

AVENUES FOR JUSTICE **2024** **ANNUAL REPORT**

Creating A More Just Future



ABOUT AVENUES FOR JUSTICE

Avenues for Justice (AFJ) is a NYC non-profit organization that has continued to provide free-post arrest support to at-risk young people for over 45 years.

As one of the first Alternative-to-Incarceration programs for young people and young adults in the country, AFJ has protected NYC's court-involved and at-risk youth from incarceration, replacing cells with services.

AFJ provides free on-going court advocacy along with their HIRE UP online and onsite enrichment programs for workforce training, education, mental health and mentoring to over 600 young people, ages 13-24, each year.

On average, 94% of AFJ's court-involved Participants avoid reconviction within three years of enrollment into the program, making our alternative to incarceration (ATI) program one of the most successful, cost-effective models in the US.

AFJ operates programs for two main groups of Participants:

- 1) "Court-Involved" Participants who are in the criminal justice system; and
- 2) "At-Risk" Participants who are at-risk of involvement with the criminal justice system, often referred by school, family, community members, or other court-involved youth.

Services for the Court-Involved and At-Risk programs are provided online and onsite at AFJ's two community centers in Harlem and the Lower East Side, and at AFJ's headquarters inside the Manhattan Criminal Courthouse.

Court-Involved Participants receive court advocacy services with intensive case management. All Participants receive HIRE UP services for job readiness and certification, teen empowerment and legal rights, life skills, mental and physical health wellness, academic support and tutoring.

AFJ also provides referrals to third party specialists for all Participants when needed.





OUR IMPACT

674

Participants were served in 2024, an AFJ record, exceeding our goal of 500.

94%

Percentage of Participants who avoid reconviction within three years of enrollment at AFJ.

500

Participants attended HIRE Up workshops.

“The impact that AFJ has had on my life cannot be expressed in words. This is why, after 30 years I continue to come back, give back, and share my story.”

LUIS
AFJ Alumnus

“I credit a lot to Nelson, my Court Advocate. He was always there to talk to me. He always called me to tell me the things that I had to do and he coached me like a father. That’s something that you can’t get anywhere else. He supported me like I was his family member. Not everyone treats strangers like family. Even though it’s his job, it felt like I mattered. It made me feel special. His support made me want to change and to do better.”

JOHN
AFJ Participant

OUR IMPACT

111

Participants had a favorable court outcome (case dismissed, reduced, were adjudicated as a youthful offender, or were conditionally discharged to AFJ) in 2024.

161

Digital literacy certifications earned by 32 Participants in 2024.

136

Certifications in OSHA-10, Scaffolding Safety-10, Flaggers, CPR and Food Handlers trainings in 2024.

78

Court-Involved Participants obtained a job/internship in 2024.

“I rely on AFJ. If I have a kid under 20 who had no criminal involvement in the past, then has appeared with five cases in the last few months, I’ll talk to AFJ and have them talk to the kid and the family to develop a plan. I know AFJ will figure it out – and hold the kid accountable.”

NYC JUDGE

206

Participants graduated the Program in 2024.



AFJ community center Locations



Harlem Community Center
69 East 130th Street
2nd Floor
New York, NY 10037

Ave B
Avenues for Justice
Way

Robert Siegal Center
100 Avenue B
New York, NY 10009

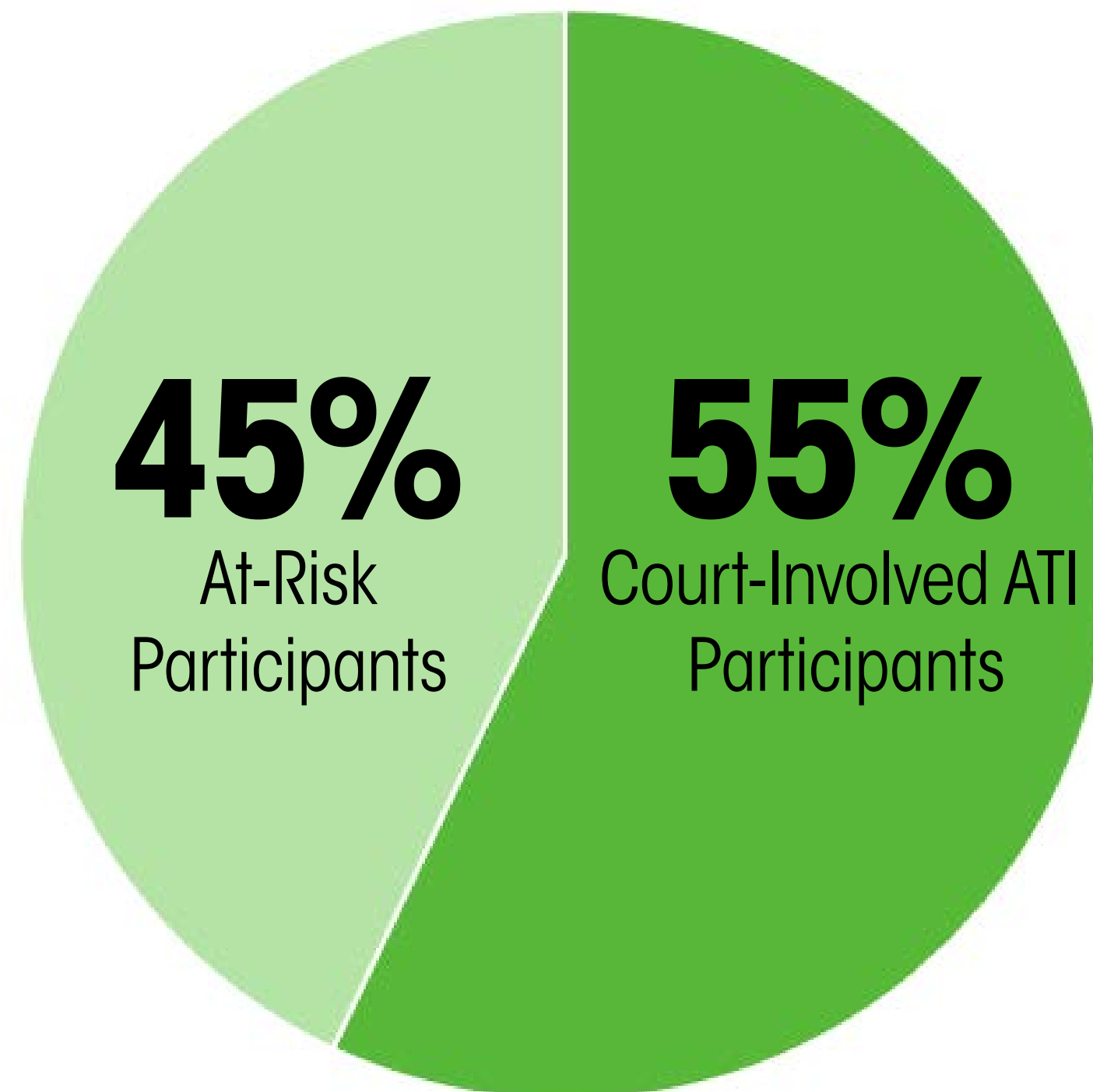
OUR PARTICIPANTS

In 2024, AFJ served 674 ATI court-involved and at-risk Participants, ages 13 - 24, from across the city. These 674 young people participated in one of AFJ's two program areas:

371 (55%) were court-involved Participants enrolled in AFJ's intensive ATI program;

303 (45%) were at-risk Participants who participated in AFJ's crime prevention programs at our community centers;

[FOR MORE CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS CLICK HERE!](#)





OUR PARTICIPANTS

ATI PARTICIPANTS: AFJ's signature long-term ATI Participants who are court-involved and typically between the ages 18-24. Services include court appearances, school visits, regular counseling, curfews, mandatory check-in at centers, and monitoring of individualized services.

DIVERSION PROGRAM: Young people assigned to the Family Court Diversion program are mandated to community-based Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) organizations, such as AFJ, for a specific number of sessions or workshops---typically 4 to 16. The program targets youth up to the age of 18. Diversion Participants receive the same services as other AFJ Participants but generally have a shorter stay.

RE-ENTRY PARTICIPANTS: Starting in 2020, AFJ began to track court-involved young people who spend time in jails and prisons. These participants have all spent at least one night in jail.

In 2024, AFJ served 371 ATI court-involved youth, ages 13 - 24 from across the city. These 371 Participants can be broken down into three categories:

141 (38%) were ATI court-involved Participants who did not spend time incarcerated or in the short-term diversion program;

163 (44%) were youth in Diversion Family Court who are offered the opportunity to have their case dismissed by the court if they comply with a short AFJ mandate;

67 (18%) were re-entry Participants who were referred to AFJ after spending a period of time incarcerated.



EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

EFFECTIVE ATI: Needed now more than ever.

Avenues for Justice's long history of success proves that providing support, skills and stability is far more effective at turning lives around than incarceration. Our organizational strength derives from seeing young people not as data points, but as people with real stories to tell about the importance of second chances—especially when empowered with the right services:

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST: With our headquarters based inside the Manhattan Criminal Courthouse, AFJ is well known in the NYC criminal justice system. Judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, and court resource coordinators know we are reliable and effective. They refer Participants to us and we engage with them on juvenile justice reform.

INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLANS: Our Court Advocates create Individual Action Plans designed to address immediate and long-term needs and help Participants strive for personal and professional success. Our Participants are accountable to us and the court. If a Participant deviates from their individual plan, we will report it to the court while developing solutions to get them back on track. This helps the Participant cultivate a sense of personal responsibility and helps us maintain the court's trust.

GUIDING FAMILIES: AFJ addresses the needs of our Participants' families and supports them through emergencies which can place them in a crisis and derail the Participant's progress. We have seen that providing services to stabilize a Participant's home life can help the Participant successfully complete the program.

COMPLETING COURT REQUIREMENTS: AFJ provides free court advocacy until a Participant satisfies the court's requirements and receives a favorable disposition of their case. This could be a dismissal, probation and/or a plea to a reduced charge or reduced sentencing without incarceration.

In some cases, records are sealed and the Participant receives Youthful Offender Status. Success is when, in addition to a favorable court outcome, our Participants complete the HIRE UP Program, graduate from school, go on to trade school or higher education, and/or enter gainful employment.

LOW RECIDIVISM: We track Participant recidivism rates for three-years and six-years from program enrollment. In 2021, AFJ initiated Participant and Alumni feedback surveys to document long term outcomes measured by non-criminal history and quality of life metrics supplemented by personal accounts.



2024 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

AFJ maintains an annual budget just below \$3.5 million. We keep our overhead low: **81% of the AFJ budget goes directly to support program.**

FOUNDATIONS GRANTS, CONTRIBUTIONS, & OTHERS	77%	\$2,660,468
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	5%	\$173,464
SPECIAL EVENTS (NET)	7%	\$242,850
GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS & GRANTS	7%	\$242,850
INVESTMENT INCOME	3%	\$104,078
CORPORATE GRANT	1%	\$32,741
TOTAL REVENUE & PUBLIC SUPPORT	100%	\$3,469,287

[CLICK HERE FOR AFJ’S FINANCIAL STATEMENTS](#)

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

\$8,900

The annual cost to put one young person through AFJ with a full year of our wraparound services.

VS.

\$500,000

The annual cost to New York taxpayers to incarcerate one young person.
(Source: NYC Comptroller)



EDUCATION

RECONNECTING WITH SCHOOL: Court advocates help Participants re-enroll in school, and meet frequently with school administrators and teachers to ensure that Participants are succeeding at their studies and are on track to graduate.

TUTORING: Currently, Avenues for Justice maintains a bank of 65 volunteers, including tutors, who help AFJ Participants with schoolwork, exams and admissions forms to complete high school and advance to college.

CORPORATE-LED WORKSHOPS: Avenues for Justice relies on Corporate Partners to help facilitate our HIRE Up enrichment workshops for job readiness, digital and financial literacy. AFJ partners such as BlackRock, Island Capital Group, City National Bank and the New York Junior League have all led financial literacy and weekly HIRE Up job readiness workshops. Goldman Sachs created and led a one-week STEM bootcamp, while Slickdeals shared entrepreneurship tools with our Participants on how to develop products and helped them collectively create an online business.

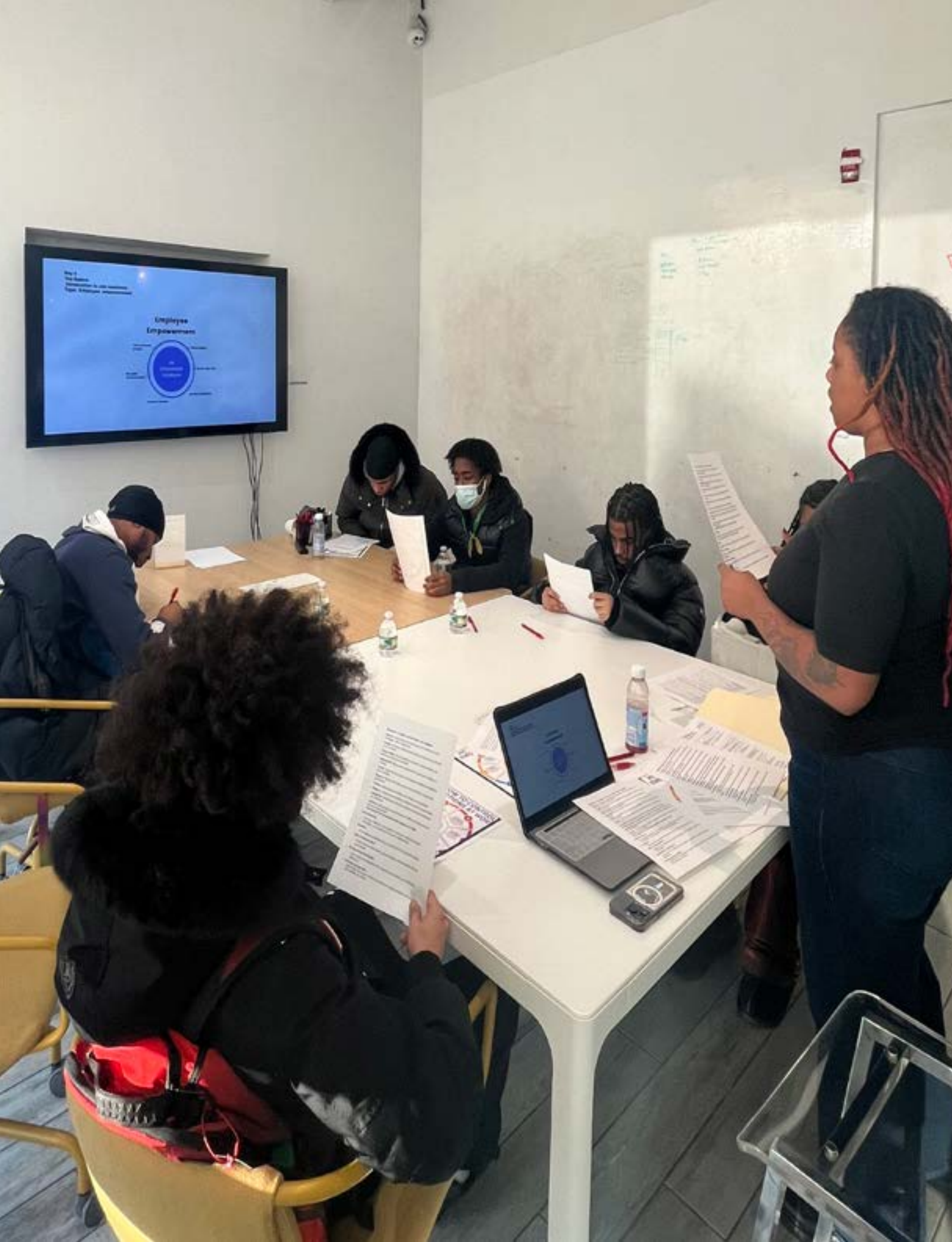
ADVANCING TO COLLEGE: When Participants successfully obtain a diploma, Avenues for Justice works with them to enter college full or part-time. Assistance includes college visits, SAT-prep and help with applications and financial aid, as well as tutoring.



HIRE UP: EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

In 2024, AFJ's HIRE UP program included a wide roster of job training and certification, educational support, teen empowerment and legal rights workshops, life skills and civics training, and mental and physical health wellness programs, both online and onsite at the Harlem and Lower East Side community centers.

Our research shows that our Participants need assistance to obtain long term employment--particularly in industries outside of retail and hospitality, which tend to have higher turnover rates and lack stability. It is for this very reason that AFJ tailored a unique approach to job readiness beyond the traditional resume and cover letter workshops. The goal of our HIRE Up program is to make Participants more marketable and to successfully complete the program with professional hard and soft skills.



HIRE UP: EMPLOYMENT TRAINING (CONT:)

CERTIFICATIONS: With the success of our certification programming in 2024, AFJ continues to offer OSHA Safety Education and Training program, along with the Flagger and Scaffold User Training, and Security Training quarterly; alternating between centers.

Our CPR certifications will also be offered twice per year through our partnership with the New York Junior League (NYJL). Along with our certifications, AFJ continues to champion continued education through our mandatory Digital Literacy requirement for all our Participants. In an increasingly digital world, AFJ is determined to provide our Participants with the skills and tools needed to navigate technology for professional advancement.



2024 CERTIFICATIONS

161
Digital Literacy

5
Security

40
**Flaggers &
Scaffolding**

44
OSHA-30

3
Food Handlers



PAID INTERNSHIPS

In addition to expanding our HIRE Up workforce readiness trainings, Avenues for Justice piloted a paid internship program, funded by AFJ, that paired Participants who passed the interview process with a local business that fit their personality and career goals. Each internship lasted for 8 weeks and a total of 125 hours paid at \$15 an hour.

Between our spring and fall cohorts, we had 38 interns complete their internship at 30 different local businesses, majority BIPOC-owned, in industries such as event production, hospitality, food and beverage, security, technology, and fitness. Since 2023, AFJ has paired ten female Participants with trailblazing female entrepreneurs throughout NYC who have provided invaluable guidance, mentorship, and work experience.

RECIDIVISM



Only 6%

**OF AFJ PARTICIPANTS WERE RECONVICTED OF A CRIME
WITHIN THREE YEARS OF ENROLLMENT IN OUR PROGRAM**

VS.

76%

**OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS WHO WERE RECONVICTED
AFTER THREE YEARS OF RELEASE.**

6%

76%

■ AFJ Participants ■ Juvenile Offenders Post-Release



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OUR SUPPORTERS

AVENUES FOR JUSTICE, INC. SUPPORTERS: 2023 TO 2025



#STARTSMALL

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VISA
WELLMET PHILANTHROPY
WILSON SONSINI GOODRICH & ROSATI FOUNDATION
ZELL FAMILY FOUNDATION

OUR TEAM

Avenues for Justice's Board Chair and Executive Director are African American, 89% of our Staff are African American and Hispanic, with two of our Court Advocates being successful program graduates.

Avenues for Justice has fifteen full-time and one part-time staff members, supplemented by a bookkeeper, development consultant, and volunteers.

ELIZABETH FREDERICK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GAMAL WILLIS, CHIEF PROGRAM OFFICER

JALIL ABDURRAHEEM, COURT ADVOCATE

LISSETTE AYBAR, OFFICE MANAGER

SHANTEL BROOKS, JOB DEVELOPER

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DAVID MOSLEY, ACCOUNTANT & BOOKKEEPER

WESTON MUENCH, COMMUNICATIONS & DATA SPECIALIST

JULIA PRICE, COURT ADVOCATE

STEPHANIE SANTANA, COURT ADVOCATE

BRIAN STANLEY, MANAGER OF COURT ADVOCACY

EDISON TABORDA, FACILITIES COORDINATOR

NELSON VALENTINE, SENIOR COURT ADVOCATE



PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIAL

DANIEL: There are a lot of great minds at AFJ. There is positive change happening at AFJ within the Participants, there is a change in me. I don't get beat down by life like I used to because of Shantel and Nelson. They help me see the world differently, certain questions about my life were solved behind those doors.

PARENT TESTIMONIAL

DOLORES: I'm so thankful for having you AFJ since day one and I'm very thankful for everybody that has extended their hands for me and my family in times of need. I'm trying to educate myself and my kids to help my family and help others as well. You guys are going to get tired of me saying thank you!!!!

ALUMNUS TESTIMONIAL

MALIK RAINEY, 2024 Second Chance Award Recipient: As I progressed in the program while still fighting my felony charge. The judge started to give me some grace and props for staying in the program. I continued to stay positive and out of trouble which then later led to the judge offering me a youthful offender status.

I want to thank AFJ because you all saved my life. It is never too late the person you want to be and make changes in your life for the better.

VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIAL

JULIA: I have had such a fruitful experience as a volunteer tutor with AFJ. Every time I tutor, I leave with a full heart knowing I am building relationships and trust with the students I work with and helping them succeed in their individual academic journeys. The staff at the Harlem center is incredibly nice and welcoming, and their dedication to each student is admirable. I have learned so much about their work and what it takes to support these students. AFJ is truly a special organization and it has been an honor to volunteer with them."

DONOR TESTIMONIAL

JUDITH M LUKIN, Long-time Supporter: If we had more programs this attentive and immediately responsive to the needs of our young people and their families, there would be significantly less need for jails and prisons, less need to incarcerate and stigmatize, and finally, we would understand what it takes to move public attitudes from punishment to providing care.

FUNDER TESTIMONIAL

RICHARD BUERY JR., CEO, Robin Hood Foundation: The work of Avenues for Justice is helping to reimagine a criminal justice system beyond bars, making new starts possible for thousands of New Yorkers. Your work delivers hope for those once caught in the grips of the criminal legal system, helping each person touched to achieve their full potential. At Robin Hood, our work is driven by a core value: we believe that where you start out in life should not define where you end up. Every New Yorker deserves a fair shot. Every day, the team at Avenues for Justice epitomizes this value. We are so proud of the partnership we share with you, and the legacy of transformation your work has left of thousands of New Yorkers in need.



SUPPORT AFJ TODAY!

Contribute to Avenues for Justice and support one of the nation's most cost effective, successful crime-fighting programs.

Help hundreds of young people get their second chance each year in Harlem, Lower East Side, and throughout Manhattan.

Donate online:

www.avenuesforjustice.org

Donate by mail:

Avenues for Justice
100 Centre St, Room 1541
New York, NY 10013

Please make your contribution payable to Avenues For Justice.

Contact us at:

Avenues for Justice

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P 212-349-6381
info@avenuesforjustice.org

Photos by Tom Benedict and Natural Expressions

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