



Challenging Barriers. Empowering People.

NJISJ Celebrates Passage of Laws to Level the Playing Field

Governor Signs Opportunity to Compete Act, Bail Reform

The Institute celebrated a victory for hundreds of thousands of New Jersey residents as Gov. Chris Christie signed two bills this summer that could expand job opportunities for those with a criminal history and prevent defendants from being incarcerated simply because they cannot afford bail.



Left to right: Mayors Alex Torpey of South Orange, Steven M. Fulop of Jersey City, and Victor De Luca of Maplewood at the New Jersey Mayors Press Conference in Support of OCA in December at City Hall in Jersey City.

Under the Opportunity to Compete Act (A1999) employers will not be permitted to ask job applicants if they have a criminal history until after the first interview. Also known as “Ban the Box,” the bill eliminates the check box on job applications asking candidates if they have a criminal record.

The law will open the door to applicants who otherwise may never have been considered and give them the chance to present their skills and qualifications to a potential employer. The need is pressing: One in four adults has an arrest or conviction record, according to the National Employment Law Project.

If New Jersey voters adopt a related constitutional amendment on Election

Day, the Bail Reform Act (S946) will help revamp a system that keeps nearly 6,000 New Jerseyans in jail before trial because they can't post bail, not because they pose a threat. Those incarcerated because they cannot make bail often lose their jobs and incur crushing debt.

“It is a shameful injustice that we continue to have systems that punish poverty,” said NJISJ Interim President and CEO Jerome C. Harris, Jr. “S946 will reform the system by requiring that defendants be screened objectively for risk. Those who pose no danger will be released, and those who are truly dangerous will be held.”

Both of these measures promote fundamental fairness for hardworking New Jerseyans. The bail reform bill establishes an assessment system for defendants and helps keep those deemed nonviolent out of jail while awaiting trial, allowing them to continue working and supporting their families.

Under the Opportunity to Compete Act, individuals who have paid their debt to society will be able to compete for work on an even playing field and not have past mistakes mar a potential employer's first impression.

The Institute applauds the leadership and support of state Senator Sandra B. Cunningham and Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman, along with the bills' other sponsors. The Institute championed the Opportunity to Compete Act for two years, meeting with business associations, industry leaders, mayors, the faith community,

and the Integrated Justice Alliance (IJA). Convened by the Institute, the IJA, the state's largest and most influential criminal justice reform coalition, played a central role in winning support for the Opportunity to Compete Act.

But the work is far from over.

“The Opportunity to Compete Act sets forth a broad floor of reform but not a ceiling,” Harris said. “The Institute looks forward to a larger conversation about how to remove unfair and overly broad barriers to employment for redeemed individuals to expand the pool of available workers, ensure that the best qualified person is matched to each position, and strengthen New Jersey's economy.”

On bail reform, the Institute will partner with allies such as the Drug Policy Alliance, the NAACP and the ACLU of New Jersey to ensure that the law is implemented fairly.



The Rev. Dr. DeForest B. Soaries, Jr., pastor of the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, addresses members of the community and the press at the Faith Leaders Press Conference in April. Also pictured are Rabbi Elliott Tepperman, Bnai Keshet Synagogue, left; Sen. Sandra B. Cunningham, right; and Cornell William Brooks, Esq., former CEO and president of NJISJ, far right.

Workforce Development Grads Celebrate Milestone

“This program helped us not just better ourselves but also our children and families. We now have a chance to obtain a career and plan for a better future for our children.”

With those words, 35-year-old Coray Owens of Newark expressed the feelings of many at the graduation ceremony this summer for 18 students from the Institute’s Workforce Development and Training Program. Of those graduates, nearly half have landed positions in their chosen fields.

This recent Construction Careers Pre-Apprenticeship Training class prepared city residents for construction trade apprenticeships and skilled trades. The 12-week class also provided academic instruction, technical skills training, comprehensive case management and assistance with job placement and retention.

The students come from diverse backgrounds. They may be low-income, have low literacy levels and have little access to opportunities. Many are returning home after incarceration, said Albert Williams, the Institute’s director of workforce development and training. They all are struggling to find employment to sustain themselves and their families.



Coray Owens, Workforce Development and Training Program graduate

“We now have a chance to obtain a career and plan for a better future for our children.”

“We’re sort of a last stop shop. The staff wants to make sure this is the last program they pass through, that this will be a gateway for them,” Williams said.

The recent graduates earned several certifications in construction trades and environmental remediation and are eligible to apply for apprenticeships in 17 skilled trades such as carpentry, electrical work, and plumbing. These recent graduates have found work with an Ironworkers Local, Roofers Local, and with environmental remediation firms. One student is completing graduate studies and doing contract work for an entrepreneurial program. Some students are awaiting testing for an

Insulators Local, and for the others, the WFD staff continues to work with them in their search for employment.

The Institute has offered the Workforce Development and Training Program since 2001 and has helped more than 500 people become apprentices. In addition to training, the program offers case management and job retention services and maintains a relationship with the students for a minimum of six months after graduation.

“Case management begins at enrollment,” Williams said. “All of those things that have been barriers to moving forward, whether it’s stable housing, day care, many of them have legal challenges. The staff works with them to make some of those things more manageable.”

Many recent graduates made tremendous academic gains, improving several grade levels over the course of the program. “We give them the tools, but a large part of that success is how much they invest in themselves,” Williams said.

Student Coray Owens would seem to agree, as he told his fellow graduates: “The power of self-reflection and patience helps us discover who we are and gives us a choice of the direction where we can go. We made it, but the journey just begins for some and continues for others.”

The Workforce Development and Training Program receives funding from:

The Prudential Foundation, Port Authority of NY/NJ, Merck Foundation, Newark Workforce Investment Board, the New Jersey Department of Labor & Workforce Development, and individuals.

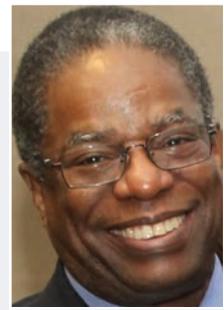


The Workforce Development and Training Program graduating class, July 2014

Dear Friend and Colleague,

I am pleased to share an update on some of the important work of the Institute over the last several months promoting social justice for all New Jersey residents.

In partnership with fellow advocates, loyal funders, legislative champions, and long-time citizen supporters from across the state, the Institute continues to make great strides in the march toward more fairness in our justice system and more opportunity in our labor market.



Jerome C. Harris, Jr.

- ▶ In August, Gov. Chris Christie signed two bills that will help reform the adult justice system and expand job opportunities for those with a criminal record. The Institute championed the Opportunity to Compete Act (also known as “Ban the Box”) for two years, working with the bill’s sponsors and other partners to build statewide support.
- ▶ The Institute celebrated the graduation of 18 students from its Workforce Development and Training Program in July. The program helps students transform their lives by gaining marketable job skills and obtaining employment.
- ▶ NJISJ hosted the ninth annual Awards Gala in June. The evening was a great success and offered an opportunity to express our appreciation to our many supporters. We also honored three civic leaders who work daily to create real change in New Jersey’s cities.
- ▶ The Institute continues to build coalitions among disparate partners who share the common goals of advancing adult and juvenile justice reform and promoting economic opportunities for all residents.

While the Institute has had a productive and exciting summer, work continues to make New Jersey’s justice system more fair and our workforce more capable of seizing economic opportunity. For when we do, we know that everyone benefits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jerome C. Harris, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jerome C. Harris, Jr.
Interim President and CEO



NJISJ Unites Partners on Common Goals

The essence of NJISJ’s work is forming partnerships among diverse stakeholders to promote social justice in New Jersey. The Institute takes pride in its capacity to bring disparate groups together around a common agenda – whether it is workforce development, creating sustainable jobs in economically depressed areas, or legal and advocacy work to drive adult and juvenile justice reform.

The Institute actively partners with fellow advocates, corporate citizens, foundations, institutions of higher education, community leaders, faith leaders and elected officials in substantive and sustained ways.

The commitment to convening vibrant, inclusive partnerships and coalitions is grounded in our values. As the saying goes, we believe if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together.

We know we have far to go to realize our social justice goals. *Together, we are going far.*

Some examples of the Institute’s partnerships and coalitions:

- ▶ Integrated Justice Alliance (IJA) is the state’s largest and most influential criminal justice reform organization, working to remove barriers to opportunity and employment.
- ▶ New Jersey Juvenile Justice Reform Coalition is the state’s leading partnership addressing a range of pressing issues, especially working to keep juvenile offenders as close to their families and communities as possible and out of the damaging “deep end” of the juvenile justice system.
- ▶ Foundations, corporations and government agencies generously provide financial support and professional expertise.
- ▶ Citizens from across the state and members of the faith community have come together to advance social justice initiatives. They may take to social media, write to their local paper, show their support at a rally or testify before a legislative panel.

Three Civic Leaders Feted at NJISJ Awards Gala

The Institute's ninth annual Awards Gala was a tremendous success as we celebrated the accomplishments of a graduate from the Workforce Development and Training Program and honored three civic leaders for their dedication to social justice for all New Jerseyans.



Keynote speaker Donnell Dinkins with Cornell William Brooks, Esq., former president & CEO, NJISJ

More than 240 supporters attended the Gala on June 11th at the Park Savoy in Florham Park. The evening was an opportunity to express sincere appreciation to all NJISJ partners who work with the Institute to create real and sustainable change in New Jersey's cities.

"The annual Awards Gala is a time for celebration and recognition of our supporters and partners," said Douglas S. Eakeley, Esq., chair of the NJISJ Board of Trustees. "Our keynote speaker, Donnell Dinkins, and our three honorees demonstrate the power of social and economic reforms to transform our urban areas and the lives of their residents."

One of the Gala's highlights was speaker Dinkins, who graduated from the Institute's Workforce Development and Training Program in 2012. Dinkins told the audience he had recently been released from jail when he learned about the Institute's EPA/Brownfields Training Program, which offered him the opportunity to gain in-demand skills and set his

life on a new path. Today, Dinkins is licensed to operate industrial power tools and construction equipment and has earned apprenticeship/journeyman status with a New Jersey laborers union.

"Finding the workforce development program, working with the NJISJ staff has given me a sense of self, a sense of worth, well-being and pride," Dinkins told the Gala audience. "I know I will succeed, and if I need help I know who to ask. With sincere respect and gratitude, thank you all. And may I continue to be an advocate and role model for those who face life's obstacles and pitfalls."

NJISJ presented the Corporate Leadership Award to Paul V. Profeta, president and owner of Paul V. Profeta and Associates, Inc., and publisher of RADIUS magazine. Junius W. Williams, director of the Abbott Leadership Institute at Rutgers University-Newark, received the 2014 NJISJ

Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein Social Justice Award. The Institute's 2014 Community Builder Award was presented to Ron Beit, founding partner and CEO of RBH Group, LLC, and president of RBH Management.

NJISJ thanks its Gala sponsors, including Lowenstein Sandler LLP, Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey, Prudential Financial, Johnson & Johnson, Public Service Electric & Gas Company, RBH Group, East Orange General Hospital, New Ark Farms, Provident Bank and Rutgers University-Newark.

The evening was bittersweet, as the Institute expressed its congratulations, gratitude and best wishes to Cornell William Brooks, Esq., former president and CEO, who has since left NJISJ to become president and CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).



Left to right: Cornell William Brooks, Esq., former president & CEO, NJISJ; Clement Price, Newark city historian and Rutgers professor, who presented the Corporate Leadership award to Paul V. Profeta, president & owner of Paul V. Profeta and Associates; Margaret Anadu, Goldman Sachs Urban Investment Group, who presented the Community Builder award to Ron Beit, founding partner & CEO, RBH Group; Junius W. Williams, director, Abbott Leadership Institute at Rutgers University - Newark; Roger Lowenstein, Esq., who presented the Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein Social Justice Award to Williams; and Douglas S. Eakeley, Esq., chair of the NJISJ Board of Trustees.

Challenging Barriers. Empowering People. Making a Difference.

New Jersey Institute for Social Justice is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that provides a dynamic and independent voice for change necessary to create just, vibrant and inclusive urban communities throughout New Jersey.

Thanks to volunteers, staff, and generous donors like you, the work of the Institute truly makes a difference. No other organization can influence the lives of as many people as effectively as we do every day. Your support strengthens our commitment to:

- ▶ Expand access to economic opportunity for low-income and minority residents of Newark and other urban areas in the state.
- ▶ Promote local, regional and state government that is effective, equitable and accountable to the concerns of urban residents and their communities.
- ▶ Ensure the civil rights of minorities and low-income individuals in the state.

Please consider making an investment in the work of the Institute.

Ways to support NJISJ:

Make a Gift or Pledge

Provide the Institute with maximum flexibility in addressing funding gaps for programs and services by donating an unrestricted gift.

Program Initiatives

The Institute offers individuals, corporations and foundations several sponsorship opportunities for initiatives in equal justice, juvenile justice, urban assets and workforce development.

Matching Gift Program

Double the impact of your contribution! Check with your employer to learn if your gift qualifies for a match, and include the matching gift form with your contribution.

Appreciated Stock and Securities

Donate long-term appreciated stock or securities. In addition to your charitable deduction, you can avoid capital gains taxes.

Estate and Endowment Planning

Bequests or planned giving in any amount will enable the Institute to maintain and plan for its continued work in social justice for years to come.

Tribute Gift

Honor a loved one, friend or colleague by making a donation to NJISJ in their name. NJISJ will notify the person or family in whose name the gift has been made. (Notification does not include the amount of the gift.)

Pro Bono and Volunteer Opportunities

Demonstrate your commitment to social justice by donating your professional skills and services in the areas of legal support, administrative support, web design, graphic design, human resources, public relations, research and so much more.

For further information about supporting NJISJ, contact Nina McCormack, Institutional Advancement Officer, at (973) 624-9400, ext. 32, or at nmccormack@njisj.org.

“Social justice should be the underlying goal of all humanity.”

-Alan V. Lowenstein, Esq., Founder of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

NJISJ 2014 Annual Awards Gala



2014 NJISJ Board of Trustees
 Douglas S. Eakley, Esq., Chair
 Antoinette Ellis-Williams, Ph.D., Vice-Chair
 Grizel Ubarry, Treasurer
 Patricia Nachtigal, Esq., Secretary
 Jerome C. Harris, Jr., Interim President and CEO
 Roland V. Anglin, Ph.D.
 Elise C. Boddie, Esq.
 Zulima V. Farber, Esq.
 John J. Farmer, Jr., Esq.
 Michael D. Francis
 Angelo J. Genova, Esq.
 Sandra King
 John H. Lowenstein, Ph.D.
 Roger A. Lowenstein, Esq.
 James McQueny
 Mark M. Murphy
 B. John Pendleton, Jr., Esq.
 Oliver B. Quinn, Esq.
 Kenneth Y. Tanji
 Theodore V. Wells, Jr., Esq.



60 Park Pl., Ste. 511
 Newark, NJ 07102



For more information, visit www.njisj.org or call (973) 624-9400.