

Trinity Church Wall Street Advocacy Priorities

Trinity Church Wall Street has a long history of advancing social justice in alignment with our belief that every person is created in the image of God and has dignity and value. This document details our current advocacy priorities, which are informed by, build on, and complement efforts across the church including our direct services, programming, grantmaking, mission investing, convenings, and neighborhood supports. They also reflect the urgency of the moment as our city strives for an equitable recovery, recognizing that the those hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic fallout are Black and brown New Yorkers.

While the challenges facing the city are great, so is the opportunity to foster systemic change and ensure the well-being of our most marginalized neighbors, particularly youth. As such, Trinity uses a multi-pronged approach to support young people that integrates direct services, programming, grantmaking, and advocacy efforts. These and additional priorities are detailed below. To move them forward, we leverage Trinity's resources and standing as a faith-based anchor institution. We also join campaigns, collaborate with those with lived experience, service and advocacy allies and policymakers, and engage in targeted government relations and communications efforts.

Goal 1: Enhance youth well-being and education

- Improve school culture and climate and increase supports for students by:
 - Expanding restorative justice programs and passing the State's [Solutions Not Suspensions Act](#) to end the over-reliance on suspension as the default disciplinary method and instead use proven restorative justice practices and social-emotional supports
 - Reform how New York City schools address students experiencing mental health crisis, by passing [legislation](#) to establish protocols for such students
- Increase services for under-resourced youth by expanding school-based social and emotional supports, telehealth options to access mental health care, job placement, training and college access and success supports, and making afterschool and the City's Summer Youth Employment Program available year-round

Goal 2: Address the needs of those suffering from severe mental health challenges

- Shift to a public health, non-law enforcement response to those in mental health crisis by:
 - Effectively implementing the 988 suicide and crisis hotline to provide support for people in suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress by trained counselors
 - Expanding and fully funding B-HEARD (Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division), designed to respond to people in severe mental health crisis by teams of paramedics and mental health professionals, by adding trained peers, reducing

response times and the number of calls routed to 911, and expanding to the communities with the highest number of 911 calls

- Facilitate recovery and avoid the criminal legal system for those with substance abuse disorder, mental illness and other disabilities by passing the State [Treatment Not Jail](#) bill
- Support New York State's plan to increase inpatient psychiatric treatment capacity by 1,000 beds and create 3,500 housing units for individuals with mental illness

Goal 3: Remove barriers to and increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing

- Ensure effective implementation of and funding for the [City](#) and [State](#) housing plans
- Improve the City's housing voucher programs, including removing the requirement that residents live in shelter for 90 days before being eligible for housing subsidies and ensure enforcement of laws barring source of income discrimination by landlords and brokers
- Develop new financing mechanisms to increase the supply of supportive housing and other models such as "shared housing" units for vulnerable populations such as homeless youth and people with criminal justice system experience
- Create the Housing Access Voucher Program to serve people who do not qualify for existing rental assistance programs by passing [legislation](#) at the State level

Goal 4: Reduce the number of people in City jails and State prison and support reentry

- Ensure the closure of the jails on Rikers Island and creation of borough-based facilities
- Increase access to evidence-based alternatives to incarceration and supervised release
- Eliminate housing discrimination against people with conviction records to support stability and reduce recidivism by making the [Fair Chance for Housing Act](#) law
- End perpetual punishment of those who have completed their sentences and paid their debt to society by passing the [Clean Slate Act](#) to automatically seal conviction records for New Yorkers who meet certain conditions
- Expand and improve coordination of reentry services such as job training and placement, housing, and health and mental health care, including for people with serious mental illness
- Ensure accountability by strengthening [Local Law 103 of 2016](#) which mandates that the mayor establish a high-level Municipal Division of Transitional Services
- Provide every person released from Rikers Island and other City jails an IDNYC card and essential documents through [legislation](#)