

NATIONAL JUVENILE JUSTICE NETWORK

Information for Prospective Members

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BACKGROUND ON MEMBERSHIP

The National Juvenile Justice Network (NJJN) aims to have representatives from all states and territories in its membership. To this end, NJJN helps to grow and support new and emerging advocacy organizations across the country, and its criteria for membership are meant to facilitate the inclusion of groups at various stages of organizational development.

All those seeking membership with NJJN must embrace its [nine principles for youth justice reform](#), which draw heavily on the Youth Transition Funders Group’s “Blueprint for Juvenile Justice Reform” Principles of Reform.

Principles of Youth Justice Reform

1. Divert Youth from the Justice System
2. Reduce Institutionalization
3. Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Disparity
4. Ensure Access to Quality Counsel
5. Create a Range of Effective Community-Based Programs
6. Recognize and Serve Youth with Special Needs
7. Improve Aftercare and Reentry
8. Engage Youth, Family and Community
9. Keep Youth Out of Adult Courts, Jails, and Prisons

Why Become a Member?

By becoming a member, you demonstrate your commitment to creating a justice system that recognizes the uniqueness of youth and their enormous capacity for change. Working together, we can successfully press for state and federal laws, policies and practices that are fair, equitable and developmentally appropriate for all children, youth and families involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, the justice system.

Benefits of Membership

By becoming a member, you become a part of the growing movement, gaining access to strategic and substantive assistance such as:

COMMUNITY – Through an active listserv, varied working groups, and an annual forum for members, partners and allies, we provide vehicles for members to share and grow their collective wisdom around strategy, research, and the latest developments in their states.

LEADERSHIP – We provide information and training on substance and strategy. Our [Youth Justice Leadership Institute](#) seeks to increase the number of youth justice reform leaders who are people of color, families of system-involved youth, and system-involved youth.

STANDARDS – NJJN circulates [policy recommendations](#) and summaries of established standards on which to build reform.

INFORMATION – In addition to this, our e-newsletter and webinars, and publications advance the field of youth justice reform by educating reform advocates, practitioners, and the public.

TOOLS – Through technical assistance, training, teleconferences, talking points and press release templates, we keep reformers equipped with up-to-date information and strategic know-how.

INCLUSION – We involve youth, families and crime victims through our Youth and Family Affinity Group and the Victim Outreach Working Group.

Which Category of Membership Best Suits You?

NJJN looks to build the movement through relationships with state advocacy organization members, state affiliates, Youth Justice Leadership Institute alumni, allies (individuals and organizations), and national partner organizations. Since each group serves a critical role in advancing justice for youth and have different needs, NJJN has created membership categories for each: State Advocacy

Organization Member, Youth Justice Leadership Institute Alumni, Affiliate Member, Allies, and National Partners.

State Advocacy Organization Members

NJJN's membership is primarily comprised of organizations dedicated to reforming the juvenile justice system through statewide advocacy. To be eligible for state advocacy membership, organizations must meet the following requirements.

State Advocacy Members' scope of work must:

- Support NJJN's [nine principles of reform](#).
- Be working actively to change policy, and/or have a proven track record in policy change. State Advocacy Members can work on these areas in any number of ways including but not limited to the following: legislative, administrative, and programmatic changes. However, State Advocacy Members cannot be solely focused on research and public information dissemination.
- Demonstrate their systemic work by filling out an annual questionnaire in which they detail their work.

State Advocacy Members' Organizational Structure:

- A State Advocacy Member can be established according to any of the following structures, including, but not limited to: a formal coalition of organizations, a free-standing non-profit organization; a project of a non-profit; an informal network of individuals or groups; or a membership organization.
- A State Advocacy Member may not be an agency that only provides representation or services on an individual, case-by-case basis; nor can it be a trade association.
- Organizations that primarily do individual, client-related work but also conduct systemic reform (e.g., class-action lawsuits) are eligible for membership.
- State Advocacy Members should be unfettered advocates for system reform. A member's sources of funding (whether private or public) shouldn't hinder the member's ability to advocate for system reform. The leadership of the member's agency or coalition should be independent enough to advocate for system reform (i.e., neither appointment of leadership nor employment should compromise any potential advocacy position of organization).

Youth Justice Leadership Institute Alumni

Alumni of the Youth Justice Leadership Institute are individuals who have completed their fellowship through NJJN's [Institute](#) in good standing. After completion, they are invited to become full members in NJJN. In order to become a member, they must:

- Support NJJN's [nine principles of reform](#).
- Fill out an annual questionnaire in which they detail their work.

Affiliate Members

Affiliate Members are state-based groups that do not fit the criteria for State Advocacy Membership, but for which there would be mutual benefits from a closer affiliation with NJJN. An example of a potential affiliate member could be a child welfare advocacy group that is thinking about engaging in juvenile justice reform work, but has yet to engage in reform.

Affiliate members:

- Support NJJN's [nine principles of reform](#).
- Must not be a government organization, trade association, receive substantial government funds or be solely focused on direct representation of or services to youth.
- Unlike, State Advocacy Members, Affiliate Members may be currently focused on research and public education.

Allies

NJJN also recognizes the need for allies in the creation of better juvenile justice policies. Allied Members are individuals and organizations that support the work of NJJN but who are ineligible for membership or affiliation. Individuals and organizations that receive substantial government funds or agencies that focus on direct services typically fall into the Ally category.

Allies:

- Support NJJN's [nine principles of reform](#).
- May be an individual (not part of an organization or coalition).
- May be an organization that does not fit the membership criteria for state advocacy organizations or affiliates such as government organizations, trade associations, etc.

Partners

NJJN Partners are national groups that support NJJN's mission and values and provide assistance to our state-based member organizations as their resources allow.

Partners:

- Agree to NJJN's [nine principles of reform](#).
- Support the activities of NJJN and its members through advice and referrals as resources allow.

Membership Responsibilities

As a member, you commit to support and further NJJN's activities and positions and pay annual dues. State Advocacy Members must also participate in at least one NJJN committee or working group during the course of the year, or otherwise participate in NJJN's development.

Breakdown of Responsibilities and Benefits by Membership Category

Membership	Dues	Signed Agreement	Benefits	Technical Assistance	Listserv
State Advocacy Organizations	\$25-\$300	Required	Access to in person meetings, all trainings, webinars, and publications	Prioritized Assistance for: communications, legislative, coalition building, and fiscal analysis. Ability to vote on policy platforms and vote for and serve on NJJN's Executive Committee.	Discussion listserv and e-newsletter
Youth Justice Leadership Institute Alumni	\$25-\$300	Required	Access to in person meetings, all trainings, webinars, and publications	Prioritized assistance for: communications, legislative, coalition building, and fiscal analysis. Ability to vote on policy platforms and vote for and serve on NJJN's Executive Committee.	Discussion listserv and e-newsletter
Affiliate Organizations	\$25-\$300	Required	Access to in person meetings, all trainings, webinars, and publications	Limited assistance based on capacity	Discussion listserv and e-newsletter
Allies	\$25-\$300	Encouraged	In person meetings by invitation, webinars, conference calls, and public education materials	N/A	e-newsletter
National Partner	\$25-\$300	Required	Access to in person meetings, all trainings, webinars, and publications	Support provided to juvenile justice initiatives and mission specific campaigns	Discussion listserv and e-newsletter

Application Process

All groups seeking NJJN membership should notify Alyson Clements (clements@njjn.org) of their interest in membership, distinguishing which category is of interest. If you are unsure, feel free to reach out to Alyson with questions. You will receive an application to complete and return. After submitting your application, you will be contacted for a brief interview. **NOTE:** All applications for State Advocacy Organization Members and Affiliate Members must be interviewed and ratified by NJJN's Executive Committee in order to be accepted for membership.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What types of organizations are eligible for State Advocacy or Affiliate Membership in NJJN?

Members can be organizations, coalitions, non-profits, or groups. A member can be established according to any of the following structures, including, but not limited to: a formal coalition of organizations; a free-standing non-profit organization; a project of a non-profit; an informal network of individuals or groups; or a membership organization.

2. Do organizations have to be state-wide?

No. State Advocacy and Affiliate Members can be city-wide and county-wide.

3. What are the benefits of Advocacy and Affiliate membership?

- Up-to-date information about what's happening across the country in youth justice reform through NJJN's electronic newsletter and discussion listserv.
- Access to national experts through webinars/teleconferences and at NJJN's Annual Forum.
- Access to members-only resources on NJJN's website and access to NJJN's network of members through NJJN's discussion listserv.
- Access to technical assistance with legislative strategy, policy analysis, communications, and coalition and organizational development.
- Opportunity to define the subjects and content of NJJN's policy papers and policy platforms.
- Opportunity to participate in NJJN's governance and define its strategic direction.

4. What are the responsibilities of Advocacy and Affiliate membership?

- Provide strategic guidance to NJJN in terms of program, policy, and funding; elect Executive Committee members.
- Actively participate in NJJN by sharing information and expertise and/or participating in at least one working group or committee.
- Attend the Annual Forum. Fill out an annual questionnaire on structure and activities.
- Actively support NJJN's policy positions and calls to action.
- Pay annual membership dues.
- Members must sign a membership agreement that states that they:
 - 1) Embrace and promote NJJN's [nine principles of reform](#).
 - 2) Undertake the responsibilities of membership.
 - 3) Acknowledge the privileges of membership in NJJN.

5. What happens if an existing member no longer meets its membership requirements?

Existing members who fail to meet the membership criteria (e.g., payment of dues, non-support for NJJN positions, lack of engagement in NJJN activities), will have their membership reviewed by the Executive Committee.

6. What is an affiliate membership?

Affiliate Members are state-based groups that do not fit the criteria for full membership, but for which there would be mutual benefits from a closer affiliation with NJJN. They receive information directly from NJJN and can participate in the discussion listserv and participate in webinars/ teleconferences. They are also eligible to attend NJJN's Annual Forum, but are not eligible for any travel stipends that may be available. Affiliate members must meet some of the basic criteria that regular members meet—such as not being a trade association, not being a government organization, and not receiving substantial government funds. An example of a potential affiliate member could be a child welfare advocacy group that is thinking about engaging in juvenile justice reform work, but hasn't yet.

7. What is an Ally?

Allies are individuals and organizations that support the work of NJJN but who are ineligible for either Advocacy or Affiliate Membership, either because they are not part of an organization or coalition, or because the organization does not fit NJJN's criteria for Advocacy or Affiliate membership. They receive NJJN's e-newsletter and may be invited to webinars/teleconferences.

8. What is a Partner?

Partners of NJJN are national organizations seeking to promote juvenile justice reform. They agree to support the activities of NJJN and its members through advice and referrals as resources allow. Partners participate in the discussion listserv, NJJN working groups, webinars/teleconferences and are invited to attend the Forum, but are not eligible for any travel stipends that may be available. However, partners, do not have a vote in NJJN, nor must they adhere to any of the criteria delineated for full members.