



****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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FPWA Announces “Ending the Poverty to Prison Pipeline” Task Force

(New York, NY) — Today FPWA (formerly the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies) announced the formation of the “Ending the Poverty to Prison Pipeline” Task Force. Health and human services nonprofits are grappling with how to best meet the growing needs of the justice-involved individuals and families in the communities they serve. Many living in poverty face a heightened risk of justice involvement. According to national survey results, fewer than 100,000 prisoners lived in poverty before their arrests in 1974, compared to more than 600,000 living in poverty before their arrests in 2004. In 2014 dollars, incarcerated individuals had a median annual income of \$19,185 prior to their incarceration, 41% less than non-incarcerated people of similar ages.

The Task Force, supported by the Ford Foundation, aims to inform and strengthen health and human services programs and policies to better support individuals and families that have been involved with the criminal justice system or impacted by it.

“The well-being of individuals and families is a vital part of our mission,” said FPWA CEO and Executive Director Jennifer Jones Austin. “The creation of this task force is a critical step toward addressing the impact of mass incarceration on individuals, families and communities, and ensuring second chances and opportunity for all.

The task force is central to FPWA’s commitment to addressing the needs of low-income individuals and families. Working with a distinguished group comprised of New York leaders in the field and persons with lived experiences, FPWA aims to build on New York City and State’s recent efforts to address the woes of mass incarceration and the generational toll it’s had on families by developing recommendations for programs and policies that will effectively combat the intersection of poverty and criminal justice.

The goals of the task force include: developing strategies to raise awareness of the link between poverty and incarceration, establishing low-income and justice involved individuals and families as a group that requires targeted services, building a more integrated approach from the human services sector to tackle the pipeline of low-income persons who become justice-involved, and better address the needs of those exiting incarceration.

The members of the “Ending the Poverty to Prison Pipeline” Task Force include the following:

- **David Condliffe, Esq.** Executive Director of Center for Community Alternatives
- **Sharon Content** Founder and President of Children of Promise, NYC
- **Chelsea Davis** Criminal Justice Project Manager, Office of the First Deputy Mayor at City of New York

- **Rev. Dr. Darren Ferguson** Director of the Advocacy Bridge to College Program at LaGuardia Community College
- **Tesa Fitzgerald** Executive Director of Hour Children
- **Elizabeth Gaynes** President and CEO of Osborne Association
- **Rev. Sam Joanna Ghiggeri** President of The Search Council/Trinity Wall Street Church
- **Mark Goldsmith** Co-founder, President, and CEO of Getting Out Staying Out (GOSO)
- **Dr. Dale Irvin** President and Professor at New York Theological Seminary
- **Anne Jacobs** Director of the Prisoner Reentry Institute
- **Seymour James** Attorney-In-Chief, Legal Aid Society
- **Rev. Dr. Voni Johyn** Senior Pastor and Founder of Isaiah's Temple of Mt. Hope Spiritual Baptist, Inc.
- **Georgia Lerner** Executive Director of Women's Prison Association (WPA)
- **Dr. Michael Lindsey** Director of McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research and McSilver Professor of Poverty Studies
- **Julio Medina** Executive Director and Founder of Exodus Transitional Community
- **Carlton Mitchell** Interim Executive Director of the Correctional Association of NY
- **Rosemonde Pierre-Louis** Deputy Director for Administration and External Affairs at New York University's Silver School of Social Work
- **Stanley Richards** Executive Vice President of The Fortune Society
- **Paul Samuels** Director and President of the Legal Action Center
- **Rev. Dr. Patricia Sealy** Pastor at Mott Haven Reformed Church
- **Chris Troy** President and Founder of Praxis Connections, LLC
- **Ronald Williams** President, CEO, and Founder of New York Therapeutic Communities, Inc.
- **Rev. Dr. Alfonso Wyatt** Founder of Greater Allen AME Church
- **Jeanette Zelhof** Executive Director of Mobilization for Justice (MFY)

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About FPWA

FPWA is an anti-poverty, policy, and advocacy nonprofit with a membership network of nearly 180 human-service and faith-based organizations. FPWA has been a prominent force in New York City's social services system for more than 95 years, advocating for fair public policies, collaborating with partner agencies, and growing its community-based membership network to meet the needs of New Yorkers. Each year, FPWA helps close to 1.5 million New Yorkers move up the economic ladder. Visit us at <http://fpwa.org/> and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).