“We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.”

This is the refrain of “Ella’s Song,” written by Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon from words spoken by the civil rights leader Ella Baker over the years. 507 This section of the handbook offers some frameworks for moving beyond study to action.

One important step on the path is connecting to news sources and advocacy groups you trust, so you can stay informed of the latest developments in broader efforts to end mass incarceration. Following are a few suggestions to get you started.

An over-arching guiding principle of the campaign against mass incarceration is that, as much as possible, it should be led by those most affected by it: the currently and formerly incarcerated, their families, and their wider communities. As Glenn E. Martin of Just Leadership USA says, “Those closest to the problem are closest to the solution, but furthest from resources and power.” 508

507 See http://ellabakercenter.org/blog/2013/12/ellas-song-we-who-believe-in-freedom-cannot-rest-untiIt-comes. Baker was a director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as discussed in Jelani Cobb’s March 2016 New Yorker article about the Black Lives Matter movement: “New scholarship [has] beg(u)n charting the contributions of women, local activists, and small organizations—the lesser-known elements that enabled the grand moments we associate with the civil-rights era. In particular, the career of Ella Baker…

508 See http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/14/where-is-black-lives-matter-headed

508 See http://www.justleadershipusa.org/about-us/
All of the organizations in this list are sources of important information and wisdom, as well as centerpoints of activism; the starred organizations were created by or have leadership from people of color.

• Of course we’ll start with T’ruah. www.truah.org. Follow us on Twitter at @truhrrabbi’s for updates about campaigns, volunteer opportunities, and news.

• The Marshall Project offers a daily digest collecting incarceration-related news stories from around the web, plus their own original reporting. www.marshallproject.org.

• The ACLU is a major driver of criminal justice reform advocacy. www.aclu.org.

• “The Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) “educates and engages African American and black immigrant communities to organize and advocate for racial, social and economic justice” and has particularly good resources on incarceration in both an immigration and criminal context. http://blackalliance.org

• *Campaign Zero is a grassroots movement led by young activists, mainly from communities of color, to end police violence in America. http://www.joincampaignzero.org/#vision

• *Detention Watch Network is organizing to end immigration detention. http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org

• The Drug Policy Alliance “is the nation’s leading organization promoting drug policies that are grounded in science, compassion, health and human rights.” www.drugpolicy.org

• *Equal Justice Initiative, founded originally to represent men wrongfully sentenced to death, now conducts a wide range of work on mass incarceration, race, and poverty, as well as ending the death penalty. www.eji.org

• Grassroots Leadership, focused primarily in the southeast and Texas, organizes against for-profit incarceration, both in criminal justice and immigration. http://grassrootsleadership.org

• *Just Leadership USA is committed to cutting the U.S. correctional population in half by 2030. https://www.justleadershipusa.org

• NRAC, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, is a leading group focused on solitary confinement. www.nrcat.org

• The Sentencing Project—“working for a fair and effective criminal justice system by promoting reforms in sentencing law and practice, and alternatives to incarceration.” www.sentencingproject.org