

# INTRODUCTION

## ⇒ WHO IS INCITE! WOMEN OF COLOR AGAINST VIOLENCE?



INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence is a national activist organization of radical feminists of color advancing a movement to end violence against women of color and their communities through direct action, critical dialogue and grassroots organizing. Nationally, INCITE!'s work is coordinated by a collective of women of color from across the country who work to support local grassroots organizing activities that challenge all forms of violence against women of color and their communities. INCITE! is a national network of local chapters and affiliates in over 10 cities, and a broad base of individual members and supporters across the country and transnationally.

## ⇒ WHY THIS TOOLKIT?

INCITE! created this toolkit to support the work of our local chapters, affiliates, and allies in raising awareness around and challenging an often invisible form of violence against women of color in the U.S.

When we think about police brutality, we tend to think primarily about the experiences of young men of color perceived to be heterosexual, and not about police brutality women and trans people of color experience daily.

When we think about violence against women, we tend to think about interpersonal and community violence, like domestic violence and sexual assault, and not gender-based violence by law enforcement agents. As a result, very little information and very few resources on police brutality and other forms of law enforcement violence against women of color and trans people of color exist at the national level. The marginalization of a gendered political analysis of state violence also de-prioritizes the work of developing community alternatives for safety, support, healing, and accountability from domestic violence, sexual violence, homophobic/transphobic violence, and other kinds of gender-based violence within our communities.

To support women of color and trans people of color survivors of police brutality, as well as individuals and groups who are working to raise awareness of and fight police brutality against women and trans people of color, we wanted to bring together as much information as possible, as well as resources and organizing tools and ideas developed by groups across the country, in one place. It is intended as an educational resource for activists and organizers, and provides some examples of organizing tools and strategies.



Art by Cristy C. Road, [croadcore.org](http://croadcore.org)

## ⇒ WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY “WOMEN OF COLOR & TRANS PEOPLE OF COLOR?”

Recognizing that police brutality and other forms of law enforcement violence often serve as tools for policing and enforcing gender and sexual conformity along with power relations based on race, class, immigration status and ability, this toolkit focuses on the experiences of people of color who experience gender-based state violence. When we say “women of color and trans people of color” we mean people of color who experience law enforcement violence and who identify as women, transgender, queer, Two-Spirit, lesbiana/lesbian, bisexual, bulldaggers, aggressives, dykes, gay, butch, genderqueer or gender non-conforming, whose experiences are generally marginalized by movements resisting state violence.



Please visit [www.incite-national.org](http://www.incite-national.org) for more info!

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## ⇒ WHAT IS “LAW ENFORCEMENT VIOLENCE?”

In this toolkit, we use the term "law enforcement violence" to include violence against women of color and trans people of color by local and state police, immigration authorities (i.e. ICE, DHS and Border Patrol), federal law enforcement agencies (i.e. FBI, DEA, Customs and Border Protection), military forces, and private security.

## ⇒ WHAT IS THE “PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX?”

Critical Resistance, a national grassroots organization formed to abolish the prison-industrial complex (more info at <http://www.criticalresistance.org>), defines the prison-industrial complex or PIC, as a complicated system situated at the intersection of governmental and private interests that uses prisons and policing as a failed "solution" to social, political and economic problems. The PIC depends upon the oppressive systems of racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia. It includes human rights violations, the death penalty, industry and labor issues, policing, courts, media, community powerlessness, the imprisonment of political prisoners, and the elimination of dissent.

## ⇒ WHAT IS IN THIS TOOLKIT?

The toolkit includes:

- ⇒ **Fact sheets** describing different kinds and locations of law enforcement violence experienced by women and trans people of color;
- ⇒ **Ideas** for documenting and organizing around law enforcement violence against women and trans people of color and for building responses to violence in our communities that don't rely on law enforcement;
- ⇒ Sample **workshops**;
- ⇒ Sample **surveys** and **flyers**;
- ⇒ A list of **resources**;
- ⇒ A **resource CD** with reports, tools and other information about law enforcement violence against women and trans people of color, participatory research and organizing strategies.

## ⇒ WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS TOOLKIT?

We are incredibly grateful to all of the chapters, affiliates, allies and partners who participated in and contributed to the creation of this toolkit, including the INCITE! Law Enforcement Violence Working Group (INCITE! Binghamton, INCITE! Denver, INCITE! New Orleans, Sisterfire NYC, INCITE! DC, Sista II Sista, October 22nd Coalition, Escuela Popular Norteña, RFR, Prison Moratorium Project, BlackOUT! Arts Collective, Southwest Youth Collaborative, Critical Resistance, Creative Interventions, and Coalición de Derechos Humanos), Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA), FIERCE!, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, the Audre Lorde Project, the Sex Workers Project of the Urban Justice Center, Community United Against Violence (CUAV), and the Young Women's Empowerment Project.

Art work by the inimitable and inspiring Cristy C. Road! <http://www.croadcore.org/>



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## ⇒ HOW CAN I USE THIS TOOLKIT?

We hope that this toolkit will help to:

- ⇒ **Integrate a gender analysis** into our conversations and action around police brutality, the prison industrial complex, and state violence;
- ⇒ **Connect, support, and advance local organizing** that addresses all forms of violence against women and trans people of color, including police brutality and other forms of state violence;
- ⇒ **Uncover and address the impacts of police brutality** on all members of our communities, including women of color and trans people of color;
- ⇒ **Develop base-building projects** that center the experiences of leadership of women and trans people of color who live at the dangerous intersections of multiple forms of interpersonal, community, and state gender-based violence, including youth, sex workers, poor and working class women and trans people of color, formerly incarcerated women and trans people of color, immigrants, and Native people;
- ⇒ **Challenge society's primary reliance on law enforcement agents** to protect us from domestic violence, sexual assault, homophobic and transphobic violence and other forms of interpersonal and community violence;
- ⇒ **Collectively develop alternative responses to violence** that do not rely on law enforcement agents who often perpetrate and permit violence against us rather than protect us.

## ⇒ WHAT OTHER TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE?

The toolkit is intended to be used along with INCITE!'s brochure *Police Brutality Against Women of Color & Trans People of Color: A Critical Intersection of Gender Violence and State Violence*. Copies of the brochure are available at <http://www.incite-national.org> or by writing us at [incite\\_national@yahoo.com](mailto:incite_national@yahoo.com).

*STOP! Police Brutality Against Women of Color and Trans People of Color* posters and palm cards are also available for local outreach.

## ⇒ WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK!

Please fill out the evaluation form at the back of the toolkit - tell us what you thought about it, how you used it, what was missing, what resources you are aware of that should be included, and anything else that would help us make it better! You can also fill out the evaluation form online at <http://www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=128>

THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF THIS TOOLKIT AND THE ACCOMPANYING RESOURCE CD  
ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
<http://www.incite-national.org>

Feel free to copy, download, distribute!



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