



2024 Impact Report

We aim to end the criminalization & confinement of Black women & girls.

Our guiding touchstone is our vision: to ensure that every Black woman and girl who is impacted by the criminal or juvenile legal systems is safe and may heal from their trauma, reconnect with their families and communities, achieve economic prosperity, and have every opportunity to live out their dreams.

We do this by focusing on our core commitments:

- Dismantle pathways to criminalization and confinement for Black women and girls.
- Increase and enhance opportunities with and for formerly incarcerated women and girls.
- Promote healing-centered justice.

Here are some highlights of the impact we made toward advancing our vision in 2024.



**National
Black Women's
Justice Institute**

nbwji.org

CORE COMMITMENT

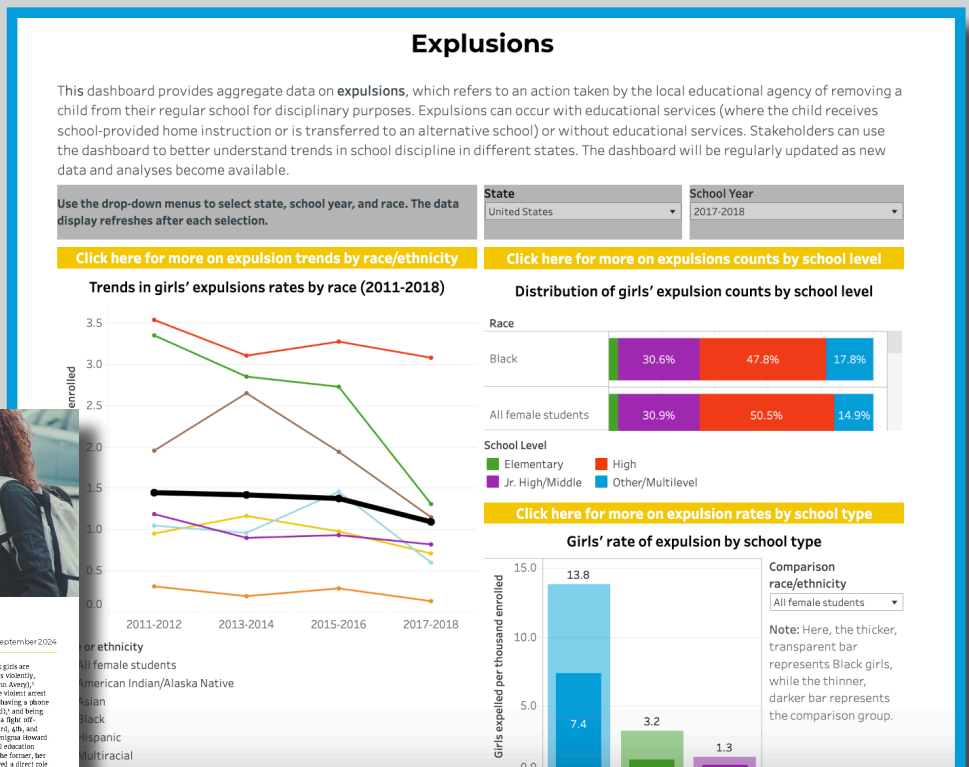
Dismantle pathways to criminalization and confinement for Black women and girls.

Launched the Black Girls' Pushout from School Data Hub

Black girls deserve to feel safe, supported, and valued in their schools—but too often, they are met with punishment instead of care. Across the country, punitive discipline practices push Black girls out of classrooms and into harmful cycles of exclusion, criminalization, and confinement. In fact, according to our analysis, Black girls are the only group of girls who are overrepresented in every type of school disciplinary action. This isn't just a statistic—it's a reflection of a system that fails to see Black girls as children deserving of care, opportunity, and the chance to learn.

To break this cycle, schools must rethink the policies and practices that drive Black girls out of school instead of supporting them to help them thrive. That's why, in 2024, we created and launched the Black Girls' Pushout from School Data Hub—a tool designed to bring visibility to this crisis and equip schools, policymakers, advocates, and communities with the data they need to demand change.

Pulling from the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) from 2011–2018, this interactive tool allows users to explore school discipline trends by state, race and ethnicity, and school year.



Piloted the CARES Mental Health System Assessment Tool for Schools

Schools should be places of possibility. Through the Creating Affirming, Responsive, and Equitable Schools (CARES) Initiative, we are working to make that a reality—so that every Black girl walks into school knowing she belongs, knowing she matters, and knowing she has the support to succeed.

Through the CARES Initiative, we equip educators with the tools, training, and resources needed to build school cultures that affirm the identities, dignity, and well-being of Black girls and all students. Over eight months in 2023, our advisory council of six Black girls from different regions of the country shared their insights, experiences, and expertise, shaping a tool that ensures schools take a more intersectional, student-centered approach to mental health. That work achieved a milestone in 2024, when we worked with three high schools in New York City to pilot that tool—our groundbreaking Mental Health System Assessment and Resource Workbook—designed in partnership with Black girls themselves.

Unlike traditional assessments, which often overlook the unique challenges Black girls face, the CARES Mental Health System Assessment helps schools critically examine their mental health policies, programs, and practices through a lens of equity and inclusion. It not only highlights what schools are doing but also provides a roadmap for what they must change to better support the emotional well-being of Black girls and all students across different identities.

The CARES Initiative is part of our strategy to end school pushout by transforming schools into environments where Black girls and gender-expansive youth can truly thrive.





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It has been an engaging and insightful journey to work with...the NBWJI [team] as we assess our schools work through the CARES Initiative. ...taking the survey and reviewing it through the lens of its attunement to the voices of young women of color has been game changing. ...We have left this initiative with tangible next steps, which is incredibly helpful. Thank you to the NBWJI team for your commitment to young women of color and to the importance of mental health.

**—Camile S. Gayle, LCSW (she/her), Chief of Student Affairs,
Brooklyn Emerging Leaders Academy**

CORE COMMITMENT

Increase and enhance opportunities with and for formerly incarcerated women and girls.

Sisters in Solidarity Reentry Network

Formerly incarcerated Black women are more than their past—they are leaders, visionaries, and changemakers. Yet, too often, their expertise, experiences, and needs are ignored in the reentry field, leaving them without the support necessary to rebuild their lives and their communities. The Sisters in Solidarity (SiS) Reentry Network is changing that.

This network uplifts the leadership of Black women who are on the frontlines of the movement for reentry services that are culturally affirming, gender-responsive, and trauma-informed. In 2024, the inaugural cohort of 10 SiS Reentry Network members came together each month in a virtual collaborative learning space, creating a powerful community of shared knowledge and support. NBWJI distributed \$100,000 in grants to member organizations, with each organization receiving \$10,000 to advance a new project or initiative critical to their mission. In addition, they received targeted technical assistance and participated in workshops and peer-led advocacy & strategy sessions to strengthen their capacities to develop solutions to address the reentry needs of formerly incarcerated Black women, which have been traditionally overlooked and marginalized in the reentry field. In its first year, the SiS Reentry Network has built a strong community of support, learning, and collaboration for members.

\$100,000

In grants to advance critical mission-driven initiatives



This cohort really allowed for me to be in community with Black women that are in the same position as me. We were able to lift each other up and extend our shared skills and knowledge. The information that was shared was needed. It felt like this program really centered our needs. I was actually able to secure 2 grants from my relationships I built in this space.

— Qiana Johnson, Founder & Executive Director of Life After Release and SiS Reentry Network member

CORE COMMITMENT

Promote healing-centered justice.

Introduced the Justice for Youth Survivors Initiative

Black girls who survive sexual violence deserve care, healing, and to feel safe. The legal system, however, frequently fails to see them as children in need of support, and instead they are punished, criminalized, and pushed deeper into harm. This devastating reality is why, in 2024, we launched the Justice for Youth Survivors Initiative—to dismantle the abuse-to-prison pipeline and transform the legal system’s treatment of young survivors.

In partnership with the Center for Gender Justice & Opportunity at Georgetown Law, this initiative centers the voices and experiences of the very youth most impacted by these injustices. We have created a youth advisory council made up of criminalized youth survivors who are shaping the future of this work.

Through trainings, listening sessions, and leadership development, these young people are leading the charge—collecting new evidence, amplifying survivor stories, and sharing powerful narratives about the impact of criminalization on children and youth.

But they are doing more than telling their truths—they are building solutions. In 2025, JYSI youth advisors, with our training and support, will launch a youth participatory action research project, which will shape JYSI’s priorities and objectives over the next few years. Ultimately, their work will help legal professionals adopt a trauma-informed approach, with the aim of leading to healing-centered responses instead of punishment.

JUSTICE FOR YOUTH SURVIVORS INITIATIVE

**Youth Participation in the Justice
for Youth Survivors Initiative**

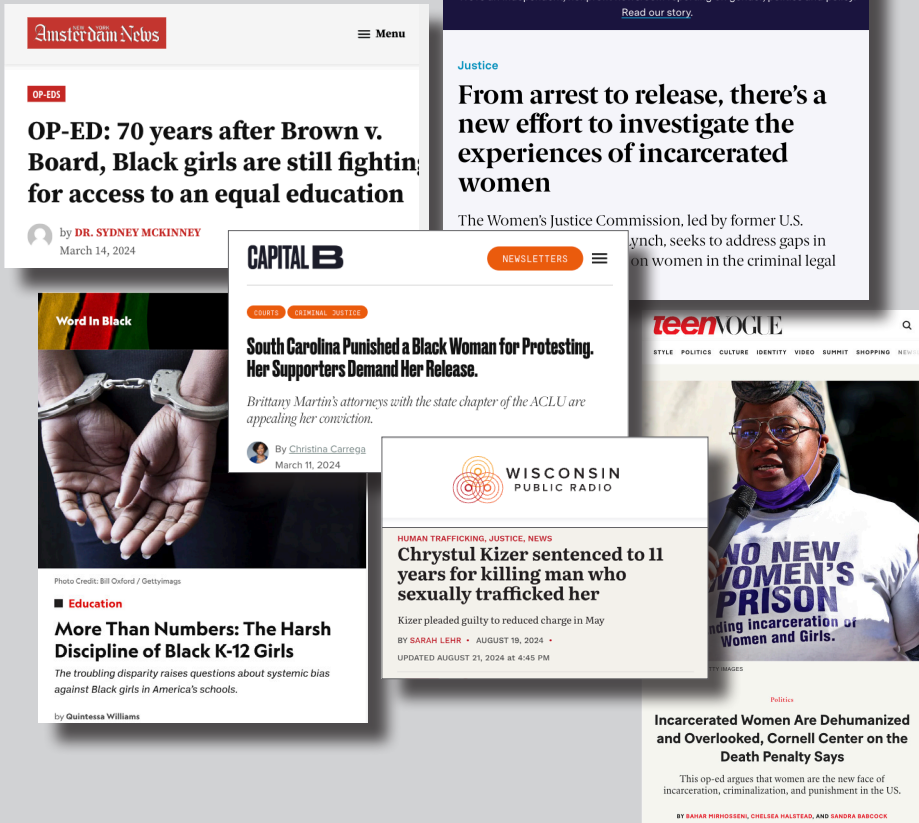
**7 YOUTH
ADVISORS**



JYSI has become such a safe space for me. The care you have all placed into crafting this program really shows and I am so excited to see what comes from this project.

—JYSI Youth Advisor

In the News



Funders

Charles and Lynn Schusterman
Family Philanthropies
Collective Futures Fund
Communities for Just Schools Fund
Focus for Health Foundation
Ford Foundation
Gobioff Foundation
MacArthur Foundation
Ms. Foundation
Nathan Cummings Foundation
New York Women's Foundation
Public Welfare Foundation
Tides Foundation
Tow Foundation

Mission & Vision

The National Black Women's Justice Institute is a Black women-led national nonprofit that conducts and champions research, capacity-building, and public education to end the criminalization of Black women & girls.

We seek to advance healing-centered policies and practices that dismantle pathways to criminalization and confinement and increase opportunities and protections for Black women & girls who are directly impacted by the criminal and juvenile legal systems.

We do this work to end the harm inflicted upon Black women & girls by these systems and to ensure that every impacted Black woman & girl is safe and may heal from their trauma, reconnect with their families and communities, achieve economic prosperity, and have every opportunity to live out their dreams.

www.nbjwi.org