

Despite their stated commitments to racial justice, CUNY and SUNY are directly funding the prison industrial complex, which is a [present-day vestige of slavery](#) that disproportionately targets Black people, Indigenous People and other people of color.

According to a [March 2020 FOIL request](#) by the Legal AID Society, CUNY and SUNY have since 2009 purchased a cumulative [\\$3.18 million](#) in products from Corcraft – New York State’s prison labor industry. Despite generating [\\$53 million](#) in annual revenue for 2019 alone, Corcraft pays its incarcerated employees [sub-minimum wages of \\$0.16-\\$1.30 an hour](#).

Corcraft’s vast industry includes the production of [hand sanitizer](#), [coffins](#), [license plates](#), [waste receptacles](#), [filing cabinets](#), [classroom chairs/desks](#), [bulletin boards](#), [garments/textiles](#), [mattresses](#), [bed frames](#), [traffic & highway signage](#), [printed forms](#), [fire hydrant spray caps](#), [crowd control barricades](#), [cleaning chemicals](#), [office panels](#), and [prescription eyewear](#). Corcraft employees also operate [call centers](#) for the DMV, as well as perform [hazardous materials abatement](#) services for asbestos, lead and mold.

In addition to receiving wages of cents on the hour, Corcraft employees have filed [multiple lawsuits](#) against the company for hazardous working conditions resulting in on-the-job injuries. Some of these injuries include: a [finger](#) cut by an angle grinder in the Corcraft Wallkill blacksmith shop, an [arm](#) caught in a disc grinder at the Corcraft Fishkill industry shop, a [back](#) injured when a Corcraft Otisville construction employee fell from a scaffold, an [eye](#) damaged by debris flying from steel pipes in the Corcraft Green Haven upholstery shop, and a [leg](#) injured when a Corcraft employee was forced to continue working despite repeating that he needs rest due to a pre-existing leg condition.

Purchasing from Corcraft is not the only way in which CUNY funds the prison industrial complex. According to a [2015 FOIL Request](#) by the student organization CUNY Prison Divest, CUNY’s endowment has investments in multiple corporations that fund private prisons. These include the Geo Group, Inc. (with CUNY endowment holdings of \$8,400 USD), Corrections Corporation of America (\$13,300 USD), and G4S (\$248,900 USD).

It is absolutely contradictory for CUNY to claim to be an institution that supports racial justice while simultaneously investing in and purchasing from companies that profit off the caging of Black and Brown people. After [mounting student pressure](#), CUNY Brooklyn College has removed Corcraft from its [purchasing hierarchy](#). Other CUNY schools must follow suit, and dedicate themselves to cutting all ties with the prison industrial complex.

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