



YOGA

behind bars

peace is an inside job

Searching for Our Next Executive Director!

SEND YOUR APPLICATION PACKET TO
EDSEARCH@YOGABEHINDBARS.ORG. THE SEARCH IS BEING
CONDUCTED BY TRICIA LAZZAR FROM STRATEGY AND METHOD

WE ARE

Yoga Behind Bars (YBB) is dedicated to offering trauma-informed yoga and meditation to system-impacted people to promote rehabilitation and empowerment. Since 2008, YBB has helped thousands of people experiencing incarceration in Washington State transform their lives through our programs. We are driven to find a way to fundamentally change the current course of the American corrections system.

2.2 million people in the United States are incarcerated. Incarceration has become a racist and inefficient solution for mental illness, poverty, homelessness, and drug addiction. It does not address one of the root causes of incarceration: trauma.

YBB gives people the opportunity to heal, grow, and prepare for their return to our communities. In addition to the physical benefits and improved overall well-being, yoga and meditation have been scientifically proven to:

- Reduce depression, anger, and anxiety.
- Be an effective adjunctive therapy during treatment for drug addiction, which is a co-factor in many of our participants' incarceration.
- Drastically reduce rates of recidivism: People who practice yoga and meditation behind bars are less likely to return to prison once they have finished their sentence.

VISION

We envision a world where all communities are healthy and thriving, where all people feel safe, connected, and valued. Through our programs, we open doors to self-understanding, resilience, and transformation. We advocate for restorative justice solutions, holistic re-entry services, and the removal of other barriers that prevent people formerly incarcerated from rebuilding their lives upon release. We work with the Washington State

Corrections Department leadership to create opportunities within the system, including yoga classes for prison staff and yoga teacher training for people behind bars.

VALUES

Integrity

We act with honesty and transparency.

Humility

We are committed to a lifelong practice of listening and learning. We address power imbalances, admit mistakes, and center and amplify our participants' voices in ways that are supportive and non-paternalistic.

Social and Transformative Justice

We recognize the harmful, exploitative, and intergenerational effects of oppressive systems. We proactively question and explore our role in these systems and continue to elevate the voices of people who are currently or formerly incarcerated.

Connection

We believe that respectful relationships with others are imperative to our own health and wellness. We honor boundaries with our students, volunteers, and staff. We listen with compassion and acknowledge that navigating tension and healthy conflict is essential and beneficial to working together.

Embodiment

We recognize trauma, stress, and bias live in our bodies and that healing starts within. Using body-based tools, we can begin to heal trauma, cope with stress, and support recovery, while building self-worth, resilience, and empathy. We recognize these practices and their benefits, while increasingly confirmed by neuroscience, are ancient. We acknowledge the wisdom traditions they come from.

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

YBB is a 501 C (3) established in 2008. We are currently a staff of seven. Our annual operating budget is ~\$500,000. We typically serve more than

4,000 people annually. Before the pandemic, our dedicated volunteer faculty of 40+ certified instructors, including 7 teachers behind bars, offered youth and adults in all levels of custody an average of 32 to 42 classes a week.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- YBB is the current leader in trauma-informed yoga programming within the prison system, reaching over 4,500 students per year across fifteen facilities
- We are the first organization in Washington State that offers training for people behind bars to become yoga teachers
- Scholarships to attend our trauma-informed yoga training for Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color, and individuals formerly behind bars have increased 47% since 2016
- Our training has inspired graduates to start prison yoga programs in Alaska, Nebraska, Kenya, and Argentina
- YBB's method has influenced other prison service organizations
- Our programs include trauma-informed education, yoga classes for people behind bars (youth and adults), and yoga teacher training for people behind bars.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

YBB is committed to reimagining the punitive carceral system. We believe individuals should be offered a place of healing, where they and their communities reclaim humanity, wholeness, and potential. We are currently deepening our reach at the youth facilities we serve. We share our best practices and methodology with people interested in teaching Trauma-Informed Yoga, locally and nationally. As we grow, a more sophisticated operational infrastructure and additional staff will be necessary to support sustainable scale and expansion.

YBB continues its work by revising programs to center participants and gather the community to discuss race, social justice, and yoga practices. As YBB prepares to re-engage its programs inside facilities, we are looking for a strong leader to guide our future.

THE POSITION

The position of Executive Director (ED) is an exciting opportunity to guide the future of YBB. The ED will



have overall strategic and operational responsibility for YBB, reporting to our Board of Directors. Responsibilities include leading the organization's fiscal health and overall strategic program development and delivery, staff management, fundraising, and promotion.

The ED will lead, inspire, and promote our organizational values: integrity, humility, social and transformative justice, and connection. As we complete our 3-5 year strategic plan, we welcome and encourage discussion about the potential for expanding social enterprise and sustainability opportunities. This is where your organizational and leadership skills will shine as you lay the groundwork for a deeper and more meaningful impact for our students, staff, and community.

YOU ARE

You are visionary, creative, and motivating. You lead by example. You are deeply committed to community-based, anti-racist work, and you have a

deep understanding of restorative practices. You are an engaging storyteller and a compassionate, transparent leader. You are transformative, flexible, and provide the staff with the resources and support needed to succeed. You understand what it takes to lead stakeholders through strategic visioning and planning, allowing YBB to be nimble and responsive to the ever-changing landscape of reforming the criminal legal system and decarceration. You understand the intricacies of trauma-informed approaches and how to use this skill while communicating with all stakeholders. You are skilled in the art of facilitation and how to include multiple diverse ideas and approaches into meaningful progress. Most of all, you are unapologetically rooted in equity and a commitment to apply a social justice lens in both personal and workplace contexts.

Individuals with lived experience or close observation of the carceral system, an understanding of yogic practices, and history in social justice work are strongly encouraged to apply. To learn more about Yoga Behind Bars, visit <https://yogabehindbars.org/>

What to expect in the first 30 days:

Meet one-on-one with team members, board, and community members to familiarize yourself with structure and culture and to receive valuable input that you will use to develop your next steps. Your time is dedicated to nurturing and developing strong, supportive relationships that will be the groundwork for all future planning and development.

In the first six months:

You will understand the landscape of the organization and are focused on relationship

building on multiple levels. You are inquisitive and thoughtful. You have identified gaps and are creating systems to address each. Fundraising and development planning are in the works, with the assistance of the Board. You have developed your team that includes existing and new hires.

In the first year:

You have clarity about processes, policies, procedures and have a vision of where YBB will be in the future. Your talent for creating action plans is starting to be realized. Your attention to creating an inclusive, supportive culture shows through staff and community.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS (EVP)

Compensation is \$90,000 to \$115,000 DOE annually. This is a full-time, exempt position based on a 35-hour workweek.

YBB provides a flexible work environment and is committed to encouraging work/life balance. 100% employer-paid medical, dental, and vision benefits for employees, 401K, 15 days paid time off, 15 paid holiday days, and \$8,000-10,000 professional development covered each year. Home office equipment necessary for the position will be provided.

LOCATION

This position is based in Seattle. YBB offers a flexible work environment, combining remote, in-office, and on-site visits. Occasional in-person meetings will be necessary at our office location. Candidate must have access to a vehicle for frequent meetings across Washington. Mileage is paid while traveling, approximately 15% overnight travel. Must have the ability to work occasional evenings and weekends.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Yoga Behind Bars is an Equal Opportunity Employer and embraces diversity. We are committed to building a team that represents a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and skills. The more inclusive we are, the better our work will be. Black people, Indigenous people, People of Color, LGBTQIA+ individuals, women, people with disabilities, individuals with lived experience or close observation of the carceral system are strongly encouraged to apply.

The application review process begins in October, and the position will remain open until filled. We aim to have the position filled by November-December, but the start date is negotiable. The interview process will include a pre-screening (resume, cover letter, and video review), an initial interview conducted virtually, and a final interview that will take place in person in Seattle, consisting of a full day with multiple stakeholders. Due to Covid, we will monitor the in-person portion of the interview process to ensure safety protocols are in place.

Candidates are asked to submit a **short introduction video and a cover letter and resume in PDF format** to EDSearch@yogabehindbars.org. Address email and cover letter to Tricia Lazzar. No phone calls, please.

- **Cover Letter:** Write a cover letter (two pages maximum) and explain how your experience will contribute to YBB's mission, the Executive Director position as described, and your familiarity with yoga, trauma-informed care, and the carceral system. **Cover letters will be evaluated as a writing sample.**
- **3 Minute Introductory Video:** Send in a three-minute video introducing yourself to the team. Talk about your work experience and your leadership style. The video will be evaluated on content, not production quality. This is a great opportunity to show off your knowledge, experience, and vision!
- **Your Resume**