

Job Title: Jailhouse Lawyer Initiative (JLI) Membership Coordinator
Employer: Bernstein Institute for Human Rights, NYU School of Law
Job Type: In Person
Employment Type: Contractor, 20-30 hours/week
Duration: 12 months with opportunity for renewal

The Bernstein Institute for Human Rights is looking for a Membership Coordinator to support the work of the Jailhouse Lawyers Initiative, which is housed at the Institute. The Jailhouse Lawyers Initiative (JLI) is a collective of current and formerly incarcerated jailhouse lawyers, law students, lawyers and advocates that provide legal training and support to a growing national network of currently incarcerated people. The JLI's work advances four goals:

1. Building a national network of current and former jailhouse lawyers
2. Co-developing legal education and empowerment trainings and curricula for currently incarcerated people
3. Raise the visibility of jailhouse lawyers as essential members of the legal ecosystem
4. Develop pathways for Jailhouse Lawyers to return their legal skills and knowledge back to their communities during and after incarceration

Today, the Jailhouse Lawyer Initiative has over 1200 currently incarcerated members. These women and men support pro se litigants, conduct legal research, lead advocacy, and build community in and out of prisons across the United States. We build community and capacity with our membership by sending quarterly newsletters, co-writing and distributing national legal empowerment practice modules, facilitating connections for research support and publication, sending in facilitation guides for feminist circles, peer-to-peer exchanges with law students, and participation in our JLI Advisory community. Our members also write letters to us sharing the successes, challenges, and resilience present in their work; priorities for JLI resources development; the contours of injustice in the US prison system; as well as policy proposals. Many of these letters are published in a digital database called Flashlights so that the dreams, demands, and wisdom of our jailhouse lawyer members can be read by the public. Flashlights launched in 2024, and is a living database that continues to be shaped by ongoing correspondence with our members.

As of June, 2025 our members came from over 480 prisons, representing about 29% percent of the 1674 state and federal prisons in the United States. Our goal is to be present and engaged with community members in every prison. The Membership Coordinator will coordinate receipt of mail from members, management of our membership database on Airtable, and production and distribution of our quarterly newsletter.

Title: JLI Membership Coordinator

Opportunities:

The Membership Coordinator will be a contractor dedicated to coordinating communication with inside and outside JLI members and conducting new membership outreach. Airtable is the primary platform that JLI uses to manage its membership and candidates with substantial experience are strongly preferred. The Membership Coordinator will join a small and mighty team of community justice advocates who believe that the practice of law can and should be rooted in dignity, care, and human rights.

Primary Duties:

- Lead the JLI letters project, taking over the management of the Airtable letter database (e.g. assigning scan and review of the letters), reviewing letters, and crafting responses to JLI members.
- Maintain and develop new trainings for student interns and staff on scanning and reading letters and sending out mail.
- Coordinate quarterly newsletter mailing.
- Support upkeep of Flashlights, a multimedia online convening space that will house a publicly searchable database of letters from JLI members.
- Develop, in partnership with the full JLI team, and implement an outside membership protocol.
- Help develop a quarterly newsletter in collaboration with the JLI team that is sent to outside partners, formerly incarcerated members and collaborators.
- Participate in strategic planning and growth of the JLI.

General Qualifications:

- Experience building and managing large databases, preferably on Airtable.
- Experience with the google suite including Google Docs, Google Sheets, Gmail and Google Drive.
- Detailed oriented and able to work independently as well as in groups
- Reliable/on-time and accountable for the quality of work
- Project management experience, including being able to oversee a quarterly production schedule.
- Creative, self-starter with strong organizational and interpersonal skills
- Experience in community/movement building, organizing or participating in justice-oriented campaigns
- Adaptable and flexible in working across teams and stakeholders
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Reliable/on-time and accountable for the quality of work
- Direct experience as a formerly incarcerated jailhouse lawyer or law clerk is preferred.

Required Qualifications:

- Able to commit to 20-30 hours per week during hours of operation: M-F 9am-5pm (please include availability in cover letter)
- 2 days of in person work required each week at the Bernstein Institute offices located in Wilf Hall 139 MacDougal St, New York, NY 10012.
- By applying to this position, you are certifying that you will be residing within the U.S. and eligible to work within the U.S. if you are hired.

NYC Pay Transparency Act

In compliance with NYC's Pay Transparency Act, the compensation for this position is \$50/hr for 20-30 hours per week. New York University considers factors such as (but not limited to) scope and responsibilities of the position, candidate's work experience, education/training, key skills, internal peer equity, as well as market and organizational considerations when extending an offer.

To apply:

Applicant should submit (1) a cover letter addressing the qualifications described above (2) a resume or curriculum vitae; and (3) the names and contact information for three references.

Submit these materials to: law.bernstein-institute@nyu.edu, with subject "JLI Membership Coordinator" in the subject line of the email.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis with an ideal start date of September 15, 2025.

NYU is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

About the Bernstein Institute for Human Rights

The Bernstein Institute for Human Rights is a center at NYU Law committed to challenging legal systems that exclude, marginalize, and oppress. We support and train community justice advocates, law students, and lawyers on legal empowerment methods as a way to actively challenge inequities here in the U.S. and around the world. We are the only U.S. legal academic center dedicated to advancing research, education, and advocacy on legal empowerment in the United States and globally.