Community Organizations/Resources: Working for Social Justice

Mass Incarceration/Criminal Justice System

Local/Regional

American Friends Service Committee “AFSC has carried the concern for prisoners, as well as victims for many years, believing that even if a person is convicted of a crime, incarceration should not take away their inherent dignity or humanity. Prisoners are entitled to proper medical care, appropriate mental health services, and interaction with others. AFSC opposes maximum security prisons and their lockdown procedures as dehumanizing and violating the Divine Spark within those incarcerated. And we work for the abolition of the death penalty.” http://afsc.org/ 2161 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge, MA 02140 Phone: 617-661-6130

The Center For Church and Prison, Inc.
“The Center for Church and Prison is a resource and research center working towards community revitalization through prison reform. Our goal is strategic solution development and intervention in the high rate of incarceration and recidivism affecting especially men and youth of color in the US prison system not forgetting women. A research center for information and support for churches desiring to establish: Church-based initiatives for job training and job placement for those coming out of prisons and Church-based social justice ministry.” 516 Warren Street Dorchester, MA 02121 http://www.churchandprison.org/

Community Change Inc. “Community Change was born out of the Civil Rights Movement and in response to the Kerner Commission which named racism as "a white problem." CCI has done what few organizations are willing to do: shine a spotlight on the roots of racism in white culture with the intention of dealing with racism at its source, as well as with its impact on communities of color. Our mission is to promote racial justice and equity by challenging systemic racism and acting as a catalyst for anti-racist learning and action... We focus particularly on involving white people in understanding and confronting systemic racism and white privilege.” http://www.communitychangeinc.org/ _Address: 14 Beacon Street, Room 605, Boston, MA 02108 Phone: 617.523.0555 Email: info@communitychangeinc.org

EPOCA: Ex-Prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement
Based in Massachusetts. “Ex-prisoners and current prisoners, along with allies, friends and family, working together to create resources and opportunities for those who have paid their debt to society.” 5 Pleasant Street, Worcester, MA 01609 (508) 459-0558

Massachusetts Bail Fund: The Massachusetts Bail Fund pays up to $500 bail so that low-income people can stay free while they work towards resolving their case, allowing individuals, families, and communities to stay productive, together, and stable. http://www.massbailfund.org/ massbailfund@gmail.com Accepts student volunteers/interns
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**New Garden Society:** Each year The New Garden Society trains 100+ incarcerated students in the art and science of plants. In prisons, prison hospitals and youth facilities, our students are 13-80 years old. Every week in prison classrooms, we teach core horticulture concepts. In prison gardens and greenhouses, students apply these concepts, find healing and build job skills. [http://www.thenewgardensociety.org/](http://www.thenewgardensociety.org/) **info@thenewgardensociety.org** Accepts student volunteers/interns

**Petey Greene Program:** Recruits, trains, and coordinates volunteer tutors to support educational programs within prisons. Primarily relies on undergraduate/graduate students to provide services. [http://www.peteygreene.org/](http://www.peteygreene.org/) Accepts student volunteers/interns

**Prison Legal Services:** “Prisoners’ Legal Services is a not-for-profit legal services corporation, founded in 1972, that provides civil legal assistance to people who are incarcerated in Massachusetts state prisons and in the county jails and houses of correction. Prisoners’ Legal Services promotes the safe, humane and lawful treatment of Massachusetts prisoners through civil rights litigation, administrative advocacy, client counseling, and outreach to policy makers and the public. We engage in administrative advocacy, litigation, and public education on behalf of prisoners and their families. And, we keep tabs on the policies and practices affecting the over 11,500 individuals imprisoned in Massachusetts.” [mcls.net/](http://mcls.net/)

**Progressives Massachusetts:** “JPProgressives convened a community conversation on mass incarceration, following the lead of their chapter members. Engaging with neighbors, activists, advocates and legislators, JPP is doing the work of bending the arc towards justice. By joining the Jobs Not Jails coalition, the JP chapter of Progressive Mass will continue to represent progressive grassroots commitment to social justice, and help lead the organization to productive engagement and action. Criminal Justice Reform is a core objective of our Progressive Platform. The Massachusetts Legislature will reconvene in January. Our Legislative Agenda will once again indicate which bills need our advocacy to get us closer to the goal of undoing the injustices of mass incarceration.” [http://www.progressivemass.com/tags/mass_incarceration](http://www.progressivemass.com/tags/mass_incarceration)

**Jobs Not Jails:** “Jobs Not Jails is an umbrella campaign, bringing together a diverse array of people who care about the future of our economy, and about the damage that mass incarceration is doing to our communities. It is not a legislative strategy. It pulls together dozens of organizations who are leading separate legislative strategies – for everything from a higher minimum wage to the creation of an innocence commission. The goals of the organization are to Reform Criminal Justice in Massachusetts, Stop All New Prison Construction, Re-Direct $2 Billion to Create Job Opportunities.” [http://jobsnotjails.org/](http://jobsnotjails.org/)

**Black Lives Matter, Cambridge, MA.** [https://www.blmcambridge.org/](https://www.blmcambridge.org/)
**National**

**All of Us Or None** “is a national organizing initiative of prisoners, former prisoners and felons, to combat the many forms of discrimination that we face as the result of felony convictions. After serving time in torturous conditions, we were met at the gate with prejudice and discrimination that made our re-entry into society difficult and in some cases impossible. Many of us recognize that our prison sentence never ends as long as the discrimination against us continues.” [http://www.allofusornone.org/](http://www.allofusornone.org/)

**Critical Resistance** “Critical Resistance was formed in 1997 when activists challenging the idea that imprisonment and policing are a solution for social, political, and economic problems came together to organize a conference that examined and challenged what we have come to call the prison industrial complex (PIC). CR seeks to build an international movement to end the PIC by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure. As such, our work is part of global struggles against inequality and powerlessness. The success of the movement requires that it reflect communities most affected by the PIC.” [http://www.criticalresistance.org](http://www.criticalresistance.org)

**Ella Baker Center for Human Rights** (EBC). “Through our people-powered campaigns, the Ella Baker Center offers smart solutions and uplifting alternatives to violence and incarceration. The safest neighborhoods aren't the ones with the most prisons and the most police. They’re the ones with the best schools, the cleanest environment, and the most opportunities for youth and working people. Instead of basing policies on fear, we're building a society where decisions and laws are based on love and common concerns.” [http://www.ellabakercenter.org](http://www.ellabakercenter.org)

**Occupy for Prisoners** *Souls on Ice* (Col.writ. 2/2/23) @’12 Mumia Abu-Jamal “When I heard of the call, just raised in Oakland, California, to “Occupy the Prisons”, I gasped. It was not an especially radical call, but it was right on time. For prisons have become a metaphor; the shadow-side, if you will, of America, With oceans of words about freedom, and the reality that the U.S. is the world’s leader of the incarceration industry, its more than time for the focused attention of the Occupy Movement. It’s past time.” [http://occupy4prisoners.org/](http://occupy4prisoners.org/)

**The Campaign to End the New Jim Crow** is a grassroots organization based in New York City. “Our campaign is rooted in the awareness that every human being has value and dignity and is entitled to basic civil and human rights, including the right to vote, the right to work, the right to shelter, the right to education, the right to health care and the right to food. In our vision, we as a nation finally come to embrace civil and human rights for all people, no matter who they are or what they have done.” [http://www.endnewjimcrow.org/](http://www.endnewjimcrow.org/)
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The Detention Watch Network (DWN) “is a national coalition of organizations and individuals working to educate the public and policy makers about the U.S. immigration detention and deportation system and advocate for humane reform so that all who come to our shores receive fair and humane treatment. We believe that by working together we can effect greater change in the immigration detention system. Our members and supporters include organizations providing services to those in immigration detention and their families, and organizations and individuals advocating on behalf of those in immigration detention. We are lawyers, activists, social workers, national advocates, students, community organizers, faith communities, former detainees, and affected families from around the country.”
http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/

The Formerly Incarcerated Peoples Movement “All of us have human rights that are being abused by the criminal justice system. We believe that imprisonment or conviction on a felony charge should not result in a lifelong violation of our basic rights as human beings, either while we are on probation, in prison or as we make the transition from prison back into our communities. We are firmly committed to prioritizing De-Entry over Re-Entry, and oppose the concept of a Rehabilitative Industrial Complex that grows along with prisons. All efforts to educate, assist, and empower our communities should be within the context of eliminating human cages as a mainstream livelihood.”
http://ficpmovement.wordpress.com/

The Human Rights Coalition “is a group of predominately prisoners' families, ex-prisoners and some supporters. Our ultimate goal is to abolish prisons. The prison system is based on a foundation of exploitation, punishment and corruption. Most of the people in prisons are poor, brown, urban, functionally illiterate, unemployed or under-employed before they were locked down, and are there for non-violent crimes. The prison system reflects all the other social inequalities in our system, and it does not work in its current incarnation.”
http://www.hrcoalition.org/

The Prison Policy Initiative “documents the impact of mass incarceration on individuals, communities, and the national welfare. We produce accessible and innovative research to empower the public to participate in improving criminal justice policy. The Prison Policy Initiative is most famous for documenting the distortion in our democratic process caused by the Census Bureau counting people where they are confined, not where they come from.”
http://www.prisonpolicy.org/

The Real Cost of Prison Projects “seeks to broaden and deepen the organizing capacity of prison/justice activists working to end mass incarceration. The Real Cost of Prisons Project brings together justice activists, artists, justice policy researchers and people directly experiencing the impact of mass incarceration to create popular education materials and other resources which explore the immediate and long-term costs of incarceration on the individual, her/his family, community and the nation.”
http://realcostofprisons.org/links.html/
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The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (SDPC) “The Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc. (SDPC) represents a cross section of progressive African American faith leaders and their congregations in the United States. Founded in 2003 the SDPC was called into being to continue the rich legacy of the faith community’s engagement in issues of social justice. The mission of the SDPC is to nurture, sustain, and mobilize the African American faith community in collaboration with civic, corporate, and philanthropic leaders to address critical needs of human and social justice within local, national, and global communities. SDPC seeks to strengthen the individual and collective capacity of thought leaders and activists in the church, academy, and community through education, advocacy, and activism.” http://www.sdpconference.info/.

The Women’s Prison Organization “is a service and advocacy organization committed to helping women with criminal justice histories realize new possibilities for themselves and their families. Our program services make it possible for women to obtain work, housing, and health care; to rebuild their families; and to participate fully in civic life. Through the Institute on Women & Criminal Justice, WPA pursues a rigorous policy, advocacy, and research agenda to bring new perspectives to public debates on women and criminal justice.” http://www.wpaonline.org/index.html

Resources:

- The Equal Justice Initiative https://eji.org/
- American Civil Liberties Union http://www.aclu.org/
- Human Rights Watch www.hrw.org/
- Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights www.lawyerscommittee.org/
- NAACP www.naACP.org/
- Prison Watch http://internationalprisonwatch.blogspot.com/p/about.html
- The Campaign for Youth Justice http://www.campaignforyouthjustice.org/
- The Drug Policy Alliance www.drugpolicy.org/
- The Innocence Project www.innocenceproject.org/
- The Justice Policy Institute www.justicepolicy.org/
- The Sentencing Project www.sentencingproject.org/