



# Ohio Counselors for Social Justice

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Greetings from the President!

Emily Baker, President 2020-2021

I want to give a huge thanks to the members of the OCSJ Executive Board who have been working diligently to update our organization and provide resources to Ohio counselors. The mission of OCSJ is to empower, unite, and support counselors in the promotion of social justice throughout Ohio by identifying and confronting oppressive systems of power and privilege that affect our clients, our profession, and our state. In a year characterized by tragedy, loss, and disparity, our mission is as important as ever. We stand together in solidarity with the Black community, international students, immigrants, refugees, the LGBTQIA+ community, and all communities continually facing discrimination, prejudice, and inexcusable rhetoric. Our organization strives to advocate with and on behalf of the underserved, and to create a community where all counselors feel empowered to engage in advocacy work. Together, the OCSJ Executive Board has created a plan of action for the 2020-2021 year, including fundraising, supporting organizations, and providing tools for advocacy to counselors, counselor educators, and students across the state. We hope you will get involved and help shape our social justice efforts this year!

## Thoughts from the President-Elect

Shanice Lockhart, President-Elect 2020-2021

Loss, heartache, and tragedy have been all too familiar experiences with the events that have occurred over the course of this year. Throughout this year we continue to see America's wounds that are in need of much healing. We are in dire need of Health Justice, Educational Justice, Racial Justice and overall **Social Justice**. When I take a step back to look at how people's lives have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and by the ongoing issues of police brutality, I understand that the fight for **Social Justice** is needed now more than ever. I empathize with those who are hurt and devastated over the loss of life and the lack of justice that often follows. I know so many of you are tired. I know the Black community is tired. This struggle has gone on for far too long and the events this year have brought some people to their breaking point. I understand the anger that you feel, I understand the hurt you are experiencing. I hope that those of you who have felt discouraged can find some hope in knowing that there are people and organizations out here still formulating ideas, protesting, proposing laws, advocating in their communities, and directly calling on those in positions of privilege and power – all for the sake of **Social Justice**. My hope is that more people join **OCSJ** in the fight for justice. I hope my fellow counselors, counselor educators, and other professionals can join us by spreading awareness on social justice issues, advocating for change, and truly taking the time to help others understand why we say Black Lives Matter. There is much more work needed to be done to dismantle the systems of oppression. When you are truly in the fight for justice, expect to be in this fight for the long haul.



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## Membership Update

Questions about membership? Email us at [ohiocsj@gmail.com](mailto:ohiocsj@gmail.com)

OCSJ currently has 57 active members who are dedicated to advocacy and social justice in Ohio. We continue to be grateful for our incredible members who continue to work and advocate for our clients. Membership in OCSJ comes with a variety of perks, including the ability to vote for executive board positions and OCSJ Award winners, updates from the board regarding opportunities for social justice advocacy, access to the OCSJ newsletter, the opportunity to run for executive board positions in OCSJ, and much more!

*Are you or someone you know interested in joining OCSJ?* There are a few ways you can join this group dedicated to social justice!

1. Are you already a member of OCA? You can simply join OCSJ as an OCA member for just \$10!
2. Not a member of OCA but are interested in joining OCSJ? You can join OCSJ as an Associate Member with a donation of \$15 to OCSJ! With this donation, you will have all membership privileges that a member of OCA would have as well.

## Upcoming Events with OCSJ

Laura Dunson, Treasurer 2020-2021

Join us for our virtual roundtable, “Social Justice While Social Distancing,” as part of the All Ohio Counseling Conference week. You can join us Monday, October 26th, from 2-3pm as we discuss strategies for staying engaged in social justice while navigating the coronavirus. We invite you to share your successes as well as join us in discussing challenges, helping to support one another’s social justice work during this time. Additionally, we will share resources and organizations as well as present information on Ohio Counselors for Social Justice and our plans for this upcoming year. To join us, please visit [www.ohiocounseling.org](http://www.ohiocounseling.org) to register for this year’s conference.



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## Social Justice Spotlight

Shanice Lockhart, President-Elect 2020-2021

iVoteBlack is an organization that was officially formed earlier this year, but its roots were grounded in a fight for social justice. In 2019, founders of iVoteBlack participated in a movement titled “Justice for Matt”, which brought awareness to the fatal police shooting of an unarmed Black man named Matthew Burroughs. Founders Todd Johnson, Lea Dotson, Chauncey Harris, Bria Bennett, and Erica Royster united together to form an organization that brings awareness to issues impacting the Black Community. iVoteBlack does most of its work within the Trumbull County area, but their impact has surpassed the county lines and inspired many. The organization emphasizes three guiding themes Self-Image, Self-Interest, and Self-Advocacy. One of the organization’s founders Chauncey Harris explained, “we know there is a lapse in justice for black people... we also know we can't change the heart of every person so that's why iVoteBlack is in place so we can have an equal playing field".

**iVote Black**

The organization currently has a petition on Change.org “Demand Reform of Warren Police Department” which now has over 2.5K signatures and counting. iVoteBlack encourages involvement from everyone in the community no matter their race or color. Harris stated “iVoteBlack is not about voting for Black candidates but voting for candidates that are supporting policies that positively impact the Black community." The organization has spoken to representative Tim Ryan, communicated with Mayor Franklin of Warren (OH), and has spoken to other local officials. During this year, iVoteBlack gathered the community together by hosting a “We Matter” march and hosting their first annual Juneteenth event. To continue their movement throughout the pandemic, the founders have hosted a podcast that streams live on Facebook. iVoteBlack is an organization that is continuing to expand their works in Trumbull County and elevating the collective movement towards social justice.

To hear more about the organization and ways to get involved, you can reach out to them at [ivoteblacktrumbull@gmail.com](mailto:ivoteblacktrumbull@gmail.com) and follow their Facebook page iVoteBlack Trumbull.



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## Social Justice Skills

Tanya Middleton, Ph.D., Past President

Due to our uncertain times with COVID-19 and current climate due to the racial and social justice issues it remains of utmost urgency to continue in efforts to fight towards equity and equality. Despite these conditions, OCSJ stresses for constant action despite the circumstances, below are skills that you perform from home or from a distance:

### Using Your Voice on Social Media Platforms

By definition, using your voice or your platform is a powerful and much needed tool that can be effective, especially given our current need to social distance but also continue to advocate for our clients and community. While we may be limited in “active engagement” it is necessary to remain “actively engaged” and this medium correlates with the trending but effective methods of communication to relay messages to the public.

1. Identify a need/cause

Working in a school setting, or within the community this current pandemic has highlighted disparities within the community. Counselors could act via identifying some of the disparities noted and team with an existing agency/organization to improve.

2. Determine a course of action

- Record a video or share/upload a message pertaining to particular issue or concern (see talking points).
- Learn about #hashtags and work to tag local organizations, leaders, etc., who will need to hear the message
- Continue to upload, share, asking friends/family and contacts to share via their platforms
- Take message to other platforms-YouTube, TikTok, SnapChat, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

Below is an example of an initiative started by Youth First State Partners:

Youth First recognized how COVID -19, a global pandemic has impacted youth within the juvenile justice system. This organization speaks to how those being detained are at higher risk for the spreading of the virus. Therefore, they urge for individuals to get involved by simply sharing posts on Twitter, Facebook or social media platforms. This group provided a toolkit for success and also urge those to tag their local officials. While this is a great cause, but these skills can be adjusted and used for a variety of issues in our constant plight for equity and equality.



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## **Youth First Background**

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic continues to impact our country and way of life, we need to ensure that the most vulnerable among us are protected. That’s why youth justice advocates across the country are demanding governors, juvenile justice system administrators, and other state and local officials immediately release young people in the youth justice system to protect them from the spread of COVID-19. By continuing to keep youth in detention centers and youth prisons, COVID-19 will spread much faster as incarcerated youth are held in close quarters, unable to practice social distancing, and oftentimes in unsanitary conditions.

**Please help us amplify the urgency of this situation by sharing the sample Twitter and Facebook posts below on social media with accompanying graphics provided by Performing Statistics here.** We encourage you to **tag your state governor and relevant government officials in your posts**. A list of twitter handles can be found at the end of this document.

Below the sample social media posts, we’ve also included guidance on posting a personal video call to action using your smartphone -- and talking points can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions, please email Liz Ryan at [lizryanyouthjustice@gmail.com](mailto:lizryanyouthjustice@gmail.com) and Berlin Rosen at [youthfirst@berlinrosen.com](mailto:youthfirst@berlinrosen.com).

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wa\\_wT6Kf3\\_nAX9JjR-AiibBHLTgAawABbnY3nT8kFnE/edit#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wa_wT6Kf3_nAX9JjR-AiibBHLTgAawABbnY3nT8kFnE/edit#) (toolkit)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a0EdflMuko8ZRrn2uGHw6bG9wSm1FjcKrpQ3mwN9aSE/edit> (talking points)

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/resource-lists/resources-addressing-covid-19-with-racial-equity-lens> (list of resources for further efforts)



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## Fundraising for Social Justice

Ohio Counselors for Social Justice is paying homage to the late John Lewis, a former U.S. Representative who spent much of his life getting in “Good Trouble” for the sake of justice.

We are currently selling short sleeve and long sleeve tee-shirts. All profits will be donated to the [Ohio Justice Foundation](#), a statewide nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that civil legal aid is available to all low-income and underserved Ohioans.

Visit our website at <http://ohiocsj.org> or the <http://teespring.com/stores/ohiocsj> to order a shirt today.



## Stay updated with OCSJ

Stay up to date with member meetings, position statements, advocacy efforts, and ways to get involved at our [website](#).

Tell us about what you and/or your organization are doing for social justice! - Use the hashtag **#OhioCSJ** on Facebook and Twitter posts to get the conversation started and be entered into a drawing for a free OCSJ tee-shirt at the end of AOCC.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Twitter @OhioCSJ

