

# **YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING CURRICULUM**

## **Program Description**

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice and Youth Justice New Jersey offer an 8-week leadership training program for directly impacted youth interested in becoming advocates and elevating their voices for change. Our goal is to engage youth in an effective and meaningful way in our 150 Years Is Enough Campaign to close two youth prisons and transform the Youth Justice System in New Jersey. We meet once a week for two hours and provide training in field organizing, media engagement, legislative advocacy, and knowing your rights. We provide small stipends and refreshments to support youth engagement in the program. In 2017, we successfully completed the program in Newark and New Brunswick.

## **Curriculum Outline**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Session: Jump Off**

- Overview of the Program

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Session: Storytelling Workshop**

- Telling your story

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Session: Juvenile Justice 101**

- Walk Through the System

### **4<sup>th</sup> Session: Race and Youth Incarceration**

- Racial Disparity Data

### **5<sup>th</sup> Session: Getting Your Message Across**

- Media Spokespeople Training

### **6<sup>th</sup> Session: Advocating for Change**

- Legislative Advocacy Training

### **7<sup>th</sup> Session: Know Your Rights**

### **8<sup>th</sup> Session: Community Organizing and Campaign Planning**

### **9<sup>th</sup> Session: Closing Celebration**

# Sample Curriculum

## **April 5: The Jump Off (page 2)**

1. Icebreaker: Fruit Salad
2. Setting Grass Rules
3. Overview of the Program
4. Collage of Your Community/ the System

## **April 12: Creating a Safe Space with Tea Ingram**

## **April 19: Juvenile Justice 101 (page 3)**

1. Icebreaker: "I Love My Homies Who"
2. Juvenile Justice Jeopardy
3. Walk Through the System

## **April 26<sup>th</sup>: Know Your Rights (page 5)**

1. Icebreaker: Police Encounter Bingo (page 6)
2. Common Crimes Matching Game (page 7)
3. Know Your Rights Training with Guest Facilitator

## **May 3: Getting Your Message Across (page 8)**

1. Icebreaker: Broken Message Game
2. Media Spokespeople Training with Berlin Rosen
3. Mock Press Conference/ Media Interviews

## **May 10: Community Organizing and Campaign Planning (page 9)**

1. Icebreaker: Human Knot
2. Raining Rocks Story (page 10-11)
3. Power Mapping YJNJ's No Kids in Prison Campaign

## **May 17: Advocating for Change (page 12)**

1. Icebreaker: Agree Disagree Exercise
2. Legislative Advocacy Training
3. Mock meetings with legislators

## **May 24: Debating the Role of Race in Juvenile Justice System (page 15)**

1. Icebreaker: Debate Icebreaker (youth vote on the topic to debate)
2. Great Incarceration Race Exercise
3. Debate: What role does racial bias play in incarceration?

## **May 31: 9<sup>th</sup> Session: Closing Celebration**

# **1<sup>st</sup> Session: The Jump Off**

## **Goals:**

- Get to know each other
- Engage with each other and share ideas
- Become familiar with the expectations and schedule for the program

## **Skills:**

- Team Work
- Artistic Expression

## **Materials Needed:**

- Large easel paper and 20 markers
- Release forms
- Magazines, paper for collage project

## **Ice Breaker: Fruit Salad**

All participants will introduce themselves. The facilitator should make clear that the next activity will require that they know everyone's name. Chairs will be placed in a circle. There will be one chair fewer than the number of participants. Persons sitting to the right will be called *oranges*, and to the left, *mangoes*. When the facilitator points at a participant and says *orange* the person will have to say aloud the name of the person to their right; if the facilitator says *mango* then the participant will have to say the name of the person to their left. Whoever gets the name wrong will move to the center and start the game again. The twist is that when the person in the middle says *fruit salad* everyone will get up, leaving an empty chair and the person left without a chair, continues the game. No one is allowed to take the chair next to them.

## **Setting "Grass Rules"**

Draw a human silhouette on a large piece of paper (4ft x 7ft), which will be displayed on the table. Participants will write inside the body what principles they want to guide their everyday interactions and outside the body what things they want to leave behind. These could include personal issues like shyness, sexist attitudes, etc. Based on what the group writes inside and outside the body, we will develop "ground rules" for how we would like the group to operate during the program.

## **Overview of the Program:**

The facilitator will pass out the schedule of workshops and the expectations for the participants. The facilitator will explain and pass out the release forms, and have the youth read them over and sign them. If young people are under 18, ask them to have a parent or guardian sign and bring back in. We will also make sure we collect all the release forms.

## **Drawing Your Community/ The System**

The group will be given materials to create a collage of their view of the youth justice system and/or their community or their vision for an "ideal" youth justice system or community.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Session: Juvenile Justice 101**

### **Goals:**

- Identify injustices within the juvenile justice system and the need to close youth prisons
- Become familiar with juvenile justice terminology
- Identify the different stages of the juvenile justice system and ways that we can reduce youth incarceration

### **Skills:**

Critical Thinking

Team Work

### **Materials:**

- Juvenile Justice Jeopardy Game
- 20 copies of “Youth Incarceration in New Jersey” handout (on next page)
- Juvenile Justice System floor map

### **Icebreaker: “I love my homies who...”**

Everyone is seated in a circle with one person standing in the middle (no empty chairs). The person in the middle says, [I love my homies who... are wearing black.” Anybody who is wearing black (including the person in the middle) must get up and find a new chair. You can’t take the chair of the person sitting next to you. The person left without a chair must then say the next statement: “I love my homies who...” (The sentence should apply to the person saying it – for example you should only say you are seeking common ground with people wearing glasses if you are wearing glasses). With every statement, people should get up and switch seats if the statement applies to them. The facilitator should decide when to end the ice breaker depending on time and if people seem to be loosened up.

### **Juvenile Justice Jeopardy**

Set up the game on the wall and divide the group into teams. Handout the one-pager, Youth Incarceration in New Jersey. Ask each team to come with a name for their group before starting the game. After each question, take time to discuss the answers with the group so that they understand the issues involved.

### **A Walk Through the System**

A large floor chart will be displayed showing the different stages of the juvenile justice system: arrest, court (arraignment), alternative-to-detention program, home, court (trial), detention, DJJJ placement, alternative-to-incarceration, probation, and aftercare. Youth will be encouraged to create a scenario and walk through it, or to walk through their own experience. For each stage they step on, they should explain what happened to them at that point in the system.

### *Possible discussion questions:*

Did people who work in the system explain what happening to you?

What could have been different for this young person at each stage?

## Youth Incarceration in New Jersey

Youth prisons don't work for New Jersey. They don't make our communities safer. Youth incarceration is unsafe, unfair, and a waste of money.

- According to the most recent recidivism data from the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (JJJ), **75 percent of youth** released from the state's juvenile facilities were convicted of a new offense within three years of release. On the other hand, community programs have far better results than secure facilities for the vast majority of kids currently incarcerated in New Jersey.
- Youth prisons are unfair. While **Black youth constitute 14% of New Jersey's youth** population, they make up 49% of youth held in pre-trial detention centers and 71% of the youth incarcerated in the state's youth prisons. The incarceration rate for the state's **Black youth is 26 times greater** than the incarceration rate of white youth.
- Youth incarceration mostly affects youth from low-income communities. Over half of New Jersey's incarcerated youth come from just three counties -- **Camden, Essex and Union**. These counties also have among the highest poverty rates in the state.
- Youth prisons are a waste of taxpayer money. These facilities cost considerably more than alternatives proven to be more effective. Detaining a single youth for one day in New Jersey can cost up to \$535. Over the course of a year, that's almost **\$200,000** to incarcerate just one youth. The **New Jersey Training School for Boys** in Jamesburg incarcerates over **200 youth** – so it costs around \$40 million every year to keep this prison open.

Instead of locking up young people in youth prisons, New Jersey should invest in community-based alternatives to incarceration.

- States, including New York, Ohio and Connecticut have already paved the way and proven that reforms can reduce youth crime and recidivism, improve outcomes for youth, and save tax dollars – and it's time for New Jersey to follow suit.
- By closing the state's remaining juvenile prisons and reinvesting the savings from their closure into proven, community-based alternatives, we can improve the lives of children as well as the safety of our communities. Communities program like the **Youth Advocate Program (YAP)** provide services and supports for a **cost of \$75 per day** per young person served.
- *Youth Justice New Jersey* is a coalition of young people, advocates, service providers, lawmakers and families, joining together to make our vision of a more just, accountable, holistic youth justice system a reality. The evidence and momentum is on our side and we will work towards a future in which all New Jersey youth are given the opportunity to succeed.

## **4<sup>th</sup> Session: Know Your Rights**

### **Goals:**

- Learn about your rights regarding street interactions with cops
- Learn basic definitions of common crimes
- Become empowered to interact on more equal footing with cops

### **Skills:**

- Conflict resolution
- Problem solving

### **Materials:**

- Copies of Police Encounter Bingo game
- Copies of “Petty Crimes Matching Game” sheet (page 7)

### **Icebreaker: Police Encounter Bingo (on next page)**

Each person gets a playing card with nine questions on it. They need to find one person to answer yes or supply the correct information for each square. The person will then write their name in the square. You cannot sign your own sheet.

### **Common Crimes Matching Game**

The youth will form into pairs and play cross match where the words will be on one side and the definition will be on the other side. They will have to match the words to the definition. After the youth complete the game, discuss how the law can be used in a fair or unfair way and who it affects and why? What are some ways different people/communities ways experience over-policing and criminalization?

### **Know Your Rights Training with Guest Facilitator**

## Police Encounter Bingo

(from the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement)

*Instructions: Find nine different people who can answer yes to one of the following questions. The first person to complete the entire sheet wins. Remember you cannot use the same person twice and you cannot sign your own sheet.*

Have you ever been stopped by the police?	Have you ever been arrested?	Have you ever been jailed?
Do you know someone personally who is or has been in prison?	Have you ever witnessed police brutality?	Do you know your rights in a police confrontation?
Have you or anyone you know ever been a victim of police brutality?	Have you ever been to a demonstration against police brutality?	Can you name three victims of police brutality?

### Common Crimes Matching Game

Crime	Definition
loitering	When a person steals property.
petit larceny	When a person causes public inconvenience, annoyance or alarm, or risks the public safety.
resisting arrest	When a person unlawfully enters or remains in a building.
violation	When a person intentionally prevents or attempts to prevent a police officer from making an arrest.
loitering	An offense that is not as serious as a misdemeanor or felony and is often punished by a fine.
trespass	When a person is ordered to make an appearance in court.
summons	When a person remains or wanders about in a public place to engage in illegal activities. For example: begging, gambling, soliciting prostitution.



## **5<sup>th</sup> Session: Getting Your Message Across**

### Goals:

- Understand how to use the media to raise awareness to your campaign
- Prepare young people to become spokespeople in the campaign to close NJ's youth prisons

### Skills:

- Public Speaking
- Developing Effective Talking Points

### **Ice Breaker: Broken Message Game**

The group will sit in a circle. The facilitator will have a nonsensical message written on a piece of paper such as: [The red chicken originally from another country, has decided to not lay any more red eggs]. The facilitator will whisper the message in the first person's ear and will make sure that the message gets whispered to every participant clockwise. The last person will say the statement out loud. The facilitator will then tell the group the original message.

### **Organizing a Press Conference and Rally**

Youth Justice New Jersey is organizing a press conference and rally on May 19<sup>th</sup> to launch its No Kids in Prison Campaign. Young people will be spokespeople during the press conference and rally.

- 1) What exactly do you want to say/communicate?
- 2) Who will be your spokespeople?
- 3) How will you get the media's attention?
- 4) Which media outlets should you target?
- 5) How will you get the community's attention?

**Group 1- Rally:** Youth organizers are strategizing and planning to speak to the community at a rally in front of the New Jersey training school in Jamesburg. The whole group should compose chants and other messages about why the Jamesburg facility should be closed. The group should choose speakers to address the community. The group should also design flyers, signs, raps, poems, and T-shirts to get the word out to the community about the rally.

**Group 2- Press Conference:** Youth organizers are planning for their press conference. The whole group should compose various talking points for the press conference. The group can also work on creating a press release, and deciding what media outlets to target. They should also work on their delivery to address the media.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Session: Community Organizing and Campaign Planning**

### **Goals:**

- Inform young people about organizing and activism in our communities
- Identify how organizing is different from other ways of making change in our communities
- Understand the systems of oppression that our communities organize against
- Create solutions for problems facing our communities

### **Skills:**

- Analytical Skills
- Gathering information
- Identifying a problem

### **Materials**

- Easel paper and markers
- Copies of Raining Rocks Story (page 10-11)

### **Ice Breaker: The Human Knot**

The group will form a tight circle. Participants will reach out to grasp one of the right hands of another participant. When all right hands are grasped, repeat with left hands. Ask them to unravel the knot without releasing hands. After the knot is unraveled, participants will be in a circle holding hands.

### **Raining Rocks Story**

Read the *Raining Rocks Story* as a group. Divide into three groups: the Rock-Bottom Rehabilitation Effort, the No More Rocks! Campaign, and Filthy Richbanks and his friends. Discuss the questions posed to their group.

The youth will act out a town hall meeting with all four groups present. We will remind them that this is role playing, and no one is to take anything personally. A member of each group will act as a spokesperson at the town hall meeting, and the rest of the group will ask questions.

### **Discussion:**

*What are some of the rocks being thrown at our communities?*  
*Who are throwing these rocks?*

We will then discuss the different ways of addressing a problem:

Create a three column chart with the titles: Social Service, Organizing, and Advocacy. Have students describe the different ways of addressing problems and write them in the appropriate columns. Give examples of organizations that approach issues in the community differently. Stress that organizing is important because it gets to the heart of the problem and it is important for organizers, advocates and social service providers to work together.

### **Building a Campaign**

The facilitator will then introduce YJNJ'S No Kids in Prison Campaign to close the NJ Training School and outline the key steps to building an organizing campaign: 1) setting goals, 2) identifying targets, 3) organizing allies and constituencies, 4) seeking to build power and influence the targets.

## **Raining Rocks Story**

(based on a story from the School of Unity and Liberation (Soul))

Once upon a time there was a little town in the mountains called Swisstown. One winter, a villager taking a walk in the hills finds a man lying in the snow. He has been hit by a falling rock. The villager, being a very caring person, uses her jacket to bandage the injured man and carries him back down to the village.

The next day, two more people are hit by falling rocks and they are rescued by other villagers. The following day, four people are hurt, then eight, then twenty. Life becomes dangerous for all the villagers, because the rocks keep falling down. A couple of the more wealthy villagers who live on the mountain hear of the people being injured by the falling rocks and decide to find out why the rocks are falling. After doing some research, they discover that the rocks are being thrown by a millionaire, Filthy Richbanks, and his friends, who hope to build a luxurious hotel and golf course in Swisstown. They are throwing rocks hoping to get rid of the villagers so they can take over the land.

A group of villagers form an organization called The Rock-Bottom Rehabilitation Effort. They set up a huge rescue operation. They set up a clinic to heal the injured, they send dogs to find injured people who are lost outside, set up a shelter for those whose homes are destroyed, and get social workers to help people deal with the traumatic effects of the falling rocks. Finally, Rock-Bottom Rehabilitation Effort makes a giant net to place over Swisstown to catch the rocks as they fall and protect the villagers from being hit.

One day, the net breaks and rocks fall on the village, injuring hundreds and destroying homes, schools, and stores. The Rock-Bottom Rehabilitation Effort is working furiously to heal people and provide shelter. From then on, rescue work becomes an important part of the villagers lives. Everyone becomes involved in helping those hurt by the falling rocks.

Meanwhile, Filthy Richbanks and his friends continue throwing the rocks and injuring hundreds of villagers each day. Many buildings have been ruined. The community is turning into a disaster area. The people of Swisstown grow tired of waiting for the mayor to pass new laws to help them. At a town meeting, the villagers voice how sick and tired they are of the falling rocks, of their people being hurt, and they want to change the situation. So at the meeting they form the No More Rocks! Campaign. The people share the resources they have, and come up with ways that they can confront both the mayor, and Filthy Richbanks, to make him stop throwing the rocks. They decide to unite the villagers and go up to the mountain to demand that Filthy Richbanks stop dropping the rocks.

The mayor and other politicians disagree, saying Swisstown needs everyone to stay and keep the rescue effort going. If anyone leaves, they might not be able to continue tending to those injured by rocks.

The town is now split into three groups -- those who want to stay and keep the rescue effort going, the wealthy people who support the mayor and Filthy Richbanks, and those who want to march up to the mountain and confront Filthy Richbanks.

## **Raining Rocks Discussion Questions**

### **Group 1: The Rock-Bottom Rehabilitation Effort**

1. Discuss the questions and pick one spokesperson who can explain your answers at the TOWN HALL meeting.
2. What is your strategy in dealing with the falling rocks problem?
3. Do you think your strategy is successful? Why or why not?
4. How would the scenario end if your strategy is used?

### **Group 2: No More Rocks! Campaign**

1. Discuss the questions and pick one spokesperson who can explain your answers at the TOWN HALL meeting.
2. What is your strategy in dealing with the falling rocks problem?
3. Do you think your strategy is successful? Why or why not?
4. How would the scenario end if your strategy is used?

### **Group 3: Filthy Richbanks, the Mayor, and His friends**

Discuss the questions and pick one spokesperson who can explain your answers at the TOWN HALL meeting.

1. Which of the three groups do you think you could work with more closely to achieve your goals?
2. Which of the three groups is more threatening to you and your goal to build a luxurious hotel and golf course?
3. What is your strategy in dealing with the three other groups in order to achieve your goal of building the luxurious hotel and golf course?

## **7<sup>th</sup> Session: Advocating for Change**

### **Goals:**

1. Get people excited and prepared to participate in lobbying their state legislators
2. Help people prepare to speak with legislators and/or their staff.
3. Help people hone their skills in communicating the need to invest in communities instead of youth prisons.

### **Materials Needed:**

1. Agree and Disagree signs
2. Masking tape for signs
3. One-pager with talking points (page 14-15)
4. One-pager with tips for talking with legislators
5. 4 copies of the outline for training facilitators

### **Icebreaker: Agree or Disagree (15 minutes)**

Tape two signs on two opposite walls of a large room. One sign says: "AGREE", the other sign says: "DISAGREE" in big bold letters. Make sure there is enough space for participants to stand between the two signs. Tell the participants that you will read a series of statements, and if you strongly agree with statement you should stand by the AGREE sign, if you strongly disagree, you stand by the DISAGREE sign, and if you are not sure, indifferent or undecided, you should stand in the middle of the two signs.

After each statement, the facilitator should participants to explain why they decided to stand where they did. Be sure to ask follow up questions to help people better explain their positions and provide supporting arguments.

Here are the statements to read aloud:

1. Sometimes incarcerating young people can be helpful because it takes them away from a difficult home situation or from bad influences in their lives.
2. New Jersey's youth justice system targets youth of color.
3. If a young person kills someone, he or she should spend some time locked up in a youth prison.
4. Locking up youth is a waste of money.
5. Young people, parents and community members talking with legislators at the State Capitol can make a difference in how legislators vote on youth justice issues.

### **How a Bill becomes a Law in New Jersey (15 minutes)**

Facilitators will review the legislative process and explain the roles of the different branches of government.

### **Review of YJNJ Talking Points and Tips for Meeting with Legislators**

Distribute the YJNJ talking points and tell the group that they will use this platform in their mock meetings with legislators. Tell them some tips to keep in mind for these mock meetings.

Here are some tips to include:

- ✓ Before the meeting, discuss with your team which points you want to cover and which team member wants to cover each point.
- ✓ When you begin the meeting, everyone in the team should introduce themselves.
- ✓ The team leader should explain the purpose of the visit.
- ✓ Feel free to talk about your personal experiences and to give examples from your own life about why this issue is important
- ✓ Don't let the meeting get off-track. You only have a short time for the meeting so make sure the legislator, the aide or a member of your team doesn't go off on a tangent.
- ✓ Make sure that everyone in your group has a chance to speak. Don't let a few members dominate the conversation.
- ✓ If a legislator is totally opposed to your views, don't become argumentative. Try to state your points calmly and politely and if needed agree to disagree.
- ✓ If you don't know the answer to a question, tell the legislator or his or her aide that you will find out the answer and send the information to them. Make sure to note the question on the Meeting Response Form.

### **Mock Meetings with Legislators (30 minutes)**

Facilitators should ask the participants to count off by threes. After participants have divided into three groups, give them 5 minutes to prepare for their meeting with a legislator. Each group will simultaneously and then come back together to debrief as a group.

#### Group 1: The Agenda-Hijacking Legislator

During the meeting, the legislator will try to veer the meeting off track by asking participants several questions about their own backgrounds rather than discussing the larger policy issues. This will be an opportunity for the team to remind the legislator for the purpose of the meeting and bring the meeting back on track to discuss the campaign's agenda and talking points.

#### Group 2: The Oppositional Legislator

During the meeting, the legislator will become very argumentative and tries to tear down all the points that the participants raise during the meeting. This will be an opportunity to calmly and politely agree with the legislator and not let the meeting to devolve into a shouting match.

#### Group 3: The Distracted Legislator

During the meeting, the legislator will seem to not pay attention and constantly look at his phone and even answer a call during the meeting. This will be an opportunity for participants to politely remind the legislator that they have a limited time to meet with him and would appreciate his attention.

### **Debrief of Mock Meetings**

What did you think your team members did effectively during the meeting?

How did you feel during the meeting?

What are some other points you would have like to raise during the meeting?

What are some ways you can follow up after the meeting?

## **It is Time to Close New Jersey's Youth Prisons**

**Youth Justice New Jersey** is a coalition of young people, advocates, service providers, lawmakers and families, joining together to make our vision of a more just and fair youth justice system a reality. We are working towards a future in which all New Jersey youth are given the opportunity to succeed.

**Youth prisons don't work for New Jersey.** They don't make our communities safer. Locking up youth is unsafe, unfair, and a waste of money.

- More than three-fourths of the young people released from the youth prisons like Jamesburg are convicted of a new offense within three years of coming home. On the other hand, community programs have far better results than secure facilities for the vast majority of kids involved in the justice system in New Jersey.
- Youth prisons are unfair. Black youth make up 14% of New Jersey's youth population, but they make up 49 percent of youth held in youth jails and 71 percent of the youth locked up in the state's youth prisons. The incarceration rate for the state's Black youth is 26 times greater than the incarceration rate of white youth.
- Youth incarceration mostly affects youth from low-income communities. Over half of New Jersey's incarcerated youth come from just three counties -- Camden, Essex and Union. These counties also have among the highest poverty rates in the state. Instead of spending money to lock up youth, we should spend money to build up the communities and create more opportunities for young people.
- Youth prisons are a waste of taxpayer money. These facilities cost considerably more than alternatives proven to be more effective. Locking up a single youth for one day in New Jersey can cost up to \$535. Over the course of a year, that's almost \$200,000 to incarcerate just one youth.

**Instead of locking up young people in youth prisons, New Jersey should invest in community-based programs that help young people get their lives back together.**

- By closing the state's youth prisons and reinvesting the savings from their closure into effective community-based alternatives, we can improve the lives of young people as well as the safety of our communities. Communities program like the Youth Advocate Program (YAP) provide services and supports for a cost of \$75 per day per young person served.
- Many other states – such as Texas, Georgia, New York and Missouri – have closed youth prisons and created more community-based programs that include counseling, mentoring, family therapy, job training and restorative justice. By create alternatives to youth prisons, these states have not only saved millions of dollars but have also reduced youth crime and improved the lives of countless young people who become involved with the justice system.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Session: What's Your Point? Debating Race and Youth Incarceration**

### **Goals:**

- Understand the role of racial bias in the juvenile justice system
- Discuss the role of structural racism in racial disparities in incarceration

### **Skills:**

- Crafting and supporting an argument
- Effective communication
- Analytical and critical thinking
- Teamwork

### **Materials**

- 20 “race cards” (5 Latino, 3 Black, 10 white, 2 Asian)
- Prison sign

### **Practice Debate**

The facilitators will quickly define what the basic structure and roles for a debate are.

#### Opening Statement

Affirmative team – first speaker, 2 minutes

Negative team – first speaker, 2 minutes

(1 minute to conference with your team)

#### Rebuttal

Affirmative team -- second speaker, 2 minutes

Negative team – second speaker, 2 minutes

(1 minutes to conference with your team)

#### Closing Statement

Affirmative team -- second speaker, 2 minutes

Negative team – second speaker, 2 minutes

Facilitator will ask for 6 volunteers (two teams of three). Based on consensus, the teams will decide on the issue they will represent. Issues can be trivial, but since this is just a try-out, participants should make sure they are KNOWLEDGEABLE about the issue. One example might be Jay Z is a better MC than Nas. Ask someone to be timekeeper.

### **Exercise: The Great Incarceration Race**

Everyone in the group should randomly pick a card from a bowl. The cards are labeled *Latino*, *Black*, *White* and *Asian*. The cards should roughly be distributed according to the racial and ethnic breakdown in the New Jersey youth population.

Ask everyone to stand in line against the wall. On the far wall should be a sign saying “Prison”



**The facilitator should read the follow statements:**

1. In New Jersey, there are over 300,000 children living in poverty. 16% of all children in New Jersey are living in poverty.
  - *If your card says White take **one** step forward.* Around 8% of white children in NJ live in poverty.
  - *If you card says Asian, take **one** step forward.* Around 6% of Asian children in NJ live in poverty.
  - *If your card says Latino or Black, take **three** steps forward.* Approximately 28% of Black and Latino children in NJ live in poverty.
2. Latino and Black children are almost twice as likely as White children to lack health insurance in NJ.
  - *If your card says Latino or Black take **two** steps forward.*
3. Black babies are almost twice as likely as White or Latino children to be born at low birthweight.
  - *If your card says Black take **one** step forward.*
4. 21% of Black and 17% of Latino students in NJ do not graduate from high school on time compared to less than 7% of white and less than 1% of Asian students.
  - *If your card says Black or Latino take **two** steps forward.*
5. In New Jersey, Latino youth are 5 times more likely to be incarcerated than white youth. Black young people are 26 times more likely to be incarcerated than their white peers.
  - *If your cards says Latino take 5 steps forward*
  - *If your card says Black **26 steps forward***

*Questions for discussion*

- Did any of these statistics surprise you?
- How did it make you feel to see certain groups move closer to “Prison” than other groups? Why do you think this happened?

**Debate: What role does racial bias play in incarceration?**

Resolution: Black youth are over-represented in New Jersey’s youth prisons because New Jersey’s judges are biased against Black youth.

Divide the team into two groups and read the resolution aloud. The affirmative and negatives teams will have 5 minutes to confer with their team and develop their arguments. Each team will select three representatives to present the opening statements, rebuttal and closing statement.