



# Community Organizing and Activism: Confronting Injustice in Public Spaces



## Bailout Movement, Organizing, and Balancing Work

*“Everything felt important, which it was. But I’m one person. So, the struggle was for me to hone in on, or narrow down, where I wanted to most put my energy when everything is quite literally on fire.”*

– Cherizar Crippen, Facilitator and Youth Advocate

### OVERVIEW

Most people in America’s prison system have not been convicted of a crime. While some are released quickly, paying their bail within hours or days, many others are too poor to make bail and thus remain behind bars until trial. “The median felony bail bond amount (\$10,000) is the equivalent of 8 months’ income for the typical detained defendant. Poverty is not only a predictor of incarceration; it is also frequently the outcome, as a criminal record and time spent in prison destroys wealth, creates debt, and decimates job opportunities” (<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2020.html>).

Cherizar helped organize the first *Black Mama’s Bail Out* in Greensboro, NC to post bail for Black caregivers of any gender and provide supportive services. In 2019, the National Bail Out Movement freed more than 100 people and raised over a million dollars to reunite caregivers with their families in time for Mother’s Day. This movement hopes to end pre-trial detention entirely.

Cherizar considers radical self-care and self-love as crucial parts of anti-oppression work. She rejects the idea that people have to choose to either take care of themselves or organize and fight oppression.

To learn more about money bail and the movement to abolish it, visit <https://nationalbailout.org/>

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does mass incarceration impact your community and our country?
2. If a caregiver in your family was suddenly incarcerated, what effect would that have on other people in your family or community?
3. What reforms could we implement to reduce the number of people incarcerated in the U.S. and to confront racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system?
4. How can we best support people in their hard work to be activists and organizers?
5. How can you balance your own responsibilities with staying civically engaged?

