



Elevating and Supporting Black Volunteer Tutors



About the Petey Greene Program

The Petey Greene Program (PGP) is an educational justice non-profit organization that supports the academic goals of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people through high-quality volunteer tutoring programs, while educating volunteers on the injustice manifest in our carceral system. Since its founding in 2008, the PGP has tutored more than 16,000 students in over 90 correctional facilities and reentry programs. In July 2020, the PGP approved a three-year strategic plan, which prioritizes a shift from only supplementing existing prison education programs to implementing and promoting the highest-quality education for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people.

Our Vision

We envision a world in which all incarcerated people have access to high-quality academic programs and we strive to inspire our alumni – both students and tutors – to become advocates, and to take on leadership roles that reimagine the criminal legal system.

Recruiting, Elevating, and Supporting Black Volunteer Tutors

The Petey Greene Program recognizes that the incarcerated population disproportionately identifies or is identified as Black and Latinx; however, during the Spring 2019 semester, only 12% of the PGP volunteer tutor base identified as Black.¹ This intimates that the currently and formerly incarcerated learners that we support are not receiving support from those who look like them or those who might share experiences of racism, particularly in the form of the carceral state. In line with the history of Black Liberation Movements, the Petey Greene Program believes that those directly impacted by the carceral state should also be the ones leading the efforts to bring about change. Therefore, in January 2021, the Petey Greene Program began our efforts to recruit, elevate, and support Black volunteer tutors with three goals in mind: (1) Increase the representation of Black volunteer tutors so that by Spring 2024, 20% of our volunteer tutor base identifies as Black; (2) Increase the support offered to Black volunteer tutors; and (3) Prepare Black volunteers to be advocates for educational justice.

¹ This figure includes volunteer tutors who identified as Black or African American only, as well as those who identified as Black or African American along with one or more other racial identities.



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SUMMARY

In July 2020, the Petey Greene Program approved a three-year strategic plan aimed at transitioning the organization from solely providing educational support inside of jails and prisons to an organization that is also:

- » **Taking a stand on what high-quality education programming looks like and how it should be implemented for currently and formerly incarcerated learners;**
- » **Piloting and scaling innovative education programs, in jails and prisons as well as in the community, to support currently and formerly incarcerated learners in pursuing their long-term educational goals; and**
- » **Providing justice-oriented leadership programming for its volunteer tutors, the majority of whom are college students.**

Of the many objectives outlined to help us work toward these goals, we aspired to “create leadership development programming and support for volunteer tutors of color, prioritizing... HBCU partners.” To this end, during the last quarter of 2020, we developed a conceptual framework to recruit, elevate, and support Black volunteer tutors. A few months later the PGP received a multi-year grant from the Pritchard Foundation to develop this model program. In January 2021, we launched a multi-year initiative to:

- 1. Increase the representation of Black volunteer tutors so that by the end of the Spring 2024 semester, 20% of our volunteer base identifies as Black;**
- 2. Increase the support offered for Black volunteer tutors who might be hesitant to volunteer or may experience stress, strain, or trauma because of racism embedded in the carceral state and/or because of family and community history of incarceration;**
- 3. Prepare Black volunteer tutors to be advocates for educational justice.**

We aimed to accomplish these goals in three phases:

Phase 1 - HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University - Research

Use a Participatory Action Research (PAR) model to evaluate how the PGP volunteer model might be refined to better support and elevate Black volunteer tutors at Howard University (HU) and, ultimately, across the PGP.

Phase 2 - HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University - Implementation

In collaboration with Black HU volunteer tutors, design, pilot, and evaluate an enhanced volunteer support model and justice-oriented leadership programming model.

Phase 3 - Elevating and Supporting Black Volunteer Tutors at PWIs and HBCU Expansion

Replicate the model developed with and for Black volunteer tutors at HU at additional Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and implement the program at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) to elevate Black volunteer tutors across the PGP's more than 30 existing university partnerships.

SUMMARY (cont.)

In September 2021, we published a report summarizing our work towards Phase 1 of this initiative. We began these efforts at Howard University, an HBCU located in Washington D.C. where the PGP already had a history of recruiting Black volunteer tutors and where new educational programs were being implemented in carceral facilities. For this phase of the initiative, we partnered with Dr. Bahiyyah Muhammad, Associate Professor of Criminology at Howard University and founding director of Howard's Higher Education in Prison Program, to lead the research efforts.

During Phase 1, in partnership with Dr. Muhammad and using a participatory action research model, we conducted focus groups with alumni and current and prospective volunteer tutors at HU to evaluate our existing tutor training and support model. Key findings included:

- 1. Black volunteer tutors largely come to the PGP because tutoring allows them to do something about a system that impacts them personally;**
- 2. They value the education we provide on the criminal legal system, and feel well prepared by our training;**
- 3. Close to 60% of the participants identified as system-impacted, with personal, family, or community experience with the criminal legal system. Black volunteer tutors want more support processing their experience tutoring as system-impacted people, and they want to lead peer-based support sessions;**
- 4. While they appreciate our justice-oriented leadership programming, HU volunteer tutors want programming that is specific to HU.**

Based on these findings, for the second phase of the initiative, we focused on designing, piloting, and evaluating an enhanced volunteer support model and justice-oriented leadership programming, in collaboration with Black HU volunteer tutors. Our objectives were to (1) provide support for the triggers that volunteer tutors might experience when entering carceral spaces as a Black person; (2) help volunteer tutors understand their experiences through a system-impacted framework; and (3) guide them in developing on-campus justice-oriented leadership programming.

This Phase 2 report summarizes the results of the implementation and pilot phase and also provides recommendations for the PGP to continue to build upon these efforts to strengthen our HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University while working towards scaling our volunteer support and justice-oriented leadership programming at HBCUs and PWIs across other PGP regions.

The report begins with a section describing the progress made towards the recommendations of the [Phase 1 report](#), related to recruiting and volunteer tutor training as well as the implementation and evaluation of the volunteer tutor support and justice-oriented leadership programming at HU. The next section of the report explains the research we conducted in exploring opportunities for expansion to other HBCUs and recruiting, elevating, and supporting Black volunteer tutors attending PWIs.

SUMMARY (cont.)

In summary, during Phase 2 of this initiative, we piloted an enhanced volunteer training, support, and justice-oriented leadership programming model, with a particular focus on the following:

RECRUITING

In support of our goal to increase the percentage of PGP's Black volunteer tutors from 12% (Spring 2019) to 20% by the conclusion of the Spring 2024 semester, during the 2021-2022 academic year we initiated efforts to increase the number of Black applicants at all universities, but with a specific focus at HU. Utilizing targeted recruiting and diversity-minded selection of applicants, combined with increased volunteer tutoring opportunities, for the 2021-2022 academic year we moved closer to this goal, with 15.1% of the PGP's volunteer tutors identifying as Black.² Of this group, 47.8% of all Black-identifying volunteer tutors were HU students. With implications for our training and support model, 19% of our volunteer tutors and 54.3% of our Black-identifying volunteer tutors identified as system-impacted. 54.2% of HU volunteers identified as system-impacted.

TRAINING

We added a more robust profile of the organization's namesake to our Pre-Service Training, connecting his legacy to our work in the educational justice space. Additionally, we added more volunteer-focused trauma-responsive practices.

VOLUNTEER TUTOR SUPPORT AND JUSTICE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMING

In partnership with HU volunteer tutors and Dr. Muhammad, we developed and implemented a volunteer tutor support model that included peer-support check-in calls, subsidized costs of transportation, community-building events, and end-of-semester debriefs. Additionally, we provided leadership and advocacy development training for the PGP Campus Organization at HU in support of their efforts to lead campus-based advocacy programming. 87% of volunteer tutors indicated that this phase of the initiative was a success, and all indicated that the efforts should continue.

During the 2022-2023 academic year and Phase 3 of this initiative, we plan to build on these efforts, not only by continuing to grow our HBCU Forward Initiative, but also by replicating and adjusting our model to recruit, train, and support Black volunteers at PWIs.

² This figure includes volunteer tutors who identified as Black or African American only, as well as those who identified as Black or African American along with one or more other racial identities.

PHASE 2 - IMPLEMENTATION

We began implementing the recommendations outlined in the Phase 1 Report during the 2021-2022 academic year, both at HU and throughout the PGP. These efforts focused on recruitment, training, volunteer support, and justice-oriented leadership programming.

PROGRESS TOWARDS RECRUITING RECOMMENDATIONS

Our goals for the initiative and findings from Phase 1 led us to implement specific strategies aimed at increasing the percentage of PGP's Black volunteer tutors, focusing on Black college students at the universities where the PGP recruits and specifically those at HU. We did so through deliberate communication to encourage potential applicants as well as targeted recruitment efforts, followed by the diversity-minded selection of applicants.

Towards the generation of applications, we implemented the following:

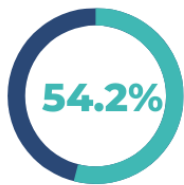
- » **Recommendation:** Update the website and application to specifically say that no prior tutoring experience is required to be a volunteer and that the PGP will provide training before volunteer tutors are placed, as well as during their volunteer tenure to continue to build their tutoring practice.
 - **Progress:** This language was added to the website and application in August 2021.
- » **Recommendation:** Update the website and application to specifically say that system-impacted people are welcome and encouraged to apply to be volunteer tutors. Include a question about system-impactedness on the volunteer application and survey returning volunteer tutors.³
 - **Progress:** In August 2021, to encourage system-impacted applicants, understand the experiences of volunteer tutors, and offer better support, we made these edits to the volunteer application and also began surveying returning volunteers.
 - **In the 2021-2022 academic year:**



Of all volunteer respondents identified as system impacted



Of Black-identifying respondents identified as system impacted



Of Howard University respondents identified as system-impacted

³ From the focus groups conducted during the Spring 2021 semester, we learned that volunteer tutors did not fully understand how person-first language frameworks (e.g. directly impacted, system-impacted, justice-impacted) applied to their lives and informed their volunteer experiences. Per the recommendation of Dr. Muhammad, we adopted system-impacted as our standard language to help volunteer tutors better make sense of their experiences and the experiences of the students they support.

PROGRESS TOWARDS RECRUITING RECOMMENDATIONS (cont.)

- » **Recommendation:** Create a long-term recruitment process in partnership with HU. This process should include building relationships with volunteer tutors, key faculty, staff, leadership, and service-learning administrators.
 - **Progress:** The PGP worked with the PGP campus organization at HU (PGP at HU) to recruit volunteer tutors for the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters.⁴ The PGP also invited applications from prospective volunteer tutors who participated in the Spring 2021 focus groups or attended PGP at HU's Spring 2021 information session. PGP staff worked with the PGP at HU to interview and select applicants for volunteer opportunities. Through these efforts, the PGP was able to fill all volunteer spots.

Along with these application generation efforts, the PGP in Washington D.C. also benefited from increased volunteer opportunities because of a new partnership. Beginning in the Fall 2021 semester, The Maya Angelou Academy (MAA) charter school became the primary education provider for the D.C. Youth Services Center (YSC).⁵ MAA specializes in providing a nurturing and mutually respectful learning environment for detained youth in Washington, D.C. correctional facilities. MAA's principal at the YSC found the PGP's HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University especially compelling, leading MAA to formalize a contractual relationship with the PGP to provide tutoring services during scheduled study hall periods and class times at the YSC.

With the diversity goals of the HBCU Forward Initiative in mind, the PGP chose to fill these new volunteer tutoring opportunities with HU volunteer tutors. Prior to the 2021-2022 academic year, we were limited in how many volunteer tutors we could place from HU due to age restrictions at the D.C. Jail, the PGP's only D.C.-based facility partner at the time.

Because of this partnership and as HU students returned to campus following the pandemic-impacted 2020-2021 academic year, we were able to increase the number of HU volunteer tutors by 367%.

⁴ PGP Campus Organizations and their college student leaders serve as the on-campus representatives of the PGP. In support of the PGP, PGP Campus Organizations help work towards the mission and vision of the PGP by recruiting and interviewing prospective volunteer tutors, coordinating campus-based advocacy events, providing peer support to other volunteer tutors, building community among volunteer tutors, and sometimes managing transportation reimbursements.

⁵ The Youth Services Center (YSC) is the District of Columbia's detention center for youth, responsible for the care and custody of young people placed in secure detention by court order from the DC Superior Court Family Court Division.

PROGRESS TOWARDS RECRUITING RECOMMENDATIONS (cont.)

**HU PGP Volunteer Placements by Facility
2020-2021 Academic Year vs. 2021-2022 Academic Year**

	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Semester % Change	Total Volunteer Placements in AY 2020-2021	Fall 2021	Spring 2022	Semester % Change	Total Volunteer Placements in AY 2021-2022	Academic Year % Change
Facilities									
Youth Services Center	3	6	100%	9	14	19	36%	33	267%
D.C. Jail	0	0	0%	0	4	1	-75%	5	500%
D.C. Jail - College Bridge	0	0	0%	0	1	0	-100%	1	100%
Howard County Detention Center	0	0	0%	0	3	0	-100%	3	300%
Westchester County Jail (Virtual)	0	0	0%	0	0	1	100%	1	100%
TOTALS	3	6	100%	6	22	21	-5%	28	367%

Across all the PGP regions in the 2021-2022 academic year, volunteer tutors came from 36 different universities as well as the community (referring to volunteers who are not affiliated with a university). HU volunteer tutors represented 11.7% of all volunteer tutors for the Fall 2021 semester and 8% of all tutors for the Spring 2022 semester, due to an increase in the number of PGP volunteers tutoring nationally during the spring.

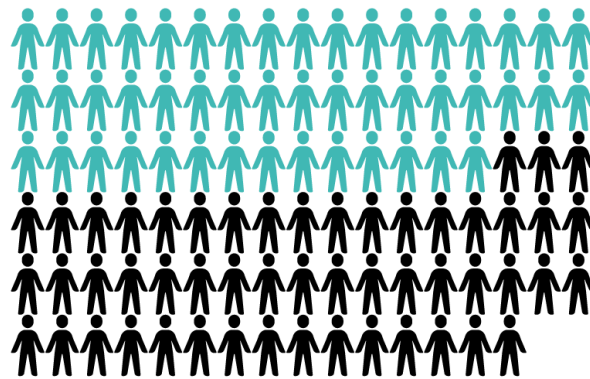
In the Washington, D.C. region of the PGP, volunteer tutors came from 8 different universities and the D.C. community. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 31.4% of the D.C. region's volunteer base were HU students.

PROGRESS TOWARDS RECRUITING RECOMMENDATIONS (cont.)



15.1%

Of the PGP's entire 2021-2022 volunteer base identified as Black



47.8%

Of the PGP's entire 2021-2022 volunteer base that identified as Black were Howard University volunteer tutors

In line with our goal to increase the percentage of the PGP's Black volunteer tutors from 12% in Spring 2019 to 20% by the conclusion of the Spring 2024 semester, 18.1% of the PGP's entire volunteer base identified as Black for the Fall 2021 semester, whereas 15.6% of the PGP volunteer base identified as Black for the Spring 2022 semester. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 15.1% of the PGP's entire volunteer base identified as Black, while HU volunteer tutors represented 47.8% of all Black-identifying volunteer tutors.

While there was a decrease in the percentage of PGP's Black volunteer tutors between the fall and spring semesters, **the number of Black volunteer tutors actually increased from 25 in the Fall 2021 semester to 39 in the Spring 2022 semester.** However, during this time the number of volunteers tutoring nationally with the PGP grew even more significantly, as more facilities reopened to volunteer organizations as the pandemic evolved, leading to a slight percentage decrease in PGP's Black volunteer tutors.

PROGRESS TOWARDS VOLUNTEER TUTOR TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

PGP volunteer tutors participate in two types of tutor training: National Pre-Service Training and Tutor Development Training. The National Pre-Service Training ensures that volunteers are ready to tutor and is required to be completed before their volunteering begins. Throughout the four modules, spread over two days, volunteer tutors learn about the context and practice of tutoring with the PGP. The Tutor Development Trainings are in-service trainings where volunteer tutors participate in workshops during the semester to help them enhance their tutoring practice.

On an annual basis, the PGP updates our tutor training to include tutoring and pedagogy best practices related to supporting the educational goals of currently and formerly incarcerated learners. Since 2019, our National Pre-Service training has been updated to include a carceral state framework to ensure that our work and volunteer tutoring do not duplicate punishment nor take on practices of carceral humanism and to explain why we began to operate in reentry spaces.⁶ PGP's National Pre-Service training also addresses strategies for virtual tutoring as well as ethical volunteering and intentional engagement. During the summer of 2022, we updated the National Pre-Service Training to ensure its alignment with an [educational justice framework](#) and to respond to the recommendations from the [Phase 1 report](#).⁷ In our Phase 1 research, HU focus group participants appreciated our tutor training and felt that it made them volunteer-ready, but wanted us to connect our work more to the organization's namesake, Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene Jr. and to include more volunteer-focused trauma-responsive practices.

- **Recommendation:** Include a more robust profile of Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene, Jr. on the PGP's website and in volunteer training.
 - **Progress:** Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene, Jr.'s profile was updated on the PGP website. As of Fall 2022, more of Petey Greene's story is also included in an introductory video that accompanies the National Pre-Service Training. PGP staff also participated in a reading group to learn about the life, lessons, and legacy of the organization's namesake.

⁶ The carceral state refers to the manifold punishment logics and practices deployed by governments, municipalities, school systems, and social institutions that work to exclude, deny, and confine people. A carceral state framework helps us locate the prison, the human in the cage, and punishment within multiple institutional arrangements and widely held beliefs about the relationship between punishment and rehabilitation. At the PGP we understand that mass incarceration is one part of the carceral state, and that by incorporating a carceral state framework, we can avoid duplicating harm and move beyond the prison as the only site of our educational support and pursuit of educational justice.

⁷ The PGP is one of the many organizations providing educational support for currently and formerly incarcerated learners and we join with other organizations doing critical work toward educational justice. Our theory of change is focused on improving educational access for those who've already experienced harm by the criminal legal system. We believe that we are mutually responsible for one another, that we cannot discount anyone, and that every person deserves access to education. Therefore, we imagine a world where all incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people have access to high-quality academic programs and we hope for our volunteer tutors to join the students that they support in reimagining educational justice. The PGP defines educational justice as 1) access to high-quality educational programming and tutoring support focused on the freedom dreams of both incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people, 2) advocacy for humane conditions of confinement for currently incarcerated people that support both the ability to pursue education and live sustainably post-incarceration, and 3) wraparound services that support formerly incarcerated people pursuing their education.

PROGRESS TOWARDS VOLUNTEER TUTOR TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS (cont.)

Our History

The PGP honors Petey Greene's legacy by providing and advocating for the highest quality education for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people and educating volunteers on the injustice manifest in our carceral system.



- » **Recommendation:** Enhance training content on harm-reduction and trauma-informed practices.
 - **Progress:** More information about and strategies for harm reduction and trauma-informed practices were added to the National Pre-Service Training. In the training, volunteer tutors review trauma-informed tutoring practices and discuss their application to PGP tutoring sessions. Training content also highlights the importance of taking a trauma-informed approach as part of being an ethical volunteer and providing a high-quality tutoring service. All tutoring strategies presented throughout the National Pre-Service Training are trauma-informed and the training's structure and content also align with trauma-informed principles. For example, the National Pre-Service Training reviews goal-setting and scaffolding practices, two strategies that align with trauma-informed principles of choice and support. Similarly, a recording of the National Pre-Service Training is always an available option for volunteers, in the event that they are unable to attend live, prefer to work at their own pace with the materials, or want to review the training afterward. Moreover, the training concludes with a discussion about self-care, reflection, and available support for PGP volunteers who may experience trauma, retraumatization, and/or triggers while tutoring.

- » **Recommendation:** Upgrade pre-reading offerings aligned with the content of each module, especially related to re-entry and education, as well as trauma.
 - **Progress:** All National Pre-Service Training modules include relevant pre-readings that provide context and resources for the content of each module and support the stated goals of each module. Readings were updated based on Phase 1 recommendations. Module 1 includes readings on Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene, Jr., the carceral state, and educational justice. Module 2's pre-work focuses on reentry, collateral impacts of incarceration, barriers to reentry, and PGP students' stories. The pre-reading for Module 3 features the PGP's definition of high-quality tutoring, information about tutoring strategies, and goal-setting processes to ensure that tutoring sessions center students and utilize trauma-informed tutoring practices. In Module 4's pre-reading, volunteer tutors review introductory information about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma-informed principles, and ethical volunteerism in carceral spaces.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND JUSTICE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP MODEL AT HU

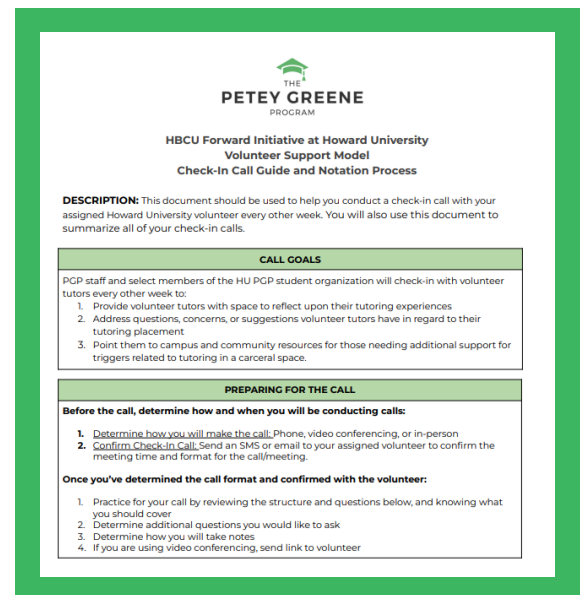
Most of our efforts for the second phase of the initiative focused on designing, piloting, and evaluating a volunteer support and justice-oriented leadership programming model, in collaboration with Black HU volunteer tutors as a matter of equity. As indicated in the [Phase 1 report](#) and the volunteer demographic data collected for the 2021-2022 academic year, over 50% of PGP's Black volunteer tutors identify as system-impacted; therefore, we must not only increase the representation of Black volunteer tutors but also provide the necessary support for the challenges they might face while volunteering with the PGP.

Additionally, in alignment with our belief that those directly impacted by the criminal legal system should be the ones leading the efforts to reduce the harm of the carceral state, it is necessary that our justice-oriented programming at HU respond to the advocacy needs of HU students. For these reasons, our objectives were to: (1) provide support for the triggers that volunteer tutors might experience from entering carceral spaces; (2) help volunteer tutors understand their experiences through a system-impacted framework; and (3) guide them in developing on-campus justice-oriented educational programming.

» **Recommendation:** Work within a Participatory Action Research framework to incorporate the voices of Black volunteer tutors in designing a volunteer support and justice-oriented leadership model for Black HU volunteer tutors.

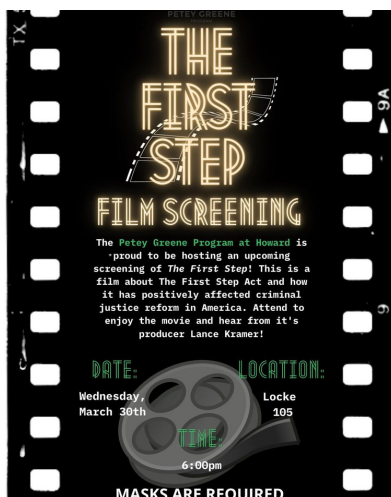
◦ **Progress: Volunteer Support Model**

- **Peer Support:** Campus leaders of the PGP at HU were trained by Dr. Muhammad to provide peer support to HU volunteer tutors through bi-weekly check-in calls held throughout the semester. During these calls, volunteer tutors were able to debrief the volunteer tutoring experience, receive peer support, and access resources for the stress, strain, or trauma they might have experienced from tutoring in a carceral space. (See *image*)
- **Subsidized Transportation Costs:** The PGP created a system that allowed for transportation and other volunteer costs to be paid in advance instead of through reimbursement, thus removing a barrier to volunteering.
- **End of Semester Debriefs:** To evaluate our efforts and allow volunteer tutors to process and share about their unique volunteer tutoring experience, in collaboration with Dr. Muhammad, we facilitated three debrief sessions during the academic year with leaders of the PGP at HU and volunteer tutors from HU.



VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND JUSTICE ORIENTED LEADERSHIP MODEL AT HU (cont.)

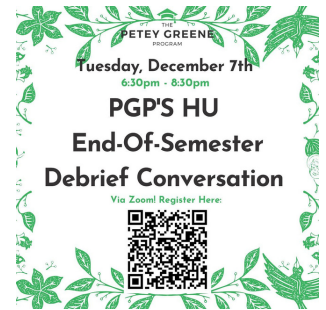
- **Community Building:** The PGP at HU created a group chat for all HU volunteer tutors to communicate. The campus organization along with PGP staff hosted two mixers to build community among volunteer tutors. Additionally, the PGP at HU hosted two volunteer appreciation events, one per semester.
- **Progress: Justice-Oriented Leadership Model**
 - **Formalizing PGP Campus Organization Model:** Although PGP campus organizations have always been a key component of PGP's work, until the 2021-2022 academic year, the PGP had not formalized these relationships or provided organization-wide guidance on how they should operate. This was the case at HU so, in addition to providing formal guidance, we worked closely with the PGP at HU to provide leadership development opportunities and mentorship, and ensure mission alignment.
 - **Family Involvement:** Participants in the Phase 1 focus groups indicated that it was difficult to talk to their families about volunteering in a carceral space; therefore, we wanted to create opportunities for families to be involved in volunteer appreciation events. We were not able to make progress towards this goal due to staff capacity and pandemic-induced limitations.
 - **System-Impacted Learners Involvement:** As part of the Participatory Action Research framework and as part of justice-oriented leadership programming, we wanted volunteer tutors to be in conversation and community with local system-impacted learners. We were not able to make progress on this goal because of staff capacity and pandemic-related restrictions.
 - **Campus-Based Justice Education Programming:** We collaborated with the PGP at HU to coordinate one campus-based advocacy event per semester, specific to the concerns of the HU community. Two events were scheduled for the Spring 2022 semester: a screening of the documentary "The First Step" and a panel about careers in social justice. Unfortunately, both were canceled due to logistical and pandemic-related issues.



EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK - VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND JUSTICE-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP MODEL AT HU

Dr. Muhammad and PGP staff led end-of-semester debrief meetings with the campus leaders of the PGP at HU and HU volunteer tutors. These debriefs served as the primary evaluative tool of the volunteer support and justice-oriented leadership model that was implemented during the 2021-2022 academic year. The debrief questions focused on assessing:

1. The Tutoring Experience and Its Impact on Volunteers
2. Tutor Training (Pre-Service Training and Tutor Development Training)
3. Justice-Oriented Leadership Programming Education Series, Campus-Based Advocacy, and the PGP at HU
4. Engagement with PGP Staff
5. Volunteer Support



These debriefs were especially well attended and volunteer tutors shared that they felt supported, motivated, and inspired. As part of the debrief conversations, volunteer tutors also completed survey forms to measure their experiences. Note that some survey questions were only asked in the Spring semester.

Volunteer tutors would refer the PGP to a classmate or friend:



Volunteer tutors enjoyed their experience with the PGP:



Volunteer tutors plan to continue volunteering with the PGP:



Volunteer tutors experienced some form of stress, strain, or trauma from tutoring in a carceral space as a Black person, particularly as Black women:



Volunteer tutors felt supported by PGP staff and the campus leadership group when sharing these experiences:



Volunteer tutors indicated that this phase of the HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University was a success, and all of them indicated that it should continue:



Volunteer tutors benefited from the overall volunteer support offered by the PGP:



Volunteer tutors were able to apply system-impacted and person-first language in their volunteering and their own life experiences:



EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK - VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND JUSTICE- ORIENTED LEADERSHIP MODEL

Volunteer tutors also shared why the HBCU Forward Initiative was important:

"We are representing a major community that needs our help. We are a part of this community, and our impact is just as important."

- "It allows us tutors the space to unite and collaborate. It also makes me feel valued as a tutor and provides me with the tools needed to be successful."
- "The HBCU Initiative matters at Howard University for us as Black student tutors because it is considerate of our day-to-day lives and triggers that may or may not arise. I've also seen it be meaningful for our students as they often express to us that when they are released, they'd like to continue their education at HBCUs like Howard. I've seen how we've been able to be direct inspirations for Black incarcerated students."

"A lot of students at Howard are system-impacted. Giving black and brown people the opportunity to go in and help other black and brown people who are incarcerated will, in my opinion, have a greater effect than just sending in white people. When black and brown incarcerated individuals are able to interact with the black and brown people, there is a level of understanding and connectedness that they just won't have with white people."

- "Howard University actually has a history of admitting less fortunate children and many of us have been justice-impacted one way or another. Specifically HU has a duty to the community to help."
- "...The initiative is important to upholding the motto, 'Truth and Service' and I personally feel that, due to the demographic of students, this a program NEEDED on and off campus."
- "I think it is important for system-impacted people to be helped by those who look like them and they can relate to. I also think that for Howard students this cause is personal because of our own experiences with the criminal justice system and/or the fact that our students remind us of family, friends, etc., and does not just serve as a resume boost."

"... I learned so much about advocacy and became a better tutor through the program, so I truly believe that it is beneficial for Black youth all around."

PHASE 3 - HBCU EXPANSION AND ELEVATING BLACK VOLUNTEER TUTORS AT PWIS

While we were implementing the HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University, we also began to explore opportunities for replication at other HBCUs and to strategize about scaling at PWIs.

HBCU EXPANSION

As part of our efforts to explore HBCU expansion opportunities, and in collaboration with Dr. Muhammad and HU volunteer tutors, we reflected on and identified several factors that have contributed to the success of the initiative at HU. These include:

- HU student's history of community service focused on incarcerated populations in the DMV area (District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia)
- HU's Existing higher education in prison programming and programming focused on supporting incarcerated populations
- Graduate and undergraduate courses at HU on social justice, criminology, criminal justice, sociology, and interdisciplinary studies
- HU's history of student organizations and professional organizations focused on educational justice and/or advocacy on behalf of currently and formerly incarcerated people
 - SAMI (Students Against Mass Incarceration)
 - Just Us
 - Juvenile Justice Advocates (JJA)
 - P2P (Prison to Professionals)
 - PGP at HU
- PGP's existing footprint in D.C. and previous experience with HU students

Informed by these factors, we determined the setting most conducive to expanding the initiative would be an HBCU that:

- Is located near a prison/jail/detention center with educational programming

- Has a residential campus with a culture of service learning, student advocacy, and activism, ideally for currently and formerly incarcerated people
- Is committed to educational programming for incarcerated learners and/or has pre-existing courses or programming in a prison/jail/detention center
- Receives current funding through Second Chance Pell Grants or other funds supporting higher education in prison⁸

Along with consideration of funding opportunities and the quality of existing educational programming, these criteria are consistent with the PGP's typical and ideal approach to expansion. However, through Phases 1 and 2 we found that unique to the expansion of this particular initiative is the need to first build trust among HBCU leaders and students and the reality of the HBCU landscape itself.

We have come to realize that our initial proposal, targeting HBCU expansion in the 2022-2023 academic year, will first require further research and relationship building with potential expansion sites, as well as advocacy and education aimed at growing HBCUs' commitment to educational programming for currently and formerly incarcerated persons. Given the PGP's established presence, we first intend to explore growing the initiative in the DMV area, where there are several HBCUs and the PGP already has partnerships with prisons and jails with educational programming.

⁸ Nadworny, E., P., & R. (2022, June 28). Pell Grants In Prison: A New Effort To Fund Degrees For People Behind Bars. NPR.

HBCU EXPANSION (cont.)

HBCUs and Prison Education Programming

While the list of universities providing educational programming for currently incarcerated and formerly incarcerated learners is long, there are only a few HBCUs doing so. In the last year, several articles have reported on the entry of HBCUs into the prison education space as part of efforts to create a prison-to-college pipeline and to extend the institutions' missions to serve other groups of historically neglected and excluded learners.⁹

Below are some of the HBCUs that are currently offering higher education programming for currently and formerly incarcerated learners:

- Howard University (Washington, D.C.)
- Bowie State University* (Maryland)
- Coppin State University (Maryland)
- Morehouse College (Atlanta, Georgia)
- Spelman College (Atlanta, Georgia)
- Mississippi Valley State University* (Mississippi)
- Claflin University* (South Carolina)
- Langston University* (Oklahoma)
- Lane College (Tennessee)
- Wiley College* (Texas)
- Shorter College* (Arkansas)

*Pell Experimental Site Initiative¹⁰

Next Steps - HBCU Expansion

Given our research and experience through Phases 1 and 2 of the initiative and the challenges outlined above we will be extending the timeline for HBCU Expansion to pursue the following steps:

» Expansion in the DMV Area

- Begin recruiting volunteer tutors from HBCUs in the DMV area, where the PGP already has a presence, who don't yet lead their own educational programming or are in the beginning stages of building their educational programming for currently and formerly incarcerated learners. This includes Bowie State University (Maryland), Coppin State University (Maryland), Morgan State University (Maryland), and University of the District of Columbia (D.C.)

» Research

- Consult experts in the space, including faculty and graduate students studying HBCUs, to help us determine which HBCUs are best suited for PGP programming and to help us build trust among HBCU leaders.

⁹ Carrillo, S. (2022, August 17). HBCUs are building a new prison-to-college pipeline. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2022/08/17/1117523697/hbcus-are-building-a-new-prison-to-college-pipeline>
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¹⁰ The Second Chance Pell (SCP) Experimental Sites Initiative, launched by the U.S. Department of Education in 2015, provides need-based Pell grants to people in state and federal prisons through partnerships with 65 colleges in 27 states.

HBCU EXPANSION (cont.)

»Research (cont.)

- The Jamii Sisterhood (Project Freedom) is currently working with a few HBCUs and other Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) that are recipients of Second Chance Pell Grants to launch sustainable higher education in prison programs. By supporting HBCUs and other MSIs through program creation and implementation, Project Freedom hopes to sow seeds of community uplift and social justice that will continue to grow on each cohort member's campus.
- The Center for the Study of Historically Black Colleges and Universities at Virginia Union University, The Rutgers Center For Minority Serving Institutions, and faculty and graduate students of HU's Department of Education who are focused on the leadership of Minority Serving Institutions.
 - Identify student organizations at HBCUs that are aligned with the PGP.

- Advocacy

- » ◦ Make the case for tutoring to be added to prison education models at HBCUs.

Next Steps - HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University

In addition to our expansion efforts, we will continue to improve the volunteer support and justice-oriented leadership model at HU. For the 2022-2023 academic year, we are working towards:

»Recruitment

- For the past two academic years, there has only been one male-identifying volunteer tutor from HU. As Black men are disproportionately incarcerated, male-identifying Black volunteers are needed to make a deeper impact through tutoring.
 - Build deeper connections on-campus with faculty, staff, centers, and newspapers to elevate the profile of the PGP and generate volunteer tutor applications.
 - Create culturally relevant promotional flyers that include Black women and non-binary individuals, reflecting the HU student population.
- **Volunteer Support and Justice-Oriented Leadership Programming**
 - Instead of check-in calls, beginning in the Fall 2022 semester, we will hold two group check-in meetings per semester. At the end of the 2021-2022 academic year, leaders of the PGP at HU shared that check-in calls were challenging to schedule and maintain because volunteer tutors were not able to prioritize scheduling and attendance. The PGP observed strong attendance from volunteer tutors at virtual debrief meetings that were scheduled once each semester. In these sessions, volunteer tutors were encouraged to speak about their experiences as a group and some tutors were inspired by hearing their peers speak, leading them to share about their own tutoring experiences. Dr. Muhammad will train campus leaders to conduct these meetings with the support of PGP staff, to ensure the sustainability of the initiative and foster leadership development among members of the PGP at HU.

HBCU EXPANSION (cont.)

»Volunteer Support and Justice-Oriented Leadership Programming (cont.)

- Provide ongoing guidance for campus-based advocacy programming: With the ongoing guidance and support of PGP staff, PGP campus organizations are responsible for hosting or co-hosting events to recruit new volunteers, fundraise, build community among volunteers, and provide campus-based justice education programming. With the support and guidance of PGP staff, PGP campus organizations host at least one community-building event per

semester and at least one campus-based justice education program per academic year. Campus-based justice education includes advocacy and consciousness-raising events related to or connected to the following:

- Education injustice and educational justice for currently or formerly incarcerated people;
- Conditions of confinement and reentry;
- Reform and or abolition of the carceral state; and
- Reading groups.

RECRUITING, ELEVATING AND SUPPORTING BLACK VOLUNTEERS ATTENDING PWIs

While we have made progress towards our diversity goal, the PGP recognizes that we cannot solely rely on HU, HBCUs, or the D.C. region to reach a 20% Black volunteer tutor base by the end of the 2023-2024 academic year:

- For the 2021-2022 academic year, volunteer tutors in the D.C. region made up 23% of all PGP volunteers. However, not all tutoring opportunities in the D.C. region are able to be filled by HU volunteer tutors.
- There are few HBCUs in the regions where we have existing programming and where we can expand more immediately.
- We want to be able to recruit and support Black volunteer tutors throughout all PGP regions, not just those from HU, HBCUs, or the D.C. region.

Therefore, as we continue to grow the initiative at HU and extend our timeline for HBCU expansion, it is important that we also focus on recruiting, elevating, and supporting Black volunteer tutors at PWIs.

To inform the extension of these efforts to PWIs, during the Spring 2022 semester we conducted focus groups among our current and former Black volunteer tutors who attended PWIs during their service with the PGP. The goals of these focus groups were to:

1. Learn about the volunteer tutoring and volunteer support experiences of Black-identifying volunteer tutors attending PWIs.
2. Learn how we can best recruit, elevate, and support Black-identifying volunteer tutors attending PWIs.

RECRUITING, ELEVATING AND SUPPORTING BLACK VOLUNTEERS ATTENDING PWIS (cont.)

The volunteer tutors who participated in the focus groups did not have the benefit of the volunteer support model that we implemented at HU. Still, like their peers at HU, they would also refer others to the PGP. Only a few of them expressed that they experienced some form of stress, strain, or trauma from tutoring in a carceral space as a Black person. Those who did, however, noted that the PGP did not have systems in place to provide them with support and that they relied primarily on their peers.

Participants also commented on the importance of recruiting, elevating, and supporting Black volunteer tutors attending PWIs, citing the following reasons:

“We need more Black volunteer tutors on our campus. The program is named after a Black directly-impacted person. This should be reflective in the volunteer tutors.”

“It matters because Black males are often discounted at my PWI.”

“The population of incarcerated (people) have a significant number of people of color, it helps to see someone who looks similar making a difference.”

“Sometimes people are more receptive when they work with people who look like them and empathize with their experiences.”

“..So many Black people are incarcerated, it gives us the opportunity to support our own community in a new way.”

Focus group participants also reflected on the unique needs of Black volunteer tutors, such as time and safe space for reflection as well as resources to process their experiences tutoring in a carceral space.

These conversations led to the following recommendations for recruiting, elevating, and supporting Black volunteer tutors attending PWIs:

- Formalize the PGP’s organization-wide recruiting process so that we can evaluate success/failure/improvement of application generation and equity-minded selection of applicants, and volunteer tutor opportunities
- Engage with the campus community and surrounding community to recruit Black volunteer tutors
- Create opportunities for Black volunteer tutors to network with other Black volunteer tutors outside their region
- Host events just for Black volunteer tutors, regardless of region
- Conduct frequent check-ins with Black volunteer tutors
- Utilize trauma-responsive practices at all times
- Create “safe” processes and policies for Black volunteer tutors to report trauma occurring inside carceral spaces
- Subsidize transportation costs in advance instead of through reimbursement
- Create recruiting materials with images that reflect Black volunteer tutors

RECRUITING, ELEVATING AND SUPPORTING BLACK VOLUNTEERS ATTENDING PWIS (cont.)

In kicking off Phase 3 of the initiative, during the 2022-2023 academic year, we will pilot our efforts to recruit, elevate, and support Black volunteer tutors at PWIs in the Massachusetts/Rhode Island and Philadelphia regions of the PGP. These regions have strong PGP campus organizations, an increasing number of volunteer opportunities, and a strong educational justice culture.

For the 2021-2022 academic year, 15.3% of Philadelphia volunteer tutors identified as Black. For the Fall 2022 semester, the PGP in Philadelphia relied on its existing relationships at universities where we recruit to increase application generation and will build on these relationships to recruit Black volunteer tutors in Philadelphia. By the end of the 2022-2023 academic year, 20% of Philadelphia's volunteer tutor base identifies as Black.

For the 2021-2022 academic year, 3.9% of the Massachusetts and Rhode Island volunteer tutors identified as Black. Taking this starting point, we recognize that we need to build deeper relationships in these two states. Therefore, during the Spring 2023 semester, the PGP will identify key people (faculty and community members), organizations (student and community), and academic centers that can serve as partners in the expansion of our initiative and support the recruitment of Black volunteer tutors in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. By the end of the Fall 2023 semester, we expect that 10% of Massachusetts/Rhode Island volunteer tutors will identify as Black.

STAFFING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In order for the PGP to reach a 20% Black volunteer base by the end of the 2023-2024 academic year, and to elevate and support these volunteer tutors, the PGP must adjust its staffing and management models. Similar to volunteer tutors, PGP staff are both equity-minded and justice-oriented, having come to the PGP wanting to do something about systems that funnel people from defunded schools and communities to prison. In fact, it was the regional program field staff who initially pushed the PGP to move towards both internal and external diversity, equity, and inclusion practices. However, the passion of the PGP staff and our stated goals to recruit, elevate, and support Black volunteer tutors must be systemized.

STAFFING AND INFRASTRUCTURE (cont.)

In the current staffing model, 70% of the PGP staff are regional early-career employees whose responsibilities are driven by placement and volunteer management logistics. These programmatic logistics include managing relationships with carceral facilities, reentry programs, and universities; recruiting and supporting volunteer tutors; handling transportation logistics; collecting and analyzing programmatic data; leading regional advisory boards; and supervising staff. The remaining 30% of PGP staff are at the national leadership level, where their work is driven by fund development, human resources, operations, overall program management, volunteer training, communications, DEI, justice-oriented leadership programming, and executive leadership.

Of this staff makeup, a few staff members have an educational or professional background in social work, but not specific training in student counseling or student development - both of which are necessary to support volunteer tutors in service. While the PGP's strategic plan and the Phase 1 report calls for justice-oriented leadership programming and more support for volunteer tutors, specifically those who are Black and or system-impacted, the PGP's current staffing model nor operations are adequately structured to support this goal.

Along with challenges in staff expertise and capacity, the current performance management model was developed to align and clarify responsibilities and expectations and support staff development. PGP does not have organization-wide key performance indicators (KPIs) in place to measure success, especially those related to recruiting, elevating, and supporting Black volunteer tutors.

Therefore, to support the human capital needs to advance our efforts to recruit, train, place, elevate, and support Black volunteer tutors, it will be necessary to:

- » Raise funds to fully support and expand the volunteer support model
 - Hire staff with expertise in student counseling or student development to specifically focus on volunteer support and trauma-responsive practices for volunteer tutors.
 - Provide training for current staff in student counseling/development/support and trauma-responsive practices to enable staff to provide better support to volunteer tutors, as well as increased leadership development opportunities for volunteer tutors
- » Scale the evaluation model used for HU volunteer tutors to all volunteer tutors to measure the tutoring experience, volunteer support, training, and justice-oriented leadership programming facilitated by the PGP.
- » Update the PGP's performance management system and develop KPIs to measure success in and incentivize recruiting, elevating, and supporting Black volunteer tutors.
- » Create a dashboard of DEI metrics for all staff to be able to track the generation of applications and placement of volunteers based on racial identity, gender identity, system-impactedness, etc.

IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINE

We have laid out plans for:

- » The continuation of:
HBCU Forward Initiative
at Howard University;**
- » HBCU Expansion;**
- » Recruiting, Elevating and
Supporting Black
Volunteers Attending
PWIs;**
- » Staffing and
Infrastructure**

IMPLEMENTATION

HBCU Forward Initiative at Howard University

»» Spring 2023

- Provide guidance for campus-based advocacy programming.

»» Spring 2023 for Fall 2023 Placements

- Targeted recruitment of Black male volunteer tutors.
- Build deeper connections on-campus with faculty, staff, centers, and newspapers to elevate the profile of the PGP and generate applications.
- Begin recruiting volunteer tutors from HBCUs in the DMV area, where the PGP already has a presence, who don't yet lead their own educational programming or are in the beginning stages of building their educational programming for currently and formerly incarcerated learners. This includes Bowie State University (Maryland), Coppin State University (Maryland), Morgan State University (Maryland), and University of the District of Columbia (D.C.)
- Create culturally relevant promotional flyers that include Black women and non-binary individuals, reflecting the HU student population.

HCBU Expansion

»» Spring 2023

- Consult experts in the space, including faculty and graduate students studying HBCUs
- Identify student organizations at HBCUs that are aligned with the work of PGP.

»» Summer 2023

- Make the case for tutoring to be added to prison education models at HBCUs.

»» Fall 2024

- Expand to additional HBCU.

IMPLEMENTATION (cont.)

Recruiting, Elevating, and Supporting Black Volunteer Tutors Attending PWIs

»» Spring 2023

- Formalize the PGP's organization-wide recruiting process.
- 20% of Philadelphia's volunteer tutor base identifies as Black.

»» Spring 2023 for Fall 2023 Placements

- Engage with the campus community and surrounding community to recruit Black volunteer tutors in all PGP regions.
- Create recruiting materials with images that reflect Black volunteer tutors.

»» Summer 2023

- Create opportunities for Black volunteer tutors to network with other Black volunteer tutors outside their region.

»» Fall 2023

- 10% of Massachusetts/Rhode Island volunteer tutors will identify as Black.
- Host cross-regional community-building events for Black volunteer tutors.
- Conduct frequent check-ins with Black volunteer tutors.
- Create "safe" processes and policies for Black volunteer tutors to report trauma occurring inside carceral space.
- Subsidize transportation costs in advance instead of through reimbursement.

Staffing and Infrastructure

»» Spring 2023

- Scale the evaluation model used for HU volunteer tutors to all volunteer tutors to measure the tutoring experience, volunteer support, training, and justice-oriented leadership programming.

»» Summer 2023

- Provide training for current staff in student counseling, development/support and trauma-responsive practices to better support volunteer tutors and to provide leadership development for volunteer tutors.
- Update performance management system and develop KPIs to measure success in and incentivize recruiting, elevating, and supporting Black volunteer tutors.

»» Spring 2024

- Hire staff with expertise in student counseling or student development to specifically focus on volunteer support and trauma-responsive practices for volunteer tutors.

WORKS CITED AND ENDNOTES

1 & 2 - This figure includes volunteer tutors who identified as Black or African American only, as well as those who identified as Black or African American along with one or more other racial identities.

3 - From the focus groups conducted during the Spring 2021 semester, we learned that volunteer tutors did not fully understand how person-first language frameworks (e.g. directly impacted, system-impacted, justice-impacted) applied to their lives and informed their volunteer experiences. Per the recommendation of Dr. Muhammad, we adopted system-impacted as our standard language to help volunteer tutors better make sense of their experiences and the experiences of the students they support.

4 - PGP Campus Organizations and their college student leaders serve as the on-campus representatives of the PGP. In support of the PGP, PGP Campus Organizations help work towards the mission and vision of the PGP by recruiting and interviewing prospective volunteer tutors, coordinating campus-based advocacy events, providing peer support to other volunteer tutors, building community among volunteer tutors, and sometimes managing transportation reimbursements.

5 - The Youth Services Center (YSC) is the District of Columbia's detention center for youth, responsible for the care and custody of young people placed in secure detention by court order from the DC Superior Court Family Court Division.

6 - The carceral state refers to the manifold punishment logics and practices deployed by governments, municipalities, school systems, and social institutions that work to exclude, deny, and confine people. A carceral state framework helps us locate the prison, the human in the cage, and punishment within multiple institutional arrangements and widely held beliefs about the relationship between punishment and rehabilitation. At the PGP we understand that mass incarceration is one part of the carceral state, and that by incorporating a carceral state framework, we can avoid duplicating harm and move beyond the prison as the only site of our educational support and pursuit of educational justice.

7 - The PGP is one of the many organizations providing educational support for currently and formerly incarcerated learners and we join with other organizations doing critical work toward educational justice. Our theory of change is focused on improving educational access for those who've already experienced harm by the criminal legal system. We believe that we are mutually responsible for one another, that we cannot discount anyone, and that every person deserves access to education. Therefore, we imagine a world where all incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people have access to high-quality academic programs and we hope for our volunteer tutors to join the students that they support in reimagining educational justice. The PGP defines educational justice as 1) access to high-quality educational programming and tutoring support focused on the freedom dreams of both incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people, 2) advocacy for humane conditions of confinement for currently incarcerated people that support both the ability to pursue education and live sustainably post-incarceration, and 3) wraparound services that support formerly incarcerated people pursuing their education.

8 - Nadworny, E., P, & R. (2022, June 28). Pell Grants In Prison: A New Effort To Fund Degrees For People Behind Bars. NPR.

9 - Carrillo, S. (2022, August 17). HBCUs are building a new prison-to-college pipeline. NPR.

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10 - The Second Chance Pell (SCP) Experimental Sites Initiative, launched by the U.S. Department of Education in 2015, provides need-based Pell grants to people in state and federal prisons through partnerships with 65 colleges in 27 states.