



JustLeadershipUSA

# 2020 REFLECTIONS





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## DEAR FRIENDS,

Since I assumed the helm of JustLeadershipUSA two and a half years ago, there is no doubt that we have made incredible strides to decarcerate America and show up everyday for people whose voices have been silenced by the criminal justice system.

2020 was no doubt a tumultuous year, but it forced us to take stock of our organization's strengths and growth areas in order to develop new strategies to best fulfill our ultimate mission. Reflection turned to action, and as an organization, we refocused our efforts on strengthening JLUSA's core leadership programming and alumni support. We know that to truly empower and elevate directly impacted voices, we need to embrace our Leaders' diverse and unique perspectives, so they can identify the most pressing issues for them and their community. Our alumni leaders are the heart and soul of this organization.

Staying true to that means focusing our organizational efforts on our fellows and alumni, amplifying and supporting their vision, their leadership and their advocacy. Through this strategic refocus, now more than ever, JLUSA is able to elevate the voices and unleash the potential of directly impacted people nationwide. And while we have seen much success in 2020, there is still more to be done. This year, and in the years to come, we are committed to elevating, educating and empowering the people and communities most impacted by systemic racism, so that they can create and drive the changes necessary to build healthy and thriving communities.

As the pandemic continues to ravage our families and communities both in and outside correctional facilities, we must continue to demand that incarcerated people are educated on and prioritized for the Covid-19 vaccine rollout. To that end, our #JustUS campaign and alumni leaders will continue their bold demands with this effort in mind.

Let's be clear: Covid-19 is not going away anytime soon. We will continue to demand that policymakers -- including the current administration -- champion and adopt federal incentives for states and local governments to adopt emergency management policies that protect the lives of incarcerated people during any and all kinds of natural disasters. As the country heads into spring, and this second wave of coronavirus infects the nation, we know having these policies in place will save lives.

JLUSA will always strive to have BOLD goals that will amplify our mission and invest in directly impacted and marginalized voices. Key new programs include our new leadership development curriculum, designed for and by directly impacted people, is based on the principles of effective organizing, advocacy, and policy analysis; and the launch of JLUSA Engage, a premier social and interactive educational platform, designed to create a vibrant, online community of JLUSA's Leaders and members that seek to make an impact in their communities.

We are in a time when systemic racism and newly-energized voices of hate and discrimination threaten to undo much of the hard work we have done to make this country live up to its values and promises, but I know that JustLeadershipUSA will continue to empower and invest in marginalized people and communities.

Thank you for joining us this past year in our fight to redefine justice. Onward!



DeAnna Hoskins, President / CEO, JustLeadershipUSA

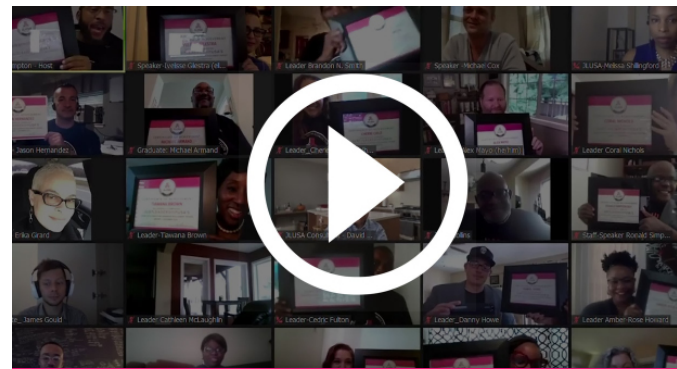
A group of diverse people are gathered around a table in what appears to be a meeting or collaborative work environment. The image is dark and slightly blurred, with a prominent pink horizontal banner across the middle. The banner contains the text "WHO ARE WE?" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The people in the background are looking towards the camera or slightly off-camera, suggesting an engaged group.

**WHO ARE WE?**



JustLeadershipUSA, a national non-profit, is led by directly impacted people and is dedicated to decarcerating the United States by educating, elevating and empowering the people and communities most impacted by systemic racism to drive, amplify, and sustain the kinds of policy reform that builds thriving, sustainable and healthy communities.

We are committed to educating, investing and supporting the leadership of those most impacted by discriminatory policies, to empower them with the tools and resources needed to be more effective advocates to drive national and local policy change and better organize supporters in their own communities. We bring this vision to reality through our transformative Leadership Development and Advocacy Training programs, created by and for those directly impacted by mass incarceration and systemic injustices.



[Watch Who We Are Video](#)

## JUSTLEADERSHIPUSA LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

### Emerging Leaders (EL) Advocacy Training Program

JLUSA builds power in marginalized and underresourced communities by training directly impacted people on the 5 practices of the Leadership Challenge© and the principles of organizing, advocacy, and policy analysis through JLUSA's accelerated Emerging Leaders (EL) training program.

EL participants are introduced to the tools and skills to effectively develop and lead local and state level campaigns, while building power through coalitions.

### Leading with Conviction (LwC) Leadership Development Program

JLUSA invests in and empowers directly impacted people a year through a 12-month cohort-based advanced leadership development and advocacy training program, Leading with Conviction (LwC).

LwC Fellows are mid-to-senior level leaders and/or past Emerging Leaders participants currently working toward criminal, racial and social justice change in their communities.

### Leadership In Action

JLUSA's alumni network is motivated and organized to drive policy change and community reinvestment strategies that help advance JLUSA's national efforts to dismantle systems of oppression the U.S. Past JLUSA-led campaigns serve as models that demonstrate when those most oppressed rise up into leadership and demand change, change can occur.

The current #JustUS campaign, powered by JLUSA, exemplifies our commitment to elevating and empowering the leadership of directly impacted people.







**#JUSTUS**

POWERED BY **JLUSA**

**NO ONE DESERVES TO DIE IN PRISON.**

**WHAT DID WE DO  
IN 2020?**





**ALEX  
MAYO**  
Washington



**AMBER-ROSE  
HOWARD**  
California



**ANGELA  
HALL**  
Arizona



**BETTY  
WASHINGTON**  
Alabama



**BRANDON  
SMITH**  
California



**CATH  
MCLAU**  
Ala



**DANIEL  
HOWE**  
Arizona



**DEMETRIUS  
RAINER**  
Noth Carolina



**DIETER  
CANTU**  
Texas



**IVELISSE  
GILESTRA**  
New Jersey



**JAMES  
GOULD**  
Colorado



**JAS  
HERNA**  
Tex



**QUNIANA  
FUTRELL**  
Virginia



**RONALD  
PIERCE**  
New Jersey



**RUBEN  
SALDAÑA**  
Florida



**SABI  
RYA**  
Washi

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LEADING WITH CONVICTION CLASS OF 2020

Due to COVID-19 closures, our 2020 Leading with Conviction national program moved online in 2020. We celebrated our 29 Leading with Conviction 2020 Fellows with a virtual graduation on October 3rd, with alumni speaker **Tracey Syphax**, **Keeda Haynes**, formerly incarcerated public defender and Congressional candidate, and spoken word artist **Hannah Drake**.



**HELEN  
HAGHLIN**  
ska



**CEDRIC  
FULTON**  
New York



**CHARLOTTE  
GARNES**  
Georgia



**CHERIE  
CRUZ**  
Rhode Island



**JOHN  
COLLINS**  
Washington



**CAROL  
NICHOLS**  
Florida



**RON  
ANDEZ**  
kas



**KHALIFA  
ALI**  
Pennsylvania



**KIMBERLY  
HAVEN**  
Maryland



**LISA  
JAMES**  
California



**MICHAEL  
ARMAND**  
Idaho



**MICHAEL  
COX**  
Massachusetts



**MARINA  
AN**  
ngton



**SHEBA  
WILLIAMS**  
Virginia



**TIAWANA  
BROWN**  
North Carolina



**TIHEBA  
BAIN**  
Connecticut

## LEADING WITH CONVICTION CURRICULUM ADVANCEMENTS

In 2020, partnered with the Justice Programs Office (JPO) at American University to revamp our signature Leading with Conviction curriculum. With feedback and guidance from LwC alumni leaders and JPO, JLUSA staff identified enhancements to the current curriculum, adding new topic areas and core competencies, including fundraising, communications, business operations, and board development skills and resources.

After piloting the training curriculum in 2021, American University will conduct an evaluation to assess three key aspects of the new curriculum: usability, effectiveness, and participant success. This new curriculum will more accurately reflect the needs of its LwC fellows and alumni and better equip them with the skills and resources to succeed in their advocacy, organizing, and policy reform efforts.





## #JUSTUS

In June 2020, we powered up #JustUS, a national campaign led by JLUSA alumni leaders to address conditions of confinement by calling on policymakers to immediately adopt federal and state-based recommendations that protect the lives of incarcerated people during ANY type of major crisis emergency or natural disaster.

Our campaign led to Sen. Tammy Duckworth introducing the “Correctional Facility Disaster Preparedness Act,” bill in the fall, that will require the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and National Institute of Correction (NIC) Advisory Board to take measures to ensure the health and safety of people in federal prisons during presidentially declared disasters, such as hurricanes and wildfires.

With news of correctional staff beginning to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, we urge lawmakers to prioritize vaccinations for incarcerated people and continue to decarcerate and increase coronavirus testing. As the pandemic

has shown, conditions behind bars have made jails and prisons dangerous settings for any infectious diseases to spread.

As part of the #JustUS campaign, we created a series of bi-weekly Facebook Live events hosted and led by alumni Leaders, on the intersection of the criminal justice system and COVID-19 pandemic.



These discussions have become a major part of our work in elevating, educating and empowering the voices of directly impacted leaders, and topics range from LGBTQ+

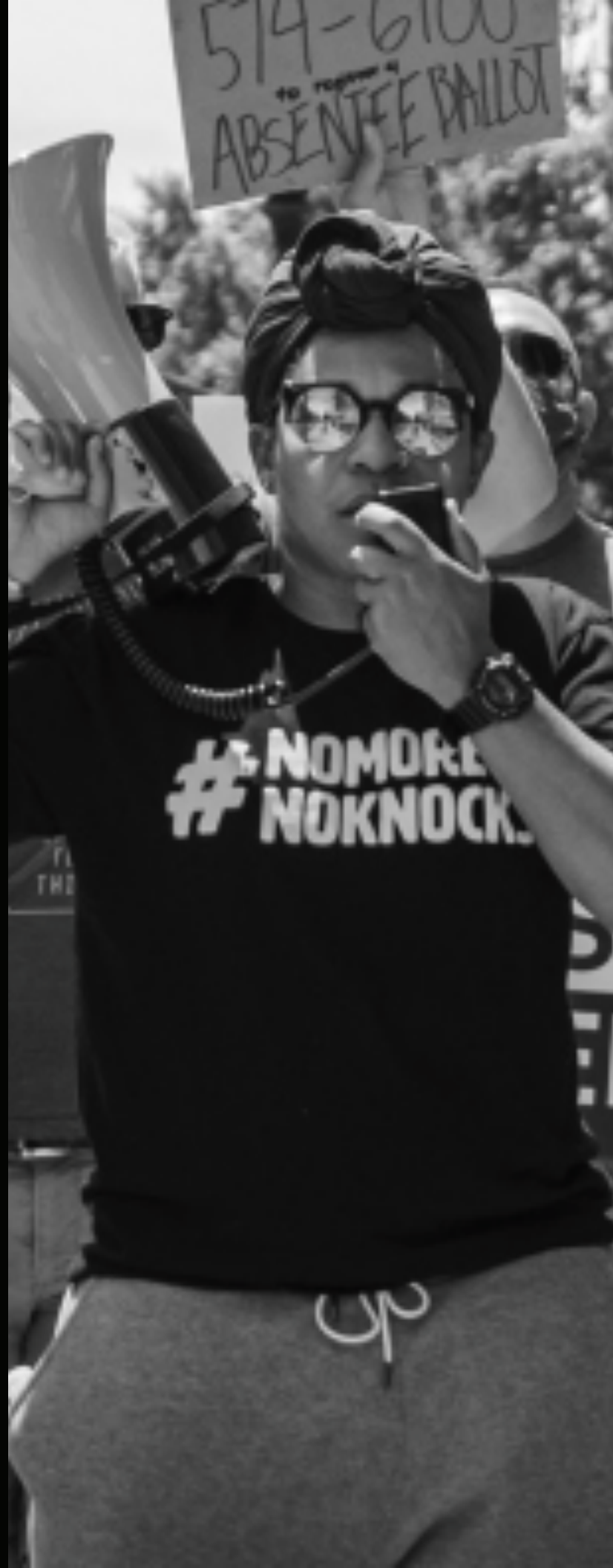
community members and incarceration to next steps after the 2020 Presidential Election.

The #JustUS campaign will continue and expand in 2021, as JustLeadershipUSA continues to demand that lawmakers create comprehensive solutions that address the lack of human dignity in our nation’s correctional facilities.

## #JUSTICEVOTESKY

Last fall, JustLeadershipUSA launched Justice Votes Kentucky, a campaign to engage and educate newly re-enfranchised Kentuckians, in the run-up to the 2020 Presidential Election. More than 175,000 Kentucky residents recently had their voting rights restored this year, but voter suppression tactics make it difficult for Black and Brown people to express their voice in the voting booth.

We partnered with ACLU Kentucky, Life Coach Each One Teach One Re-Entry Fellowship, All of Us or None, YVPRC, and Louisville Urban League to host webinars so that directly impacted people who have had their voting rights restored could learn civic engagement.







## #WORKINGFUTURE

### Michigan Updates



**“This has been a long time coming for a lot of people, a lot of formerly incarcerated people, who have long been worthy of an opportunity to have a clean record.”**

**- Hakim Crampton**

We saw two victories for the #WORKINGfuture campaign. The state House of Representatives approved a bill making it easier for people with a conviction history to get occupational licenses and the Senate approved a package of expungement reform bills that will remove barriers to employment, housing, and other opportunities for formerly incarcerated people. Since then, both bills have been signed into law by Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

### South Carolina Updates

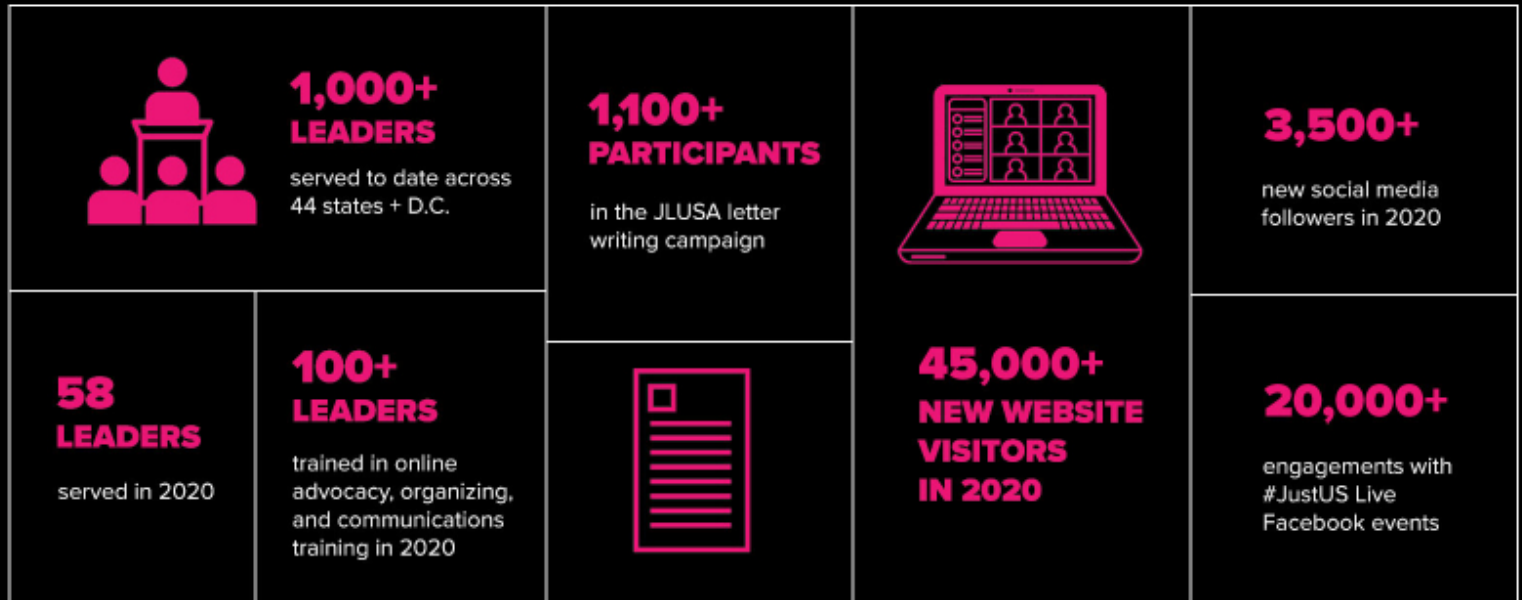
**“70% of people who apply for jobs who have felony convictions, the chances are, they never really make it to the second round. If they do get it, they end up getting jobs that only pay minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour.”**

**- Lester Young, Jr.**



Aiken, South Carolina, after advocates campaigned for the [“Ban the Box” initiative](#).

# WHAT'S OUR IMPACT?



# WHY OUR WORK CONTINUES





A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a light-colored shirt and a dark blazer, is speaking into a microphone. He is looking slightly to his left. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a meeting or conference setting.

# **WHAT DO JLUSA LEADERS HAVE TO SAY?**







# BRANDON SMITH

#LwC2020 Graduate

**“I want to help out my brothers and sisters, show them the path that I took, and create new pathways for them.”**

Due to an extreme firefighter shortage, today incarcerated firefighters make up 30-40% of the fighting force in California. Brandon joined these forces when incarcerated, and enjoyed having a sense of purpose and the opportunity to help the community. “It was what I needed to get my life back on track and I grew to love it.” But after being released from prison, there were many barriers to become a firefighter professionally. So he co-founded the Forestry and Fire Recruitment Program (FFRP), which works to help formerly incarcerated firefighters enter the field professionally.

“When I got out of prison I decided to go professional, but it wasn’t easy. It took me about a year to figure out how to make it happen. Then the first time I fought a fire as a professional, I found myself working with guys from the same fire camp I’d been in as a prisoner. We all did a double take!

During dinner I spoke about how I had made the transition and quite a few men were very interested. That’s what gave me and my co-founder, who had also spent time in a fire camp, the idea of starting FFRP. That was in 2013. So far **we’ve helped over 80 people enter the field professionally** on an entry level basis. That means going from the prison wage of \$24 a day to making \$50-80K within 2 years of coming home.

One of the reasons why I got involved with JLUSA is because FFRP is gaining a lot of local attention now and I want to sharpen my advocacy skills. Being a firefighter is one of the ultimate public safety jobs. In fact people respect firefighters more than they do police officers. So coming from a position of being a “public nuisance” to the number one public safety job sometimes gets some pushback. People in fire camp are often told they can’t do it, there’s no way to make it happen. There are also licensing issues that come up.

Our program spreads awareness to the folks incarcerated that they can do it and then we try to be a support system for them. **I want to help out my brothers and sisters, show them the path that I took, and create new pathways for them.”**



# QUNIANA FUTRELL

#LwC2020 Graduate

**“My pain is what pushed me into my purpose.”**

Quniana grew up with both her parents in and out of jails and state penitentiaries, in a community so impacted by mass incarceration and over policing that her experiences were normal within her family and community. “I knew deep down that my trauma was not normal and that I needed to change my story.” The pain of growing up with the loss of her mother and father drove her to focus her career on rebuilding families impacted by mass incarceration through two programs: Teaching Beyond Bars and Parenting Behind Bars.

“Parenting Behind Bars came out of my own very personal sorrow of seeing my mother arrested and incarcerated again in 2016. I tried to understand what would cause her to jeopardize so many things—her relationships with me, with her grandchildren, with her husband. Something awakened in me and challenged me to figure out what was going on. **Parenting Behind Bars was born out of my own need to show my mom that she could still be a parent, even from the inside of a prison**, and that she could use the time there to learn how to come out and stay out. I created a twelve week course that explores the issues that caused mothers to be where they are, and teaches them how to stay involved with their children even while incarcerated. I speak to them not just theoretically, but as a child who still hurts from years of having a parent in prison. Next week I’ll be bringing Parenting Behind Bars into my second local city jail and I couldn’t be more excited!

My pain is what pushed me into my purpose. In this line of work not all stories are success stories. I see women who relapse and lose their children again, retraumatizing them. Seeing that kind of pain can make you say, I don’t want to help anybody else, I’m just going to live my life. But the thing that keeps me going and keeps me pushing is that I do have a purpose and I can use my pain to help other people change their families. **If I can change the family then I can change the world** – that’s my motto.”



**WHERE DO WE GO  
FROM HERE?**



While we saw many successes worth celebrating in 2020, our work is nowhere near finished. In 2021, JLUSA is deepening its investments in leadership development and training. JLUSA seeks to mobilize a grassroots movement to end mass incarceration and racial and social injustice by providing leadership development and training to directly impacted leaders. JLUSA will work with directly impacted leaders on the ground in various regions to organize, develop, and support coalitions around decarceration efforts and the reinvestment of savings from the criminal legal system back into marginalized communities, so that coalitions can identify solutions related to: Employment & Economic Development, Housing, Mental Health & Counseling, Substance Use, Conflict Mediation & Alternative Accountability, Education & Schools, Youth, Family & Recreational Services, and Health, Wellness & Environmental Justice.



**ANTONEISE  
GANT**  
Michigan



**ART  
JACKSON**  
New Jersey



**ASHLEY R.  
GOLDON**  
California



**CHAZIDY  
BOWMAN**  
Ohio



**CHRISTOPHER  
ZAHN**  
Wisconsin



**CIERA BATES-  
CHAMBERLAIN**  
Illinois



**DAVID  
GASPAR**  
Indiana



**DEBRA  
WRIGHT**  
Michigan



**JIQUEANDA  
JOHNSON**  
Michigan



**JOSHUA  
HOE**  
Michigan



**JULIUS  
JOHNSON**  
Kentucky



**KESHA  
HAMILTON**  
Michigan



**DR.  
LATHERESA  
JEFFERSON**  
Michigan



**RICHARD C.  
SPECK**  
Michigan



**YUSEF  
BUNCHY  
SHAKUR**  
Michigan



**ZACH  
RUPPEL**  
Ohio

## LEADING WITH CONVICTION 2021 COHORT

JustLeadershipUSA welcomes 16 fellows across seven states into our advanced, cohort-based leadership development program.

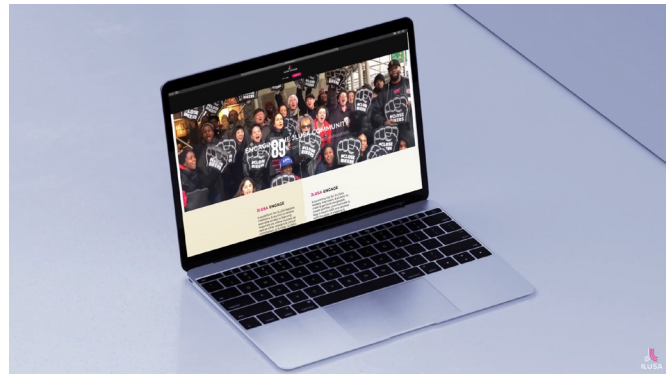


## BRINGING DIRECTLY IMPACTED VOICES TO THE TABLE

Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution and Education  
In 2020, as an unprecedented global pandemic ravaged communities, lawmakers have consistently shown a lack of foresight, care and attention to protect people in prison and jails. While the successful #JustUs campaign continues to address the urgent need for emergency preparedness protocols in correctional facilities, the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over, and inaction from lawmakers will only prolong the suffering behind bars.

As we enter a new phase of this pandemic and a new administration takes office, our work is not over. As priority groups across the country have begun to receive the vaccine, incarcerated people are still excluded, despite facing a risk of infection four times higher than that of the general population. While vaccine distribution efforts increase nationwide, incarcerated people simultaneously suffer disproportionate risk of infection, while burdened with the medical communities' history of racially motivated neglect, deception, and disregard for their humanity.

Throughout 2021, JLUSA will continue to demand that the public health community and the government reckon with this history of brutality and racism, that incarcerated people are prioritized for the vaccine, and that lawmakers adopt proactive solutions to decarcerate and protect the lives of incarcerated people during ANY kind of natural disaster. Additionally, we will work to ensure that formerly incarcerated and directly impacted leaders spearhead engagement and education around the vaccine among incarcerated people.



## JLUSA ENGAGE

JLUSA is proud to launch JLUSA Engage, the premier social media platform for individuals impacted by the criminal justice system. This innovative online engagement tool will operate as both a virtual training and networking platform for alumni-leaders. JLUSA Engage provides all directly impacted members access to virtual workshops, training, advocacy toolkits, and opportunities to build community and professional connections among directly impacted visionary leaders across the country.

True to JLUSA's mission and fervent belief in the power of directly impacted individuals to spearhead change, JLUSA Engage was developed by and for directly impacted individuals. JLUSA Engage soft launched in November 2020, and will be fully rolled out to current LwC fellows and alumni of JLUSA's Leadership Development and Training core programs. By putting resources, community, and connection all on one online platform, thousands more directly impacted individuals will have access to the resources they need to drive meaningful change.

**WATCH JLUSA ENGAGE VIDEO**



## **JUSTLEADERSHIPUSA'S 2021-2024 ROADMAP**

In January 2021, a new administration and the 117th Congress were sworn into office to serve our country.

JustLeadershipLUSA believes that there are bold, positive actions at the federal level that can be taken, relatively rapidly, to unlock access to the basic human needs for the 70 million individuals living in communities across the United States with a criminal history, and provide pathways to opportunities for those currently incarcerated.

To ensure directly-impacted voices are represented at the decision-making tables in this new administration, JustLeadership developed a JLUSA 2021 Roadmap. This roadmap, the first of its kind, provides immediate, mid-term, and long term policy recommendations informed by the organization's growing nationwide network of formerly incarcerated leaders. While many advocacy organizations are making recommendations to the new Administration and Congress to create a more fair, humane, and just criminal justice system, JLUSA's recommendations reflect the expertise of those who have been directly impacted by the criminal legal system and mass incarceration.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR ROADMAP**



**THE PEOPLE WHO  
MAKE IT POSSIBLE**



## STAFF LISTING

- DeAnna Hoskins
- Daonese Johnson-Colón
- Melissa Shillingford
- Ronald Simpson-Bey
- Aminah Abdul- Majeed
- Michael Paul Jackson
- Chelsea Hornick-Becker
- Alexandra Park
- Amber Artis
- Brigid Stegemoeller
- David Etheridge-Bartow
- Erika Girard
- Hakim Nathaniel Crampton
- Kristin Lysko
- Lester Young, Jr.
- Madeline Firkser
- Matt Collinson
- Sophie Halter
- Stella Frank

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- **Welcoming:** Ashish Prashar, Jeff Henderson

## THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

**“Donating to Black-led organizations is radical allyship. JLUSA’s donors, institutional funders, and corporate partners support the platform from which directly-impacted leaders can build power, seize opportunities and drive change.”**

### - DeAnna Hoskins

Thank you to the nearly 600 individuals, corporations, and foundations who supported JustLeadershipUSA financially in 2020. Your donations make our work possible.



**JLUSA™**

[jlusa.org](http://jlusa.org)