

# GENDER JUSTICE AT CEPP: POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS, AND PROGRESS

2025



C E P P

Center for Effective Public Policy

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# ABOUT US, MISSION, & VISION

For over 45 years, CEPP has supported practitioners, policymakers, and communities in reimagining a justice system that works for all —providing training, resources, and strategic planning grounded in local and national expertise.

CEPP’s work with women inspires change by equipping agencies, advocates, and system-impacted women with information and technical assistance that promotes trauma- and research-informed, gender-responsive policies and practices. To advance our mission, we:



Partner with system stakeholders, community organizations, and those directly impacted to co-develop policies, improve practices, and deliver meaningful training.



Work alongside a team of currently and formerly incarcerated advisors to co-develop innovative, scalable educational tools and resources that advance safety and well-being in the field.



Collaborate with government and nonprofit partners to provide tailored support to justice systems at all levels, focusing on staff wellness, gender and trauma, data use, and related areas.



Support jurisdictions with implementation support, helping teams turn promising ideas into action.

## Our Team

Our team members have decades of experience working at all levels of the criminal legal system, a deep understanding of how to bring about lasting change, and subject area expertise to help agencies and organizations move their important work forward.



**Erica King, MSW,**  
Senior Manager



**Keilah Joyner, MPA, MS,**  
Program Associate

# STRATEGIC PARTNERS - CEPP'S GENDER JUSTICE POLICY ADVISORS

Building collective justice strategies across areas of difference is critical to advancing the safety and health of our families and communities. We are proud to collaborate with partners essential to our work's success, including currently and formerly incarcerated people whose lived experiences are central to shaping our programs and policies, and people whose lives have been impacted by violence. Through this balanced approach, we are embracing the inherent tensions that exist between systems and communities, moving our work forward and developing practical, harm-reduction strategies. These women are not just participants; they are **leaders, collaborators, and experts** in shaping policies and practices that reflect their realities and needs. The following consultants worked almost 2000 hours across 2024 and 2025, across our projects focused on improving the health and well-being of women.



**Ashley Mackie**  
Student, University of Maine  
& Teacher's Assistant,  
Justice Coding Lab



**Cheryl Wilkins**  
Co-Founder and Co-Director,  
Center for Justice at Columbia  
University



**Catherine Jones**  
Consultant



**Consuela Gaines**  
Chapter Organizer,  
Voice for the  
Experienced



**Darlene George**  
Facilitator and Coordinator, Maine  
Prisoners Advocacy Coalition;  
Lead Opportunity Scholar



**Kristie Puckett**  
Chief of Staff, Second Chance  
Federation, Lead Gender  
Justice Policy Advisor



**Kyle Black**  
Policy and Outreach  
Associate, Oregon Justice  
Resource Center



**Linda Small**  
Founder and Executive  
Director, Reentry Sisters



**Nicole Lemay**  
Interim Executive Director,  
Youth Led Justice



**Pamela Neely**  
Member of the Women's  
Community Justice  
Association



**Ruby Carter-Welch**  
Organizer and Founder, Formerly  
Incarcerated Empowered  
Leaders Overcoming Negative  
Stigmas (F.E.L.O.N.)



**Tamika Cheree Henry**  
Founder, I Am Here



**Undrea "Gem" Jones**  
Founder, Building Bridges  
Solutions LLC



**Victoria Scott**  
Board Member,  
University of Maine at  
Augusta Prison  
Education Partnership



**Yolanda Johnson**  
Consultant

# THE CHALLENGES

Addressing the distinct needs of women in the justice system yields better outcomes for women as well as their families and communities. Our work equips system stakeholders with the insight and tools to implement approaches that are more responsive, equitable, and effective. This work is critical given the realities women face in the justice system:

- **A dramatic surge:** Over the past four decades, the [number of women](#) in state prisons has skyrocketed by 834%.
- **Trauma is the norm:** 86% of women in jail [report](#) surviving sexual violence, and 77% have experienced intimate partner violence—both key drivers of women’s incarceration.
- **Presumed innocent, but behind bars:** More than half of the [84,000 women in local jails](#) are awaiting trial, not convicted of a crime.
- **Incarcerated mothers, rising numbers:** 80% of women in jail are mothers. From 1991 to 2016, the number of [mothers in prison](#) grew by 96%.
- **Collateral damage of incarceration:** Because women are often primary caregivers and earners, their incarceration destabilizes families and deepens cycles of poverty.
- **Released and unsupported:** 1.7 million women [return from prisons and jails](#) each year with little to no help rebuilding their lives.
- **Set up to fail:** Women are too often re-incarcerated for “technical violations” – missing a meeting, falling behind on fines, or failing a drug test, and not for committing new crimes.
- **Punished for poverty:** Women, who are often primary caregivers, are [disproportionately](#) burdened by court fines and fees.
- **Less support, fewer opportunities:** Women receive fewer visits in prison and have more limited access to diversion and rehabilitation programs than men.
- **A system designed for men, applied to women:** Despite fundamental differences in needs, most prison [programming](#) mirrors that of men’s facilities.



“The providers from CEPP have always proven to be responsive, efficient, and effective in the performance of project deliverables. Their work on institutional and community assessments for women under supervision has resulted in a one-of-a-kind tool that agencies have embraced and found incredibly useful.”

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***Lorie Brisbin,  
Former Correctional Program Specialist,  
National Institute of Corrections***

# GENDER JUSTICE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

At CEPP, we believe that meaningful justice reform begins with people—and that includes both those who operate the system and those most affected by it. Each year, we partner with practitioners, organizations, people affected by violence, and those who are currently or formerly incarcerated to provide technical assistance, implement innovative solutions, and drive systemic change. We also deliver a broad range of in-person and virtual training sessions for criminal justice professionals nationwide.

Training topics include:

- Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence
- Women and Pretrial
- Gender-Responsive Services and Equitable Diversion Access
- Strategies for Gender-Responsive Reentry and Crisis Response
- Trauma-Informed Gender-Responsive Assessment

Our training is designed to advance policies and practices that improve the safety and well-being of women and their families. By sharing essential learnings and practical tools, we equip practitioners to lead change in their communities.

What sets CEPP apart is our multidisciplinary, cross-systems approach. We bring system stakeholders, community partners, and directly impacted people to the same table. By doing so, CEPP builds strategies that are not only effective but also just, inclusive, and deeply rooted in real-world experience.



Our work spans a broad range of local, state, and national initiatives aimed at creating meaningful change and increasing the well-being of directly impacted women and staff. Here are some examples:

## Deschutes County, Oregon



CEPP supported Deschutes County Community Justice in refining data indicators that align with their new gender responsive approach to inform practice-based evidence. We worked closely with county staff to define key performance measures for both employees and the women they served, and to strengthen the agency's ability to communicate results effectively to stakeholders.

## Hennepin County, Minnesota



CEPP partnered with Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation to evaluate the agency's needs related to trauma- and gender-responsive practices, and provided recommendations on policies, training, protocols, and tools based on the assessment findings.

## New York State Office of the Courts



CEPP partnered with the Council of State Governments to provide training and technical assistance to Justice Mental Health Collaboration Program grantees in the Bronx and Rochester courts, addressing the unique needs of justice-involved women and gender-expansive individuals.

## Multnomah County, Oregon



CEPP helped Multnomah County apply the Agency Evaluation Tool for Women on Supervision (AETWS). This included conducting the assessment, developing an action plan, and assisting the Community Justice Adult Services Division and Women and Family Services Division in strengthening the Women and Family Services Unit, expanding services for women on supervision, and providing more effective, gender-responsive support for staff and clients.

## Prince William County, Virginia



In June 2025, CEPP presented at Prince William County's first Community Safety Innovations Symposium on a panel discussing the development of coordinated responses to domestic violence. CEPP highlighted the value of system mapping as a tool to help communities identify decision points, gaps, and opportunities to strengthen services for survivors and hold perpetrators accountable.

## Spokane County, Washington



CEPP, in collaboration with the Council of State Governments, facilitated training on behavioral health and reentry implementation, providing guidance on gender-responsive services to counties working to advance gender equity during reentry and crisis situations.

## Tallahassee, Florida



In 2022, CEPP received an award from the Bureau of Prisons to conduct a Gender-Informed Practices Assessment (GIPA) at the Tallahassee Federal Correctional Institution, evaluating gender-responsive policies and practices. The findings informed the facility's strategic planning to improve programming and outcomes for women in custody. Building on that work, in 2024, CEPP partnered with the Bureau of Prisons and the Women and Special Populations Branch to develop a 6-module training series to increase the safety and well-being of staff and incarcerated women and develop data and policy strategies to reduce restrictive housing for women and address the broader needs of incarcerated women.

## West Michigan



CEPP partnered with the Council of State Governments to provide technical assistance to Second Chance Act grantees in Western Michigan, supporting efforts to advance community-based reentry, diversion, and crisis services for women under supervision.



“Being a Justice Policy Advisor for CEPP as an incarcerated Black woman is profoundly impactful. The unparalleled support from the staff at CEPP leading the women’s work makes all the difference. Every project we embark on leaves a legacy, ensuring that our efforts will be remembered and utilized for years to come.”



***Darlene George,  
Gender Justice Policy Advisor, Maine***

Our team members routinely present their work at national and local conferences. These invitations reflect both the field's interest in the topic of gender justice and the expertise our team brings to addressing the complex needs of currently and formerly incarcerated women.



**Develop your Roadmap: Using the Agency Evaluation Tool for Women on Supervision (Ohio, September 2025)**



**Improving Outcomes for Women: Agency Evaluation Tool for Women on Supervision (New York, August 2025)**



**Women and LGBTI Populations: Ensuring Equity in the Parole Process (Washington, May 2024)**



**Solidarity Justice: Collective Care, Safety, and Generational Healing in a Digital World (Maine, October 2025, Conference Host)**

**Making Social Impact through Healing and Collaborative Work Within and Beyond the Walls (New York, March 2025)**

**Transformation through Innovation (Maine, October 2024, Conference Host)**

**Integrating Gender Justice Strategies Within and Beyond the Walls (New York, April 2024)**



**Gender Equity: Policies and Practices that Work with Women, Non-Binary People, and Families (Ohio, August 2024)**



**Participatory Pretrial: Women and Pretrial (Georgia, September 2025)**

**Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence Support (Louisiana, September 2024)**

# RESOURCES

CEPP is continuously developing new resources, often co-authored by women with lived experience. These innovative, evidence-based, and trauma-informed resources are designed to enhance outcomes, respond to the unique needs of women in the system, and accelerate justice.



## [Caregivers and Their Children: Pretrial Justice Policy & Practice Brief](#)

December 2025

## [Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence Self-Assessment Checklist](#)

December 2025



## [Bringing Gender Justice to Pretrial](#)

August 2025

## [Make Every Interaction Count: Successful Community Supervision with Women](#)

May 2025



## [Building Responsive Pretrial Systems](#)

October 2024

## [Returning Home: My Guide to Community Reentry](#)

October 2024



## [Creating a Culture of Safety and Well-Being: Training and Coaching](#)

June 2024

## [Gender Justice Pretrial Toolkit](#)

April 2024



## [Trauma-Informed Prisons and Gender Justice: Building a Culture of Safety and Well-Being](#)

January 2024

## [Anthology: What Are We Waiting For?](#)

Summer 2023



# ACCOMPLISHMENTS & IMPACT

Across CEPP's gender justice-focused projects, we employ a results-driven, data-informed approach to evaluate our impact and refine our strategies. In addition to providing training and technical assistance, we work with system and community partners to model policies and practices that enhance safety and well-being.



CEPP's work with the Bureau of Prisons Women and Special Populations Branch to reduce the harm of restrictive housing for adults incarcerated at FCI-Tallahassee led to a **reduction of segregation to under 2%**, the lowest in the country.

**CEPP has maintained a 100% satisfaction rate from training participants**, reflecting the high quality and relevance of the content presented.



In July 2024, CEPP Senior Manager Erica King was named an expert advisor to the Council on Criminal Justice's **Women's Justice Commission**, a multi-year initiative focused on advancing evidence-based reforms to improve safety, health, and justice for women in the system.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS & IMPACT CONTINUED

Across CEPP's gender justice-focused projects, we employ a results-driven, data-informed approach to evaluate our impact and refine our strategies. In addition to providing training and technical assistance, we work with system and community partners to model policies and practices that enhance safety and well-being.

CEPP's **Opportunity Scholars** bring academic, policy, and lived experience to national reform efforts, with a focus on women, families, emerging adults, higher education, and community justice. In partnership with the Maine Department of Corrections, they helped establish **the nation's first resident remote work policy in January 2025**, providing incarcerated people with access to meaningful remote jobs at competitive wages to support their families and meet financial obligations.



CEPP, in partnership with the Maine Department of Corrections, Washington County Community College, and Unlocked Labs, launched the **Justice Policy Coding Lab in 2025, the first program of its kind in the nation**. The Lab teaches incarcerated women coding and digital skills to support both justice reform projects and future employment.

The inaugural class of 11 women began in June. Participants are earning industry-recognized certifications, developing coding portfolios, and acquiring skills that position them for long-term professional growth and economic stability. The program was recently featured on [Maine Public's Cracking the Code](#). By offering badges, certificates, academic credits, and apprenticeships, the Lab opens pathways to education, careers, and sustained economic mobility.

"I am deeply honored to have worked with CEPP for over two years. As a survivor of domestic and intimate partner violence and the unimaginable loss of my only daughter, this journey has been life-altering—a path of healing, growth, and ultimately, empowerment. CEPP has helped me use my voice to uplift others facing similar struggles. Elevating women's voices is not just a mission but a necessity. We must change how the criminal justice system views and addresses cases involving women, who are too often criminalized and silenced when they are the true victims—especially when forced to make heartbreaking decisions to protect themselves or their children."



***Tamika Cheree Henry,***  
***Founder, I am Here***

# THANK YOU

We are extremely grateful for the support of our funders, whose commitment enables us to continue our work and expand our impact. Together, we form a powerful network dedicated to creating a fairer and just system for all.

- Apple's Racial Equity and Justice Initiative
- Arnold Ventures
- Bureau of Justice Assistance
- Bureau of Prisons Women and Special Populations Branch
- Center for Justice Innovation
- Council on Criminal Justice Women's Justice Commission
- Council of State Governments Justice Center
- Louis N. Cassett Foundation
- Mellon Foundation
- Ms. Foundation
- National Institute of Corrections
- Qualcomm Charitable Foundation



**Arnold  
Ventures**



Mellon  
Foundation



**Justice  
Center**

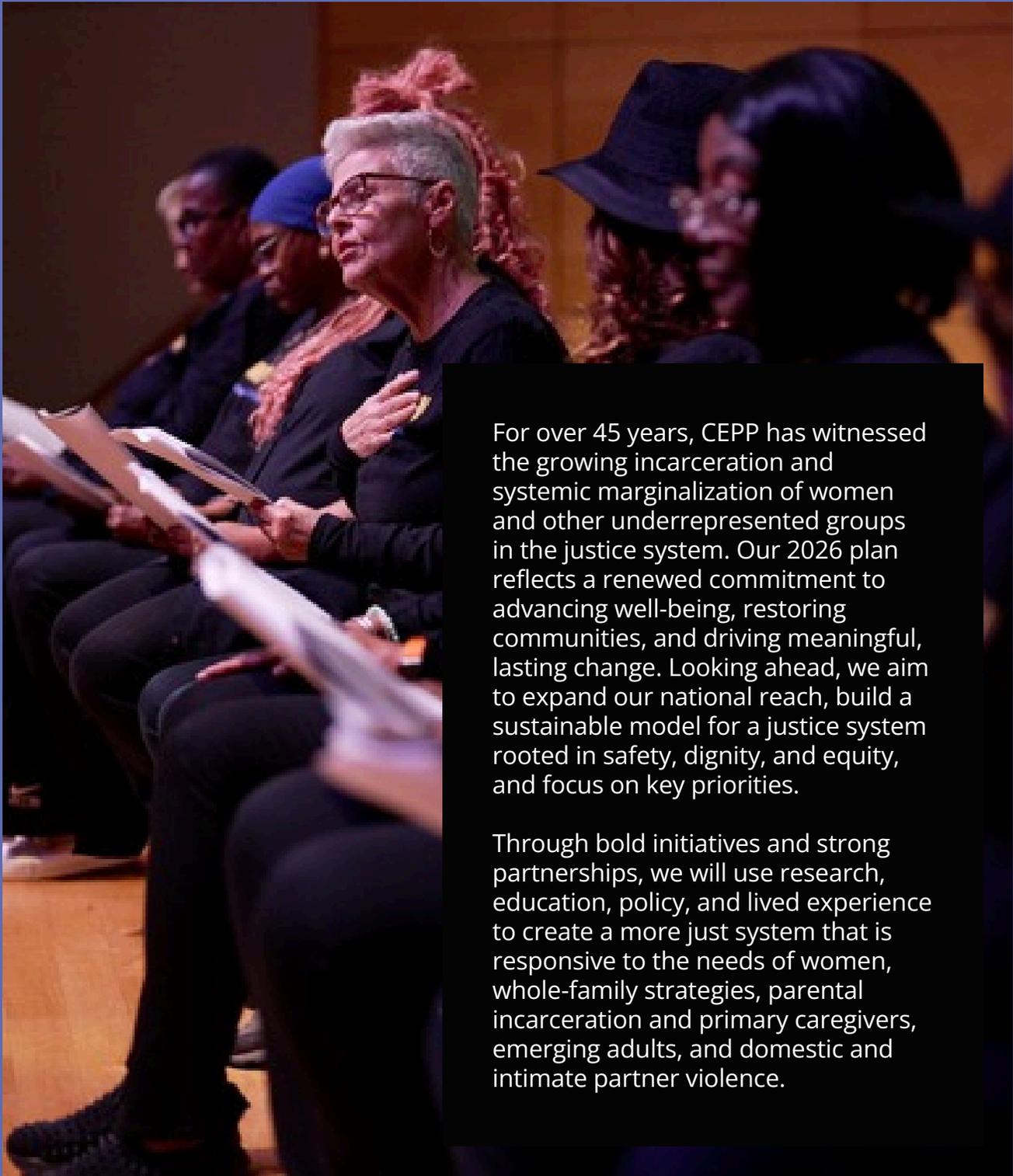
*Louis N. Cassett  
Foundation*



**BJA**  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
U.S. Department of Justice



# OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE



For over 45 years, CEPP has witnessed the growing incarceration and systemic marginalization of women and other underrepresented groups in the justice system. Our 2026 plan reflects a renewed commitment to advancing well-being, restoring communities, and driving meaningful, lasting change. Looking ahead, we aim to expand our national reach, build a sustainable model for a justice system rooted in safety, dignity, and equity, and focus on key priorities.

Through bold initiatives and strong partnerships, we will use research, education, policy, and lived experience to create a more just system that is responsive to the needs of women, whole-family strategies, parental incarceration and primary caregivers, emerging adults, and domestic and intimate partner violence.

# WORK WITH US

We welcome the opportunity to work together to advance the safety and well-being of women, primary caregivers, and the staff who support them. Whether through diversion, system-based services, or community reentry and accountability, we provide training, technical assistance, and implementation support that strengthen outcomes across the justice continuum.

**VISIT OUR [WEBSITE](#) TO LEARN MORE.**

**[CONTACT US](#) TO FIND OUT HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR JURISDICTION.**





Center for Effective Public Policy