



2023

MEET THE CFSY



The **CAMPAIGN** for the
FAIR SENTENCING
of **YOUTH**

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OUR WORK

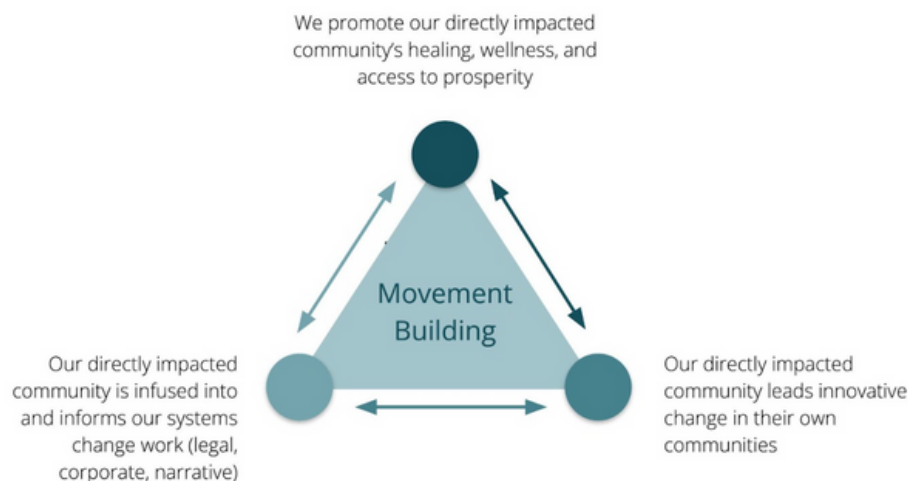
The CFSY is oriented toward liberation.

Our vision of liberation is the CFSY's unique expression of our collective work for freedom, equity, justice, and restoration in our community, our country, and our world.

We seek to create a world in which individuals impacted by extreme sentencing of youth are treated with dignity, value, and self-determination, and that we create the beloved community where transformative, healing justice is the normative practice.

To accomplish this, we are building a movement.

The CFSY is oriented toward building a movement centering those directly impacted by extreme sentencing of youth—including people currently incarcerated, people home from incarceration, loved ones of those who are or were incarcerated, and survivors of harm committed by youth—and in partnership with a diverse coalition from all walks of life.



Theory of Change

Since our inception, the CFSY has focused its efforts on the experience and policies impacting people given extreme sentences as children. Most of these individuals were convicted of homicides. Most are black. Most were exposed to violence and experienced trauma as children. Among those who are home, most are truly extraordinary individuals.

We focus on this population in an effort to end the egregious sentences they've been given, to humanize the children easiest to demonize, and to catalyze reforms that dismantle mass incarceration and anti-black racism.

We know that as long as it is okay to sentence children to die in prison, it's easier to rationalize shackling them, holding them in solitary, imposing life – or death – sentences on adults. This barbaric practice makes the rest of our punitive system seem rational.

Similarly, we know that if people returning from prison with murder convictions on their records are given meaningful opportunities for employment, housing, and opportunities to thrive, it's easier to make these opportunities possible for those convicted of lesser crimes.

In short, our efforts on behalf of those condemned to die in prison as children are intended to address the challenges and inhumane policies and practices they face, while catalyzing broader changes intended to dismantle white supremacist culture, systems and structures.

Lens

Ensure all prongs of our work focus on dismantling anti-black racism and white supremacy.

Goals



Reform

End life without parole and other extreme sentences for children in the United States and work for equitable and meaningful implementation of these reforms.



Heal

Create meaningful and holistic opportunities for individuals directly impacted by youth violence and extreme sentencing of youth to experience healing, wellness, and access to prosperity.



Reclaim

Reclaim the narrative and expand the realm of social concern through proximity, truth-telling, and cross-sector education and cultivation.



Embody

Be an organization that embodies our values and promotes anti-racism, racial equity, diversity, inclusion, social justice, collective wellness, and the leadership of directly impacted individuals.

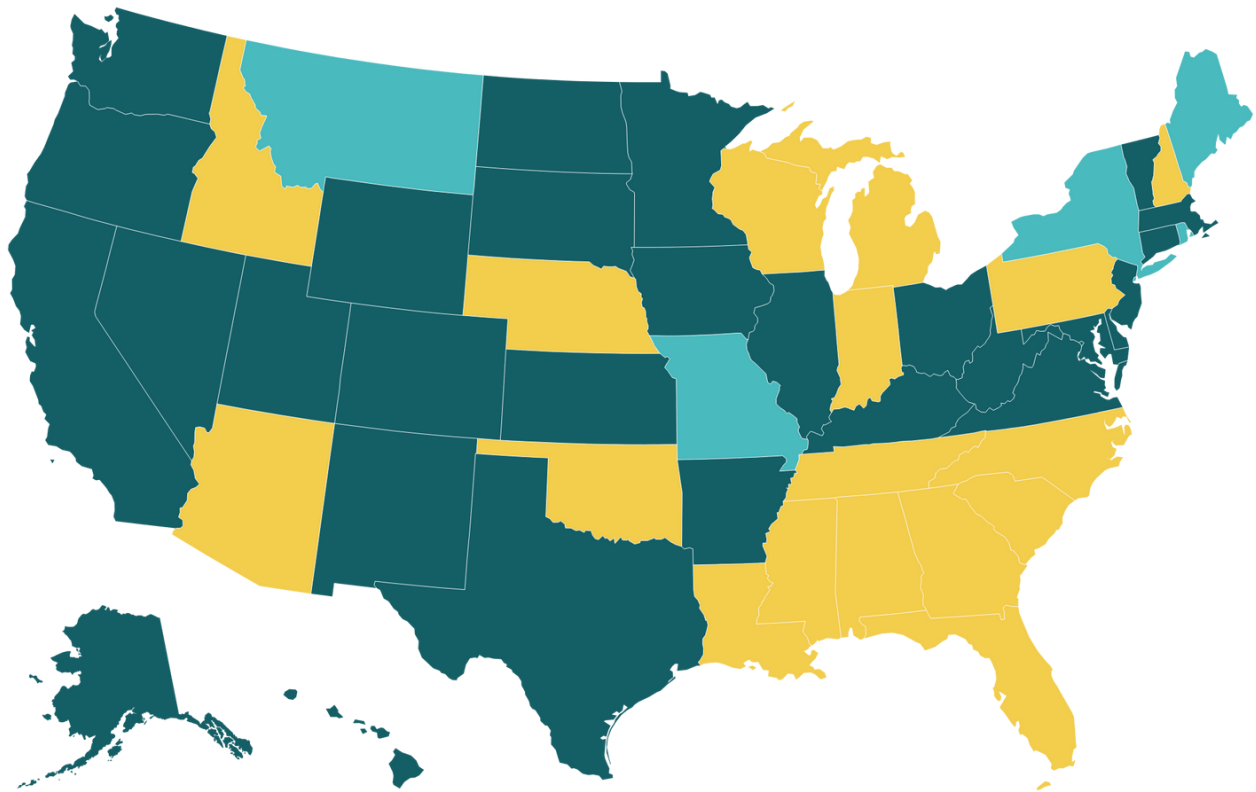
OUR PROGRESS

A Snapshot

The majority of US states banned Juvenile Life Without Parole (JLWOP)

CFSY has been building a national trend toward reexamining life without parole for children and other lengthy sentences for youth. This movement has catalyzed legislative bans nationwide. In 2012, only several states had banned life without parole as a sentencing option for children. Today, 28 states and Washington DC have outlawed JLWOP.

■ Banned JLWOP (28 states) ■ Permits but no one serving JLWOP (5 states) ■ Permits JLWOP (22 states)



1,000 people sentenced to JLWOP for homicide have been released

In 2012, nearly 3,000 individuals were serving JLWOP. Legislative bans of JLWOP have given individuals who were sentenced as children parole eligibility and resulted in 1,000 releases.

OUR APPROACH

Centering Directly Impacted Leadership at the CFSY



At CFSY we attach great value and importance to ensuring all staff and interns feel included, and that they are treated equitably and respectfully. We fully acknowledge and appreciate that everyone possesses unique skills, talents, and insights (gained from lived experiences) that are critical to our collective work. As such, we work diligently to ensure that these values are embedded within our mission, policies and practices, as well as our behaviors.

Although we hold equal value for all CFSY staff and interns, and we believe in, and fully endorse, equal opportunity for everyone to grow and to contribute, it is equally true that we are intentional in elevating directly impacted leadership within CFSY and across its networks.

We believe that to end life without parole and other extreme sentences for children, policymakers and the public and private sectors must be educated on the failings of our nation's response to children who commit all forms of harm. Therefore, we are committed to exposing unjust practices, highlighting opportunities for positive transformation, and elevating the voices of people directly impacted by the system.

We fundamentally believe that directly-impacted people possess unique knowledge and experience. They are the leaders who possess detailed knowledge of conditions and practices that remain invisible to most Americans. And while directly impacted persons possess a unique value, they are often excluded from positions of power and influence in society. Here at the CFSY, we intentionally seek to increase opportunities for power-sharing while simultaneously working to eliminate barriers that diminish the value and humanity of people impacted by the legal system. Our collective work is, and must always be, informed by their voices and leadership. Moreover, this journey of elevating directly impacted leaders is (in-and-of-itself) inclusive of our stated goal to promote racial equity, human dignity, transformative justice, and wellness and wellbeing for all staff—and especially those amongst us who were harmed and continue to experience residual harm caused by long-term incarceration.

In order to achieve these lofty, albeit necessary goals, it will require a collective humility, empathy, trust, and, yes, sometimes even sacrifice on behalf of all of us. As we read through the FAQ on page 12, hopefully, each of us will come to a common understanding that this is not an exclusionary endeavor. On the contrary, it is a worthy endeavor designed to be radically inclusive and rooted in our shared value, our shared humanity, our shared commitment, and our shared love for one another and/or the work that we do.

We also recognize that oppression is not reserved just for those who have been system-impacted. Because of their lived experience of the exact oppression we are seeking to eradicate in our society and the expertise they gained as a result, it is strategically important that those who have been most directly impacted by the system (and have been systemically distanced from positions of power) are in a position to help shape and lead our efforts.

This does not diminish the fact that other categories of people have been oppressed in this country, including black people, indigenous people, and people of color, LGBTQ+, and women, among others. Our equity journey is intended to dismantle white supremacy culture in all its forms and ensure that all our staff are treated with dignity, feel valued, and are given opportunities to thrive at the CFSY.

Meanwhile, we believe that all of us are impacted by the gross injustice of condemning children to die in prison. By defining a specific category of people as “directly impacted” we do not intend to dismiss that truth. We are all impacted by laws that undermine our values and have a collective responsibility to work toward their abolition. As Nelson Mandela beautifully put it, “To be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” That is our work at the CFSY, and there is no one better suited to lead us than those most directly impacted by the egregious injustice we seek to eradicate.



RACIAL JUSTICE BELIEF STATEMENT

2019

WE BELIEVE THAT...

- Racism is embedded in the very foundation of our country, and by extension, its social, economic, and political structures, including the juvenile and criminal justice systems.
- Our current crisis of mass incarceration is a legacy of American slavery and exerts control over communities of color in modern society, hindering their economic and political power.
- Racial animus and unconscious bias have led to selective enforcement and significantly harsher penalties for African Americans and other people of color accused of crimes than for whites charged with the same offenses.
- The now-debunked “superpredator theory,” a racially biased, scientifically deficient, and morally bankrupt idea suggesting that black teenagers are hyper-criminal, continues to shape societal perceptions of children of color, and contributes to a climate in which it is socially, culturally, and politically acceptable to sentence children of color to extreme sentences, including sentencing them to die in prison.

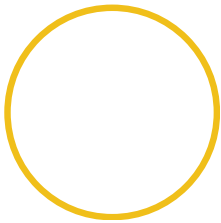
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- Discriminatory policies in schools, heightened law enforcement presence and a dearth of support services and economic opportunity in communities of color have resulted in children of color being disproportionately funneled into the juvenile and criminal justice systems and thereby disproportionately subjected to extreme sentences such as life without parole. Specifically, black youth are sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole at a per capita rate that is ten times that of white youth.
- The disparate rates at which youth of color are subjected to JLWOP and other extreme sentences is also a function of laws, policies, practices and decisions made daily in cases throughout the country. Overcharging, unnecessary transfers of youth to adult courts, and sentencing and parole decisions in individual cases are major factors in these racial disparities. The good news is that these dynamics can, therefore, be changed if system stakeholders take steps to both ensure that all defendants face an equal playing field and if those same stakeholders examine and change patterns of decision making that currently result in unnecessarily punitive responses to crimes.

JUSTORG DESIGN

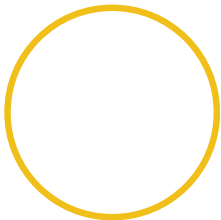
TABLES OVERVIEW

Through the framework of JustOrg design, we have created tables—oriented around specific organizational goals—at which staff strategize and make decisions. This model advances our commitment to equity and centering leadership of directly impacted staff by infusing strategy decisions across the organization.



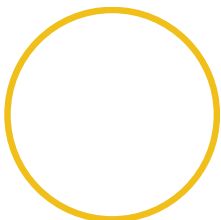
Healing Table

The purpose of the Healing table is to explore and advance our work to support the wellness and prosperity of directly impacted community members.



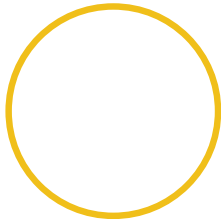
Reform Table

The purpose of the Reform table is to explore and advance our work to free people given extreme sentences as children in an effort to dismantle mass incarceration.



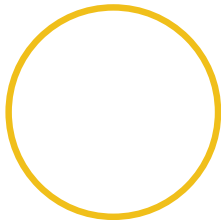
Proximity Table

The purpose of the Proximity table is to explore and advance our work to build and celebrate beloved community.



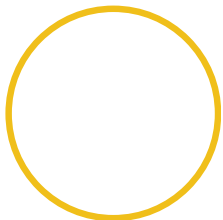
Reclaim Table

The purpose of the Reclaim table is to explore and advance our work to shape public opinion and build will for a shared commitment to our most vulnerable children as well as the potential and well-being of our directly impacted partners.



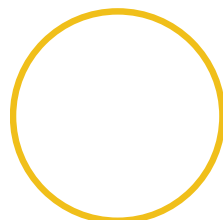
People & Culture Table

The purpose of the People & Culture table is to explore and advance our work to create staff policies, practices, and cultural norms that reflect our values and support employee engagement and development at the CFSY.



Resource Table

The purpose of the Resource table is to explore and advance our work to secure financial support for CFSY priorities.



Executive Leadership Table

The purpose of the ELT table is to provide organization-wide leadership. We interpret the operating context, set direction, and nurture staff alignment around CFSY's values, strategies, and priorities.

OUR EQUITY JOURNEY

How We Got Here

- (2009) NFN is formed – the National Family Network
- (2014) ICAN is formed – the Incarcerated Children's Advocacy Network
- (2017) Staff and board visit Equal Justice Initiative to participate in Community Remembrance Project and preview museum and memorial
- (2018) Racial justice belief statement is written and shared publicly
- (2018) Board adopts five-year plan to be led by those directly impacted
- (2019) All-staff DEI training / retreat (2020) Board DEI retreat/training
- (2020) Equity Leadership Group (ELG) is formed
- (2020) Creation of CFSY's Racial Equity & Social Justice (RESJ) statement
- (2020) Creation of Senior Strategic Advisor & Racial Equity Specialist position
- (2020) Shift to Co-Executive Directors: Xavier McElrath-Bey elevated to role
- (2021-present) Work with equity design consultant Jeanne Bell
- (2022) The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is created
- (2023) JustOrg Design and table model implemented
- (2023) Executive leadership transition

OUR EXECUTIVE TRANSITION

Announcement • March 2023

The CFSY's Board of Directors is thrilled to share some exciting news. After nearly 15 years, co-founder and Co-Executive Director Jody Kent Lavy will step down in October 2023 as CFSY's Co-Executive Director, and Xavier McElrath-Bey will become CFSY's sole Executive Director and lead our organization into its brilliant next chapter.

The CFSY has been laying the groundwork for this moment since 2018, when we shared our strategic vision for centering the leadership of those directly impacted by the legal system. This vision was born out of a growing understanding in our



March 2023

organization and across the movement that people closest to the issues have unique wisdom to offer, experiences to share, and immeasurably valuable perspectives on how to lead and create change.

We are confident that elevating directly impacted leaders is a highly effective and direct path to reform. The results speak for themselves: our legislative strategy has

been led and and informed by people impacted by youth violence and extreme youth sentencing, and as of last month, a majority of states now ban the practice of sentencing children to life without the possibility of parole. It's also central to CFSY's commitment to equity, and the dismantling of white supremacist systems that have hitherto structurally barred people of color – especially formerly incarcerated individuals – from leadership opportunities.

“

At the time CFSY was founded, I had been on the ground fighting for over a decade against JLWOP for my brother who was serving the sentence in Pennsylvania and advocating for youth sentencing reform. The fight was often lonely and isolating, especially after the loss of our mother in 2004. When the CFSY came into existence things began to change – I found a strong ally and friend in Jody, and an extraordinary family of advocates through and within CFSY, including Xavier. I no longer felt like I was fighting alone or in vain. It has been incredibly gratifying to be a part of this organization and see it grow and succeed under Jody's leadership and as someone so personally impacted by this issue, I am thrilled that Xavier will lead CFSY into the future.

–Anita Colón, Vice Board Chair and Transition Committee Chair

“

In 2004, I met with people sentenced to die in prison for offenses committed when they were kids, and it seemed nearly impossible that these remarkable human beings would ever leave prison. Today, nearly 1,000 of them are free because of the work of their loved ones, the work of the CFSY under the leadership of Jody Kent Lavy, and the work of all those aligned with this movement. Xavier assuming the role as Executive Director of the CFSY is a signifier of all the vision and leadership he brings to this work, and of the transformative change that the CFSY has been a part of and will continue to be a part of going forward.

–Alison Parker, Co-Founder of CFSY and Current Board Member

Our evolution in the intervening years has been rooted in this vision, and today, directly impacted individuals lead many areas of our work, both on our staff and in our wider community. In 2020, Xavier was tapped to co-lead the organization, and in 2022, we formed the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), which includes three directly impacted leaders, including Xavier, to ensure that our internal operations are aligned with our strategic goals and values. We are incredibly proud to say he will now take the helm as one of a small but growing number of national nonprofit executives who are formerly incarcerated.

We are pleased to share that a committee of staff and board members has been formed to oversee this transition, chaired by our current Board Vice Chair Anita Colón. We're also happy to note that at the end of the transition, Jody will be staying with the CFSY community, and plans to pursue opportunities to work more directly with, and in support of, ICAN members leading efforts in their communities to address public safety in restorative, age-appropriate, and trauma-informed ways.

Watch a video message from our Co-EDs to hear about this exciting moment in their own words!

On behalf of the entire CFSY board and staff, we'd like to express our deep gratitude to Jody for her years of visionary leadership, and our heartfelt congratulations to Xavier. We are excited for the next phase of the CFSY journey, and know that with the support of this incredible community, big things and continued progress await.

ONWARD!

The CFSY Board of Directors

OUR TEAM

CFSY STAFF OVERVIEW

Abd'Allah Lateef: Co-Deputy Director

- Role overview: lead organizational strategic alignment, organizational culture, and employee relations, with an emphasis on equity values and practices, and; serve on the ELT

Adam Hollies: Movement Building Associate

- Role overview: support ICAN membership cultivation and data management; support self-care convenings and initiatives; supervise interns; oversee letters to people serving

Adam Kemerer: Associate Communications Director

- Role overview: lead communications work, including traditional media and digital media strategy

Alicia Contreras: Donor Engagement and Communications Associate

- Role overview: build base of donors; manage data and operations of donations; support donor-specific communications

Angel Alejandro: Senior Development Manager, Grants

- Role overview: write and submit grant applications and grant reports; manage foundation database; serve as foundation point-person

Callie King-Guffey: Digital Communications & Advocacy Manager

- Role overview: execute digital communications strategy; maintain and grow CFSY digital presence, and; support traditional comms strategies as needed

Catherine Jones: Co-Director of Outreach & Partnership Development

- Role overview: lead prosperity initiatives; support community care/self care initiatives, and; support cultivation and nurturing of ICAN membership, with a particular focus on women

Christina Oliver: Senior Development Manager, Major Gifts

- Role overview: manage relationships with major donors; develop communications (personal correspondence and large-scale campaigns), and; serve as point person on development-related events

Crystal Carpenter: Chief Program & Strategy Officer

- Role overview: advance program management and strategy across Movement Building (i.e., Heal, Reform, Reclaim, Proximity) areas of work; support organizational culture and employee relations, and; serve on the ELT

Donnell Drinks: Leadership Development & Engagement Coordinator

- Role overview: support cultivation and nurturing of ICAN membership, with a particular focus on cultivating grassroots base in legislative priority states

Eddie Ellis: Co-Director of Outreach & Member Services

- Role overview: lead self-care/community-care initiatives; support cultivation and nurturing of ICAN membership, and; support prosperity initiatives

Eric Alexander: Senior Advocate

- Role overview: lead tier 2 legislative advocacy (i.e., states without active legislative campaigns); lead parole engagement, and; support tier 1 legislative advocacy (i.e., states with active bills)

Jackie Suazo: Finance & Benefits Manager

- Role overview: manage finance administration—primarily recordkeeping, reporting, and payment disbursement—and benefits administration

Jody Kent Lavy: Co-Executive Director

- Role overview: collaborate with external partners in the youth justice and criminal legal reform field to provide thought leadership and to advance CFSY's strategic goals; partner in development efforts; engage with CFSY board, support other programmatic priorities, and; serve on the ELT

Karmah Elmusa: Chief of Staff & External Affairs

- Role overview: oversee internal communication with staff and staff professional development; support external comms strategies, and; serve on the ELT

Matt Gritzmacher: Finance & Compliance Director

- Role overview: oversee finance and benefits administration, including maintaining fiscal controls and government compliance; facilitate budget creation

Preston Shipp: Senior Policy Counsel

- Role overview: lead tier 1 legislative campaigns; support tier 2 legislative priority states, and; support parole board engagement

Rebecca Turner: Senior Litigation Counsel

- Role overview: lead data and case tracking, pro bono engagement, and technical assistance to legal field, and; support parole engagement

Tamala Allen: Legal & Policy Program Associate

- Role overview: support data tracking, case tracking, release tracking, bill tracking; support legislative advocacy (scheduling meetings & travel, lobbying reports, etc.), and; facilitate letter responses to incarcerated individuals with legal questions

Xavier McElrath-Bey: Co-Executive Director

- Role overview: collaborate with external partners in the youth justice and criminal legal reform field to provide thought leadership and to advance CFSY's strategic goals; serve as a spokesperson for CFSY and the movement; engage with CFSY board; support internal management; support other programmatic priorities, and; serve on the ELT

OUR BENEFITS

We as an organization seek to operate in a way that is consistent with our values. One way we seek to live out our values is through the benefits we provide to our staff. This document serves as a snapshot of CFSY staff benefits for 2023.

We recognize that the CFSY is comprised of multi-dimensional people with varied passions and life circumstances. We want our staff to have time to experience a well-rounded life, of which work at the CFSY is one meaningful part.

- Twenty days of personal time off (“PTO”) per year
- Eleven Federal holidays, one optional holiday of personal significance, and a holiday the Friday after Thanksgiving
- Nine days (i.e., 72 hours) of sick leave per year
- Workweek ends at 2pm every Friday
- Eight week sabbatical after five years of employment at the CFSY
- Office closed December 25 – January 1

We also recognize that employment is a means to financial security, and we seek to promote both the short-term and the long-term well-being of our staff.

- 100% coverage of health insurance premium for employees, partial coverage of enrolled dependent premiums, and employer-sponsored Health Reimbursement Account (HRA)
- Employer matching up to 1% of salary and year-end contributions to employee 403(b) retirement accounts
- Per diem for food and incidentals, paid in advance of work travel, to minimize out-of-pocket expenses
- \$75 stipend per night of work travel toward dependent care expenses (childcare or eldercare)
- Option to withhold pre-tax earning toward a Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA)

THANK YOU!



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