

Adam Foss

Biography

"Adam J. Foss is a former Assistant District Attorney in the Juvenile Division of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office (SCDAO) in Boston, MA, and a fierce advocate for criminal justice reform and the importance of the role of the prosecutor in ending mass incarceration. Mr. Foss believes that the profession of prosecution is ripe for reinvention requiring better incentives and more measurable metrics for success beyond, simply, "cases won" leading him to found Prosecutor Impact - a non-profit developing training and curriculum for prosecutors to reframe their role in the criminal justice system.

During his eight years as a prosecutor, Mr. Foss collaborated with the courts and the community to develop programming that continues to have a positive impact on the neighborhoods he prosecuted in. One example of these efforts is the Roxbury CHOICE program, an initiative Mr. Foss co-founded, to turn probation from a punitive sentence into a beneficial relationship with the court, the probation department, and the District Attorney's Office. He is also the founder of the SCDAO Reading Program, a program he started, to bridge the achievement gap of area elementary school students. Before leaving the District Attorney's Office, Mr. Foss was a critical piece of the foundation of the first juvenile diversion program in Suffolk County, keeping young people out of the cradle to prison pipeline.

Most recently, Mr. Foss appeared in the critically-acclaimed CNN feature-length documentary "American Jail." The Mandela Foundation recognized Mr. Foss as the 2017 Nelson Mandela Changemaker of the Year. Fast Company named him one of the Most Creative People in Business of 2017. The NAACP awarded Mr. Foss with the 2017 Roy Wilkins Next Generation Leader Award. The Root named Mr. Foss one of the 100 most influential black Americans of 2016. He was named Graduate of the Last Decade by his alma mater, Suffolk University Law School and is a visiting senior fellow at Harvard Law School. He sits on the boards of Restore Justice California and of the Pretrial Justice Institute. He also is a fellow at the Open Society Foundation Leadership in Government initiative as well as a Director's Fellow in the world renowned MIT Media Lab. In February of 2016, Mr. Foss delivered a TED talk that has already eclipsed 2 million views. In 2015, he was voted one of the country's 40 most up-and-coming lawyers by National Law Journal and in 2013, the Massachusetts Bar Association voted him Prosecutor of the Year. In both his professional and personal capacities, Mr. Foss volunteers much of his time to the community he works in."

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