

Resource Guide

BACKGROUND

The Blueprint for Racial Justice (BRJ) was created in 2020 after the death of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers. Floyd's murder raised the nation's consciousness to real and/or perceived inequities in the justice system and led the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) to pass a resolution that called on courts to 'intensify efforts to combat racial prejudice within the justice system ... and to recommit to examine what systemic change is needed to make equality under the law an enduring reality for all.'

The Blueprint for Racial Justice is supported with funding from the State Justice Institute and staffed by NCSC. Its Steering Committee is made up of members of CCJ and COSCA. The Blueprint is a community of court professionals from around the country committed to ensuring "justice is not only fair to all but also is recognized by all to be fair."

To make this happen, BRJ members are working in a range of areas including fairness and awareness; systemic change; improving diversity of the bench, bar and workforce; and communication and implementation.

RESOURCES

Since its inception, the Blueprint for Racial Justice has created dozens of resources to support state courts' efforts to improve diversity, equity and fairness through education, community engagement, data analysis, court services, and leadership and governance. The Blueprint's work is ongoing, with papers, policies, webinars, and other resources continuing to be developed.

The resources include nearly 20 webinars; papers, toolkits, and action plans; numerous videos, podcasts, and other mixed media products; and various other materials.

- All resources are housed in NCSC's [Racial Justice Resource Center](#), which also includes materials created outside the Blueprint but complement and support its work and mission.

Major Recent Resource Developments

- [The Racial Justice Organizational Assessment Tool for Courts](#) – This assessment tool is a self-service resource that serves as a roadmap to help courts create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace and court services that deliver on the mission to provide equal justice for all. Court professionals are encouraged to use the assessment tool as part of a system review process to help identify opportunities for learning and improvement, and to inform their decisions about immediate priorities for action. Launched in March 2023
- [CORA, Court Opportunity Recruitment for All](#) -- A job application portal for courts to upload career opportunities – namely clerkships/externships/internships -- for law



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students across the country. CORA provides a universal application process similar to the Federal Courts' OSCAR program, with a mission to increase the diversity of the bench, bar, and court workforce by broadening the pool of candidates. (Currently being piloted in Connecticut, South Carolina, Delaware, New Hampshire.) Marketing materials, including a brochure and videos, are available in the Resource Center, see below.

- [CORA Brochure](#) – Explains the platform, its benefits and how to use it.
- Videos to support CORA:
 - [Processes and Practices for Hiring Law Clerks, Externs and Interns](#) (for judges and court professionals)
 - [State Courts are Where Career Opportunities Exist](#) – (for law students)
 - [Court Opportunity Recruitment for All \(CORA\) animated social media shorts](#)
- Creation of the Network for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Court Professionals
 - The Network was formed to provide peer-to-peer discussions and meetings for court professionals around the country whose job involves overseeing their court's DEI efforts. The Network held its first convening in November 2022 in Atlanta, which was so successful that they have formed a listserv to share stories, questions and to plan future collaboration time.
 - The Network held its first virtual learning session in April, which focused on judicial education. The second session is scheduled for June 12, 2023. The topic of that session will be strategic planning.
- The *Blueprint for Racial Justice Quarterly* – an e-newsletter to inform the nation's state court community about the Blueprint's work, the resources available, and other issues relevant to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the courts. To subscribe, go to www.ncsc.org/publications-and-library/newsletters
- Web repository

Webinars

- [Where to Begin: Lessons Learned on the Path to Creating a Racial Justice Blueprint](#) and [What's Next: Maintaining Momentum on the Path to Creating a Racial Justice Blueprint](#)
 - [Webinar Resource Guide](#)
- [The Importance of Language: How to Use Inclusive Communication to Advance Equity in the Administration of Justice](#)
- [Knock Knock \(Not!\), Who's There?](#)
- [Racial Disparities and Systemic Change: Putting Guiding Principles Into Action](#)



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- Pretrial Reform Series
 - [Research on Pre-Trial Assessment, Release and Detention](#)
 - [Implementation Challenges and Opportunities Roundtable](#)
 - [Pretrial Historical and Legal Foundation](#)
- Fines & Fees series
 - [Fair Justice for All: Recommendations for Imposing and Enforcing Financial Sanctions](#)
 - [How a Community Conversation Changed the lives in the Ocean State](#)
- Jury Diversity Series
 - [Jury Selection: beyond intentional racial bias](#)
 - [Implicit bias and juror decision-making](#)
 - [Criminal history exclusions and jury diversity](#)
 - [The path to a diverse jury pool](#)
 - [Jury diversity and its role in promoting confidence in the court system](#)

Papers & Toolkits

- Systemic Change [Guiding Principles](#), Systemic Change [Action Plan](#), and a [Directory](#) of over 60 court efforts to implement 23 types of initiatives across five areas of reform to promote equal justice. (*If your court is doing work in these areas but isn't yet represented in the directory, please let NCSC know. Submit an entry for a future edition of the Directory by completing the online [Directory Submission Form](#).*)
- [Inferring Race & Ethnicity Demographics from U.S. Census Data: Testing the Feasibility for Use in State Court Disparity Analysis](#) -- a research white paper.
- [Community Engagement Talking Points and Tips](#) - Tips to help courts increase and promote community engagement through relationship-building activities with community members.
- Four companion videos – [Advancing Community Conversations featured projects](#) are available in the Resource Center. The videos were produced by courts in Michigan, Kentucky and New Hampshire (two videos) and demonstrate how courts are addressing racial justice issues with measurable solutions to achieve fair and equitable justice.
- [Advancing Equity in the Administration of Justice Through Inclusive Communication and Person-Centered Language](#) -- Guide to raise awareness about the value of inclusive communications and person-centered language and the importance of mitigating stigmatizing language. Provides practical examples. (See companion webinar.)



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- [Establishing a Shared Language in the State Courts](#) – Document that explains why developing a shared language is important in conversations about racial justice and offers guidance on how to get started. (See companion Tiny Chat.)

Videos/Podcasts/Hotlines

- [Tiny Chat: Shared Language](#) -- (*Establishing a Shared Language in the State Courts* serves as a companion piece to this Tiny Chat.)
- [PIO Hotline](#) -- Resource for courts requiring both routine and rapid response assistance with crisis communications, media relations, community outreach and more. Members of CCPIO provide assistance.
- [Watch/Read/Listen](#) -- an informal “book club” to promote national conversations about racial justice. Every other month the Blueprint recommends a book, show, or podcast that addresses topical issues.

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