

20 YEARS


College & Community Fellowship



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Vivian Nixon
Executive Director

“People whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system know best that failures in social systems exclude people from access to high-quality education.”

“This report exemplifies the power of a community that is relentless in its refusal to accept erasure and in its ability to be effective in times of great adversity.”

Letter from the Executive Director

Barbara Martinsons had an idea in the year 2000. She wanted women who had been introduced to college while incarcerated to finish the degrees they had started. It was just a handful of women. Barbara didn’t imagine that it would become hundreds.

Twenty years later, women still rely on CCF to help them reach educational goals, find a pathway to interrelated careers, and connect to advocacy campaigns that improve the quality of life in their communities.

Not only is CCF still here, it is thriving. Even as the world navigates a pandemic, CCF’s talented and dedicated team consistently supports hundreds of women and families. While some people are only beginning to understand structural and systemic racism, CCF is doubling down on work it has always done to address issues at the intersection of racial justice, economic equity, and decarceration.

This year, shortly before COVID-19 hit New York, CCF expanded eligibility requirements. Now women with any direct criminal justice involvement can access our College & Career Programs.

The women of CCF have a relentless thirst for a better future. Engaging in higher education while battling the complications of criminal justice involvement, family life, and work, requires CCF’s constituents to overcome every imaginable obstacle. The erasure caused by gender and racial bias is not new to CCF women. The light of truth is revealing the unique struggles of Black women as they seek to cross the borders created to contain them.

CCF’s Policy & Advocacy team expanded its focus to respond to urgent needs at the height of the pandemic. Alignments with several coalitions and organizations have helped get women released from jails and assisted with housing and other basic needs. To protect incarcerated people from future exposure, CCF co-created draft legislation and an organizing tool kit to formalize correctional responses to emergency situations. Allied organizations have started campaigns to adopt the legislation in several states.

Access to education remains CCF’s primary advocacy issue. We know that higher education is historically tied to race and class in America. People whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system know best that failures in social systems exclude people from access to high-quality education. CCF elevates their voices, highlights their expertise, and centers their stories. A commitment to increase educational opportunities in prisons and ensure that the doors to colleges and universities are open for people when released is at the heart of CCF’s collaborative advocacy.

This report exemplifies the power of a community that is relentless in its refusal to accept erasure and its ability to be effective in times of great adversity. The work CCF does comes with a great deal of personal sacrifice. We appreciate the sacrifice every member of the CCF team has made in choosing a career that lends their potential, talent, and energy on behalf of CCF’s extraordinarily resilient women.

Many thanks to all our supporters, new and old. You have demonstrated extraordinary commitment by offering your support in the midst of your own challenges. Because of you, we were able to expand our reach, grow programs, and launch new initiatives. Your confidence in our multidimensional approach fuels our success. For that, we are grateful!

Warm Regards,

Vivian Nixon
Executive Director



What We Do

COLLEGE & CAREER



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We work with more than 400 women with criminal justice involvement through our Academic Support Program, Uplift Mentoring Program, and Career Advancement Program.

We know that access to education has immediate and long-term effects on one's overall wellbeing and has significant ripple effects for multiple generations.

We also know that as the labor market continues to change, it is critical that the women we serve continuously update their learning and have the resources they need to navigate a complicated and evolving economy.



POLICY & ADVOCACY



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To build the movement for criminal justice reform, we prioritize two strategies

- (1) Campaigns to increase access to higher education and civic engagement, and
- (2) Training women impacted by incarceration to be leaders in their communities.

Throughout this work, we center the voices of the women we serve and are committed to integrating the arts into advocacy and education.



THRIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



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THRIVE supports the successful reintegration of criminal justice-affected people nationwide through two training tracks

- (1) For institutions that work with or serve justice-involved people.
- (2) For employers that want to tap into an under-utilized workforce.

THRIVE is a training program grounded in evidence-based and promising practices that are at the core of what has made CCF's College & Career Programs successful over the last 20 years.



CCF is one of 11 members of the Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI)/ Reentry Coalition. Its mission is to reduce crime and bring opportunity to NYC communities with complex needs and issues by providing a spectrum of services for justice-involved people.

CCF is part of the Formerly Incarcerated Convicted People and Families Movement (FICPFM), a network of over 50 civil and human rights organizations led by people who have conviction histories and their family members. Vivian Nixon, Executive Director of CCF, sits on their Steering Committee.

This year, all CCF staff received training from the Connecticut Women's Consortium on "Creating a Culture of Trauma-Informed Care" and "Differentiating and Demystifying Gender & Sexual Identity."

COLLEGE & CAREER PROGRAMS



WHY WOMEN

Contact with the criminal justice system often leaves people stigmatized and economically disadvantaged. Our high-touch, gender-specific approach combines individual guidance with community support to partner with our students on their pathway to a college degree and meaningful career. We follow the suggested strategies outlined in the evidence-based research conducted by Bloom, Owens, and Convington called *Gender-Responsive Strategies for Women Offenders*. The report identified the different pathways to criminal justice involvement between men and women and the need for distinct services for women.



EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY

For 20 years, we have been committed to serving women with criminal convictions. Throughout the years, we have recognized the need to serve women not only with a conviction but with any direct criminal justice involvement.

This year, our College & Career Programs became available to women with any direct criminal justice involvement. That includes women with arrest histories, adjournments in contemplation of dismissal, or alternative to incarceration participation that led to the dismissal of charge.

UPLIFT MENTORING

Mentors (women with criminal justice histories and a college degree) support mentees (women impacted by the criminal justice system) as they build higher education into their reentry plans.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM (ASP)

Our oldest and largest program, ASP, provides individual and community support to help women earn their college degrees.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM (CAP)

Designed in response to the needs of current students & alumnae from our Academic Support Program, CAP works with women at any point on their career pathway.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL PROGRAM

We know that our students' educational achievements have a positive impact on the educational aspirations and achievement of their families. This year, we officially launched our Multi-Generational Program. We supported ten women pursuing a degree while also serving as caregivers to school-age children (whether as a parent, grandparent, or other).



Ebony Maher and daughter Ivy at the 2011 and 2018 family day

UPLIFT MENTORING

Relationships rooted in shared experiences often lead to more meaningful connections. CCF’s peer mentoring program thoughtfully matches mentors (women with criminal justice histories and a college degree) with mentees (women impacted by the criminal justice system) to build higher education into their reentry plans.

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Trained mentors

LOOKING AHEAD

In the coming year, we will be launching two community-based peer mentoring cohorts. The community model will deliver intensive group mentoring sessions using a virtual interactive curriculum that fosters a sense of sisterhood and self-efficacy.

Partner Facilities:

- Taconic Correctional Facility
- Bedford Hills Correctional Facility
- Rose M. Singer Center on Rikers Island

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM (ASP)

Women with criminal justice histories can enroll in our Academic Support Program and receive support as they apply for, enroll in, and complete their degree at a college or university. If a woman is not yet ready for college, she can join Community Sisters.

270

Number of women who received a College & Career Awareness Workshop

41

Number of women working toward a college degree

17

Number of women working towards Career Certification

68

Number of women getting ready or have applied to college

18

Community Sisters enrolled

100k+

Over \$100,000 in financial support

“[The financial support I received from CCF has] helped me tremendously. Now that my past school balance has been paid off, I can register for classes and complete my bachelor’s degree. Without this support, I wouldn’t have been able to go back to school.”

—Community Sister

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With tenacity and perseverance, our students earned their college degrees despite any barriers in their way. As our Valedictorian, Chermaine Black said, “We are the current leading women of color who happen to share a history of being involved in a system that is unfair, unjust, and inhumane. We are creating opportunities for others who come after us.”

Graduates:

- 3 Associate Degrees
- 6 Bachelor’s Degrees
- 4 Master’s Degrees

3 Earned Career Certifications

MIMI PASCUAL
BA in Theater from City College, Class of 2020

Minerva “Mimi” Pascual will graduate from City College this year with a Bachelor’s degree in Theater. Mimi, with her huge smile, has a bubbly personality and an incredibly positive outlook on life. She came to CCF immediately after her release from prison in 2019 and has since taken every opportunity we offer to develop her educational, career, and activism goals.

“I had gone to college before prison, but where I was incarcerated, they only offered vocational training - and I had to fight for that,” says Mimi. “I always knew I wanted to go back to school, but I just didn’t know how,” she remembers. While incarcerated, Mimi enrolled in a vocational cosmetology program in prison, which she finished with the support of CCF once released as a stepping stone to a 4-year Bachelor’s degree in Theater.

“When I joined CCF, I just thought I would get some help with my college application and then do everything else on my own. I didn’t know about the financial help or mentoring, or other programs,” Mimi says. Since then, Mimi has taken advantage of all that CCF has to offer.

“I joined the WISH program because I wanted the chance to meet other women and develop my advocacy. I learned that there are so many ways to elevate your advocacy, including presenting it through my theater, writing, and presentation. I want to elevate what I stand for and what I want to fight for.”

“Then I joined the Career Advancement Program. My career coach Janelle has been helping me grow and find my true self. And my academic counselor Angela has always been there for me, and she’s doing her Master’s Degree too – so she can relate to me and guide me in my next steps.”

Now, Mimi is combining everything she’s learned from her time in CCF’s academic, career, and advocacy programs to plan her next steps.

“I’m sure that I want to incorporate my activism into what I’ve learned in my degree,” she’s decided.

“I’ve been doing work with the group Educate Don’t Incarcerate to record interviews about criminal justice reform, and learning to do media editing and producing. Moving forward, I don’t want to be the hair and makeup artist. I want to be the one who coordinates the entire aspect of the project. I want to shoot PSAs, produce activist theater work, and write about my activism work, and that’s how I want to marry my two passions.”

So what’s next for Mimi? She’s taking advantage of the COVID-19 social distancing measures to plan for her future.

“I’ve been confined before, but this time I have gadgets!” She exclaims.

“This pandemic is a starting ground for the whole world, and since I just came home, this is a good chance to restart with everyone else. I’ve been spending my time recording content with Educate Don’t Incarcerate, so it’s making me think about a Master’s Degree in film, and I’d like to stay at City College and work with CCF. I want to produce, record, and put my work out there to fight for prison reform.”

In the meantime, Mimi is sharing everything she’s learned about college with her son, who is a junior earning his undergraduate degree.

“Not that many programs explore what I’m going through - the family dynamic of having both my son and me in college. We have our study dates together and help each other now, but I wasn’t there when he was applying to college. I parented him from prison, but I wasn’t able to show my son how to navigate the college process. I couldn’t say ‘this is how you fill out



a TAP application, or this is how you fill out a college application.’ I want to break the chains of our children going through the same things we went through, and I want to extend the help that’s been given to me to our kids. I want to fight for the kids the way CCF fights for us.”

Mimi and her son both feel passionate about providing support to families like their own. “I am offering my services and my son’s services to anyone who needs help or to vent,” she says with a smile. And for women thinking about pursuing their education, Mimi’s advice is:

“You’re going to have rough days and days you want to quit, but there are ways to get assistance and lighten your load to make sure you can finish. Just ask for the help you need. When I came to CCF, I didn’t know how to work a computer or anything, but we can all figure these things out. If I can do it, you can do it!”

100%

CCF Alumnae from our Academic Support Program said they would recommend CCF to someone they know.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM (CAP)

CAP supports women with criminal justice involvement at any point on their career pathway. The program was designed in response to the needs of women in our Academic Support Program who struggled to find work reflective of their educational levels and interests. Through a flexible module-based program, we meet this need and provide our students with adaptive support to attain their goals.

170+

CAP sessions (consisting of career coaching sessions and workshops) delivered in our first year!

100%

Employed CAP graduates have made it past their 60-day job retention bonus period.

88%

Women who have completed the entire CAP curriculum have secured meaningful employment in their chosen fields.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Representatives from NYC Health + Hospitals spoke to over 30 current and prospective CCF students at our first-ever CAP Career Convening. With over 50 locations across multiple NYC boroughs, this was the perfect opportunity for the women we work with to get direct access to career opportunities in information technology, administration, clinical, and more.



POLICY & ADVOCACY



CCF provides a platform for self-empowerment for women who engage in its direct services (College & Career Programs) and the whole community of people affected by the criminal legal system to advocate for policy changes that advance social justice in their communities.

This year, CCF created #EquityIsJustice as a vehicle to move our policy and advocacy work and gained significant momentum on the federal and New York State campaigns described below.

PELL RESTORATION

College-in-prison programs operated successfully for decades. Then in 1994, the crime bill banned incarcerated people from receiving Pell Grants. We are fighting relentlessly on this issue so that all incarcerated people can access Pell Grants, even if they have long sentences or are incarcerated for life.

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

State financial assistance is a key component to creating access to higher education for incarcerated people. Nineteen states currently provide this. New York is not one of them. We see the restoration of TAP as an essential means to uplift communities devastated by mass incarceration.

WOMEN INFLUENCING SYSTEMS & HISTORY (WISH)

CCF has a 20-year history of centering the voices of those impacted by the criminal legal system. WISH provides the leadership skills and resources that promote long-term self-efficacy and civic engagement. WISH alumnae have and continue to play a crucial role in strengthening strategic relationships with ally organizations through their participation and leadership in campaigns across the city.

PELL RESTORATION

Education is a bedrock of a healthy, civically engaged society. It is a proven key component of movement-building. Pell Grants help provide greater access to higher education regardless of income and socioeconomic status. Higher education opens doors to opportunity, helps people transform their lives, and gives them a sense of value and purpose. That is why we must restore Pell for ALL people in prison.



RAPID RESPONSE

CCF joined the Vera Institute, Safer Foundation, and Drug Policy Alliance to monitor the House Committee Education and Labor mark-up on Pell legislation. The goal was to prevent carve outs on Pell restoration that would exclude people based on the nature of the crime or length of the sentence. We fended off more than 10 legislative offices that intended to vote on a negative amendment. As a result, a clean lift of Pell passed through that committee.

ADVOCACY DAYS

In collaboration with Law Enforcement Leaders (LEL), the Brennan Center for Justice, and #UnlockHigherEd Coalition, CCF organized a series of Advocacy Days on Capitol Hill.

28 Number of formerly incarcerated advocates representing 11+ states who met with 90+ legislative offices on Capitol Hill in partnership with LEL and the Brennan Center.

200+ Number of congressional staffers and representatives in attendance at a briefing held by CCF on the urgent need to restore Pell.

50+ Cosponsors of the REAL Act, which would permanently restore Pell Grant eligibility to incarcerated students. Many signed on after hearing our advocates (who have direct experience) speak at our advocacy days.

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS

Together with #UnlockHigherEd, CCF hosted a congressional briefing sponsored by Representatives David Trone and Danny Davis. The briefing exclusively featured formerly incarcerated advocates for higher education, flown in from all over the country. Currently incarcerated individuals who could not attend in person participated by way of pre-recorded interviews. CCF partnered with the Association for State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) for a congressional briefing on restoring Pell and key legislative meetings, resulting in ASCA President and Secretary of Corrections in Pennsylvania John Wetzel sending a powerful message to Congress on the importance of this policy change.





There are now many potential legislative vehicles that could reinstate Pell.

CCF has also supported the Expanding Educational Opportunities for Justice-Impacted Communities Act and the current version of a clean Pell lift that appears in the fiscal year 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill. It is a great sign that Pell has continued to move when other high priority bills have dropped off.

“The roughly 2.3 million people in prison, 95 percent of whom will be released, should be given access to the tools required to build a life post-incarceration. More importantly, they must be allowed the dignity that comes with the pursuit of opportunities to self-improve and grow and learn — a right which our founding documents suggest all humans deserve.”

—Vivian Nixon, CCF Executive Director

Writing Workshop in Collaboration with Liza Jessie Peterson

To raise awareness about the barriers that formerly and currently incarcerated students face in accessing higher education, we teamed up with Liza Jessie Peterson for a writing workshop. Ten formerly incarcerated women from CCF and Operation Restoration participated in the workshop. Participants shared their personal stories related to access to higher education and Pell Grants and examined how artistic responses are used to transform communities.

LOOKING FORWARD

CCF will produce a short educational video of narratives from the writing workshop with Liza Jessie Peterson, demonstrating how education builds power.

TUITION ASSISTANT PROGRAM (TAP)

In 2008, CCF co-founded the Education from the Inside Out (EIO) Coalition to remove higher education barriers for incarcerated students in New York State and nationwide. In October 2019, CCF relaunched our Turn on the TAP Campaign bringing together statewide partners comprised of college-in-prison programs, criminal justice reform practitioners, and formerly incarcerated advocates.



CCF TRAVELS TO ALBANY

CCF Community Organizer, Ivelisse Gilestra, was invited to give testimony before the Joint Budget Hearing on Higher Education in the New York State Legislature to restore TAP funding for incarcerated people.

“Because I was able to earn my Bachelor’s degree in prison, I returned to my community not only personally transformed by the education but also empowered and better equipped to promulgate sustainable change. In our state motto, “excelsior,” we commit ourselves to the idea that we are forever moving upward. If that remains true, then the same educational opportunities guaranteed for some must be provided to all.”

—Ivelisse Gilestra,
CCF Community Organizer

Presented ‘Turn on the TAP’ to the New York State Legislature’s Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Caucus.

80+

State-wide advocates, majority of which were formerly incarcerated, registered to participate in our Turn on the TAP advocacy Day.

40+

Bipartisan meetings

WOMEN INFLUENCING SYSTEMS & HISTORY (WISH)

Movement building requires education, skill-building, and civic engagement. WISH is an eight-week advocacy training program for women who have felt the impacts of the criminal legal system.

- Women in our program learn
- Issue Identification
 - Forms of Advocacy
 - Government & Policy Making Process
 - Building Power in Community
 - Storytelling for Effective & Persuasive Communication
 - Digital Organizing



Women trained this year
(82 women trained since 2018).



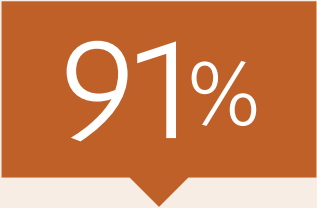
- Alumnae who participate and lead the following campaigns:
- #CLOSErikers
 - #HALTsolitary
 - Release Aging People in Prison
 - #BEYONDrosies
 - COVID Behind Bars
 - Black Lives Matter

“As a result of the WISH training, I feel that I am more informed and better able to share with others in the community that they have the power to advocate on behalf of themselves, their families, and their communities. Our votes matter, and we have the power to make our votes work for us.”
—WISH Alumnae

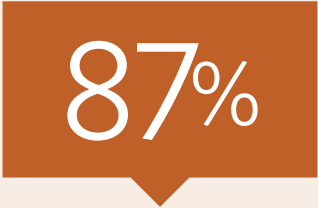
- Our Policy & Advocacy Team + WISH alumnae Attended the following legislative education events
- Restore the Vote NY Meeting (National Action Network)
 - Rally with CAIC #HALTsolitary confinement

Our Policy & Advocacy Team Presented at more than six national Conferences, including the National Council for Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls (The Council), #FreeHer Conference, and The Formerly Incarcerated and Convicted People’s Family Movement FICPFM National Convenings.

WISH INTENSIVES
Policy Research and Arts & Advocacy
• 18 Participants



WISH alumnae who want to work on a CCF-led campaign.



WISH participants who indicated they felt part of a community.



Number of WISH participants who spoke at legislative hearings or lobby days.



THRIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

129

Number of staff
trained across three
training sites

THRIVE is the only program of its kind geared towards institutional change for the betterment of justice-impacted individuals; bringing together evidence-based and promising practices and grounded in CCF's 20 years of working with women with criminal convictions.

In the last year, THRIVE trained the following organizations

- North Carolina Department of Public Safety
- Fortune Society
- Tennessee Higher Education Initiative (THEI)

CURRICULUM EVALUATION

THRIVE was evaluated by the Joyfields Institute, an expert in evidence-based practices. Joyfields found that the THRIVE curriculum effectively uses existing research, empirical assessment, and data-driven decision-making to enhance client success, improve staff performance, and promote a culture of learning and collaboration.



THRIVE EVIDENCE-BASED AND PROMISING PRACTICES

- **Postsecondary Education:** Sites learn about the importance of higher education for the people they serve to gain a competitive edge in the workforce and overcome generational poverty. Promising practice.
- **Financial Education:** Sites are trained by a certified financial health counselor with a concentration in credit and debt repair. Additionally, trainees can access our Financial Education Train-the-Trainer curriculum to pass on knowledge to clients or employees. Promising practice.
- **Trauma Awareness:** Training sites learn about the various causes and effects of trauma and how it relates to all people, specifically criminal justice-affected people. Certified evidence-based practice.
- **Motivational Interviewing:** Trainees learn about the long-standing, strength-based conversational techniques that support better outcomes among CJ-impacted people. Certified evidence-based practice.
- **Asset-Based Community Development:** Trainees learn the importance of identifying the skills and assets that exist in the people they serve and how CCF successfully utilizes asset-focused leadership development in its service delivery. Evidence-based practice.
- **Organizational Learning and Development:** Sites learn key organizational learning and development components including change management, data management/analysis, basics of fundraising, and capacity-building to ensure successful implementation of training modules.

OUR THRIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM ATTENDED THE FOLLOWING CONFERENCES

- ECMC Conference in Washington, DC
- Adult & Juvenile Female Offenders (AJFO) Conference, Georgia

OUR THRIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM PRESENTED AT THE FOLLOWING CONFERENCES

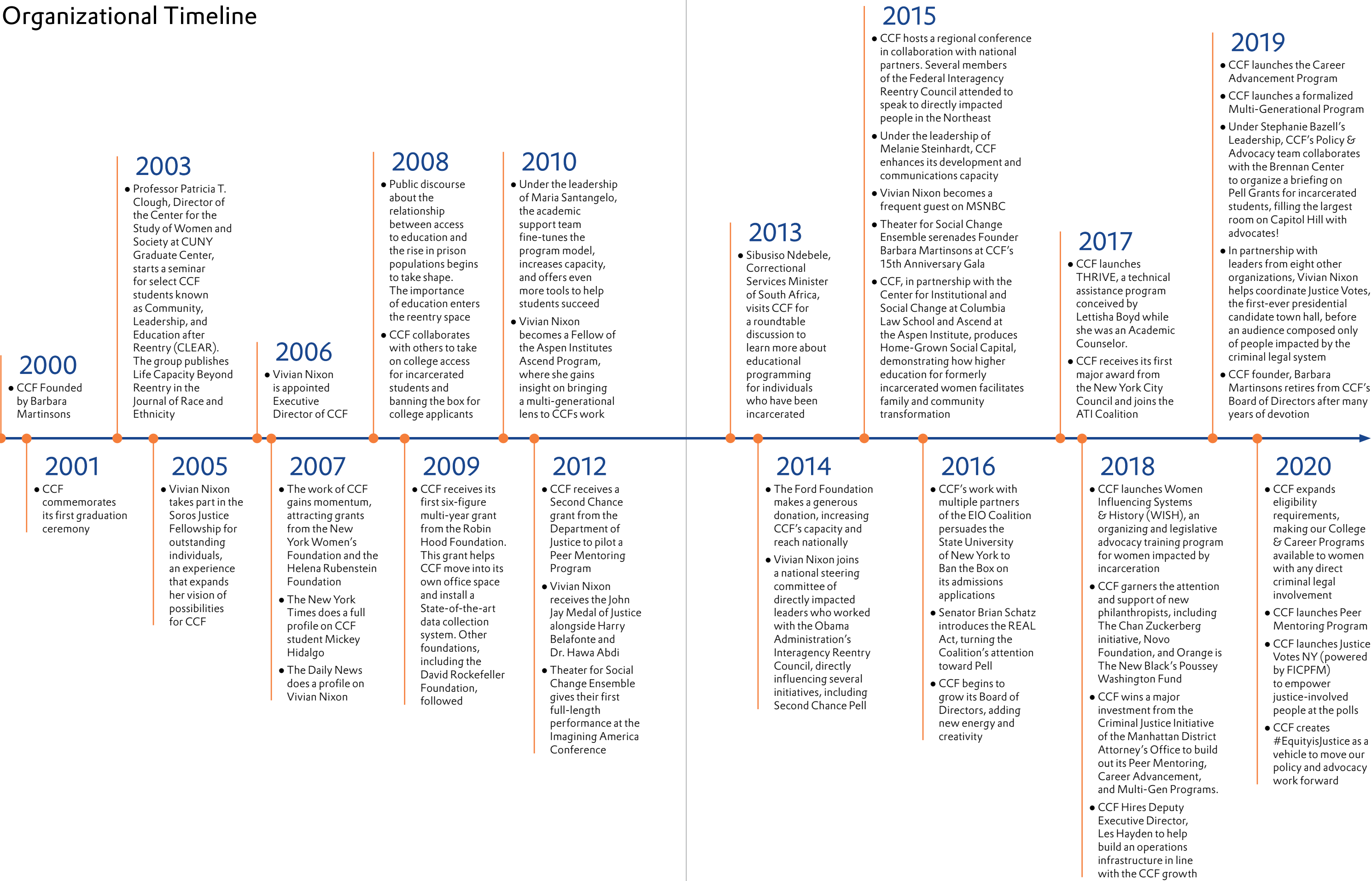
- **GlobalMindED 2020:** Lettisha Boyd, Associated Director of THRIVE joined our Program Officer at Ascendium and the Reentry Campus Program to present on higher education access and success.

LOOKING FORWARD

In the coming year, we will provide training to Exchange for Change in Miami. Exchange for Change offers writing courses in prisons and runs letter exchanges between incarcerated students and writers studying on the outside. By preparing incarcerated people for reentry and preparing the community for their return, Exchange for Change provides vision and understanding on both sides of the fence.



Organizational Timeline



COVID-19 Emergency Response

CCF, like many, began working remotely by mid-March 2020, and although none of us know how long this health emergency will last, we remain available and committed to the women we serve.

In response to the increased challenges our women faced in light of COVID-19, we launched a COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund. With the support of our community, we provided additional support to 24 women. An additional 18 individuals were assisted with cash awards from CCF's Executive Directors Almoner Fund. Our team also put together a list of COVID-19 resources for our students and community at large, with information and resources related to unemployment, housing rights, the federal stimulus bill, and more.

CCF's Policy & Advocacy team has historically advocated for access to higher education for currently and formerly incarcerated people - with the advent of COVID-19, we expanded our focus to respond to our community's urgent needs. CCF is leading coronavirus-related advocacy with our partners, which lays the groundwork for stronger services and rights for incarcerated people following the crises.

- **#ConnectingFamiliesNOW Campaign**
(Steering Committee Member)
to stop the cost of telecommunications as visitation has been suspended due to pandemic.
- **New York Justice for Women Task Force**
(Steering Committee Member)
Focused on raising awareness on every aspect of getting women out of jail and prison, including advocacy, clemency, and parole decisions. 44% of coalition members are CCF Alumnae, having been through our WISH advocacy training program and/or our Academic Support Program.
- **JustLeadershipUSA.**
We have been working closely with JLUSA on their #JustUs Campaign focused on developing emergency action plans for state jails and prisons in response to natural disasters.
- **Forward Justice**
(The Formerly Incarcerated, Convicted Peoples and Families Movement). Working closely with our partners to support stopgap housing and reentry for COVID-19 releases of incarcerated people.

Provided Federal Input on multiple bills aimed at decarceration during the COVID-19 Pandemic. including:

- **Emergency Community Supervision Act**
(Senator Cory Booker/Representative Hakeem Jeffries)
- **COVID-19 Correctional Facility Emergency Response Act of 2020**
(Representative Jerrod Nadler)
- **Dismantle Mass Incarceration For Public Health Act of 2020**
(Representative Rashida Tlaib)



Staff

- Raphael Anil**
Operations Associate
- Stephanie Bazell**
Director of Policy & Advocacy
- Lettisha Boyd**
Associate Director of
THRIVE Technical Assistance
- Stacy Burnett**
Recruitment/Intake/Support
Coordinator
- Angela Diaz**
Senior Academic Counselor
- Anna Giannicchi**
Academic Counselor
- Ivelisse Gilestra**
Community Organizer
- Les Hayden**
Deputy Executive Director
- Chris Massey**
Associate Director of Career
Advancement
- Victoria Micalizzi**
Communications Associate
- Vivian Nixon**
Executive Director
- Jesús Reyes-Velardo**
Associate Director of
Academic Support
- Janelle Rollins**
Career Coach
- Wendy Romano**
Program Support & Events
Coordinator
- Jordyn Rosenthal**
Senior Associate of Policy &
Advocacy
- Maria Santangelo**
Director of Programs
- Bridget Shanahan**
Policy Associate
- Jacqueline Thompson**
Recruitment/Intake/Support
Coordinator
- Whitney Vairin**
Associate Director of
Mentoring Services
- Tim Ward**
Associate Director of
Communications
- Lisa Yankowski**
Director of Development
& Communications

Letter from the Board Chair

More than two decades ago, a childhood friend, Barbara Martinsons, mentioned to me that she was mentoring women at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The women were smart, interesting, and eager to learn, she said, but when they came out, they were unlikely to be able to follow up with their education without a push and some support. Barbara created College & Community Fellowship (CCF), and today, in our 20th year, more than 350 women have earned degrees from institutions of higher learning - reaching thousands through our varied programs.

In addition to Barbara’s insight and commitment, much of the credit goes to our extraordinary Executive Director, Vivian Nixon and the terrific staff she has assembled. They’re helped by a dedicated board of directors and together form a team that is devoted to the achievement of our mission, the sust ever-widening constituency. I’m proud of all of them, particularly how they have pulled together during this past year, which clearly is the most challenging of our existence.

As you see as you read through this annual report, we now offer an expanding range of services to more women through a variety of programs. We are engaged nationally with major organizations working collaboratively to achieve a more just environment for those with criminal justice involvement. We have expanded our work geographically through our THRIVE program and our WISH program is training women to be advocates for a more just criminal justice system. And throughout this difficult time our donors have stayed with us and even increased their funding, so we start our 2021 fiscal year on a sound financial basis.

I’m optimistic about what we’ll be able to accomplish this year. We are looking forward to sharing our story with many of you this fall at a virtual gala that celebrates 20 years of growth and service.

We have a lot more to do before we’re done.
We’re ready and, I believe, able.



Peter Bakstansky

Board

- Peter Bakstansky**, Chair
- Onyekachi (Kachi) Akoma**
- Cynthia Alberts**
- Irene Branche**
- Barat Dickman**
- Liza Eaton**
- Yolanda Johnson-Peterkin**
- Jacki Kelly**
- Jane Pauls**
- Rashida Richardson**
- Tony Smith**
- Dawn Walker**
- Bridget Williams**
- Barbara Martinsons** (founder)



First-ever Democratic
Presidential Candidate
Town Hall on Criminal
Justice Reform

In October 2019, Vivian Nixon alongside Norris Henderson, Daryl Atkinson, and DeAnna Hoskins moderated the first-ever Democratic Presidential Candidate Town Hall on criminal justice reform. The event, organized by Voters Organized to Educate, took place at Eastern State Penitentiary Museum (formerly a prison) in Philadelphia with questions from impacted people and their families.

New York City
Advocacy

We are proud to have partnered with NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams on a bill that makes access to personal information and documentation like school transcripts and government records free to people coming out of prison.

“Working closely with the Public Advocate’s office, we were able to apply our on-the-ground experience to help not only eliminate unique barriers needed to survive, but also allow directly impacted people to pursue a college degree. We call on the City Council to pass this legislation as a necessary next step in their continued efforts to decarcerate New York City.” - Vivian Nixon, Executive Director, CCF



“They’re not talking to us. You certainly wouldn’t have a conversation with veterans without sitting down with veteran groups – that would be absurd. But I have never seen or heard of a candidate sitting down with people who have been directly impacted by the criminal justice system.”

—Vivian Nixon, CCF Executive Director

“Working closely with the Public Advocate’s office, we were able to apply our on-the-ground experience to help not only eliminate unique barriers needed to survive, but also allow directly impacted people to pursue a college degree. We call on the City Council to pass this legislation as a necessary next step in their continued efforts to decarcerate New York City.”

—Vivian Nixon, CCF Executive Director

Financials: Statement of Financial Position

Assets:	2020	2019
Cash	\$ 879,475	\$ 581,323
Contributions, grants and other receivables	861,993	578,783
Investments	1,064,205	1,099,753
Prepaid expenses	33,322	24,436
Property and equipment, net	11,936	30,685
Security deposits	2,038	2,038
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,852,969	\$ 2,317,018
Liabilities and Net Assets:	June 30, 2019	June 30, 2018
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 129,731	\$ 117,162
Total liabilities	288,715	–
Total liabilities	418,446	117,162
Commitments and contingencies (see notes)		
Net Assets:		
Without donor restrictions	1,775,257	1,539,314
With donor restrictions	659,266	660,542
Total net assets	2,434,523	2,199,856
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 2,852,969	\$ 2,317,018

Financials: Statement of Activities

	2020			2019		
Support and Revenues:	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Contributions	\$ 819,971	\$ 625,423	\$1,445,394	\$ 782,975	\$ 616,000	\$1,398,975
Government grants and contracts	1,069,569	–	1,069,569	651,171	–	651,171
Program service revenue	125,981	–	125,981	152,975	–	152,975
Government subcontracts	117,759	–	117,759	100,404	–	100,404
Special events:						
Income	–	–	–	51,513	–	51,513
Less: related direct costs	–	–	–	(20,429)	–	(20,429)
Net special event income	–	–	–	31,084	–	31,084
Investment income/(loss)	(30,227)	–	(30,227)	8,124	–	8,124
Other income	(252)	–	(252)	1,985	–	1,985
Net assets released from restriction:						
Satisfaction of purpose restrictions	405,699	(405,699)	–	307,927	(307,927)	–
Expiration of time restrictions	221,000	(221,000)	–	360,000	(360,000)	–
TOTAL NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS	\$626,699	(626,600)	–	\$667,927	(667,927)	–
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES	2,729,500	(1,276)	2,728,224	2,396,645	(51,927)	2,344,718
Expenses:						
Program services:						
College & career services	951,435	–	951,435	782,717	–	782,717
Policy & advocacy	550,525	–	550,525	303,310	–	303,310
Technical assistance	251,088	–	251,088	323,253	–	323,253
Total program expenses	1,753,048	–	1,753,048	1,409,280	–	1,409,280
Supporting services:						
Management and general	439,258	–	439,258	406,466	–	406,466
Fundraising	301,251	–	301,251	341,728	–	341,728
Total expenses	2,493,557	–	2,493,557	2,157,474	–	2,157,474
Increase/(Decrease) in net assets	235,943	(1,276)	234,667	239,171	(51,927)	187,244
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	1,539,314	660,542	2,199,856	1,300,143	712,469	2,012,612
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$ 1,775,257	\$ 659,266	\$2,434,523	\$ 1,539,314	\$ 660,542	\$2,199,856

Racial Equity

June 2020, we have witnessed years of collective trauma and pain - rooted in generations of racial discrimination and a deeply flawed criminal legal system - pour out onto our streets. As an organization committed to centering the voices of directly impacted people, advocates for trauma-informed service delivery, and a leader in the transformative power of education, we know that this is not the time for incremental change but a reimagining of the criminal legal system as we know it.

For 20 years, we have been working at the intersection of racial justice and criminal legal reform. This episode in history commands that those who have lived in the trenches, on the front lines, enduring every type of sidelining imaginable, must have a voice.

We must not only dismantle an unjust system whose origin is intrinsically tied to oppression, but set our sights further, and demand resources in its place to liberate people through education and other means of social and economic advancement.

From the time of slavery to the present day, our government has denied Black people access to education time and again as a means of oppression. Instead of spending money on an outdated, ineffective penal system that dates back to the slave patrol, we must provide education to those ensnared in this system and increase access to education to communities devastated by cyclical incarceration. Only then can we empower those, who for years have been disproportionately torn apart by America’s criminal legal system, to be the changemakers.

We recognize in this moment that Black women have continued to be the invisible population. So, we say Breonna Taylor should be alive today, George Floyd and countless others before them - should be alive today.

As an organization, we will continue to invest in human capital, support community engagement, and extend our reach through meaningful partnerships that lend themselves to collective efficacy - because we know that when people impacted by the system have the necessary tools and resources they will succeed.

Those in power must be held accountable for the actions and inactions that brought us to this moment. To do that, we must keep the protest alive and march from the streets into our respective voting booths.





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College & Community Fellowship enables women with criminal justice involvement to earn their college degrees so that they, their families, and their communities can thrive. We advocate for equity and opportunity for the communities we serve.



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