May Newsletter

DPA Launches COVID-19 Discussion Series

As the COVID-19 crisis continues to exacerbate the harms of the drug war, DPA is launching a new discussion series, beginning next week.

The first conversation is titled “COVID-19, Drug Policy, and Decarceration: Reflections and Looking Ahead”, and will take place over Zoom on Thursday, May 7 from 2pm – 4pm EST. It will explore the importance of decarceration in ending the drug war, how decarceration and the decriminalization of drugs support the health and safety of people who use drugs, and how we can sustain progress on these issues during and after this crisis. The inaugural session will also investigate how we can use the current moment to be more transformational with our policy agendas.

DPA Calls on Congress to Let Marijuana Industry Access
COVID-19 Relief Funds

DPA is urging Congress to give marijuana businesses access to the federal COVID-19 relief funds that are available to companies in other industries.

The letter was submitted by the Marijuana Justice Coalition, a broad coalition of national advocacy organizations, convened by DPA to advocate for federal marijuana reform through a racial and economic justice lens. The coalition is comprised of drug policy reform organizations, as well as civil rights, criminal justice, immigration, and other groups representing directly impacted people.

“Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the marijuana industry already struggled with inclusivity and diversity in ownership and operations, as well as countless barriers to the industry for people directly impacted by marijuana criminalization,” the letter states.

“Now more than ever, if we are to provide pathways of opportunity and ownership for communities that have been historically targeted and marginalized under the senseless and cruel policies of marijuana criminalization, Congress must protect these small businesses in order to ensure a level playing field in these emerging markets.”

Read more.

Join the Ashawna Hailey Planned Giving Society

By leaving a legacy gift, or bequest, to the Drug Policy Alliance, you become part of a group of extraordinary advocates who have committed to advancing the values that have defined their lives and activism — science, compassion, health, and human rights.

Our legacy supporters are recognized as members of the Ashawna Hailey Planned Giving Society, named in honor of the tech innovator and philanthropist whose bequest has made a lasting impact on the movement. The enduring support of these donors ensures that we can protect our hard-won progress while continuing to promote drug policy reform for generations to come.

We encourage you to stand with us.
DPA Clips, Podcasts, and Stories

Drugs & Stuff: DPA’s Weekly Podcast is Back!

We are delighted to announce that DPA’s podcast – Drugs & Stuff – is back. In this regular podcast series, we convene a wide variety of experts – from scientists to activists, writers to teachers, and DPA staff – to hear about how drugs and drug policy play a role in their work and lives.

Recent episodes are focused on the relationship between the COVID-19 crisis and the drug war. They explore health injustice and the importance of decarceration as outbreaks hit prisons and jails, and discuss how the pandemic has blown the broken system wide open.

Our latest episode involves a conversation with DPA’s Managing Director of Policy Advocacy & Campaigns, Kassandra Frederique, who breaks down how drug policy is more relevant than ever – and the opportunities we now have to reform it.

The podcast’s full back catalog, dating to 2017, is available on our website and on your favorite podcast streaming platforms.

Listen to the latest Drugs & Stuff podcast.

DPA Urges CDC to Adopt Decarceration and Expand Healthcare for Incarcerated People

DPA is urging the Centers for Disease Control to explicitly adopt decarceration and expanded healthcare access for incarcerated and newly released people as a public health imperative in combating COVID-19.

The letter, also signed by more than 100 organizations and 550 individual public health professionals, was sent following troubling reports of rapidly escalating outbreaks within the country’s jails, prisons, and immigration...
detention centers.

“People in prison and detention can’t practice the same social distancing or hygiene measures the rest of us so easily can,” warned Queen Adesuyi, Policy Manager at DPA's Office of National Affairs.

“This situation has led to an extremely gruesome scenario in these facilities, where sick people quickly infect others, and those infections can put the communities where they’re based at risk. Neglecting to quickly reduce the population in these facilities is essentially handing hundreds of thousands of incarcerated people a death sentence.”

Since DPA submitted the letter, COVID-19 has claimed the lives of numerous people incarcerated in federal prisons – including Andrea Circle Bear, who recently gave birth while on a ventilator, and was serving a 26-month sentence for a drug charge in South Dakota.

Read more.

Drug Policy in the News

Teen Vogue: Black and Brown Teens Are Still More Likely to be Punished for Smoking Weed

Filter: Vast Coalition Issues Demands for Far-Reaching MAT Reform

The Appeal: Methadone Rules Requiring In-Person Visits Are Putting patients At Risk of Coronavirus.

Politico: Trump Officials, Health Experts Worry Coronavirus Will Set Back Opioid Fight

NY Daily News: Indiana Police Department Suspends Narcan Use As Officials Raise Alarm About Overdose Deaths During Coronavirus Pandemic

Marijuana Moment: US Marijuana Research Policy Violated International Law For Decades, DEA Lawsuit Memo Reveals

It's not too late to complete the Census

As we all stay at home, there’s never been an easier time to complete the U.S. Census. The data you provide determines how Congressional seats
are distributed. It also informs some of our nation's most important decisions, including the federal government's spending on vital services like healthcare and education. When you respond to the census, you help your community gets its fair share.

*Find out about responding to the Census here.*