



Racial Justice Statement

To promote justice for *all* children, the National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC) must actively work to counteract the deeply rooted systemic biases that disproportionately impact Black, Latinx, Asian, Native, Indigenous, and all youth who experience disparate treatment because of their race or ethnicity at every stage of the juvenile legal system.

NJDC is committed to incorporating racial justice advocacy in every aspect of our work supporting youth and defenders across the country, by:

- ensuring racial justice advocacy and education is incorporated in every training, publication, and project;
- providing resources to help defenders raise race and change discriminatory policies and practices;
- preparing defenders to incorporate research and data on race, adolescence, and police trauma throughout a case;
- increasing the capacity of defenders to train others to raise race, address implicit bias, and challenge discriminatory practices;
- raising awareness about racial and ethnic disparities, implicit bias, and racial trauma with policymakers, juvenile legal system stakeholders, and the public; and
- establishing a diverse community of defenders, advocates, and leaders within our organization and regional juvenile defender centers.

Racial justice advocacy is integral to effective juvenile defense, and juvenile defenders play a vital role, through both courtroom and policy advocacy, in dismantling discriminatory systems that harm youth. A juvenile defender cannot fully, ethically, and zealously represent their young clients if that defender does not consider the impact systemic racism has had on each young person's life and on the circumstances that brought them into juvenile court. As defenders, we must consistently raise race in the juvenile legal system, which is, at its core, about race.