

Volunteer Needs

Black & Pink NYC Volunteer Needs

Last updated Apr 9, 2025

Thank you for your interest in getting involved with Black & Pink NYC chapter work!

Follow us on Instagram **@blackandpinknyc** for the most up-to-date information.

SUBSCRIBE

Send an email to our listserv at blackandpinknyc-subscribe@lists.riseup.net to receive updates on getting involved in some of the following activities.

STIPENDS

Financial compensation is available to formerly incarcerated people who engage in certain programming with us on a completely voluntary basis (not employment). We give \$20/hour to people who are formerly incarcerated upon attendance of most of our events (Letters for Liberation, card-writing, penpal matching, etc.)

EVENT SPEAKERS/PERFORMERS

Some of our formerly incarcerated, Black, and TGNC members are interested in speaking, being panelists, and performing original art for online and in-person events. If you're involved with an event that they could be a part of, please email nyc@blackandpink.org with information about the opportunity, including date/time, location, audience, honorarium offered, and accessibility. We typically request at least a \$200 honorarium (half for the individual, half for the chapter).

LETTERS FOR LIBERATION

Twice a month, we gather to answer mail from our inside members, with options to join on Zoom or in person. No experience necessary. You need to use [Airtable](#) and follow our [guide](#) to participate in-person or on Zoom. All you need to do is show up; there is no need to send a separate email to RSVP or ask how to get involved. You are also welcome to come and go for any portion of the event; however, we would recommend committing to at least an hour or more. If these recurring times never work for you and you are truly committed to doing mail response multiple times on your own schedule after learning how in a one-off session, you can contact us with a specific request to make arrangements. These dates are subject to change/cancellation — subscribe to our listserv and/or check our Instagram to confirm.

1st Sunday of each month

4-7 pm ET

Parole Preparation Project

135 W 20th St Suite 302, New York, NY 10011

Zoom registration: bit.ly/bpnycsundayL4L

3rd Thursday of each month

5:30-8 pm ET
Brooklyn Community Pride Center - Crown Heights**
1561 Bedford Ave Suite Ground A, Brooklyn, NY 11225
Zoom registration: bit.ly/bpnycthursdayL4L

**Please note the Crown Heights location, as there used to be a location in Bed-Stuy that GPS applications might route you to by mistake.

COMING HOME SUPPORT

We are in touch with several members who we support once they are released from jail or prison. If you know of any affordable apartment/sublet leads in NYC, PLEASE let us know—especially if you know a broker/landlord who is voucher-friendly. If you are interested in helping with grocery delivery, job leads, appointment accompaniment, clothes provision, furniture, please let us know, particularly if you have access to a vehicle. **We always need volunteers who can do ad hoc work; if you are interested, please request to join the low-traffic Signal thread at [this link](#).** You must have the Signal app to volunteer in this way.

NEWSLETTER

We send a quarterly update to our incarcerated members with chapter news, poetry, resources, and more. Check our Instagram and email listserv for updates about when we hold an event to stuff and send the newsletter.

PENPALS

We have a long list of incarcerated members who are eager to connect with a penpal for long term, 1:1 correspondence. Educate yourself and sign up for a penpal at bit.ly/bpnycpenpalguide. We sometimes do penpal matching when we table at events hosted by other groups. You can always self-match with a penpal by following the instructions in the guide. If you have questions about being a penpal, please feel free to email us—we're happy to support.

1:1s

Our organizing team offers 1:1 meetings to connect with our free world community. This is a good opportunity to connect with other comrades and/or think more deeply about how you may want to get connected to Black & Pink NYC efforts. Please fill out [this form](#) if you're interested in connecting 1:1 with someone from our organizing team.

Please note that we unfortunately do not have the capacity to connect with anyone who is interested in our work. Our ability to connect 1:1 is reserved for people who have previously volunteered with us and/or have been impacted by the criminal legal system. The best way to learn more about what we do and abolitionist organizing is plugging in to our monthly events. Thank you for understanding.

SPECIFIC VOLUNTEER ROLES

We are always looking for experienced volunteers who want to deepen their involvement in Black & Pink NYC work and are able to commit to 3-6 hours per month or additional hours on an ad hoc basis. Roles include letter response facilitation, penpal promotion support, tabling, English-Spanish translation/interpretation, and more. Please see the tab "[Volunteer Roles](#)" in this document for further details.

DO THE READING

Educate yourself on the past, present, and future of prison abolition. Reading is really important to learn more about the work as not just charitable volunteering or side saviorism, but as an imperative for a more just world. Here are some reading lists to start with:

- <https://we.riseup.net/plsn/black-pink-prison-abolition-syllabus>
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XNkWwFajh7WsSbvVCMoaIxiFsXtsoQ5RIEFewOgBX6A/edit> (COVID19-specific)
- <http://www.usprisonculture.com/blog/essential-pic-reading-list/>
- <https://abolitionistfutures.com/pre-conference-events/abolitionist-reading-discussion-group/reading-list/>

REDISTRIBUTE

Any monetary contribution always helps and will be put to use sending material support to currently and formerly incarcerated members. Donate at <http://bit.ly/bpchaptergive> and remember to select the New York City option. You can set up a monthly recurring donation too.

Another place to redistribute directly to individuals is bit.ly/redistributedirectly.

Volunteer Roles

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Some volunteer roles such as penpal or language support will require that you have some experience due to the nature of the role. Other roles do not necessarily require you to have experience, although it is certainly preferred. If you're willing to commit yourself to the role for a longer period of time, we're happy to support your learning. Don't see something that you think could be a valuable role? Feel free to email us and ask. We're always open to accommodating your talents and skills for the benefit of our Black & Pink NYC community.

If you have any interest in a particular position, please send us a brief email at nyc@blackandpink.org with your experience related to the role (if any) and how you're interested in helping. Please include the title of the role in the subject of your email.

Letters For Liberation Facilitation (3-6 hours per month)

We are seeking volunteers with experience answering mail with Black and Pink NYC to help facilitate our letter response program. Our goals are to ensure that correspondence from inside members is responded to accurately and consistently and that volunteers are supported and engaged to answer letters. Alongside a core chapter organizer, you will support mail response by:

- Regularly attending letter answering meetings (in person or virtually), aiming to consistently participate in one of the following sessions per month:
 - First Sundays of the month, 4-7pm at Parole Prep Project
 - Third Thursdays of the month, 5:30-8pm at Brooklyn Community Pride Center Crown Heights
- Training new volunteers in how to use Airtable and how to respond to mail.
- Answering questions that arise during letter answering sessions.
- Supporting core chapter organizers with meeting setup and cleanup.
- Keeping Airtable up to date by ensuring answered letters are deleted and following up with volunteers as needed on outstanding mail.
- Developing and implementing recommendations on how to improve letter response systems and processes.

When emailing us your interest, please include your availability for the regularly held Letters for Liberation sessions.

Penpal Matching Promotion and Support (3-5 hours per month)

We are seeking volunteers who have experience being penpals with inside members to help promote this program. Our goals are to 1) grow the number of outside penpals to match more of our inside members who are waiting to be matched and 2) foster community engagement to support existing outside penpals to consistently write and maintain their relationships. Do you really delight in writing to your penpal and want to help spread the joy? Your involvement could look like any or all of the below:

- Co-facilitate 1-2 hour orientations for new outside penpals to be matched
 - Host penpal meetups (in-person or virtual) for people to build community and have time to write to their penpals
 - Publicize penpal program in new channels to recruit more people with time/inclination to commit
 - Check in with inside and outside penpals to confirm if they're still writing each other and keep our lists up to date
 - Any other ideas you may have to promote our penpal program!
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Prison Visits (5-10 hours preparation in advance of a full day of visiting)

We are seeking volunteers who would be interested in coordinating prison visits for outside volunteers to meet our inside Black & Pink NYC community members. We have template information for how this has been facilitated in the past that you can utilize to help coordinate.

Tasks may include:

- Communicating with inside community members who would like a visit
 - Coordinating a date/time to conduct visits
 - Arranging details to navigate transportation between one or multiple prison facilities
 - Supporting free world community members who may be visiting someone in prison for the first time
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Hot Pink Zine Editor (5-10 hours per issue)

We are seeking a couple volunteers to edit *Hot Pink*, a local zine of written and visual erotica submitted by inside members and free world friends. Peep [previous editions here](#). *Hot Pink* can be published on a schedule that works for your availability.

Our prior *Hot Pink* editor Tyrone says about *Hot Pink*,

"This is a space for you to express and explore your sexual imagination and erotic creativity. For many of us, our sexual expressions have been deemed wrong by—whether through homophobia, transphobia, patriarchy, religious shame, or any of the other ways that society tends to place its fear of sexuality on its people. Here at Hot Pink, we believe that sexual expression is an important part of being a healthy and liberated human being. We believe that being able to express ourselves through art and writing are acts of liberation. We believe that our members are worthy of spaces for liberation."

Tasks could include:

- Communicating with inside community members who share written or visual erotica for *Hot Pink*
 - Coalescing submissions into a publication no more than 10 pages (due to prison restrictions)
 - Coordinating printing of the publication and the mailing event to send it out to subscribers
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Social Media (3 hours per month)

We are seeking a volunteer who would be willing to help support our Instagram page. This could include:

- Posting a reel of our monthly events
 - Occasionally re-sharing posts we are politically aligned with
 - Other miscellaneous social media support per your availability and interest
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Partnership Outreach & Tabling (ad hoc)

We are seeking volunteers interested in helping us with our outreach by working with partners to support various events. This could include:

- Tabling at events that we are invited to, including but not limited to: Pride events, holiday markets, open streets, festivals, zine fairs, etc.
 - Working with groups and formations that reach out to us, asking our chapter to partner with them for events
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Political Education

We are seeking a couple of volunteers who would be interested in leading a regular political education series for both our incarcerated and free world community members. In the past, we have shared a

reading excerpt with inside community members who expressed interest in participating in our political education group. We then held an event after receiving their responses for free world community members to discuss the same excerpt and engage with inside member responses.

English-Spanish Interpretation Support (ad hoc)

We are seeking volunteers who are fluent in English and Spanish to provide pro bono translation and interpretation to facilitate support and engagement with our primarily Spanish-speaking inside and free world members. This could include:

- Responding to mail from Spanish-speaking inside members
- Attending events and answering Spanish-speaking community members' questions about Black and Pink NYC
- Providing ad-hoc, informal interpretation at events as needed for Spanish-speaking community members
- Translating Black and Pink NYC forms, info sheets, etc. from English to Spanish
- Translating Black and Pink NYC's quarterly 10-page newsletter from English to Spanish

Archived Volunteer Roles

Chapter Newsletter Support (5-15 hours every 3 months)

~~We're looking for volunteers to support writing and distributing Black and Pink NYC's quarterly newsletter. The newsletter goes out in January, April, July, and October, and the bulk of work happens during the mailing month and the month before. Volunteer newsletter support could include:~~

- ~~● Write and edit sections of the newsletter, including local and world news, resources and information, incarcerated member submissions, and more.~~
- ~~● Brainstorm new topics and sections for the newsletter.~~
- ~~● Coordinate printing and pickup of newsletters ahead of mailing events.~~
- ~~● Develop and implement recommendations to improve the newsletter~~

~~If interested, please email nyc@blackandpink.org with a brief background on your experience with Black and Pink NYC and prison abolition and how you're interested in helping.~~

~~****At this time, we have all the help we need on the newsletter**~~
