

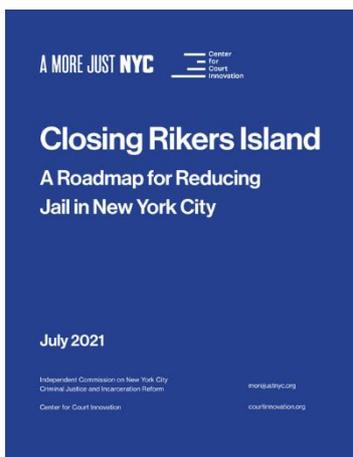


New York, N.Y. USA

Decades of data and experience point to the same truth: **We cannot incarcerate ourselves to safety.** Increasingly, research is finding that jail—with its attendant traumas and the severing of ties to family, treatment, and employment—actually *increases* the likelihood of future criminal activity once someone is released.

Based on the evidence, New York City is working to accomplish two goals that go hand-in-hand. The first is to close its notorious Rikers Island jail complex, where the use-of-force rate has reached a five-year high and Black New Yorkers make up a vastly disproportionate 60 percent of people incarcerated, compared to 24 percent of the city's general population.

**Closing Rikers hinges on reducing the number of people New York City holds behind bars.** This leads directly to a second and related goal: identifying data-driven strategies capable of reducing the jail population, while simultaneously prioritizing public safety.



Our [new report](#), written with the Independent Commission that called for Rikers' closure, advances almost 40 recommendations for safe and effective jail reduction, building on decades of reforms in New York City that have already driven down both crime and incarceration.

**Jail reduction starts with crime prevention.** Money now spent on Rikers could be diverted to short- and long-term interventions and strategies that are responsive to community members' needs and foster safer neighborhoods

The report recommends changes to policy spanning each stage of the criminal justice

system, from ending the mounting case backlog due to COVID-19 to ensuring people's ability to pay bail is properly considered. (About 85 percent of the people now on Rikers are held before trial and have not been found guilty of a crime.) Additional recommendations describe ways to closely monitor and curtail the city's steep racial disparities in incarceration, limit jail sentences through greater use of restorative justice and other evidence-based options, and minimize the incarceration of women and people suffering from mental health challenges who face a heightened risk to their well-being when incarcerated.

**These changes, big and small, can remake New York City's approach to incarceration.**

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