



We're excited for the 2025 CSJ Conference in Puerto Rico!

[Counselors for Social Justice is excited to be hosting our first-ever conference on April 11th & 12th, 2025, in San Juan, Puerto Rico.](#) We've received a number of questions and the CSJ Board wanted to share more information on how this conference came to be.

In 2023, the ACA announced that their 2025 conference would be held in Florida. After that announcement, CSJ surveyed its members to understand their feelings about this decision. Overwhelmingly, our members expressed their disappointment in the location and shared they would not attend. CSJ joined with a few other ACA divisions to request that the location be changed, because of the unsafe environment for LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC counselors in traveling to that state due to the legislative policies being enacted there. As part of its advocacy to the ACA, CSJ recommended Puerto Rico as an alternative location. When the CSJ advocacy efforts were unsuccessful, the CSJ board decided to go with that alternative location in developing our own conference:

Puerto Rico was chosen for the CSJ conference for a number of reasons:

1. **It's part of the United States.** Puerto Rico is an unincorporated U.S. territory, which gives it a distinctive position within the country. Holding the CSJ conference in Puerto Rico can help amplify the voices and experiences of the island's residents. This location also does not require a passport for U.S. citizens to visit.
2. **Disenfranchisement and inequality:** Puerto Rico residents face various forms of disenfranchisement, including lack of voting representation in Congress and exclusion from presidential elections. We're hoping that hosting our conference there will bring attention to these issues and encourage discussions on potential solutions.

3. **Supporting the local economy:** The island's economy has been struggling, exacerbated by natural disasters and a slow recovery process. CSJ's intentions are that hosting the conference in San Juan can help boost the island's economy while raising awareness of its unique challenges. We also appreciate that the conference facility is a multinational corporation; this location was selected because we need a facility that could support our needs in putting this on. The conference hotel provides full accessibility support, ease of access for multiple modes of transportation, as well as a centralized location for all the activities that are being planned.
4. **Opportunities for service:** The conference committee is working on service projects and outreach to the local community in partnership with the Puerto Rican Counseling Association as part of our conference programming.

This CSJ conference is an in-person experience, happening on-site at the conference location in San Juan. We have received requests for a virtual component to the conference and unfortunately that will not be possible. The reasons for this are due to cost and staffing constraints. CSJ is a very small membership organization, run by an all-volunteer board of directors, and does not have capacity to take on the technological complexities of live-streaming an in-person event. We also want to point out that CSJ consistently offers virtual professional development opportunities throughout the year at no cost to its members. Those webinars are driven by membership feedback and they offer continuing education credits from online participation.

That being said, the CSJ Conference Committee is focusing on access as part of the in-person experience, with attention to signage, mobility, and accommodations for those attendees who experience restrictions. Accessibility is a priority. CSJ acknowledges COVID, long-COVID and other immunocompromised health conditions are a disability justice concern. Therefore, masks will be provided. Mask wearing is encouraged, but not mandatory.

We understand the concerns and we hope these accommodations make it possible for you to join us in-person in April 2025.

We encourage your questions on these issues and we very much hope you'll be able to attend our conference in San Juan! It's shaping up to be a very important event for communication and collaboration with Counselors for Social Justice. Find out more at our conference website:

<https://www.counseling-csj.org/conference.html>