



# **Sticker Shock 2020:**

## **The Cost of Youth Incarceration**

**JULY 2020**

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## **CITATIONS**

All state level data sources are available online at <https://justicepolicyinstitute.box.com/s/i830t7hw58t6h7tj02qu4fdp8a755w2u.com>

# Sticker Shock: 2014 to 2020

**In 2014, when the Justice Policy Institute first analyzed** the cost of secure youth confinement, 33 states and the District of Columbia reported an annual cost per youth that eclipsed \$100,000.<sup>1</sup> In 2020, despite more than a half-decade of falling youth arrests and declining rates of youth incarceration since 2014, 40 states and Washington, D.C. report spending at least \$100,000 annually per confined child, with some states spending more than \$500,000 per youth per year.

The average state cost for the secure confinement of a young person is now \$588 per day, or \$214,620 per year, a 44 percent increase from 2014. These cost figures over a six-year period represent the growing economic impact of incarcerating youth. However, the long-term impact of these policies extends well beyond the fiscal cost.

Extensive research reveals that secure youth incarceration increases the likelihood of recidivism and harms educational attainment, lifetime wages, and future health outcomes for youth. Additionally, carceral settings have proven to be a primary vector for the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Many jurisdictions have reduced the number of youth detained pre-trial to stem the spread of the virus, either by cutting down the number of youth admitted to detention, or by releasing some young people from confinement; but much more work remains to be done. For example, while admissions to youth detention fell by 50 percent between February and May 2020, rates of release also declined after a brief increase in March.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the overall pre-trial detention population did not decline as much as expected. Moreover, this slower rate of release was concentrated among Black youth, which exacerbates pre-existing racial disparities. For youth incarcerated post-adjudication, unfortunately there does not appear to have been a significant number of youth released in response to COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> This mirrors what is being seen in the adult criminal justice system, where there have been substantial reductions in pre-trial jail populations, but very limited reductions in prison populations.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, states are spending millions of dollars on secure confinement for youth that not only

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1 For the purpose of this report, the cost of confinement was the most expensive secure confinement option publicly available. In certain circumstances, some states did not break out the different 'per diem costs' for each facility and provided the average across their entire system. When possible, this report is a direct comparison to the 2014 data.

2 N.A., Youth Detention Admissions Remain Low, But Releases Stall Despite COVID-19 (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2020). <https://www.aecf.org/blog/youth-detention-admissions-remain-low-but-releases-stall-despite-covid-19/>

3 N.A., States Must Do More to Protect Youth Behind Bars during COVID-19 Pandemic (Youth First Initiative, 2020). <https://backend.nokidsinprison.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/NKIP-COVID19-Policy-Paper-2P.pdf>

4 Emily Wadra and Peter Wagner, While jails drastically cut populations, state prisons have released almost no one (Prison Policy Initiative, 2020). <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2020/05/14/jails-vs-prison-update/>

fails to deliver on public safety promises, but also placed confined youth and correctional staff at risk and contributes to the transmission of a deadly virus. The fiscal cost increases coincide with an era of significant juvenile justice improvements. Juvenile justice reform packages, and declining arrests over the last two decades, have resulted in a decreased reliance on incarcerating youth. Between 1997 and 2017, the number of youths committed, post-adjudication, to some category of confinement, decreased by 62 percent.<sup>5</sup> The percentage of youth placed in a long-term secure facility declined at a similar rate. The overall decline is considerable, but juvenile justice systems remain riddled with inefficiencies and policy choices that stifle progress. Nearly 40,000 pre-and-post adjudicated youths remain detained or committed in a residential facility, with nearly 60 percent held for a nonviolent offense.<sup>6</sup>

Racial disparities have remained, and in some cases worsened, despite the population decline. Twice as many youth of color are detained and committed as compared to white youth.<sup>7</sup> Further, Black, Native American, and Latinx youth are incarcerated at 5, 3, and 1.7 times the rate of white youth, respectively, with disparities increasing as youth move deeper into the system.<sup>8</sup> As noted above, changes in release policies in response to COVID-19 have disproportionately benefitted white youth, thereby driving even higher rates of racial disparity in an already racist system. The stark reality is that youth confinement is fueled by racially-biased practices and closing facilities is the most effective means of promoting true equity

JPI found that the average cost of the most expensive confinement option for a young person in 48 states was \$588 per day, or \$214,620 per year. The data show that in 40 states taxpayers spend at least \$100,000 a year for a single young person's confinement, and in 12 states spend over \$250,000 a year for a single young person's confinement. Four of these states – Alaska, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont – spend over \$500,000 a year to confine a young person. By contrast, these resources can be better allocated toward services known to improve outcomes, including community-based alternatives, secondary and higher education, and investments in communities that are most impacted by crime.

**\$214,000**

The most expensive confinement option for a young person, on average, can cost \$588 a day, or about \$214,000 a year.

5 Melissa Sickmund, T.J. Sladky, W. Kang, and C. Puzzanchera, Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2019). [https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/asp/Age\\_Sex.asp](https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/asp/Age_Sex.asp).

6 Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (2019).

7 Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (2019).

8 Charles Puzzanchera, et al, Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2018. (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2019, and Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (2019).

State	Per Day	Per Year	Cost Per Year 2011 - 2014	Percentage Change
Alabama	\$443.00	\$161,694.00	\$58,035.00	179%
Alaska	\$1,542.49	\$563,008.85	N.A.	N.A.
Arizona	\$406.78	\$148,474.70	\$106,098.00	40%
Arkansas	\$238.36	\$87,000.00	\$115,734.00	-25%
California	\$833.59	\$304,259.00	\$208,338.00	46%
Colorado	\$359.03	\$131,045.95	\$104,985.00	25%
Connecticut	\$750.00	\$273,750.00	\$221,705.00	23%
Delaware	\$567.85	\$207,265.25	N.A.	N.A.
District of Columbia	\$621.00	\$226,665.00	\$277,765.00	-18%
Florida	\$247.00	\$90,155.00	\$55,407.00	63%
Georgia	\$309.21	\$112,862.00	\$91,126.00	24%
Hawaii	\$566.49	\$206,768.00	\$199,319.00	4%
Idaho	\$273.97	\$99,999.05	\$77,953.00	28%
Illinois	\$514.42	\$187,765.00	\$111,000.00	69%
Indiana	\$264.97	\$96,714.05	\$77,427.00	25%
Iowa			N.A.	N.A.
Kansas	\$307.20	\$112,128.00	\$91,433.00	23%
Kentucky			\$100,740.00	-100%
Louisiana	\$424.00	\$154,760.00	\$46,662.00	232%
Maine	\$689.22	\$251,565.30	\$224,960.00	12%
Maryland	\$1,136.79	\$414,929.00	\$295,285.00	41%
Massachusetts	\$529.53	\$193,278.45	\$172,824.00	12%

Michigan	\$312.03	\$113,890.95	\$173,455.00	-34%
Minnesota	\$397.26	\$145,000.00	\$104,839.00	38%
Mississippi	\$425.00	\$155,125.00	\$153,300.00	1%
Missouri	\$263.45	\$96,159.25	\$89,170.00	8%
Montana	\$1,111.00	\$405,515.00	\$175,810.00	131%
Nebraska	\$734.70	\$268,165.50	\$126,856.00	111%
Nevada	\$339.00	\$123,735.00	\$195,406.00	-37%
New Hampshire	\$1,479.45	\$540,000.00	\$214,620.00	152%
New Jersey	\$794.05	\$289,827.00	\$196,133.00	48%
New Mexico	\$638.36	\$233,000.00	\$178,073.00	31%
New York	\$2,444.40	\$892,206.00	\$352,663.00	153%
North Carolina	\$298.25	\$108,862.00	\$159,750.00	-32%
North Dakota	\$544.00	\$198,560.00	\$125,042.00	59%
Ohio	\$507.68	\$185,303.00	\$202,502.00	-8%
Oklahoma	\$391.23	\$142,798.95	N.A.	N.A.
Oregon	\$308.00	\$112,420.00	\$95,995.00	17%
Pennsylvania	\$577.00	\$210,605.00	N.A.	N.A.
Rhode Island	\$722.60	\$263,750.00	\$186,380.00	42%
South Carolina	\$540.00	\$197,100.00	\$155,490.00	27%
South Dakota	\$394.52	\$144,000.00	\$75,712.00	90%
Tennessee	\$630.14	\$230,000.00	\$109,971.00	109%
Texas	\$479.56	\$175,039.40	\$133,911.00	31%
Utah	\$246.13	\$89,837.45	\$78,154.00	15%

Vermont	\$1,447.00	\$528,155.00	\$224,475.00	135%
Virginia	\$586.87	\$214,207.00	\$260,019.00	-18%
Washington	\$239.84	\$87,540.00	\$95,805.00	-9%
West Virginia	\$293.35	\$107,072.75	\$141,467.00	-24%
Wisconsin	\$397.00	\$144,905.00	\$106,215.00	36%
Wyoming	\$234.00	\$85,410.00	\$95,265.00	-10%

Community-based programs providing individualized and wraparound services based on the unique needs of each youth can cost as little as \$75 per day.<sup>9</sup> Such community-based programs engage the family and connect the youth to supportive neighborhood resources.

## POTENTIAL DRIVERS OF COST INCREASE

A few potential explanations for the increased costs are worth noting. First, declining populations and emptier facilities do not necessarily minimize spending and can actually increase the cost of confinement substantially. As of 2016, 84 percent of detention centers, and 74 percent of long-term secure centers, operated under capacity.<sup>10</sup> But as long as they are open and operating, these facilities often must maintain a certain budget to provide salary and benefits for all staff, as well as maintenance of the facility.

There is not a 1:1 relationship between a facility budget and the confined population. The fixed costs of staffing and operating a facility are not reduced dollar-for-dollar by the average daily population. As an example, California's Division of Juvenile Justice currently operates at about one-third of its design capacity because, at least in part, legislative changes in 2007 limited the offenses that lead to confinement. The subsequent population decline ultimately resulted in the closing of one of its four state-operated facilities. However, the dwindling population did not coincide with further budgetary changes to the remaining three facilities and, as a result, the cost per-youth continues to balloon.<sup>11</sup>

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California's \$300,000 per year price tag may all end shortly. In light of the economic toll of COVID-19, Governor Gavin Newsom has proposed abolishing the Division of Juvenile Justice and closing the remaining three facilities to help mitigate a \$54 billion shortfall.<sup>12</sup>

However, a facility closure can produce meaningful cost savings for a department's budget. This

9 The cost of community supervision comes from a 2014 report by the Youth Advocate Programs Inc (YAP). The cost of supervision can vary case by case, and even day by day. The figure from YAP is an average for their target population: high-risk youth. See, Shaena M. Fazal, *Safely Home: Reducing youth incarceration and achieving positive outcomes for high and complex need youth through effective community-based programs* (Washington, DC: Youth Advocate Programs, 2014).

10 *OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, 2018). <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/corrections/qa08522.asp?qaDate=2016>

11 Maureen Washburn., *California's Division of Juvenile Justice Reports High Recidivism Despite Surging Costs* (San Francisco, CA: California Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2017). <http://www.cjci.org/uploads/cjci/documents/californias-division-of-juvenile-justice-reports-high-recidivism-despite-surging-costs.pdf>

12 Jeremy Loudonback, "In surprise move, Newsom calls for an end to Californian's youth prison system," *The Chronicle of Social Change*, (Los Angeles, California), May 14, 2020. <https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/justice/juvenile-justice-2/in-surprise-move-newsom-calls-for-an-end-to-californias-youth-prison-system/43366>



was the experience in Maine. In 2014, the annual cost of secure confinement for one youth was \$443,000, but the closure of one of its facilities in 2016 drastically reduced the per diem cost. The reason that Maine's annual cost remains high (over \$250,000) is due to dwindling population numbers, last reported at 22 youth in a facility constructed for 300. While the state works on establishing its community-based programs, officials are reluctant to close Maine's last remaining facility.

New York currently spends the most on confinement at nearly \$900,000 per youth. This extends beyond the youth system and is reflective of the wider culture born from tough-on-crime policies. Since 1999, New York's adult prison population has dropped from 72,000 to 47,000, resulting in the closure of 17 facilities.<sup>13</sup> From 2008, the youth justice system has either closed or downsized at least 24 facilities statewide.<sup>14</sup> While this has allowed the state to explore reducing spending on incarceration, these attempts have been slowed by resistance to closing additional facilities, most notably in the adult system. The closure of facilities has been singled out as a danger to the communities in upstate New York that have come to depend on confinement as a means of economic development. Local legislators are often in strong opposition to policies that would diminish state spending on prisons due to the loss of jobs and economic activity associated with closing facilities.<sup>15</sup>

Second, justice-involved youth often require significant and individualized services. Improvements to secure programming can come at a significant cost, which would impact the per diem. For example, several states that have seen increases in the cost per youth have also recently launched programs meant to improve their juvenile justice system. Among these states are Georgia, Kansas, and South Dakota, all of which have seen an increase of at least 22 percent. South Dakota nearly doubled its spending, which is attributable to some degree to an expansion of treatment services and developing risk-based graduated responses.<sup>16</sup>

According to an Urban Institute report, while it is still too early to assess the full impact of recent reform efforts, initial indicators suggest that the states involved are aligning with evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for youth with an emphasis of community-based programming and criminal justice diversion.<sup>17</sup> For example, between FY 2014 and FY 2017, Georgia provided \$37 million in grants for communities to develop evidence-based programming. During this time Georgia experienced a 20 percent reduction in youth commitment to state facilities. Various treatment services delivered in a community setting have helped Georgia serve more than 7,000

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13 "Governor Cuomo Announces Closure of Additional Prisons Following Record Declines in Incarceration and Crime Rates." Governor Andrew M. Cuomo. New York State, February 20, 2019. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-closure-additional-prisons-following-record-declines-incarceration-and>

14 Marsha Weissman, Vidhya Ananthakrishnan, and Vincent Schiraldi, *Moving Beyond Youth Prisons: Lessons from New York City's implementation of close to home* (New York, NY: Columbia University, 2019). <https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Moving%20Beyond%20Youth%20Prisons%20-%20C2H.pdf>

15 N.A., "Byrnes demands Cuomo give closing prisons 1-year notice," *The Evening Tribune* (Hornell, NY), 2020. <https://www.eveningtribune.com/news/20200220/strongbyrnes-demands-cuomo-give-closing-prisons-1-year-noticestrong>

16 Julia Durnan, Robin Olsen, and Samantha Harvell, *State-Led Juvenile Justice Systems Improvement* (Urban Institute, May 1, 2018). [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98321/state-led-juvenile-justice-systems-improvement\\_0.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/98321/state-led-juvenile-justice-systems-improvement_0.pdf)

17 *State-Led Juvenile Justice Systems Improvement* (2018).

youth without relying on confinement. However, in 2019, 1,300 children were still placed in a secure confinement setting, receiving similar programming that impacts the cost per youth.<sup>18</sup>

Lastly, harmful practices within facilities can drive costs. For example, advocacy organizations and policymakers have pushed to limit the use of solitary confinement of youth in juvenile facilities in recent years. More than half of states now limit or prohibit the practice. However, nearly one-third of states still allow for the unrestricted use of solitary confinement.<sup>19</sup> Numerous studies document the psychological, developmental, educational, and physical harms worsened by solitary confinement. Youth exposed to solitary confinement are at heightened risk for adverse psychological reactions like depression, anxiety, and psychosis.<sup>20</sup>

Regardless of its purpose, the cost of isolation is clear. Studies on the direct fiscal impact of states using solitary confinement on adults demonstrate that it can cost up to three times as much as incarceration in the general population.<sup>21</sup> This mistreatment often results in costly legal action. Numerous lawsuits alleging mistreatment within juvenile facilities have occurred in almost every state.<sup>22</sup>

Prolonged court fees and complying with injunctions cost states millions of dollars. Wisconsin has been at the forefront of media attention for civil suits. In 2018, the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Corrections settled an \$18.9 million lawsuit due to dangerous conditions of confinement. Four million dollars of that settlement was paid from state taxpayer money.<sup>23</sup> As of 2015, 57 lawsuits in 33 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico resulted in court-sanctioned remedies in response to complaints of abuse or conditions in juvenile centers.<sup>24</sup> The costs of youth incarceration will likely not fall until states address the treatment of youth in their facilities.

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18 N.A., Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice: Annual Report 2019 (Atlanta, GA: Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, 2019). <https://online.pubhtml5.com/howr/lxly/#p=1>

19 Anne Teigen, *States That Limit or Prohibit Juvenile Shackling and Solitary Confinement* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of State Legislatures, 2020). <https://www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/states-that-limit-or-prohibit-juvenile-shackling-and-solitary-confinement635572628.aspx>.

20 Juvenile Justice Reform Committee, *Solitary Confinement of Juvenile Offenders* (Washington, D.C.: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2012). [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Policy\\_Statements/2012/Solitary\\_Confinement\\_of\\_Juvenile\\_Offenders.aspx](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Policy_Statements/2012/Solitary_Confinement_of_Juvenile_Offenders.aspx).

21 Jeffrey Ian Ross, "Supermax Prisons," *Society*, no. 44 (2007): 60-64.

22 Richard Mendel, *Maltreatment of Youth in U.S. Juvenile Corrections Facilities: An Update* (Washington, D.C.: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281292624\\_Maltreatment\\_of\\_Youth\\_in\\_US\\_Juvenile\\_Corrections\\_Facilities\\_An\\_Update](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281292624_Maltreatment_of_Youth_in_US_Juvenile_Corrections_Facilities_An_Update).

23 Molly Beck, "State Settles Lawsuit from Former Youth Prison Inmate who was Severely Injured for \$19 Million," *Wisconsin State Journal*, (Madison, WI), March 21, 2018. [https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/state-settles-lawsuit-from-former-youth-prison-inmate-who-was/article\\_e4a181ef-c96b-5ba3-bf37-4673ecfd7104.html](https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/state-settles-lawsuit-from-former-youth-prison-inmate-who-was/article_e4a181ef-c96b-5ba3-bf37-4673ecfd7104.html).

24 Richard Mendel, *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration* (Washington, D.C.: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011). [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279059791\\_No\\_Place\\_for\\_Kids\\_The\\_Case\\_for\\_Reducing\\_Juvenile\\_Incarceration](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279059791_No_Place_for_Kids_The_Case_for_Reducing_Juvenile_Incarceration).

## WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS SPENDING BUY?

### REOFFENDING AND RECIDIVISM

Rates of reoffending, or recidivism, are the most frequently used metric to track the effectiveness of incarceration. Of the research on the effect of youth incarceration on recidivism, Aizer and Doyle's revised 2013 study remains the most statistically sound and comprehensive analysis. They found that "incarceration as a juvenile increases the probability of recidivism as an adult by between 22 and 26 percent."<sup>25</sup> Subsequent research has only further confirmed their findings. A 2016 study randomly assigned 3,800 incidents to probation officers who then made detention decisions. This study found no statistically significant effect on recidivism within a year of release when a youth was subjected to pre-adjudication secure detention versus other community supervision mechanisms, including community-based.<sup>26</sup>

Community-based approaches consistently produce better outcomes than confinement. A 2019 study analyzed pretrial outcomes for 340 detained youths and 517 community-supervised youths. That study found that being placed in detention increased the probability of recidivism due to a technical violation for low-risk youth by 28 percent within two years of release.<sup>27</sup> This effect is seen in other studies analyzing the effectiveness of the Youth Build Offender Program. Cohen and Piquero's analysis of the program found that participants between 16 and 23 years old had a 3.4 to 5.7 percent lower recidivism rate in the two years following the program than did non-participants.<sup>28</sup>

An analysis of Ohio's Department of Youth Services also provides a glimpse into the potential of community-based supervision. Ohio youth supervised in the community have a lower recidivism rate than those in an institutional or residential environment, regardless of their assessed risk level. While this gap narrows for youth deemed high risk, those deemed low and medium risk outperform their counterparts by a 2:1 ratio in recidivism.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, recidivism rates for low-risk youth have been found to increase

Regardless of its purpose **the cost of isolation is clear.** Studies on the direct fiscal impact of states using solitary confinement on adults demonstrate that it can cost up to three times as much as incarceration in the general population.

25 Anna Aizer and Joseph Doyle. "Juvenile Confinement, Human Capital, and Future Crime: Evidence from Randomly Assigned Judges," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 130 (April 2015).

26 McCormack, Grace, "The Impact of Juvenile Detention on Recidivism." (2016).

27 Ogle, Meghan R., and Jillian J. Turanovic. "Is getting tough with low-risk kids a good idea? The effect of failure to appear detention stays on juvenile recidivism." *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 30, no. 4 (2019): 507-537.

28 Cohen, Mark A. and Piquero, Alex R., Benefits and Costs of a Targeted Intervention Program for Youthful Offenders: The Youthbuild USA Offender Project (November 2015).

29 Edward J. Latessa et al., Using Evidence-Based Decision Making to Reduce Recidivism with Youthful

Offenders—LEAD Conference (Washington, D.C.: The McCourt School of Public Policy, 2017). PowerPoint.

due to the negative impacts of any type of confinement.<sup>30</sup> Conclusively, a youth has a much better chance of avoiding future criminal justice involvement if they are supervised within the community.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Incarceration severely limits a young person's ability to advance academically. A 2008 study by Hjalmarsson reveals the difference in educational attainment between youth confined and those without justice involvement. While 67 percent of non-confined youth in a sample of 9,000 finished high school, only 18 percent of confined youth eventually graduated.<sup>31</sup> Since that study, research has further demonstrated how confinement negatively impacts educational attainment.

Confinement severely limits any individual from pursuing educational opportunities. Youth are at a crucial point in development and learning. Young people should receive encouragement and support from their community to advance through school and explore future opportunities. A 2011 study found that youth who are further behind in their education when confined and youth who experience longer periods of confinement are significantly less likely to return to school after release.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, justice-involved youth have lower levels of temperance, perspective, and responsibility than the general public. Post-release, they also lag behind other youth in self-clarity, self-esteem, and decision-making. These are all critical factors that can ultimately shape their future.<sup>33</sup> Controlling for these differences, a 2016 study found that confined youth are up to four times less likely to complete high school and subsequently less likely to be working full time and to have completed college by their late 20s.<sup>34</sup> More than nine in 10 youths in the study attended school within their facility, demonstrating that these long-term impacts stem not from lack of access to education, but from the actual conditions of confinement.

For youth who have already experienced disruption in their education due to incarceration, the **effects on employment and wage attainment** can be heightened.

## EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment is frequently a prerequisite to sustainable employment. Thus, it follows that individuals who have been unable to complete high school will struggle to find jobs that offer competitive wages. Research has further shown that the impact of incarceration on future

30 Edward J. Latessa and Christopher T. Lowenkamp, "What Works in Reducing Recidivism?" *University of St. Thomas Law School* 3, no. 3 (2006): 521–535.

31 Randi Hjalmarsson, "Criminal Justice Involvement and High School Completion," *Journal of Urban Economies* 63, (2008): 613–630.

32 Thomas G. Blomberg, William D. Bales, Karen Mann, Alex R. Piquero, and Richard A. Berk. "Incarceration, Education and Transition from Delinquency." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 39, no. 4 (May 14, 2011): 355–65.

33 Shelley Schaefer and Gina Erickson, *The Impact of Juvenile Correctional Confinement on the Transition to Adulthood* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, June 2016). <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/249925.pdf>.

34 The Impact of Juvenile Correctional Confinement on the Transition to Adulthood (2016.)

employment has less to do with the loss of work experience while incarcerated than the stigma of simply having a history of incarceration. Research examining data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth found that youth incarceration significantly reduces wages and weeks worked per year at age 40.<sup>35</sup> For adult males, this can result in reduced wages post-release (11 percent) and yearly earnings (40 percent).<sup>36</sup> For youth who have already experienced disruption in their education due to incarceration, the effects on employment and wage attainment can be heightened.

## HEALTH OUTCOMES

Incarceration during adolescence and early adulthood is independently associated with worse physical health later in adulthood. UCLA researchers looked at 14,344 participants who were incarcerated while they were a youth and compared their health outcomes between the ages of 25 and 34. They found that even an incarceration period of less than one year is associated with worse adult general health, and more than one year of incarceration is associated with worse adult mental health and other adult functional limitations.<sup>37</sup>

Not only do confined youth have worse future health outcomes, but adolescents with any level of criminal justice involvement have higher risk health profiles in comparison to the general adolescent population. Depression is 1.5 times more prevalent and anxiety two to three times more common among this population. These youth are also more likely to have health conditions such as asthma and hypertension caused by the stress of confinement.<sup>38</sup>

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35 Haeil Jung. "The Long-Term Impact of Incarceration During the Teens and 20s on the Wages and Employment of Men." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 54, no. 5 (July 2015): 317–37.

36 The Pew Charitable Trusts, *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility* (Philadelphia, PA: The Pew Charitable Trusts, September 28, 2010). [https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pes\\_as-sets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf](https://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pes_as-sets/2010/collateralcosts1pdf.pdf).

37 Barnert, Elizabeth S., Rebecca Dudovitz, Bergen B. Nelson, Tumaini R. Coker, Christopher Biely, Ning Li, and Paul J. Chung. "How Does Incarcerating Young People Affect Their Adult Health Outcomes?" *Pediatrics* 139, no. 2 (February 2017).

38 Winkelman, Tyler N.a., Joseph W. Frank, Ingrid A. Binswanger, and Debra A. Pinals. "Health Conditions and Racial Differences Among Justice-Involved Adolescents, 2009 to 2014." *Academic Pediatrics* 17, no. 7 (2017): 723–31.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

As policymakers look at the use of confinement, they need to focus instead on investments in interventions that prevent youth from becoming justice involved in the first place, developing community-based options that can hold youth accountable, and reducing the length of stay for those youth who are held in secure confinement.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE:

**Reduce spending on confinement**, and shift funding to evidence-based and promising community-based options for youth, as well as expanding overall community investments. Policymakers should shift public dollars away from the most restrictive, most expensive options to community-based alternatives for treatment and supervision that keep young people at home or close to home. By reallocating resources to support education, expand employment opportunities, improve public health services, and develop sustainable housing, decisionmakers can stabilize communities and make them partners in responding to underlying public safety concerns.

**Until all youth prison-type facilities are closed**, states must improve the treatment of youth remaining in locked custody. The larger, prison-like facilities that were designed without youth rehabilitation in mind should be closed in favor of smaller, local alternatives.<sup>39</sup> The small percentage of youth who pose an imminent risk to public safety can be served in these smaller, rehabilitative facilities. These facilities should reflect the foundational principles rooted in trauma-informed and healing-centered treatment approaches. They should be staffed with well-qualified and supportive personnel who develop partnerships with a youth's family and community and tailor their programming based on principles of positive youth justice.<sup>40</sup> These changes would include eliminating the use of solitary confinement as a form of discipline. Young people must have access to safe reporting mechanisms without fear of reprisal<sup>41</sup> and independent, on-site oversight bodies should monitor and report on confinement conditions.

**Establish a community-based race-conscious system** to address the stark racial-disparities experienced in secure confinement. Community members and organizations are best positioned to create a supportive continuum for youth of color to avoid unnecessary deep-end justice involvement. The Annie E. Casey Foundation found that these supports can come in the form of disposition decisions, diversion tactics, probation care, and family and community engagement.<sup>42</sup>

**Remove the barriers to reducing reliance on confinement** in states and localities. In every state, policymakers should identify specific barriers to reducing needless reliance on confinement, consistent with the evidence, best practices, and what can be learned from other jurisdictions. Barriers include rigid sentencing policies, insufficient reentry practices, and underdeveloped and underfunded community programs.

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39 Vincent Schiraldi, *Can we eliminate the youth prison? And what should we replace it with?* (New York, NY: The Square One Project, 2020).

40 N.A., *Eight Principles to Transform Care for Youth People in the Justice System* (Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019).

41 Richard Mendel, *No Place for Kids: The Case for Reducing Juvenile Incarceration* (Washington, D.C.: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011).

42 N.A., *Leading with Race: To reimagine youth justice* (Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2020).

The Justice Policy Institute is dedicated to ending the incarceration generation by reducing reliance on the justice system and using incarceration only as a last resort.

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