

JUSTICE LAB

PUTTING RACIST POLICING ON TRIAL

OUR MISSION:

Through direct legal representation and community advocacy, Justice Lab aims to create a partnership among directly-impacted people, communities, private law firms, and legal clinics to challenge racially discriminatory policing practices in Louisiana. The initiative seeks to empower directly-impacted families and communities in taking on this fight.

OUR VISION:

As one of a host of solutions for ending police violence against people of color and reimagining the role of policing in our communities, Justice Lab aims to hold law enforcement accountable for racist policing practices and establish a litigation blueprint for combatting police abuses across the country. We envision a world where police are no longer immune from accountability and where no child has to grow up in fear of being targeted by the police.

WHY JUSTICE LAB:

Justice Lab is not an experiment, but a serious pursuit of what justice means, who it is for, and who has been historically excluded from obtaining it. The name “Justice Lab” acknowledges that ending racist policing will require learning and listening, dialogue and collaboration. Most of all, it will require centering the voices, leadership, and lived experiences of the people most impacted by this epidemic of police violence. We don’t have all the answers and we won’t win every case – but that cannot be an excuse for inaction.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS AS LOCAL EXPERTS:

Nothing about us without us. Justice Lab will be shaped by community input and aims to meet community needs. To do so, Justice Lab plans to invest litigation and other resources in those communities most impacted by police violence – including providing stipends to community members who offer their local expertise to the lawyers representing those harmed by discriminatory policing. To the extent fee awards are obtained from litigation, Justice Lab will look to reinvest a portion into social and other services that respond to community-identified needs.

INTAKE AND LAW FIRM TRAINING:

Being victimized by racist policing is a profoundly traumatic and dehumanizing experience. That is why Justice Lab is committed to making sure all legal partners not only have a firm grasp of the legal and constitutional issues at stake, but are also acutely aware of the collective trauma these abuses have caused and the history of enslavement and oppression from which they evolved. All intake volunteers and participating law firms receive comprehensive training on anti-oppression and anti-racism principles, the history of policing, as well as on the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment.

BUILDING COMMUNITY POWER:

Working with community partners, we plan to develop a set of non-litigation support tools to help empower directly-impacted families and communities with information and opportunities to pursue other avenues for change. The avenues will include storytelling and writing workshops, know your rights seminars, trainings on how to advocate for reform, and wellness sessions.

Justice Lab recognizes that we will not be able to litigate all requests for assistance and that litigation is not the only way to change systems. As such, Justice Lab will work to uplift and support the voices of those while supporting directly-impacted by systemic racism. At the ACLU of Louisiana, we believe that stories have power and we know that affirming and respecting the lived experience of impacted people must be central to everything we do.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Justice Lab recognizes that it takes a lot of courage to come forward and talk about a traumatic experience with police. To respect your privacy and to prevent retaliation from law enforcement, all communications about those incidents with the ACLU of Louisiana’s Justice Lab are confidential. We will not take any action on your behalf or communicate with any outside parties without your express consent and knowledge. If consent is given to move forward with a lawsuit, we will put all defendants on notice that any allegation of retaliation will be investigated, and the complaint and damages sought amended accordingly.