ORGANIZATIONS

Black and Pink
blackandpink.org

California Coalition for Women Prisoners
womenprisoners.org

Chicago Community Bond Fund
chicagobond.org

Community Justice Exchange
communityjusticeexchange.org

Dignity Not Detention Coalition

National Council on Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls
nationalcouncil.us

Reclaim the Block
reclaimtheblock.org

Black Visions Collective
blackvisionsmn.org

Californians United for a Responsible Budget
curbprisonspending.org

Critical Resistance
criticalresistance.org

Southerners on New Ground
southernersonnewground.org

Release Aging People in Prison
rappcampaign.org

Survived and Punished
survivedandpunished.org

The Red Nation
therednation.org

You can view this platform on Critical Resistance’s website. Please visit http://criticalresistance.org/abolitionist-platform-in-response-to-covid-19-resources/ to view related resources.
This document lays out a platform for COVID-19 emergency response in a way that supports freedom, health, and collective care, and actively resists the prison industrial complex in all its forms.

As COVID-19 spreads around the country, abolitionists grow increasingly alarmed at the ways that this new development is impacting our loved ones connected to the prison industrial complex (PIC). Locked facilities are already toxic environments; exposing those inside to poor and crowded living conditions and lack of care. There is a long history of epidemics and diseases spreading throughout prison and jail systems with little recourse or relief. We know that during times of crisis, the PIC builds up its capacity and often expands – while communities most marginalized are left behind. They are the last to receive relief both inside and out of prison. They have escalated experiences of harm due to more frequent police contact and expanded police power. They are more likely to be targeted due to heightened surveillance.

Decades of organizing to end the prison industrial complex has prepared us and our movements for liberation to respond to the COVID-19 emergency with a focus on putting people’s immediate well-being first, tapping into communities’ knowledges about how to build structures for support and mutual aid, and moving forward with a vision for long-term building. As abolitionists, we believe that social structures, both formal and informal, need to support people’s lives and ability to live. We also believe that policing, imprisonment, and surveillance do not, and cannot, ensure safety or create opportunities for care. As a severe public health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated abolitionist demands and practices as the most common sense and practical steps to ensure that we are as strong and healthy as possible.

The abolition of the prison industrial complex is about dismantling cages and oppressive structures while building up the resources, practices, and institutions that support healthy and self-determined communities. It requires all of us. As Ruthie Gilmore noted during Los Angeles for Abolition: Dismantling Jails and Building Liberation (Sept. 2019), “abolition is a practical program of radical change cobbled together from the work that people do in disparate struggles every day.”

We are seeing this already in the massive movements to share resources, look out for each other, and build networks and structures for care across cities and towns, neighborhoods, and virtual communities. Here, we uplift calls for life-saving measures to address the needs of prisoners and loved ones, people facing housing and food insecurity – long term or with the loss of work now, and people who are targeted for arrest and detention. These are real, clear, and concrete steps for stemming the pandemic now among millions of the most vulnerable and changing the social and political structures that guarantee that vulnerability.

**How we address this crisis will determine what our society looks like after it passes. We are committed to seeding a more abolitionist future.**
POUNTS OF THE PLATFORM

1. Demand Freedom for Imprisoned and Detained People, and Defend Their and Their Loved Ones’ Wellbeing

2. Resist Surveillance, Policing, and Militarized Responses to COVID-19

3. Demand People’s Access to Quality Healthcare Now and into the Future

4. Ensure People’s Access to Housing, Food, and Economic Security

5. Support Internationalism / End US Imperialism and Militarism

All Photos from *Brooke Anderson Photography: Still of Our Stories and Struggles*
movementphotographer.com
1. DEMAND FREEDOM FOR ALL IMPRISONED AND DETAINED PEOPLE, AND DEFEND THEIR AND THEIR ONES’ WELLBEING

Prisons, jails, detention centers, and psychiatric facilities are sites in which the COVID-19 virus is spreading at exponential rates. As such, carceral settings are fundamentally unable to hold people healthily and safely. We must prioritize the release of incarcerated people now, and access to safety measures for those still inside. We must free them all.

- Release all people in immigrant detention centers and contracted jailing facilities, and end all detention expansion

- Release all people from jails, halfway houses, transition centers and federal and state prisons, starting with elderly, immunocompromised, and others who have been identified as being particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 (including Black, trans, gender nonconforming, and LGBTQ prisoners). Immigrants being released must not be funneled to immigration custody from local jails, state prison systems, or any state agency. All jurisdictions should have a full decarceration plan as soon as possible, but in no longer than 30 days. Demand full release, not carceral mechanisms such as furloughs or home monitoring.

- Use a public health lens to replace a “criminal justice” lens and resist excluding any group of people based on category of crime or conviction. This includes rejecting false divisions branding people as either "violent" or "non-violent."

- Upon imprisoned people’s release, provide free, safe transportation from facilities to their community residence of choice, if needed. For those who do not have housing lined up, provide access to housing.

- Provide immediate and full access to free health care and health/hygiene supplies for all imprisoned people. Provide soap, hand sanitizer, medical care, and eliminate all medical co-pays.

- All facilities detaining and imprisoning people must share a plan to ensure the health and safety of all people in carceral facilities with the public.
Instances of crisis and disaster have historically been used as justification for escalating the resources and power of policing and military responses. Once the crisis has passed, the escalated capacities and response become the new norm. We must not yield to any calls for surveillance, police, or military as a means of managing people under COVID-19. During this time, it is imperative to cease police contact and utilize community based and collective solidarity to support each other.

- Law enforcement, military collaborations and deployment should be removed from emergency response completely. Do not increase funding to law enforcement, as is the practice under emergency declarations. Emergency funds should be released to community-based organizations, health worker organizations, and self-organized mutual aid groups that are providing material support directly to vulnerable communities.

- End all ICE enforcement operations immediately, including surveillance, arrests, and deportations

- End all new arrests, bookings, detentions and caging

- Immediately end all immigration, law enforcement and child welfare presence in hospitals, clinics, child care, and distribution centers. No one should have to fear being tracked or flagged for contact with the PIC when accessing care.

- Immediately end all quality of life and broken windows policing, including police enforcement and neighborhood patrols against the houseless, vendors, sex workers & others who are forced to be in public spaces.

- DAs should decline all criminal charges and divert to public health and community-based supports
o Cancel all pretrial, probation, and parole meetings; revocation hearings for technical violations; court-ordered classes; drug testing; collection of court debt and restitution; and modify all reporting conditions to phone-reporting.

o End all “failure to appear” warrants or, “bench warrants” and agree to jointly waive the appearance of people who are out-of-custody.

o Ban government collaborations with Google, Facebook and other tech companies to use aggregated location data captured from mobile phones for public health surveillance of the virus. While these strategies may support the immediate containment of the virus, the long-term impact is increased, violent surveillance and criminalization of vulnerable communities.

o We demand a commitment from local and state officials and public health authorities, law enforcement, prosecutors, and immigration authorities that disclosure or failure to disclose COVID-19 symptoms and non-compliance with “shelter in place” or “quarantine” will not under any circumstances lead to criminalization, family court involvement or involvement of immigration authorities.
The spread of COVID-19 has revealed our sorely under resourced health infrastructure, and reaffirmed the ways that it is tied to systems of criminalization and control. Decades of building up the prison industrial complex while neglecting investment in healthcare is what got us here. We must quickly move to a health care system that is accessible, robust, collective — and not intertwined with policing and surveillance. Health care workers should be well resourced and given what is needed to care for communities.

- Eliminate medical co-pays for all. All medicines, vaccines and treatment should be free and accessible to all people.
- Make COVID-19 testing and treatment universally available; no one should be turned away and frontline workers should be prioritized (e.g. food delivery workers, childcare workers, distribution center workers, healthcare workers, etc.)
- Equity in access to care: all clinics and hospitals should be resourced equitably and equipped to provide testing and treatment to COVID-19 patients, including tribal health clinics and hospitals part of the Indian Health Service.
- Immediately end all immigration, law enforcement and child welfare presence in hospitals and clinics. No one should have to fear being tracked or flagged for contact with the PIC when accessing care.
- Provide universal paid sick leave to all workers in all sectors, including those with temporary/part-time employment status.
- Provide access to abortions. Some states have been ordered to stop providing the procedure on the grounds that it is a “nonessential and elective” procedure.
o Provide access to trans health-care. Some states have been ordered to stop providing trans healthcare on the grounds that it is an “nonessential and elective” procedure.

o Provide protective gear, testing kits, surgical masks and ventilators to all shelters, outreach workers and street care providers. Prioritize protective gear and resources to frontline caretakers like nurses, mothers, doctors, and teachers.

o Provide free and direct delivery of testing and care services to elders, immunocompromised people and people with disabilities

o Provide rapid deployment of free mobile WiFi in communities with limited access to facilitate on-line education, tele-medicine, basic communications.

o Provide free public transportation for all (busses, trains, subways, etc.) and coordinate free transportation assistance for people with disabilities.

o Provide free access to telehealth and prescriptions for at least 3 months

o End all cuts to SSI and SSDI. Suspend all medical Continuing Disability Reviews.

o Close all schools, colleges, and universities, and provide free meals, paid leave and free, sanitary, and well-resourced childcare services to students, parents, and caregivers, especially those who are frontline health workers

o Immediate end to mandatory reporting to Child Welfare.
This crisis has underscored the need for all people to have access to stable housing, necessities such as food and water, and economic security immediately. These are necessary for survival, yet the prison industrial complex feeds off of and perpetuates people’s inability to have access to these basic resources. Given the heightened precarity of so many already vulnerable people that leaves them without basic needs while they are criminalized for their efforts to survive, the only solution is to meet the needs of communities to ensure the health and safety of everyone.

- **Housing for All**
  - Cancel/Waive all rent payments
  - Freeze all mortgage payments
  - Immediate end to all home evictions and property repossessions
  - Open up unoccupied homes for anyone who needs one
  - End all utility shutoffs and waive utility charges for the period of social distancing (plus some time), as people won’t be able to pay these bills once they are able to work again.
  - Restore access to water, gas and power to all homes, even in the midst of payment issues
  - Immediately enable those unhoused, those being released from jail and prison facilities with no housing set up, and those fleeing potential harm from intimate partners or guardians to inhabit vacant property, free of charge, and in a long-term capacity
Immediately end all police sweeps and patrols of houseless community members, and provide guaranteed housing for all

- **FOOD FOR ALL**
  - Provide access to adequate and healthy food for all
  - Ensure equitable distribution of basic food and supplies during the period of social distancing
  - Put price caps on all food and supplies to prevent profiteering during the period of social distancing
  - Ensure food delivery to those with restricted mobility and access

- **UNIVERSAL INCOME / NO DEBT**
  - Provide financial and material assistance plans for people who have lost their jobs, been laid off or are expected to refrain from working
  - Provide a livable universal basic income for all individuals
  - Suspend all loans payments, foreclosures and parking enforcements
  - Cancel all student, medical and credit debt
  - All aid/relief must include undocumented people
  - Relief/ aid must prioritize people over profit
This pandemic is not bound by borders. As such, our solidarity and response must be international. Moments of crisis and disaster have long been used as justification for restricting people’s access to movement and care. All borders and sanctions that restrict people’s movement to access care or restrict the exchange of food and medical supplies across nations and territories must be lifted.

- End all local and international exchanges of policing, surveillance and military technologies.
- Immediately suspend all military activity in countries with US troops, and begin withdrawing military presence internationally.
- Halt Department of Homeland Security border patrol activity and open up borders for refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers.
- End US sanctions against Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, North Korea, and all countries to increase the exchange of and access to medical care and supplies.
- End US military aid to repressive governments, especially as they are instituting draconian measures as a response to COVID-19, such as Israel’s continued blockade of Gaza and denial of legal access and basic medical care to Palestinian political prisoners, and the Philippines’ Duterte abusing emergency powers against the population.
- Ensure that tribal health clinics and hospitals part of the Indian Health Service are resourced equitably and equipped to provide testing and treatment to COVID-19 patients.
- Provide unconditional financial support to countries, such as Cuba and Venezuela, who are providing medical teams to countries hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.