



**Director, Criminal Justice Reform Program
New Jersey Institute for Social Justice
Newark, Jersey**

Established 25 years ago by Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein, the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (the “Institute”) advocacy empowers people of color by building reparative systems that create wealth, transform justice and harness democratic power – from the ground up – in New Jersey

The Institute employs a broad range of advocacy tools to advance our ambitious racial and social justice agenda, including research, analysis and writing, public education, grassroots organizing, communications, the development of pilot programs, legislative strategies and litigation.

As was the case at our founding, this moment calls for racial and social justice advocacy inspired by the fierce urgency of now.

To meet this moment, the Institute employs a holistic approach to address the unique and critical issues facing New Jersey’s Black, Latino and other communities of color advocate for systemic reform that is at once transformative, achievable in the state, and replicable in communities across the nation.

Overview

The Institute is looking to welcome to its team a sophisticated, creative and dynamic team player to serve as our **Director of Criminal Justice Reform** to manage and implement a program of strategic legal and policy advocacy to expand racial and social justice in New Jersey and beyond.

This is an exciting opportunity, at a critical time in our history, to advance racial and social justice on behalf of New Jersey’s communities of through the Institute’s Criminal Justice Reform Program, which is at the forefront in the movement to reduce the footprint of law enforcement and help keep communities safe.

Following Darnella Frazier’s recording of George Floyd’s murder, the Institute championed a statewide First Amendment policy to protect the right to record police conduct without intimidation, a policy subsequently established by the Attorney General.

The Institute’s advocacy resulted in the historic closure announcement for two of New Jersey’s youth prisons, the reduction of the youth prison population from 465 young people to approximately 115 and nearly a \$10 million investment in youth restorative justice hubs in communities most impacted by youth incarceration.



The Institute serves as a subject matter expert on the Independent Monitoring Team overseeing the Newark Police Division’s Consent Decree with the Department of Justice. As part of that work, the Institute led the effort to center community engagement in the development of 16 new policies designed to bring about the transformation in policing that Newark residents have urged since the 1967 Newark Rebellion.

The Institute also championed the passage of an independent prosecutor bill to address police misconduct and is currently leading the “Jury of Us” campaign, designed to end NJ’s law that prohibits more than 500,000 people from jury service for life—including a staggering 219,000 to 269,000 Black people.

The Director of the Criminal Justice Reform Program will report to the Institute’s Law & Policy Director. The position, based in Newark, New Jersey in a hybrid-work format, will require travel throughout the state and occasional travel to national conferences, seminars, and events. Given the nature of the position, some work will be required outside of regular office hours (including on the weekend).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Director of the Criminal Justice Program, working with the President & CEO and reporting directly to the Law and Policy Director, is responsible for leading a team based in Newark that will include a Counsel, a Policy Analyst and legal interns.

The responsibilities of the Director of the Criminal Justice Reform Program include but are not limited to the following:

- Work in partnership with the Law & Policy Director to (1) implement and manage the Institute’s strategic vision for criminal justice programs, (2) cast a creative vision for criminal justice reform in New Jersey, (3) set goals for the Program, (4) monitor progress, and (5) evaluate outcomes to ensure that objectives are met and in line with the needs and mission of the organization.
- Develop new and creative strategies and approaches to both engage with the work of the Independent Monitoring Team overseeing reforms to the Newark Police Division (of which the Institute is a member) and to inform the development of a campaign to advance community-based solutions to public safety concerns.
- Advocate for the closure of youth prisons and investment in the creation of a community-based system of care.
- Help execute programmatic functions and supervise and monitor implementation of the Institute’s strategic vision for criminal justice reform programs—including the integration



of advocacy, legislative initiatives, policy goals, public education, targeted campaigns, and, if necessary, litigation.

- Act as a public spokesperson for the Institute on racial and social justice issues, engage in public speaking, and participate in public education activities to articulate the Institute's views on a broad range of racial and social justice issues to the public and various stakeholder constituencies.
- Build strategic alliances with organizations and individuals to advance the Institute's mission, engage on shared priorities, and exchange knowledge and information in support of the Institute's programs and initiatives.
- Coordinate with the Chief Operating Officer and staff team to develop and stay abreast of criminal justice operations, planning, budget, spending, and funder compliance.
- Collaborate and coordinate with the Director of Development to advance the Institute's fundraising priorities.
- Write and edit legal and policy briefs, as well as program descriptions, in furtherance of program goals and funder communications.
- Form and maintain relationships with Institute partners, including other legal service agencies, law firms, the cooperating attorney network, law students, community-based organizations, policy institutions, et al.
- Assist the Law & Policy Director and others on the senior management team in fostering internal collaboration, creating professional growth opportunities at the Institute, and promoting a work environment that encourages independent judgment and values self-starters.
- Work with the Communications and Marketing staff to integrate policy and legal advocacy with communications, including through public education materials, policy reports, white papers, talking points, op-eds, and press releases.
- Work with the Community Engagement staff to incorporate community outreach and field organizing into program campaigns.
- Supervise the daily activities and professional development of program staff including attorneys and student interns. This includes assigning cases, monitoring workloads, offering mentorship and guidance, conducting performance evaluations, and ensuring compliance with organizational policies and legal standards. Develop and manage special projects and initiatives, including litigation, when appropriate.
- Act as a thought partner and collaborative teammate with other Institute Staff and model values of an inclusive and respectful workplace, fostering the same in the staff.

Experience and Qualifications:

The Institute is seeking an ambitious and dedicated Director, with experience challenging systemic racial discrimination through advocacy, to lead the Criminal Justice Reform Program. The successful candidate will have a strong track record in leadership and driving a vision within a



complex and multi-faceted program. An ideal candidate will have personal experience in organizing and coalition building, as well as a track record of strategic development of long-term policy plans. Ideal candidates will be self-starters, be able to develop and advance bold visions and strategies and be excellent managers of their time in what can be a high-intensity setting.

This position requires passion for racial justice, the highest integrity, sound judgment, and strong communication skills. Given the interconnected nature of the Institute's work, an ideal candidate must also be able to effectively work in a highly collaborative team environment.

The successful candidate will also have the following:

- A J.D. is required, along with admission to the New Jersey bar or ability to waive in. A minimum of seven years of experience is strongly preferred.
- Ideal candidates will have significant racial justice experience, either through personal connection and history or through work experience, with people harmed by structural racial discrimination.
- An ability to develop and implement multi-faceted campaigns that include litigation, public education, advocacy, and media outreach.
- Ability to work effectively with diverse coalitions and community groups, particularly of color, and to work across political ideology, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic circumstances, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.
- Passion for, and knowledge of, racial and social justice, and a familiarity with the work and mission of the Institute.
- Experience supervising staff and leading teams.
- Ability to listen, coach, shepherd, and support people to achieve shared goals.
- Excellent research and writing skills; superior attention to detail; ability to work on multiple projects simultaneously; good problem-solving skills; and a positive, professional attitude with excellent judgment, flexibility, determination, and grace in a sometimes-high-pressure office.
- Integrity, honesty and a balanced, non-partisan approach.
- Exceptional written and oral communications skills.
- The ability to work effectively in a collaborative context, both internally and externally.
- Ability to lead, build, and participate in teams, including a willingness to communicate openly, listen well, and learn from others.
- Excellent judgment and follow through.
- Sophistication about public policy and an intellectual curiosity.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively and collaboratively with a team.

Compensation:

This is a full-time, at-will position. Salary is commensurate with experience and includes excellent benefits, including health, dental/vision, a 401(k) plan with an employer contribution, Medical



Expense Reimbursement Program, life insurance, and generous vacation, sick, and holiday leave. The Institute is a hybrid work environment, requiring all staff to work in-person at the office (or at an Institute event/commitment) two days a week.

How to Apply:

Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and will be accepted until the position is filled. Please email your cover letter, resume, professional writing sample on which you are the primary author, and three professional references to recruitment@njsj.org. Please submit your application materials via Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. Include all attachments in a single email stating, in the subject line, "Director of Criminal Justice Reform Program".

The Institute is an equal opportunity employer and values a diverse workforce and an inclusive culture.