

CRIMINAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

JCPA's Criminal Justice Initiative engages Jewish communities around the country in reforming the criminal justice system and ending mass incarceration in partnership with communities most directly affected. The mission:

- Educate and empower the Jewish community to **TAKE ACTION** on criminal justice
- Advocate to **CHANGE UNJUST LAWS** and improve law enforcement practices
- **SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES** harmed by incarceration
- **BUILD ALLIANCES** between the Jewish community and Black community

JCPA's network of 125 local community relations councils and 17 national Jewish agencies has uniquely positioned us to help create a broad movement to stand with those impacted by the criminal justice system. JCPA's impressive civil rights record and its effective reach across the Jewish communal spectrum lend us unparalleled credibility as a convener, and we have used that credibility to begin bringing the Black community and the Jewish community back together to work on critical civil and human rights issues. We are using our policy expertise and strong relationships with elected officials to help build board coalitions to advocate for bold reforms. Both nationally and locally, JCPA and its network are successfully bolstering the voice and influence of movements led by impacted communities calling for change.

Throughout its 75-year history, JCPA has prioritized the advancement of civil rights, working extensively with partners in the Black community on school desegregation, voting rights, and discrimination in housing, education, and employment. JCPA led Jewish engagement in the Civil Rights Movement, beginning the 1950s, when JCPA began building Jewish communal support for the movement, and cofounded and helped guide the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights alongside the NAACP. Through this coalition, JCPA fought hard for—and helped win—critical civil rights legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

Highlights of JCPA's Criminal Justice Initiative

- **National Network of Jewish Criminal Justice Experts** –JCPA leads a national network of 60+ Jewish experts working in the criminal justice space at the federal, state, and local levels around the country.
- **Federal Criminal Justice Reform** – JCPA is active in national policy setting on criminal justice reform, advocating on Capitol Hill, and partnering closely with civil rights and interfaith coalitions.
- **Grassroots Jewish Mobilization** – Across the U.S., JCPA is empowering Jewish communities to tackle this challenging issue at the state and local level. Many Jewish Community Relations Councils are already engaged in coalition-building with diverse partners and programming on issues such as bail, representation, alternatives to detention, and policy advocacy.

Media

- [The Language of Engagement on Criminal Justice Reform](#)
- [Why We Must Renew Our Commitment to Civil Rights](#)
- [Four Reasons to Re-Engage in the Civil Rights Movement](#)

For more information and to learn how to get involved, contact Melanie Roth Gorelick at MGorelick@thejcpa.org.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) is the hub of the 125 Jewish community relations councils and 17 national Jewish agencies. Together our network advocates for a just and pluralistic American society, promotes human rights around the globe, and supports Israel's quest for peace and security.