



Money Well Spent:

*How positive social investments
will reduce incarceration rates,
improve public safety, and promote
the well-being of communities.*

A Justice Policy Institute Report

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Introduction

Poverty does not create crime, nor is limited wealth and income necessarily a predictor of involvement in the justice system; however, people with the fewest financial resources are more likely to end up in prison or jail. And the effects of an economic crisis like the one we are now experiencing are magnified for people with less income and wealth.

For this reason, the Justice Policy Institute chose to explore the connection between poverty and incarceration. Crime is down across the country, yet arrests and prison populations continue to increase, and disproportionately impact low-income communities and communities of color. This report focuses on the impact and overarching theme of poverty and its effects on a person's life chances, as well as specific factors such as housing, education, youth development, treatment, and employment. We conclude that through focusing on the well-being of communities and individuals, we will have the greatest impact on both public safety and poverty.

In order to illustrate the ways in which poverty, criminal justice involvement, and incarceration intersect, JPI has chosen to feature the District of Columbia, our nation's capital, as an example of a city facing challenges related to poverty and the criminal justice system.

While most people know Washington for its political and historical significance, most do not know that it has the highest incarceration rate of any state in the country. The District is home to diverse communities that face significant challenges and opportunities, many of which are echoed in cities and communities across the country. By shining a light on the complex social, economic, and political interconnections in the District, this report provides information and recommendations gleaned from D.C.'s experience to illuminate the constellated issues of poverty and the justice system that exist everywhere.

NOTES BEFORE READING THE REPORT

D.C. and state data comparisons

It is difficult to compare various demographic and other factors from D.C. to states and other jurisdictions since it effectively is a city, county and state combined and has a unique relationship with the federal government. Throughout the report, we try to fairly compare D.C. data with either state averages or other jurisdictions' information. Many organizational and government reports compare data in this way, and JPI tried to acknowledge any comparisons that may not be entirely "apples to apples."

Black vs. African American

In this report, we use both the terms "Black" and "African American" whenever research or statistics cited in the report use those terms. Acknowledging that the two terms are not necessarily interchangeable, we also felt it important not to change the descriptors used by other data sources, agencies, or organizations.

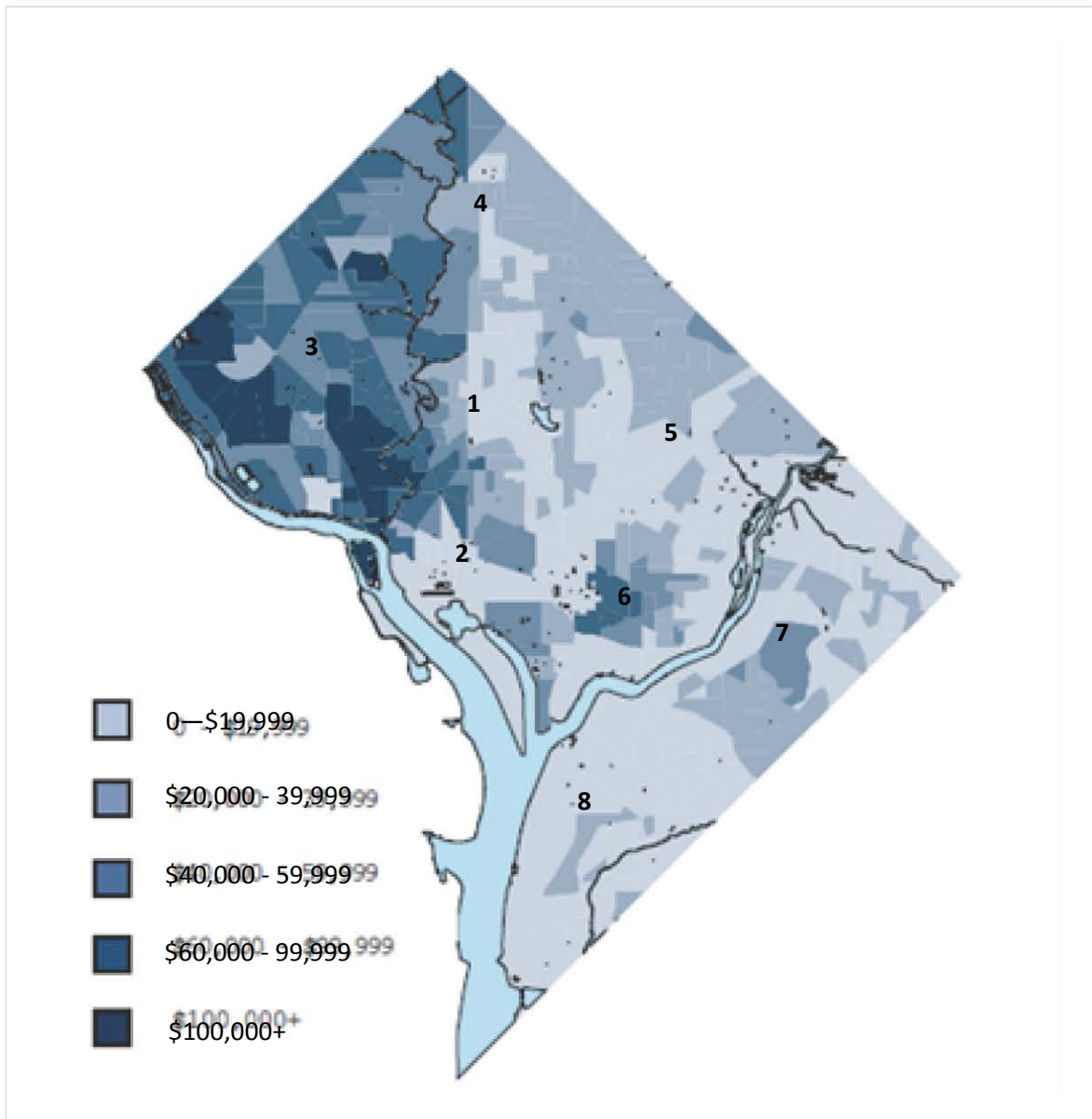
- *Ward 7* is in the Northeast and Southeast quadrant, is made up almost entirely by people of color and has one of the highest unemployment rates of the city. It also has the largest number of children living within its boundaries.² Robert F. Kennedy Stadium, home of D.C.'s soccer team, D.C. United, is located in Ward 7.
- *Ward 8* in the Southeast quadrant of D.C. is home to Bolling Airforce Base and is bordered by the Anacostia River. Its residents are primarily people of color, particularly African Americans. This area has the lowest median income of the city as well as the highest unemployment rate.



Nationals Park, Southeast Washington, D.C.

It is impossible to disentangle poverty from race and ethnicity: the marginalization of communities of color is closely tied to income and wealth, which in turn contributes to the disproportionate impact of the criminal justice system on these communities. The high cost of living makes Washington a challenging place for many to live, particularly those earning in the bottom quadrant of income. D.C. has a median income higher than the national average (\$58,000 versus \$52,175 per year, respectively),³ but inside its 68 square miles, some communities, mainly the wards home primarily to people of color, have some of the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the country. The District has the greatest income inequality of any major city in the country, with the average income of the top fifth of the District's households 31 times higher than the average income of the bottom fifth of households.⁴ While some D.C. neighborhoods face a variety of socio-economic challenges, billions of dollars are spent and earned in this city by the national government, lobbying sector, universities and commuters from neighboring Maryland and Virginia.

Per capita income is highest in Northwest D.C.

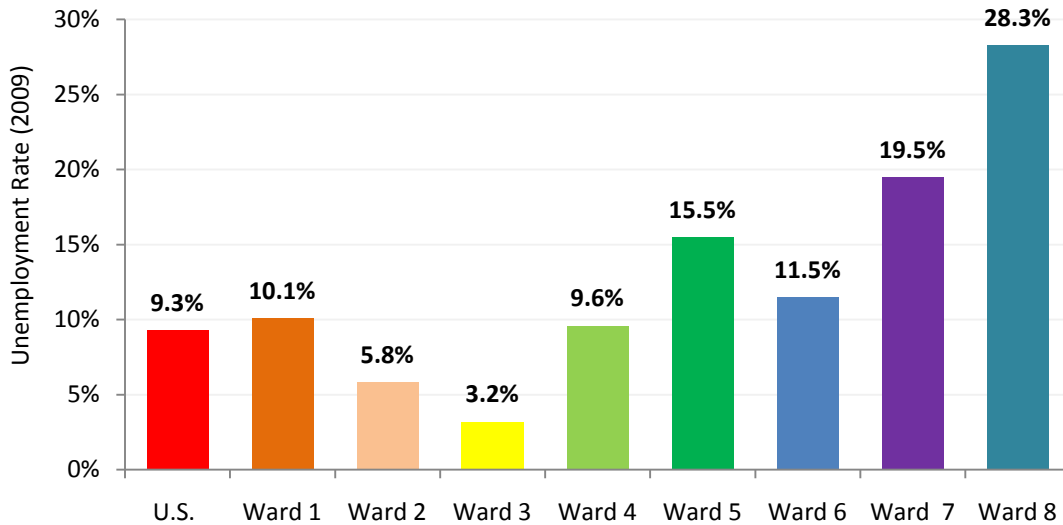


Note: Ward numbers and boundaries superimposed on map.

Source: D.C. Office of the Deputy Mayor of Planning and Economic Development

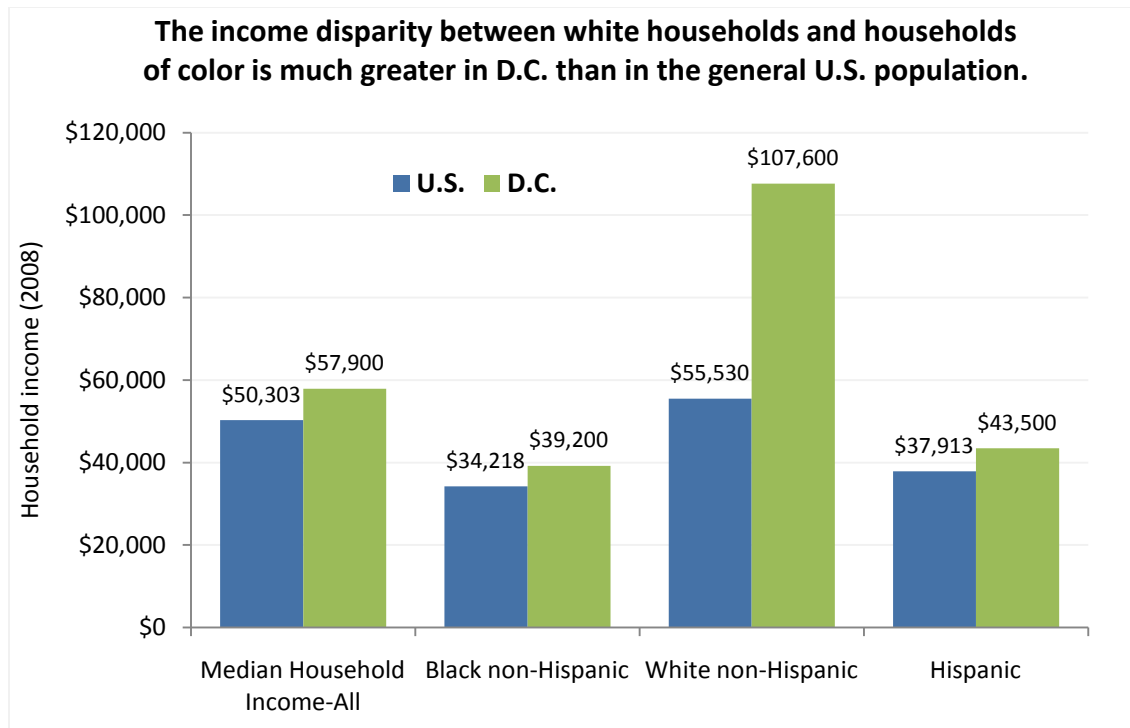
The recent recession and subsequent loss of over 7 million jobs nationally has been tremendously difficult for communities across the country. Low-income communities and communities of color have been hit particularly hard. As of March 2010, the unemployment rate in D.C. was 11.6 percent, compared to the national average of 9.7 percent;⁵ stark differences exist in unemployment among the eight wards. The highest rates of unemployment are in communities of color: over 28 percent in Ward 8, 20 percent in Ward 7, and 15 percent in Ward 5. In contrast, Wards 2 and 3, which are majority white, have unemployment rates of about 6 and 3 percent, respectively.⁶

Wards 5, 7, and 8 have the highest levels of unemployment in D.C.



Source: District of Columbia Department of Employment Services, "Ward Unemployment Rates," Accessed May 2010.

In 2008, 13.2 percent of U.S. residents were living below the federal poverty line, the highest rate since 2000.⁷ In D.C. the poverty rate has risen by 19 percent since 2007; currently about one in five D.C. residents are at or below the poverty line.⁸ This is slightly higher than the poverty rate of 17.7 percent nationally for principal cities.⁹ One in 10 D.C. residents lives at 50 percent of the poverty level, categorized as "extreme poverty."¹⁰ While caseloads for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) have increased, less than half of those living in poverty in D.C. are receiving TANF benefits; this may be due to ineligibility (i.e. childlessness or lack of citizenship), pride, or difficulty in accessing services.¹¹ Drastic variances by race and ethnicity persist in this country: about 25 percent of African Americans and 23 percent of Latinos live below the poverty line, compared to about 9 percent of non-Hispanic whites.¹² Black residents of D.C. are three times more likely than white residents to be living under the poverty line.¹³

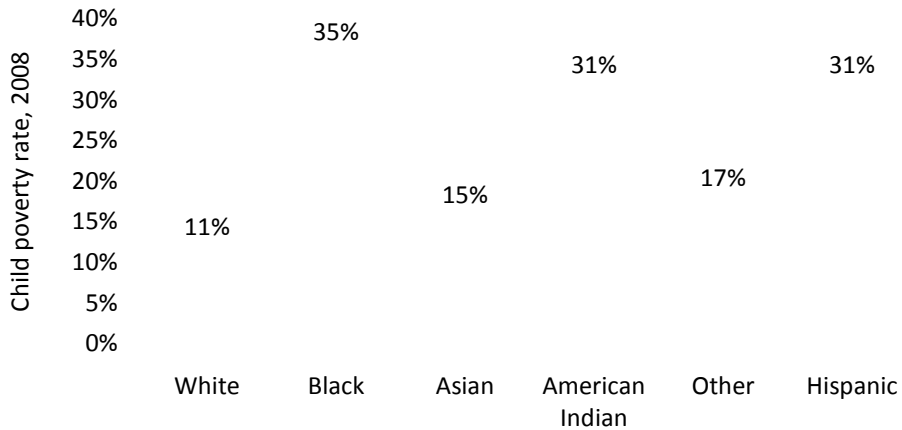


Source: Katie Kerstetter and others, *New Census Data Reveal Growing Income Gaps in the District* (Washington, D.C.: D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute, September 2009). <http://dcfpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/9-22-09ACSIncome.pdf>; U.S. Census Bureau, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2008* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, September 2009). www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p60-236.pdf

Living in poverty in D.C. is especially challenging because of the city’s high cost of living; the Economic Policy Institute reports that D.C. has the second highest cost of living in the nation, after Boston.¹⁴ A “basic family budget” for a family of three in D.C. is about \$61,000 per year; a low-wage single earner family making \$10.80 per hour would earn \$22,000 a year, only 37 percent of the basic family budget.

In 2009 almost 30 percent of children in D.C. lived in poverty, significantly higher than the national rate of 18 percent;¹⁵ it has a similar percentage (51 percent) of children living in low income families as other urban areas in the country.¹⁶ Just less than 41 percent of African American children in D.C. live in poverty, compared with just over 6 percent of white children.¹⁷ These numbers are not particularly dissimilar from national child poverty statistics broken down by ethnicity: in 2008, 35 percent of African American children in the U.S. lived in poverty, as compared to 11 percent of white children.¹⁸

Black and Hispanic children in the U.S. are disproportionately poor.



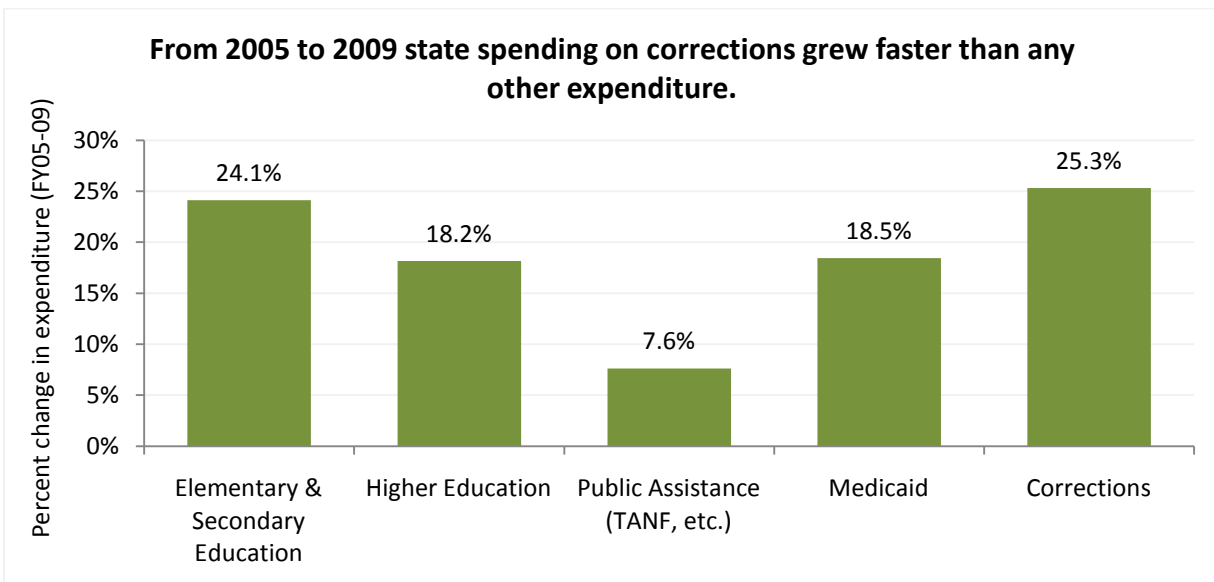
Source: Vanessa R. Wight and others, *Who Are America's Poor Children? The Official Story* (New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, 2010). www.nccp.org/publications/pub_912.html

People who work with at-risk youth in D.C. note that characteristics of areas that these youth come from include poverty, reliance on TANF and public or assisted housing, single parent households, multiple families in one home, young mothers, high truancy and drop-out rates, and low levels of education. Most families work in low wage, blue-collar jobs and make less than \$30,000 per year.¹⁹ Even access to enough healthy food is a reported problem.²⁰ Some youth workers report that some youth become involved in illegal activities as a direct result of poverty, because his or her family cannot afford to provide the basic necessities like food, clothing, or shelter.²¹



Spending reflects prioritization of law enforcement and incarceration over providing vital public programs and support.

Research shows that investing in services and programs that keep people out of the justice system is more effective at improving public safety and promoting community well-being than investing in law enforcement.²² Yet, across the country, state spending indicates that public officials are investing in locking people up rather than providing needed social services. From FY2005 to FY2009, state spending on corrections increased 25 percent nationally, more than any other expenditure. During these tough fiscal times, many states are starting to look toward alternatives to incarceration for improving public safety and reducing prison populations, but states still spend more than \$53 billion per year on corrections.²³

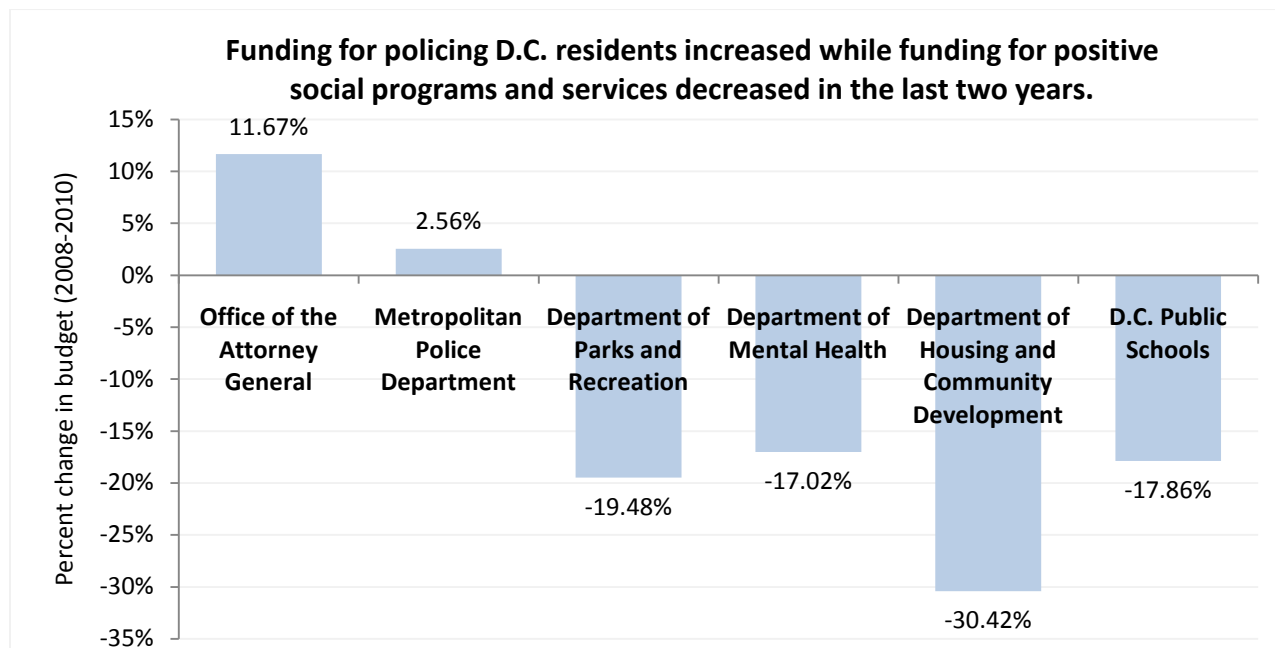


Source: National Association of State Budget Officers, *State Expenditure Reports 2005-2009* (Washington, D.C.: NASBO).

Similar priorities are visible in D.C. spending choices. Despite the effectiveness of front-end and preventative services in improving public safety and keeping people from becoming involved in the justice system, changes to D.C.’s budget from 2008 to 2010 reveal a powerful statement by city officials about their priorities. The recession began in 2008 and, during budget strained times, city officials made the choice to cut funding for programs and services such as affordable housing, parks, and mental health care and to increase spending on the policing and court processing of its residents. Spending on the Metropolitan Police Department and the Office of Attorney General increased more than 2 percent and 11 percent respectively from 2008 to 2010;²⁴ other agencies saw their budgets drop.

Part of the reason for decreasing spending on D.C. Public Schools is the Mayoral takeover of the school system in 2007, which resulted in transfer of functions to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization (OPEFM) starting in 2009, including special education transportation and non-public tuition.²⁵ These two functions are now expensed under other budget chapters, making it look like there was a larger decrease in funding than is

accurately the case. Still, from FY2009 to FY2010, after these changes took effect, the DCPS revised budget included a 13 percent decrease.²⁶



Source: Track D.C., <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/>, Accessed September 9, 2010

The FY2011 budget includes an 11 percent increase in education spending (with enrollment expected to increase slightly) and a 1 percent decrease in public safety spending, but other agencies aimed at improving communities are still being cut; according to the D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute, support for D.C.’s affordable housing programs in the proposed FY2011 budget would be one-third lower than in FY2008, and funding for D.C. childcare programs are nearly one-fifth lower.²⁷ Although investing in education and social services is more effective than law enforcement at improving public safety, reducing incarceration and saving money in the long run,²⁸ the D.C. city government continues to make budgetary decisions to reduce resources for communities that are most in need of services and support.

While it is difficult to compare D.C.’s spending on law enforcement to other jurisdictions – since it effectively is a city, county and state combined and has a unique relationship with the federal government – we do know that with the help of the 2009 Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act’s stimulus funding, many jurisdictions were able to maintain or in some cases expand their policing while other services suffered. With the Federal government providing \$3 billion in law enforcement funding through Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, localities were able to “backfill” their police budgets. Meanwhile, at the state level, in FY2010 states cut K-12 education budgets by \$5.46 billion; higher education by \$2.39 billion; and Medicaid by \$1.55 billion; in contrast, correctional budget cuts combined were only \$1.12 billion.²⁹

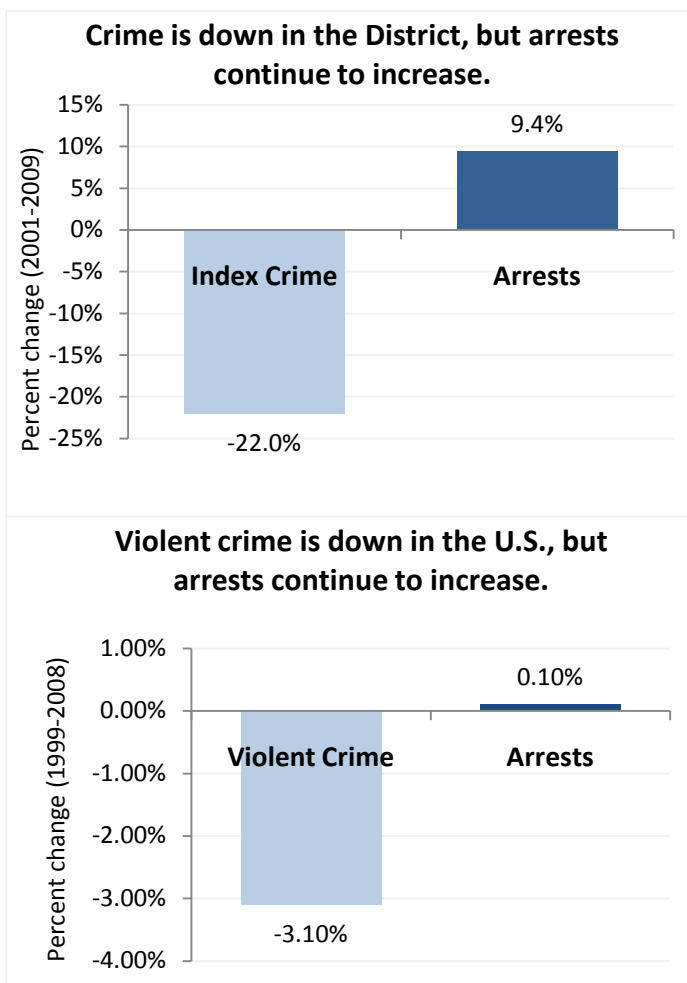
Although crime is down, arrests are up, particularly in low-income communities.

Crime has been falling across the country since the mid-1990s, but many communities continue to face public safety challenges, and the drop in crime has not seen a corresponding drop in arrests. From 1999 to 2008, the number of violent crimes reported to law enforcement in the U.S. fell 3.1 percent, but the total number of arrests increased 0.1 percent.³⁰ More stark is the difference between D.C. crime and arrest trends: despite a 22 percent decrease in crime in D.C. from 2001 to 2009,³¹ arrests increased 9.4 percent during this time, mostly due to arrests for drug and nonviolent offenses; 81 percent of arrests in 2008 were for nonviolent offenses, including 4,229 arrests for release violations such as missed appointments and failing drug tests.³² Arrests for misdemeanor offenses increased 83 percent during this time.³³

Crime is down in many communities.

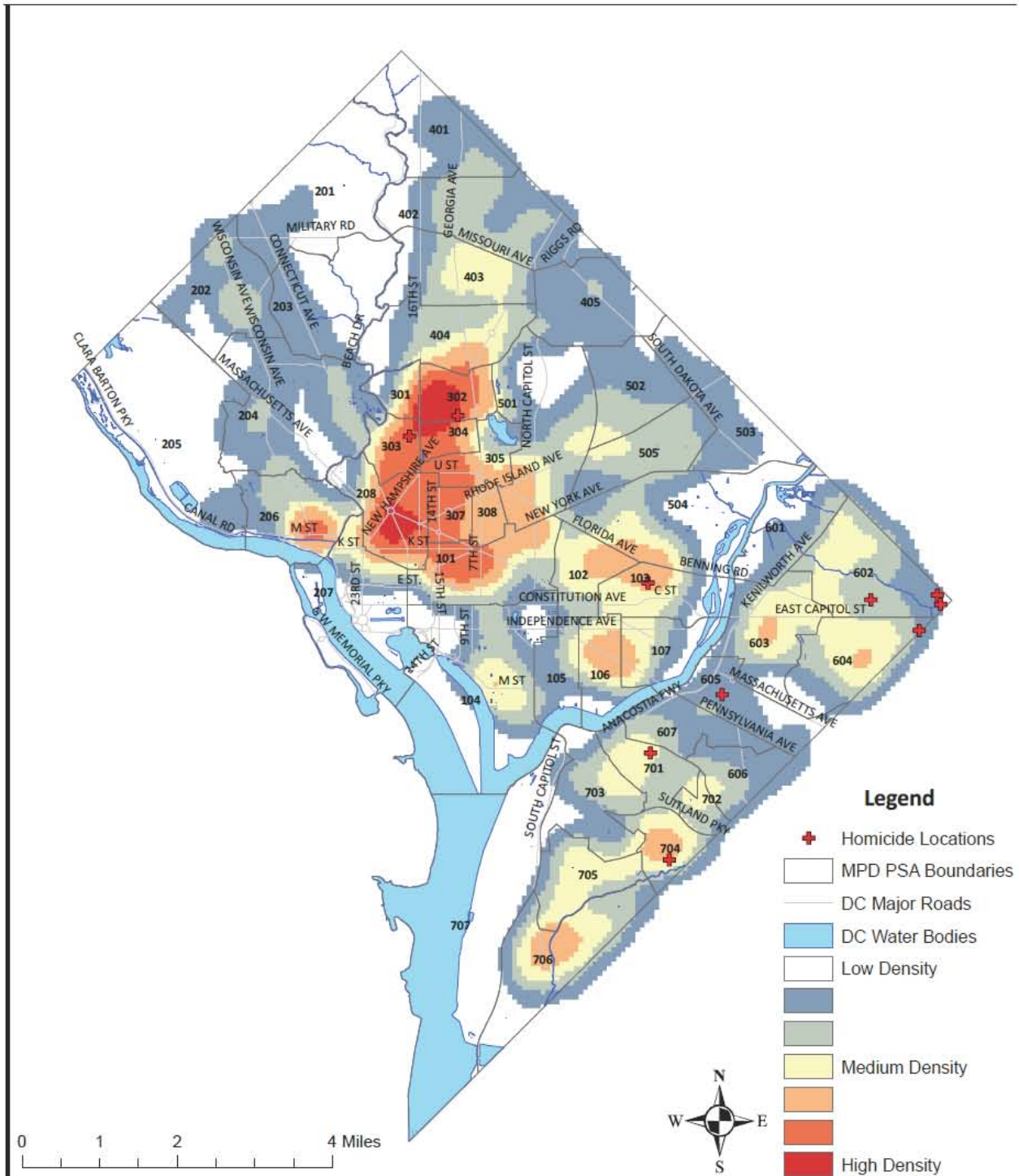
While the violent crime rate in the District of Columbia has historically been, and continues to be, higher than the national average (at around 1,500 offenses per 100,000 people versus 454 per 100,000 in the U.S.),³⁴ this rate has been dropping in recent years. In 2009, D.C. had one of the lowest homicide rates in the city's history.³⁵

The D.C. Metropolitan Police Department is divided into seven police districts, which are broken further into 47 police service areas (PSAs) as seen in the map below.³⁶ The number of homicides fell across almost all police districts in D.C. from 2001 to 2009 (the 4th District—in the Northeast quadrant—had three more homicides in 2009 than 2001).³⁷ And the number of index (more serious) crimes³⁸ reported to police fell 22 percent across the city, with only the 2nd District in the Northwest quadrant experiencing an increase (13 percent during this time).



Sources: **D.C.:** Metropolitan Police Department, *Annual Index Crime Totals 2001-2009*; Metropolitan Police Department, *Office of Research & Analytical Services* July 2010; **U.S.:** FBI Uniform Crime Report, *Crime in the United States, 2008* (Washington, D.C.: FBI, 2009) Table 1A and 32.

WASHINGTON, DC
 METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT
 CRIME DENSITY & HOMICIDE LOCATIONS DURING JULY 2010



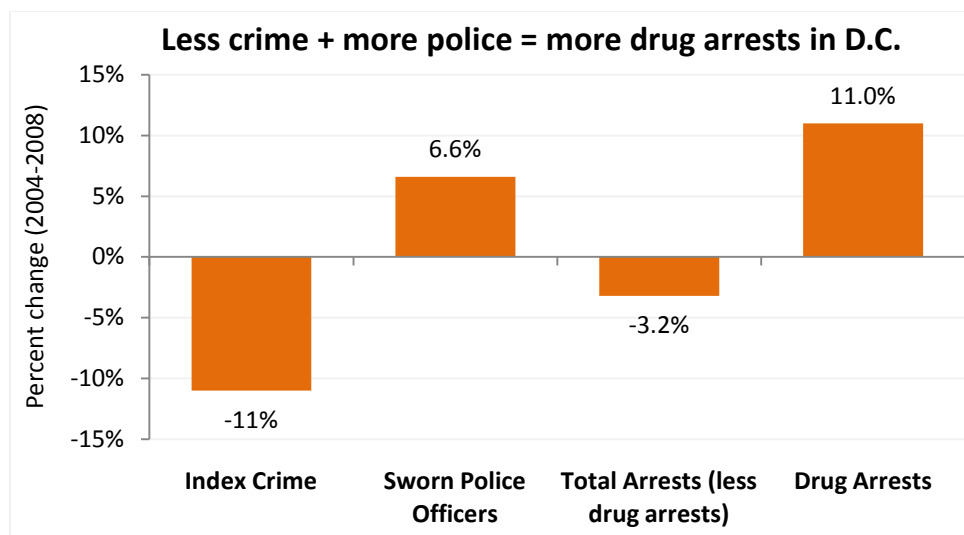
Source: Metropolitan Police Department, Crime Density Map,
http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/lib/mpdc/about/units/rrd/density/july_dc_crime_density_map.pdf

Crime reported to D.C. Metropolitan Police Department						
	2001		2009		%Change (2001-2009)	
	Homicide	Index Crime	Homicide	Index Crime	Homicide	Index Crime
1 st District	17	7,996	9	6,342	-47%	-21%
2 nd District	0	5,096	0	5,776	0%	13%
3 rd District	36	8,900	17	6,342	-53%	-29%
4 th District	14	6,460	17	3,689	21%	-43%
5 th District	54	6,387	25	3,867	-54%	-39%
6 th District	50	5,413	33	4,372	-34%	-19%
7 th District	61	4,236	42	4,205	-31%	-1%
D.C. Total	232	44,488	143	34,684	-38%	-22%

Source: Metropolitan Police Department, Annual Index Crime Totals 2001-2009, <http://mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1239,q,543315.asp>

Even when crime is falling, arrests continue to increase.

One of the primary sources of increasing arrests is drug offenses; the number of arrests for drug abuse violations in the U.S. increased 11.9 percent from 1999 to 2008.³⁹ Research shows that law enforcement has a great deal of discretion when it comes to policing and recording drug offenses, and charging people with these offenses.⁴⁰ Rates of arrests for offenses such as drug law violations tend to have strong correlations with the number of personnel assigned to police those specific behaviors⁴¹ and the amount of money spent on law enforcement.⁴² The number of sworn police officers in D.C. increased 6.6 percent from 2004 to 2008 and the District now has over 4,000 police officers in its department.⁴³ During this time, index crime dropped 11 percent,⁴⁴ while the number of arrests for drug offenses increased 11 percent; when drug arrests are taken out, all other arrests fell 3.2 percent.⁴⁵



Source: D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, *Citywide Crime Statistics Annual Totals, 1993-2009*; Julia E. Brault, *Female Arrest Trends in Washington, D.C.: 2001-2008* (Washington, D.C.: Metropolitan Police Department, 2008); Metropolitan Police Department, *Annual Report 2008*

Philip Fornaci, D.C. Prisoners' Project⁴⁶

Philip Fornaci is the Director of the D.C. Prisoners' Project of the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs, which advocates for the humane treatment and dignity of all persons convicted or charged with a criminal offense housed in prisons, jails or community corrections programs, assists family members with prison-related issues, and promotes progressive criminal justice reform. Through his work in D.C., Mr. Fornaci has noticed a growing trend in the over-policing of communities of color, especially of youth of color. In an interview with this report's author, Mr. Fornaci shared these thoughts:

Discretion in policing has much to do with who is arrested: the younger and darker you are, the more likely you are to be arrested. Students of color are targeted for expulsion from schools and inclusion in prisons; and once they are in the system, it is very hard to get out. In 1997, 50 percent of black men in D.C. ages of 18 to 35 were under criminal justice supervision of some kind.⁴⁷ One reason that this rate is so high is that many D.C. prisoners are held too long and are often sent back to prison for technical parole violations;⁴⁸ D.C. sends more people to prison on technical violations of parole conditions than they do for new crimes. The most common violations tend to be for possessing marijuana or not appearing for an appointment with a parole officer, sometimes as a result of a mental illness. Often a person will go to jail three to four times for technical violations. These practices primarily affect low-income people and people of color, the very people whose communities are targeted by police and prosecutors. The cycle of arrest, prison, parole, violation, and prison has come to be termed by the D.C. Prisoner's Project as living "Life on an Installment Plan."

Changes need to be made to probation and parole laws that allow people to fully exit the correctional population and move forward in a positive way. Instead of focusing on technical violations, resources should be going toward support services and programs to help people returning from prison make positive choices and re-integrate into the community. In addition to these changes, more equitable policing in communities would help reduce the disproportionate number of people of color involved in the criminal justice system.

For more information on the D.C. Prisoner's Project, please visit
http://www.washlaw.org/projects/dcprisoners_rights/default.htm

When serious crime is down, law enforcement can proactively target its resources on drug offenses and other low-level offenses. Frequently, this results in targeting of specific neighborhoods as well, especially communities of color. This situation is not unique to the District: one study of New York City found that police would return to the same neighborhoods, often neighborhoods where residents are primarily people of color, to make marijuana arrests.⁴⁹

In the first six months of 2010, D.C. police made 700 more arrests than the same time last year, an increase of 2.8 percent. The biggest increases in arrests were in Police Districts 3 and 4, at 18.1 percent and 28.3 percent respectively.⁵⁰ Policing efforts in the District targeting low-income communities and communities of color are not uncommon. "Summer crime emergencies" produce extreme,

neighborhood-wide responses that are frequently the result of a highly-publicized incident of violence.⁵¹ In D.C., over half of all arrests occur in police districts 1, 3, and 6, which roughly coincide with Wards 1, 6 and 7, and are areas that are primarily made up of communities of color.⁵² Nearly half of arrests for drug offenses occur in wards 7 and 8,⁵³ where most residents are black and have the lowest median incomes in the city.⁵⁴ Selective enforcement in certain neighborhoods can lead to more criminal justice involvement for residents of those areas, resulting in higher incarceration rates and negative impacts on communities.

About 93 percent of arrests in D.C. are of adults and 7 percent are youth under age 18. Youth arrests increased 42 percent from 2001 to 2009, while overall arrests increased only 9 percent.⁵⁵ This trend may be largely due to an increase in arrests for misdemeanors, which were up 183 percent from 2001 to 2009 and made up about 25 percent of youth arrests in 2009. While increasing arrests for misdemeanors are occurring all over the city, the greatest increases have been in wards 7 and 8 (up 249 percent and 228 percent, respectively). Nationally, youth arrests dropped 15.7 percent from 1999 – 2008. In 2008, 14.5 percent of all arrests in the U.S. were of youth under 18.⁵⁶ To compare D.C. to another large Eastern city, in Philadelphia 12 percent of arrests are youth, down from 13.9 percent in 2008.⁵⁷

In the first six months of 2010, D.C. youth arrests for misdemeanors increased 46 percent compared to the same time the previous year while overall youth arrests fell 1.8 percent.⁵⁸ Property⁵⁹ and drug offense arrests for youth were down 30 and 23 percent, respectively, but arrest for violent offenses⁶⁰ were up 14 percent, primarily due to an increase in arrests for robberies and carjackings. Even with the increase in youth arrests for select offenses, youth continue to make up a small portion of people arrested in D.C. and reliance on punitive policies aimed at youth, such as curfews and school suspensions, is an inappropriate and ineffective strategy for improving public safety in the District.

Where are people arrested in D.C.? January 1 thru June 26, 2010			
	Adult (18+)	Juvenile (<18 years)	Total
1 st District	4,582	281	4,863
2 nd District	1,309	77	1,386
3 rd District	3,875	216	4,091
4 th District	2,560	200	2,760
5 th District	3,355	282	3,637
6 th District	3,826	404	4,230
7 th District	3,408	356	3,764
Unknown	893	46	939
D.C. Total	23,808	1,862	25,670

*Note: excludes homicide arrests; For a list of all arrests by Public Safety Area (PSA) in the first 6 months of 2010, please see Appendix 3.

Source: Metropolitan Police Department, *Number of Adult and Juvenile Arrests (1/1-6/26/10)* (Washington, D.C.: MPD, 2010)

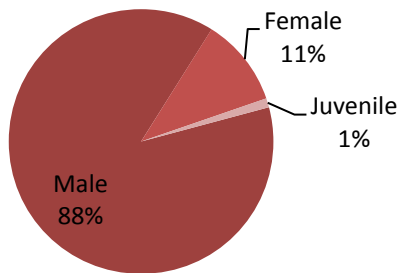
People continue to be incarcerated at high rates.

As a result of policing practices and sentencing changes, the United States is locking up more of its residents than ever before and holding them for longer periods of time. As of 2009, more than 2.3 million people were incarcerated in the United States; more than 1.6 million people were in prison,⁶¹ and about 767,000 people were held in local jails.⁶² Including people on parole or probation, the United States' total correctional population was more than 7.3 million people by the end of 2008.⁶³ In 2006, the most recent year national data is available, about half of all people in prison were there for nonviolent offenses.⁶⁴

A recent Pew Center on the States report that examined state correctional populations, including probation, parole, prison and jail populations, found that in 2007 D.C. had the highest adult incarceration rate in the country of any state (1 out of every 50 adults in D.C. were in prison or jail).⁶⁵ In addition, D.C. had the third highest rate of correctional control in the country, behind Georgia and Idaho. By Pew's estimates, nearly 23,000 people—almost 5 percent of the D.C. population—were under correctional control (in prison or jail or on probation or parole), a rate of one in 21 compared to the national average of one in 31.

In mid-fiscal year 2010, there were more than 3,100 people in the D.C. Department of Corrections jail facilities, including 2,050 people in the Central Detention Facility and 965 in the Correctional Treatment Facility.⁶⁶ As many as 10,000 people are on parole and supervised release in the District by the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA),⁶⁷ at a rate of one in 35 adults.⁶⁸ About 338 women and 35 youth under the age of 18 who are being tried as adults are in custody; those in custody who are not held at the Central Detention Facility (CDF) are held in contract halfway houses and the Correctional Treatment Facility.⁶⁹

88 percent of people in D.C. Department of Corrections custody are men



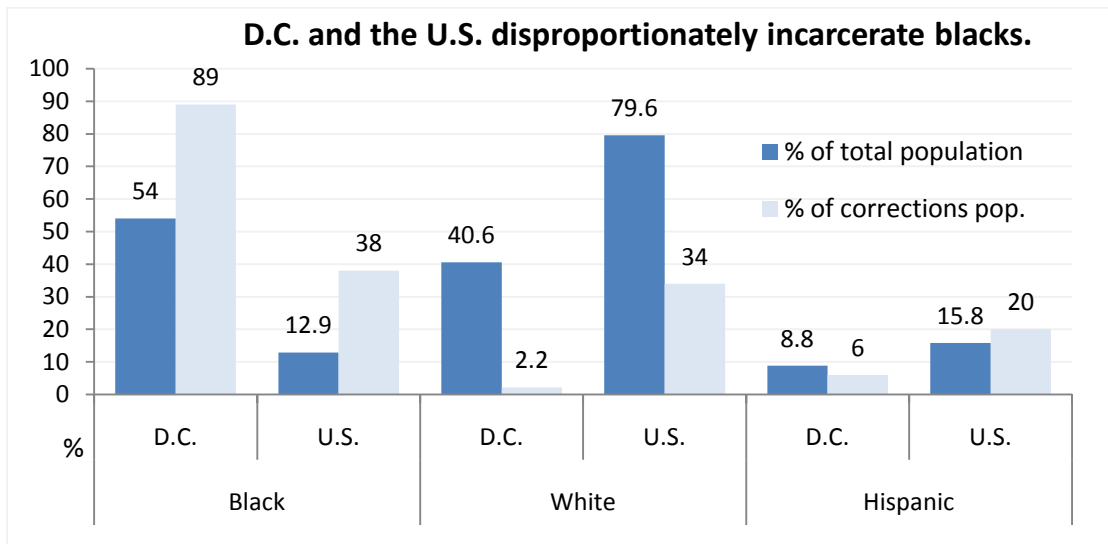
Source: DC Department of Corrections, *Facts and Figures* (Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Department of Corrections, 2010).

With the passage of the 1997 Revitalization Act and closure of D.C.'s Lorton prison - which was located about 30 miles south of the city in Virginia - in 2001, people sentenced to prison now serve their time further outside of the city in federal Bureau of Prisons custody, many in private, for-profit facilities like Rivers Correctional Institution in North Carolina. As of March 2010, more than 6,000 people from D.C. resided in prisons across the country.⁷⁰ People from D.C. are supposed to be housed in prisons within 500 miles of the District, but this is not always the case; hundreds are housed outside this range in states like California and Arizona, including many youth being tried as adults who are housed in North Dakota.⁷¹ This distance makes it extremely difficult to maintain family and community ties, which are protective factors shown to reduce recidivism.⁷² D.C. is just one of many jurisdictions that incarcerates people far from their communities; Hawaii, for instance, sends about 50 percent of the people sentenced to prison to a private facility in Arizona.

People of color disproportionately bear the burden of poverty and incarceration.

As mentioned previously in this report, people of color disproportionately live in poverty with 25 percent of African Americans and 23 percent of Latinos living below the poverty line, compared to 9 percent of non-Hispanic whites. In D.C., the disparity is more pronounced;⁷³ 24 percent of Black residents live in poverty in D.C., compared to 8 percent of non-Hispanic white residents.⁷⁴

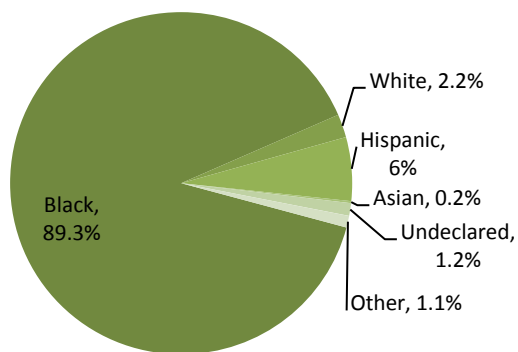
At the same time, people of color are also disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system. People of color make up the majority of people in prison and those involved in the justice system. In 2008, 38 percent of all people in U.S. prisons were black, 20 were Hispanic, and 34 percent were white.⁷⁵ D.C. has a significant problem with the overrepresentation of people of color in the juvenile and criminal justice system as well; more than 89 percent of the people in D.C. Department of Corrections custody are African American, though African Americans make up only 54 percent of D.C.'s total population.⁷⁶ Hispanics make up 6 percent of the people in custody and whites, who make up 40.6 percent of D.C. residents, are only 2.2 percent of people in custody. For those sentenced to the custody of the Bureau of Prisons from D.C., nine out of 10 are black, 2 percent are Hispanic and 3 percent are white.⁷⁷



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Quickfacts data, www.census.gov; Heather C. Westand and William J. Sabol, *Prison Inmates at Midyear 2008-Statistical Tables* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008).

The data is not available to definitively say that communities of color who are also low-income bear the disproportionate burden of incarceration in the United States. However, given what we know about the disproportionate impact of the criminal justice system and poverty on communities of color, it is possible to consider that policies that disproportionately impact communities of color are also disproportionately impacting low-income communities. The following section of this report will consider the policies that have contributed to the disproportionate impact of the criminal justice system on communities of color, not necessarily as a proxy for understanding the impact on low-income communities, but as a way of better understanding how policies that can end poverty might also eliminate racial disparities.

9 out of 10 people in D.C. Department of Corrections Custody are black.



Source: D.C. Department of Corrections, *Facts and Figures* (Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Dept. of Corrections, 2010).

The drug war increases incarceration and racial disparities in the justice system.

President Reagan's "War on Drugs" gained momentum in the 1980s, resulting in a dramatic increase in the prison population; it created the greatest negative impact on low-income communities and communities of color. Mandatory sentences that take away discretion from judges, and drug-free zones that target specific areas with specialized enforcement and sentencing enhancements, are still sending thousands of people to prison every year for increasingly longer sentences, despite evidence

of the ineffectiveness as a public safety strategy and racial bias of these policies.

The number of people incarcerated in state prisons for drug offenses increased 1,299 percent from 1980 to 2006, with the biggest increases occurring in the 1980s.⁷⁸ More than half (52 percent) of all people incarcerated in federal prisons in 2008 were convicted on drug charges.⁷⁹ And while use of illicit drugs is comparable among African Americans and whites,⁸⁰ African Americans, who comprise 12.2 percent of the general population,⁸¹ made up 35 percent of those arrested for drug offenses in 2008⁸² and 44 percent of people in state prisons for drug offenses in 2006.⁸³ The disproportionate enforcement of drug laws in communities of color leads to more people of color in the criminal justice system and in prison, and has a devastating impact on families and communities, whose loved ones are removed from their homes, leaving other family members to care for children and each other, while also trying to maintain ties to the incarcerated person.⁸⁴

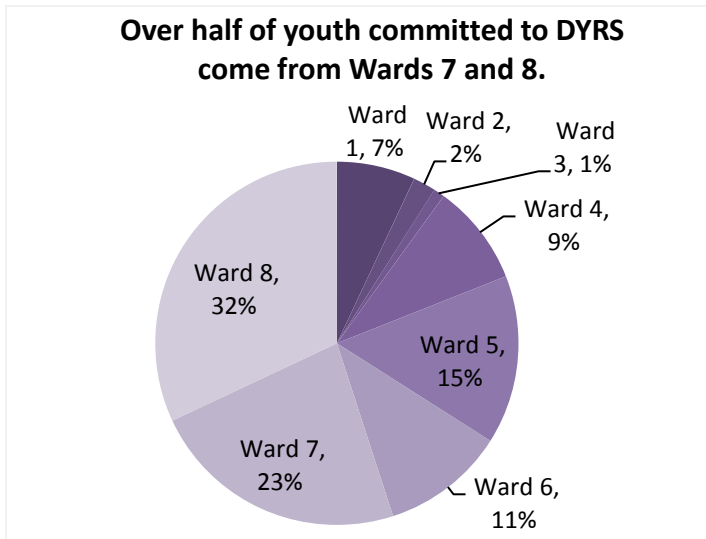
Fair Sentencing Act of 2010: Reducing, but not eliminating, the disparity

The inconsistency in sentencing between crack and powder cocaine is illustrative of the racial disparities in drug enforcement, and is mainly a result of inaccurate perceptions of its different effects on behavior, and the reality that cocaine, being more expensive, enjoyed greater popularity with the affluent and powerful. Previously, a five-gram possession of crack cocaine received a five-year federal mandatory minimum sentence.⁸⁵ In contrast, a person would have had to sell 500 grams of powder cocaine to get the same sentence. In August 2010, the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 was signed into law, reducing the federal sentencing disparity between federal crack and powder cocaine offenses. Instead of the 100:1 ratio, the rule adopts an 18:1 ratio amount of powder cocaine versus crack cocaine triggering the same sentence. The rule also eliminates the mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack;⁸⁶ it is the first time in 40 years that a mandatory minimum has been repealed. While this law will provide greater fairness to the thousands of people affected each year, save taxpayer money, and reduce racial disparities in the criminal justice system, it still prioritizes law enforcement on low-level drug offenses, which has a disproportionate impact on low-income people of color, instead of focusing on more effective public safety strategies such as increased access to drug treatment.

Youth of color are disproportionately impacted by the justice system.

The racial and ethnic disparities are even more apparent when looking at youth and the D.C. justice system. Over half (55 percent) of the youth in DYRS custody⁸⁷ were from Wards 7 and 8,⁸⁸ which have the lowest median incomes, lowest levels of high school graduation, and highest unemployment in the District.⁸⁹ Only two youth resided in Ward 3, which has the highest median income, highest levels of high school graduation, and lowest levels of unemployment. In 2009, the majority (about 96 percent) of the 358 youth committed to D.C.'s Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) is African American; about 4 percent were Latino and there was only one white youth.⁹⁰ About 90 percent were young men; 85 percent were under age 18, including 14 children age 13 and younger.

These youth are not necessarily incarcerated for the most serious offenses. About 29 percent of youth in DYRS custody were committed for violent felonies and another 17 percent for violent misdemeanors. Stolen vehicles (17 percent), property offenses (13 percent), and drug offenses made up most of the remainder. About 39 percent of youth in DYRS custody were committed on probation revocations, including violations for missing appointments or disobeying other rules like curfew, indicating a possible need for more effective probation policies, including revocation alternatives that send fewer youth to DYRS custody.



Source: DYRS Research & Quality Assurance Division, October 1, 2009.

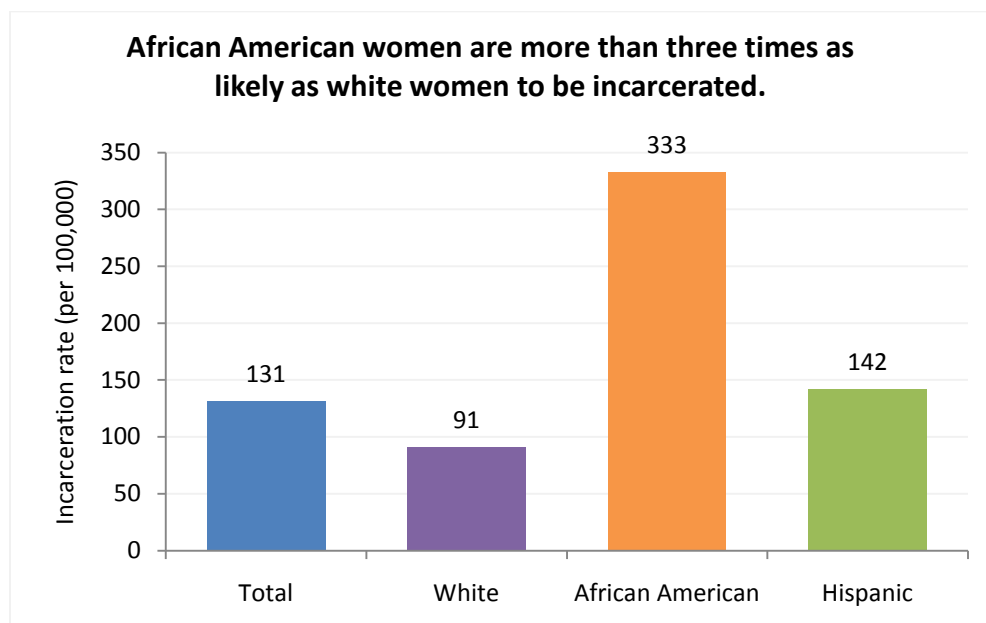
Across the country, racial disparities in youth involvement in the justice system persist. Forty percent of youth in juvenile justice facilities in the U.S. are youth of color,⁹¹ despite being only 16 percent of youth under age 18. And 64 percent of youth in juvenile justice custody in the U.S. are committed for nonviolent offenses.⁹²

Women are increasingly affected by the criminal justice system.

Poverty rates are highest for households headed by single women; 28.7 percent of households headed by single women were living in poverty, particularly if the households are led by women of color.⁹³ At the same time, women and girls in the criminal justice system are often overlooked and under-studied because they represent a relatively small percentage of the incarcerated population. In all 50 states, however, women are the fastest-growing demographic of the prison population; between 1990 and 2008, the rate of women sentenced to state or federal prison more than doubled, from 31 to 68 per 100,000.⁹⁴ The number of women under jurisdiction of state and federal prisons increased 25 percent from 2000 to 2009.⁹⁵ In D.C., the number of women arrested in 2008 increased by 19 percent since

2001, while arrests of men fell by 2 percent.⁹⁶ As of March 2010, 319 women from the District were incarcerated in federal prisons across the country, some as far away as Texas or Florida.⁹⁷

Across the country, African American women are more than three times as likely as white women and more than twice as likely as Hispanic women to be incarcerated.⁹⁸ Drug law enforcement is primarily responsible for the increasing number of women, particularly women of color, in prison across the U.S. Drug offenses now account for about 28 percent of women in state prisons (up from one in 10 in 1979⁹⁹), compared with just 19 percent of men.¹⁰⁰ In federal prisons, where about half of the population is incarcerated for drug offenses, the number of women incarcerated increased 42 percent from 2000 to 2009.¹⁰¹ Women in prison face unique challenges; many incarcerated women are mothers and when they are separated from their families, their absence is a significant hardship for their children and loved ones.



Source: William J. Sabol and others, *Prisoners in 2008* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009)

Mental illness, substance abuse and traumatic experiences – including child abuse and neglect, partner abuse, and sexual violence – are all risk factors that increase a woman’s chances of going to prison. A study by the Rebecca Project of girls in the juvenile justice system found that 92 percent of the incarcerated girls interviewed had experienced some form of abuse, and more than half of the girls reported experiencing sexual violence.¹⁰² Girls and women with histories of childhood abuse or neglect were 70 percent more likely than those without abuse histories to be arrested for property, alcohol, drug, and misdemeanor offenses. In addition, girls hurt by sexual violence are three times more likely to develop mental illnesses or abuse drugs or alcohol as an adult, making them more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system later in life. Because of the close relationships between untreated trauma, substance use and justice involvement, one could say that the “war on drugs” has become a “war on women,” with girls, women and families as the casualties.

Incarceration of women has significant impacts on communities, families, and children. In 2007, there were more than 65,000 mothers in prison;¹⁰³ almost 65 percent of mothers reported living with their children prior to incarceration and nearly 42 percent reported being the head of a single-parent household.¹⁰⁴ Children whose mothers are incarcerated are more likely to live with a grandparent or go into foster care than a child whose father is incarcerated.¹⁰⁵ D.C.'s Adoption and Safe Families Act authorizes the termination of parental custody after a child has been living in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months.¹⁰⁶ Because the average prison sentence is 22 months, many parents, particularly mothers, risk losing parental custody of their child. According to advocates, this law contributes to the destruction of families, particularly families of color.¹⁰⁷

Recommendations:

Improvements in public safety provide unique opportunities for states and localities to examine justice practices that result in higher incarceration rates and disproportionately impact people with lower income and communities of color. Examining these practices and re-focusing public safety efforts could reduce incarceration rates, improve public safety, save money, and promote community well-being.

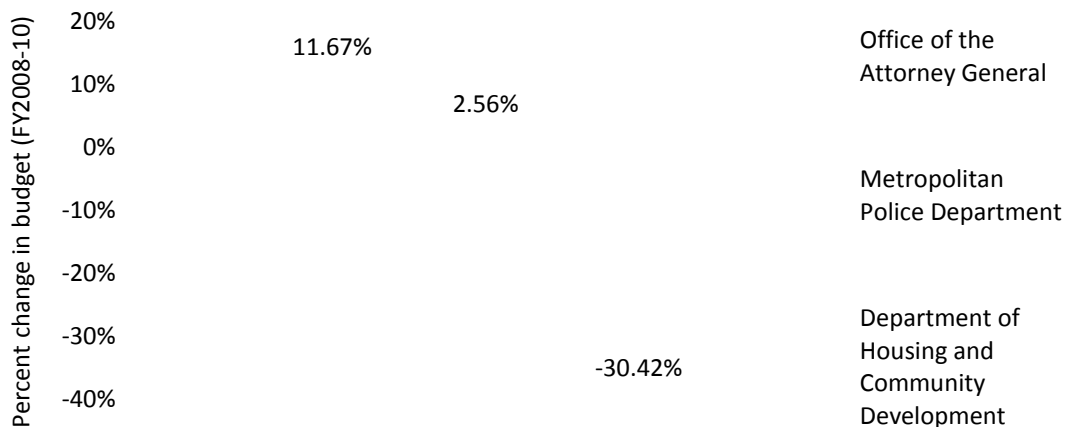
- 1. Focus law enforcement efforts on the most serious offenses rather than quality of life offenses.** Reducing the number of arrests and subsequent detentions of people for low-level and quality of life offenses like trespassing or loitering will not only free resources for policing of more serious or violent offenses, but it will reduce the number of people impacted by the justice system for low-level offenses.
- 2. Consider policies that allow police to provide citations for marijuana possession rather than arrests.** A number of states across the country have decriminalized marijuana possession by changing them from arrestable offenses to infractions. This practice frees up law enforcement and court resources and reduces the number of otherwise law-abiding residents in the justice system.
- 3. Address racial and income disparities in arrest and incarceration practices.** Across the country, people of color and those of lower-income are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated than other racial and ethnic groups or people with higher income, despite similar offense-rates. States and localities should evaluate arrest policies that target these groups and bring more people into the justice system.

Increasing investments in housing will reduce incarceration rates, improve public safety, and promote community well-being.

Across the country, the housing crisis has taken its toll on families and communities, leaving many without access to quality, affordable housing. In D.C., the housing challenge is particularly salient due to the city’s high cost of living. Stable housing is one of the most significant factors affecting the risk of involvement in the criminal justice system; having a home is the foundation for leading a productive, positive life. Lack of quality, affordable housing has been linked with poor life outcomes, including decreased educational performance, exacerbation of health problems, and increased justice involvement.¹⁰⁸ Yet city and state investments in housing are decreasing, having an adverse effect on families and public safety.

The changes in D.C.’s budget from 2008 to 2010 reveal a powerful statement by city officials about their true priorities. The recession began in 2008 and during budget strained times, city officials made a choice to cut funding for affordable housing (as well as for schools, parks and recreation, and mental health care) and instead increase spending on the policing and court processing of its residents. D.C.’s Department of Housing budget has been cut more than 30 percent over the last two years. And core housing programs are suffering the most: the Housing Production Trust Fund budget was slashed from \$42 million in 2008 to \$18 million in 2010, a cut of more than 50 percent.¹⁰⁹

The budget for D.C. Department of Housing fell by more than 30 percent in the past 2 years while the budgets for the Attorney General and the Police Department increased.



Source: Track D.C., “Office of the Attorney General,” <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/CB0>; Track D.C., “Metropolitan Police Department,” <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/FA0>; Track D.C., “Department of Housing and Community Development,” <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/DB0>

While housing assistance is available in the District, funding to help families is dwindling and, like families around the country, D.C. families continue to struggle to keep roofs over their heads; foreclosures in the District rose 267 percent from 366 in the first quarter of 2005, to 1,344 in the first quarter of 2009.¹¹⁰ In 2008, more than 25,000 families were on a wait list for D.C. Housing Authority’s Housing Choice vouchers. Housing Choice vouchers are federally funded vouchers distributed by local

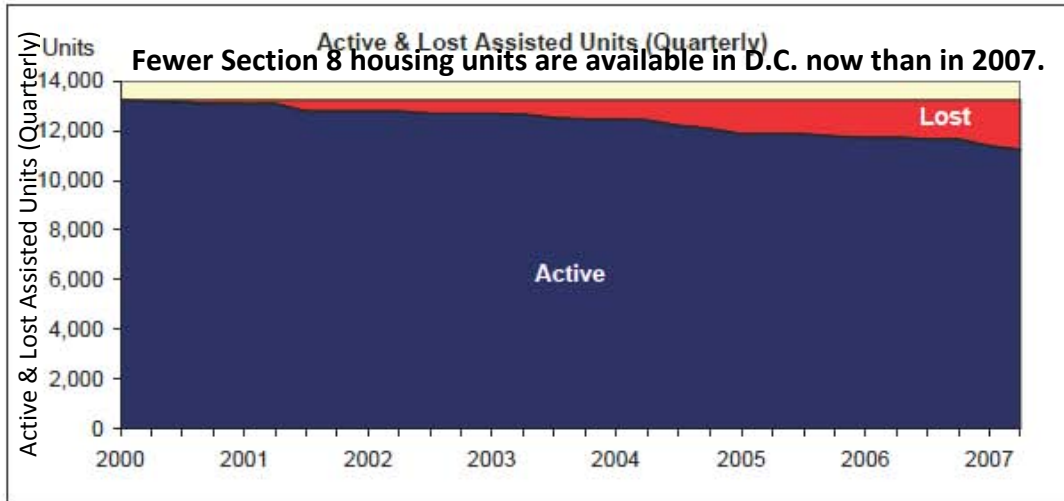
public housing authorities that help people with very low-income, elderly people, and disabled people afford safe, stable, and quality housing.¹¹¹ The need for housing and vouchers is concentrated in certain areas of the city; one-third of Housing Choice Voucher holders in D.C, and a fourth of those on the waiting list, live in Ward 8.¹¹²

Housing costs in the District have increased significantly since 2000,¹¹³ with fewer low-cost rental and home ownership options available. According to the 2007 American Housing Survey (AHS), D.C. households earning \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year spend 63 percent of their income on monthly housing costs. The U.S. Census estimates that more than 22,800 households in the District fall into this income bracket.¹¹⁴ By comparison, households with incomes of over \$120,000 only spend 16 percent of their income on housing.¹¹⁵ The D.C. Fiscal Policy Institute reports that nearly all low-income District households have unaffordable housing costs:¹¹⁶ about 40 percent of D.C. residents spend more than 30 percent of their annual income on housing, exceeding federal standards for affordable housing,¹¹⁷ and nearly 20 percent of District residents spend more than half of their income on housing.

Across the city, affordable housing shrank by more than one-third from 2000 to 2007,¹¹⁸ and the number of homes costing less than \$250,000 fell by 75 percent. This decrease in affordable home ownership is visible in areas like Ward 8, which has the highest proportion of people of color and the lowest rate of home ownership in the city; only 23 percent of people own their home in Ward 8, compared to 40 percent in the rest of the District.¹¹⁹

One reason for the lack of affordable housing in the District is the ongoing gentrification of the city. Gentrification refers to the social and cultural changes that occur when an area is repopulated, generally when people with more income move to an area previously inhabited by people with lower income, creating a shift in the culture and economy of the neighborhood or community. Gentrification is a double-edged sword: On one hand, it can bring needed services and business to underserved neighborhoods such as grocery stores, banks, and other businesses, and often it has been shown to create jobs and improve safety in that community. On the other hand, it can cause rent and property value to rise dramatically so that low-income residents cannot afford to live in their own neighborhood anymore;¹²⁰ residents may be forced to move out to areas far from their jobs and social networks.

Gentrification can also cause landlords to remove their housing stock from the “Section 8” public subsidized housing pool, so the units can be sold as condominiums, reducing the availability of affordable housing units for low-income people. According to the D.C. Housing Monitor, the availability of “Section 8” housing units in the District fell 15 percent from 2000 to 2007, resulting in fewer affordable housing options for struggling families and individuals.¹²¹



Source: NeighborhoodInfoDC, *Loss of Active Section 8 Multi-Family Housing in D.C.: Preservation Summary, Winter 2008* (Washington, D.C.: District of Columbia Housing Monitor, 2008)

A decrease in publicly subsidized housing – at a time of increased demand – is being felt in other communities around the country as well. In August 2010, a suburb of Atlanta passed out 13,000 applications for only 655 available spaces (200 for public housing units, the rest for vouchers for Section 8 housing). Experts credited the economic crisis and Atlanta’s gentrification with creating a crowd of approximately 30,000 people attempting to get on the waiting list for housing.¹²² The Low Income Housing Coalition of Alabama has said that the state has an estimated shortage of 44,000 affordable and available housing units.¹²³ And according to Linda Couch, senior vice president for policy at the National Low Income Housing Coalition, “It is common in large cities and in medium-sized cities for the waiting list [for subsidized housing] to be six to 10 years long.”¹²⁴

Another consequence of gentrification and people being priced out of their neighborhoods is access to transportation, which people rely on for jobs, school and services. Access to public transportation is crucial for residents, their families, and their communities to be successful and healthy. The neighborhoods that have public transit are more desirable locations and are targets for urban development projects; they are therefore becoming more expensive and sometimes out of reach for people with less income, who stand to benefit most by the availability of public transit.¹²⁵

“It is common in large cities and in medium-sized cities for the waiting list [for subsidized housing] to be six to 10 years long.”—National Low Income Housing Coalition¹

For many families, household budgets are stretched incredibly thin, as funds for expenses like food, health care, and transportation become increasingly limited. Unaffordable housing has a devastating impact on youth as families struggle to provide basic necessities; a recent report found that children living in unaffordable housing are more likely to not have access to enough healthy food and be seriously underweight than children living in subsidized housing.¹²⁶

Housing Heroes: Forward-thinking housing organizations

Some cities have organizations working on finding ways to reduce homelessness in their communities and increase access to affordable housing while revitalizing communities.

Since 1973, **Jubilee Housing**, a faith-based, privately funded non-profit organization, has provided housing and supportive services to disadvantaged community members in D.C. Currently, the organization serves 700 people among seven different properties in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Ward 1. Their comprehensive supportive services include positive youth development, health education, community building, economic empowerment, and leadership training. For more information, please visit www.jubileehousing.org.

The **Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation** in the Bronx, New York City builds quality, affordable, energy-saving housing for low-income women and families. Their innovative and holistic service model won the 2000 Opportunity and Empowerment Award by the American Planning Association and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. For more information, please visit www.whedco.org.

The **Corporation for Supportive Housing** (CSH) in New York strives to end homelessness by creating permanent housing with supportive services. CSH provides development expertise, makes loans and grants to supportive housing sponsors, and works to reform public policy affecting housing. Since 1991, CSH has helped about 28,900 formerly homeless adults and children move into supportive housing and assisted in the development of about 41,600 new units of supportive housing. In 2002, CSH set a goal to work in partnership with other housing organizations to help communities provide 150,000 units of housing by 2012. As of 2009, CSH had achieved about 70 percent of their goal. CSH's work has twice been recognized through the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award from the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. For more information, please visit www.csh.org.

The **Housing Consortium of the East Bay** (HCEB) in Oakland, California provides affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities. HCEB works in three ways to provide housing: first, HCEB works with non-profit housing developers to build affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities; secondly, HCEB works with local housing developers and public agencies to set aside units for people with developmental disabilities, which allows them to live affordably while being integrated into the community; and finally, HCEB helps local housing authorities in obtaining Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers for people with developmental disabilities. These vouchers allow people to choose their housing and live affordably and independently. For more information, please visit www.hceb.org.

Reducing homelessness can reduce incarceration.

In January 2009 there were 643,067 people in the U.S. counted as homeless on a single night; 62.7 percent were in shelters, while the rest were unsheltered — sleeping on the streets, in their cars, in abandoned buildings, or in other places not meant for human habitation.¹²⁷ Because of undercounting, experts estimate the actual number of people experiencing homelessness is higher — closer to 672,000.¹²⁸ Over two-thirds of homeless people are in cities.¹²⁹

Though unemployment has increased and more families struggle financially in recent years, fewer resources are available to help people find quality, affordable housing. This contributes to a rise in poverty and homelessness, as individuals and families are forced out of their homes and into shelters or onto the streets. Across the country, homelessness is a growing problem; nineteen of 25 major cities reported an average increase of 12 percent in homelessness in 2008.¹³⁰ And people of color are most likely to be homeless; about 59 percent of the sheltered homeless population and 55 percent of the poverty population are people of color, compared with only 31 percent of the total U.S. population. African Americans constitute 12 percent of the total U.S. population but 45 percent of people who are homeless.¹³¹

“Homelessness and poverty is an issue for youth in D.C. Youth are vulnerable to homelessness or running away if their parents are not able to pay rent for any number of reasons. The young person may feel that by leaving home, he will be less of a burden to his struggling family or the youth gets a (false) sense of security and support from their peers. Some youth have parents who are abusing drugs and sell the families’ food stamps to support their habit. The youth may then hustle for food, eat only at school, or eat at other people’s house.” —Cecilia Thomas, Roving Leaders Program for Teens, Washington, D.C.

D.C. has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the country: estimates of the homeless population range from 12,000 to 17,800 over the course of a year.¹³² A report by the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the Homelessness Research Institute reported that in 2007 D.C. had a homelessness rate of about 96 per 10,000 people, or about one in every 100 people.¹³³ Forty-seven percent of homeless people in D.C. are “chronically homeless,” meaning they lived either in shelters or on the streets for more than a year. Families represent over 30 percent of D.C.’s homeless population; more than 2,000 homeless families seek shelter in D.C. over the course of a year and D.C. has more than 2,000 homeless children and youth.¹³⁴ The number of homeless people in D.C. has risen by almost 7 percent since 2005, but the city is nowhere near able to provide even temporary assistance to people in need of shelter.¹³⁵ In 2004, there were only 8,875 publicly and privately funded beds in DC, leaving half of the people without homes also without emergency assistance.¹³⁶ Nationally, there are reported to be 424,042 beds available for people who are currently homeless, about a third fewer than are needed.¹³⁷

Particularly concerning is the rise in homelessness among children and youth across the country. More than 780,000 U.S. students were homeless during the 2007-2008 school year, representing a 15 percent increase from the previous year.¹³⁸ Youth who are homeless face extreme challenges finding food and a

safe place to sleep. They are vulnerable to violence and exploitation and face academic challenges or may drop out. Not only does homelessness contribute to underachievement in schools and malnourishment, but these factors can increase a youth's chances of involvement in the juvenile justice system. Frequently, youth who were homeless prior to their incarceration will return to the streets once released, where survival often means participation in the city's informal and often illicit economy. And housing discrimination against people with previous criminal justice involvement leaves many people without access to quality housing and can increase a person's likelihood of returning to the criminal justice system.

Criminalizing homelessness reinforces poverty and homelessness.

Enforcement of certain public ordinance laws like those against loitering and panhandling that disproportionately impact people who are homeless have led to the "criminalization of homelessness." People who are homeless are perhaps the most likely to bear the burden of "zero tolerance" in cities. Most states have implemented laws specifically directed toward the punishment of people who are homeless, as they seek to "push out" this population to another jurisdiction, and this can result in more people being admitted to jails. The National Coalition for the Homeless and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty issued a report in 2006 that surveyed 224 cities around the country on their laws involving the criminalization of homelessness.¹³⁹ This report found that city ordinances frequently serve as a prominent tool to criminalize homelessness through "quality of life" crimes and that these laws are increasing.

- 28 percent of cities surveyed prohibit "camping" in particular public places in the city and 16 percent have citywide prohibitions on "camping"
- 27 percent prohibit sitting/lying in certain public places
- 39 percent prohibit loitering in particular public areas and 16 percent prohibit loitering citywide
- 43 percent prohibit begging in particular public places; 45 percent prohibit "aggressive panhandling" and 21 percent have citywide prohibition on begging.

Punishment for violating these laws can result in steep fines or incarceration: about half of people who have experienced homelessness have also spent five or more days in a city or county jail.¹⁴⁰ About 16 percent of incarcerated people had experienced homelessness prior to arrest,¹⁴¹ and most of these people are significantly more likely to have both a mental illness and a substance addiction, which frequently go untreated in the community.¹⁴²

Imprisoning people for being homeless or living in poverty is a failed policy on a number of levels. Perhaps most fundamentally, the practice serves to reinforce poverty and homelessness. Imprisoning a person cuts that person off from employment opportunities, community treatment options, family, community, and other support systems. Employers are less likely to hire someone who has been convicted of a crime,¹⁴³ thus, imprisoning an individual for not conforming to society's expectations concerning employment and material success virtually guarantees a return to poverty and a life on the

street. And forcing people without homes to hide far from the eyes of police can be a risk to their own safety.

Finding housing is particularly difficult for people returning from jail or prison. Federal laws require local housing agencies to permanently bar individuals convicted of certain sex offenses and methamphetamine production on public housing premises. The federal laws also give local public housing agencies discretion to deny eligibility to virtually anyone with a prior arrest or conviction on their record,¹⁴⁴ and prohibit them from participating in federally assisted housing programs like Housing Choice Vouchers.¹⁴⁵ Private landlords are permitted to discriminate against someone with a prior arrest or conviction, and people frequently have to rely on the limited options of staying with friends or family or finding a shelter.

The D.C. Housing Authority's (DCHA) regulations indicate tenants may be screened by "reviewing police reports and/or criminal background checks of each member of the applicant family, including juveniles," and may consider in the application process the "conviction of any applicant family member for a crime involving physical violence against persons or property or other criminal convictions that may adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of other DCHA residents, staff, or other members of the community." It goes on to state that:

DCHA may deny admission to public or assisted housing to any applicant: (1) If any adult member of the applicant's family (or any non-adult member who has been convicted of a crime as an adult offender) has been convicted of a felony, or a misdemeanor involving destruction of property or acts of violence against another person; or (2) If the applicant or a member of the applicant's family has participated in documented violent criminal behavior for which he or she has not been convicted.¹⁴⁶

In this way, entire families can be denied housing or made homeless based on arrests that were not prosecuted or allegations against a family member that were unable to stand up in a court of law.

Recommendations:

Increased access and funding for affordable and supportive housing would not only result in less costs incurred by jail stays, but would also greatly increase the quality of life of many people struggling with homelessness, including children and youth, who are particularly affected by lack of housing. Not only would increased housing options for low-income people increase public safety, it would provide individuals and families with the foundation needed to be able to flourish as students, parents, employees, and community members.

Providing supportive or affordable housing can be cost-effective as well. The National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates that each homeless person costs about \$14,480, mainly due to the cost of overnight jail time.¹⁴⁷ A 2004 comparative study of nine different cities found that jail costs were two to three times higher than permanent supportive housing or shelter costs.¹⁴⁸ The study compared the cost of one overnight stay for one person in permanent supportive housing, jail, prison, a shelter, a mental hospital, and a general hospital. In Boston, for example, the cost of housing one person for one night in

permanent supportive housing was about \$33, compared to jail or prison costs at about \$92 and \$117 per night, respectively.¹⁴⁹ A study in Portland, Maine found that when people lived in permanent supportive housing, there was an associated 62 percent decrease in jail nights, representing a reduction in costs of \$38,261.¹⁵⁰

- 1) Increase availability of housing vouchers.** Housing vouchers help people with less income find adequate housing and helps to reduce homelessness. Increasing the number of housing vouchers available to people of lower-income would improve access to housing and reduce the likelihood of homelessness.
- 2) Increase incentives for property owners to participate in Section 8 housing programs.** With the gentrification occurring in many cities across the country, people of lower-income and those who rely on Section 8 housing are being pushed out of certain neighborhoods due to the lack of available units that fall into this category. Creating incentives for providing these units will give people more options for where to live.
- 3) Provide supportive housing for people transitioning out of prison or jail.** People leaving incarceration face a number of challenges, one of which is finding housing. As a result, many people are forced into homelessness. Assisting people in finding affordable or transitional housing options once they are released will help them get back on their feet and reduce incidence of re-incarceration.
- 4) Change policies that discriminate against people with prior arrests or convictions.** People with prior arrests or convictions face significant discrimination in housing, both by law and by individual property owners. Reducing these barriers to housing would help people to succeed in their community, reduce their risk of re-arrest or re-incarceration, and improve public safety for the whole community.
- 5) Change policing practices that arrest people for quality of life offenses that may be related to homelessness.** Many jails and prisons across the country are de facto homes for people who are homeless. The criminalization of homelessness has led to high re-arrest rates of people who commit quality of life offenses like loitering and sleeping on park benches. Instead of arresting people for these offenses, we should focus resources on helping people to find housing to reduce homelessness.

Increasing investments in education will reduce incarceration rates, improve public safety, and promote community well-being.

Education can play a critical role in determining life outcomes. Research shows that education has the potential to augment access to employment and desired job markets, and increase monetary return to the individual and the community, ostensibly creating a context where public safety is better realized.¹⁵¹ And likelihood of criminal justice involvement decreases as education attainment increases.¹⁵² A study by the Economic Policy Institute of early childhood development programs found that as adults, children who received a high-quality kindergarten experienced higher employment rates and earnings, lower rates of drug use, fewer interactions with the criminal justice system, and lower incarceration rates.¹⁵³

States with higher high school graduation rates and college enrollment have lower crime rates than states with lower educational attainment levels.¹⁵⁴ An Alliance for Excellence in Education report found that a 5 percent increase in male graduation rates could yield over \$7 billion in benefits to the U.S. annually in terms of reduced crime and increased earnings;¹⁵⁵ in D.C., this would amount to \$69 million.

Despite evidence of its benefits, nationally spending on education by states has not grown at the same rate as corrections spending and many young people are not receiving adequate education to be competitive in the job market. In Florida, for example, the Legislature cut the state education budget by \$332 million in 2008, while increasing the corrections budget by \$308 million; this is despite the fact that Florida ranks last among states on per-capita-spending on K-12 education. Florida now also spends more tax dollars on corrections than it does on the state university system – \$2.4 billion for prisons in the current fiscal year vs. \$2.2 billion for universities (excluding student tuition).¹⁵⁶

The District of Columbia is among the states with the highest percentages of high-poverty elementary schools in 2007–08, with 37 percent of its schools where 76 – 100 percent of students were eligible for free lunch; the other states were Mississippi (53 percent), Louisiana (52 percent), and New Mexico (46 percent). In total, D.C. has the highest percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch—68.9 percent—of any state in the country,¹⁵⁷ indicating a high number of low-income students, as well as the likelihood that a significant number of affluent parents have left the public school system. On average, students from high-poverty schools did not perform as well on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading, mathematics, music, and art assessments as students from low-poverty schools.¹⁵⁸

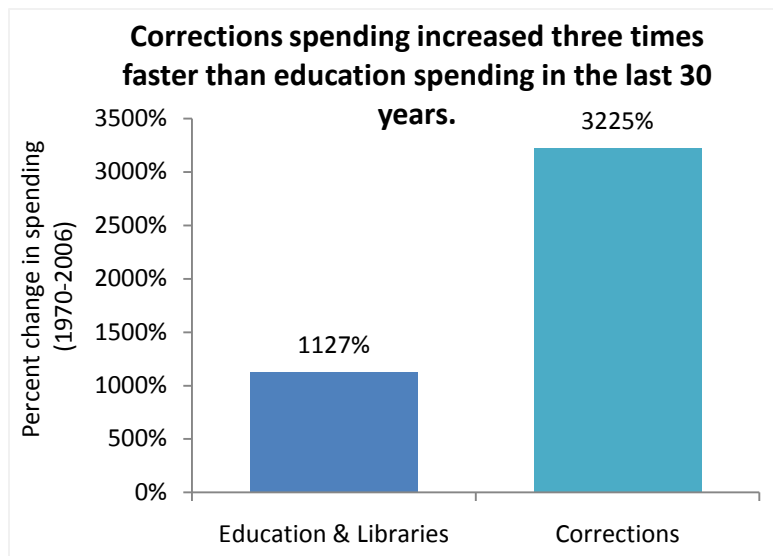
In D.C., Wards 1, 7, and 8 have with the lowest graduation rates as well as the highest crimes rates and lowest unemployment rates in the city.¹⁵⁹ Investing in education to improve graduation rates can be an effective strategy for improving public safety and life outcomes for youth, especially youth who come from lower-income communities.

	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8	All D.C.
% graduated High School	68%	87%	96%	78%	72%	79%	71%	66%	78%
% graduated College	39%	64%	79%	33%	21%	44%	13%	8%	39%
Violent Crime (per 1000 pop.)-2007	17	13	1.7	12	17	16	16	22	14
Unemployment-2009	10.1%	5.8%	3.2%	9.6%	15.5%	11.5%	19.5%	28.3%	14.4%

Source: Neighborhood Info D.C., "Neighborhood Profiles: Council Wards"; Department of Employment Services, "Ward Unemployment Rates," Accessed May 2010.

In 2006, the U.S. spent approximately \$214 billion policing, processing, and imprisoning its people.¹⁶⁰ In the past 20 years, spending on corrections has grown at a faster rate than every other state budget category except Medicaid.¹⁶¹ From 1988 to 2008, state spending on corrections increased 333 percent, up to \$52 billion,¹⁶² and overall corrections spending went up 239 percent from 1988 to 2006, to \$69 billion (the most recent year available).¹⁶³ While education and libraries went down as a percentage of state and local budgets, corrections' share of these budgets more than doubled; funding for corrections has increased almost three times as fast as education in the last 30 years.¹⁶⁴

Trends toward increasing spending on corrections illustrate a national prioritization of policing and incarceration over providing quality public education for all children. The focus on incarceration as the solution to public safety challenges is short sighted; a dedication to providing quality education for children would provide not only significant public safety benefits, but would also provide a better-prepared population that could more significantly contribute to the growth of the economy.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, "Digest of Education Statistics, Table 28," July 8, 2008.

With the emphasis on law enforcement over education, it is no surprise that according to the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy Prison Survey, 37 percent of people in U.S. prisons had not finished high school. Only 4 out of 10 (41 percent) had a high school education or GED equivalent; 74 percent had parents who had a high school education or less; and 26 percent had parents who did not finish high school.¹⁶⁵ In D.C., the levels of education among people incarcerated are comparable to national levels: about 50 percent of men in Department of Corrections

custody have completed high school or obtained a GED and close to 37 percent self-report having no education.¹⁶⁶ The correlation between low levels of education and incarceration suggests that having an education is an important factor affecting the ability to be successful in life.

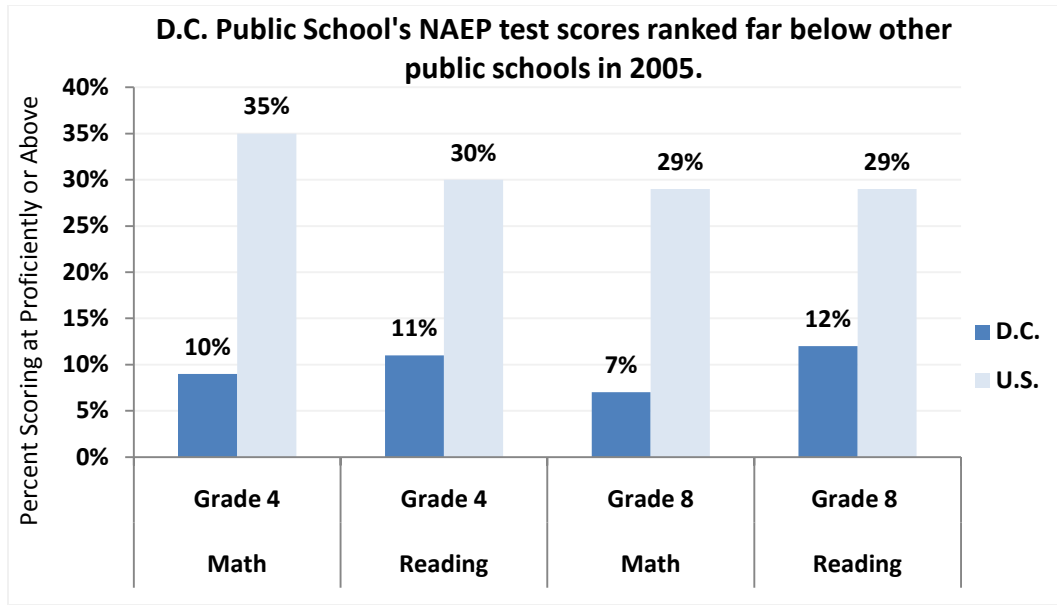
While quality education is an oft-discussed goal, too many children are being hurt by failing education systems. And it is often children from low-income communities and communities of color who are harmed the most. Without the quality education they deserve, these children may be less likely to fulfill their academic potential and more likely to fall through the cracks into the justice system. In addition, the increasing presence of police officers (“school resource officers”) in schools and referrals to the courts by schools results in more youth, especially youth who are poor, or those with learning disabilities, and youth of color, involved in the justice system. Ensuring adequate resources to promote education and using effective strategies for managing challenges like truancy without the use of the justice system will result in healthier, more successful youth.

Quality education is necessary for improving the life outcomes of youth.

Despite being one of the wealthiest countries in the world, U.S. students lag in math and science test scores compared to students in other industrialized countries.¹⁶⁷ In 2006, the average science score of U.S. students was below those in 16 of 30 of the world's richest countries, and U.S. students were further behind in math, trailing peers in 23 countries.¹⁶⁸ The poor state of education in the U.S. is particularly evident in D.C.; within the same 68.3 square miles, D.C. is the home of the most powerful political offices in the country as well as one of the worst public school systems. The D.C. Public School system (DCPS) consists of 129 schools and is responsible for the education of about 46,000 students, about 93 percent of whom are students of color and 19 percent are in need of special education.¹⁶⁹

While D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) has seen improvements in test scores over the last few years,¹⁷⁰ D.C. students' scores are still 20 points lower than the national average,¹⁷¹ and the graduation rate for DCPS students was 61.1 percent compared to 69.4 percent nationally.¹⁷² DCPS has the fourth highest dropout rate in the country.¹⁷³

Certainly, test scores are not the only marker of the quality of a child's education. That being said, however, DCPS ranked last in the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) proficiency, with only 9.8 percent of 4th and 8th graders scoring proficiently or above in math and reading; the national average was about 31 percent.¹⁷⁴ Even on the test called the Trial Urban District Assessment, a NAEP given to a sample of students in urban districts, which is considered a fairer snapshot of urban districts' academic achievement, D.C. schools did not fare well; compared to other large, urban school districts, DCPS was still 7 points below the average.¹⁷⁵



Source: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, *Quality Counts at 10: A Decade of Standards-Based Education* (Bethesda, MD: Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2006).

The gap between the academic achievement of D.C. students and students in the rest of the country is more apparent in certain wards in the District, especially when comparing the racial and income make-up of the neighborhoods. For example, the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) assesses students on reading and math in grades 3-8 and 10. Data from DC CAS shows that:

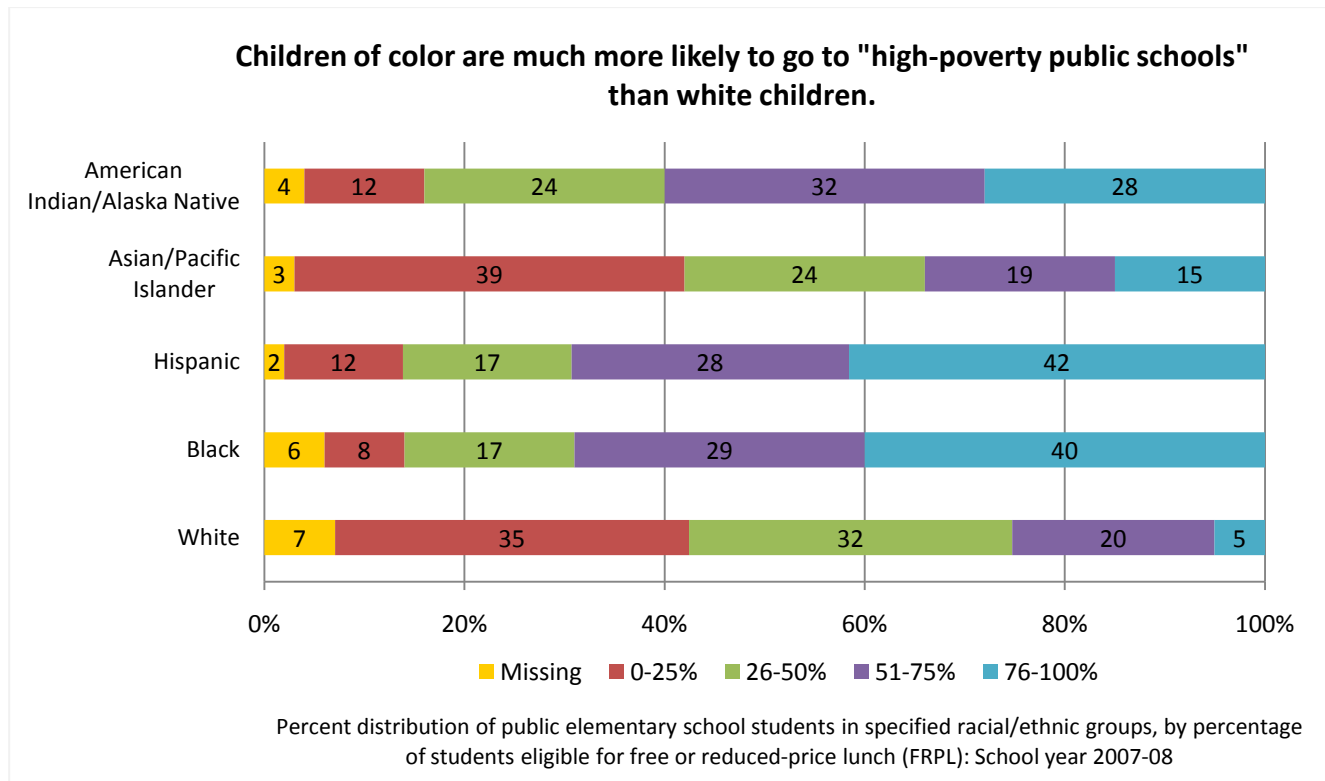
- 69 percent of youth in the District were below 50 percent reading proficiency in 2009, but 91 percent of youth in wards 7 and 8 were below 50 percent;
- 65 percent of youth in the District were below 50 percent math proficiency in 2009, but 93 percent of youth in wards 7 and 8 were below 50 percent.¹⁷⁶

These numbers indicate a discrepancy between educational achievement in certain areas of the city coinciding with income disparities; Wards 7 and 8 have the lowest median income and also the highest number of people of color. The two wards also have the lowest high school and college graduation rates in the city. These trends are not unique to D.C., but are symptomatic of most high-poverty urban schools, which are generally in communities that are largely made up of people of color.

	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8	All D.C.
Percent of schools with over half of students testing below proficient in math	60%	50%	0%	40%	71%	63%	91%	96%	65%
Percent of schools with over half of students testing below proficient in reading	70%	50%	0%	53%	77%	69%	91%	91%	69%
% People of Color-2000	75%	39%	20%	85%	92.6%	70%	98.8%	94.9%	72%
Median Household Income-1999	\$59,140	\$130,891	\$187,709	\$81,500	\$54,479	\$67,454	\$45,039	\$35,228	\$78,192

Source: HellaBelHadj Amor, Ph.D. (Resident Research Fellow, District of Columbia Public Schools, Office of Data and Accountability), email message to author, July 14, 2010.

Recent research by the Southern Education Foundation found a strong correlation between children living in extreme poverty and lower scores on state standardized tests.¹⁷⁷ And in a special report on schools and poverty, the National Center on Education Statistics found that children of color are far more likely to attend “high-poverty public schools” than white children, as indicated by the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.¹⁷⁸



Source: U.S. Department of Education, *The Condition of Education 2010: Special Analysis, High Poverty Schools* (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, May 2010.)

Focusing school resources on areas with the lowest income or highest poverty rates can help youth in these areas succeed and have a chance at a better future. Increasing the quality of education for all U.S. children, especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, can result in significant improvements in public safety as more youth succeed academically, fulfill their potential, and give back to their communities.

Special education suffers when schools are not adequately funded.

A disproportionate number of children with learning disabilities and emotional or behavioral disorders are involved in the juvenile justice system. One study found that students with emotional disturbances are three times as likely to be arrested before leaving school; 85 percent of youth in juvenile detention facilities have disabilities, but only 37 percent had been receiving any kind of support services in school.¹⁷⁹ A 2005 study found that about one third of youth in education services in juvenile corrections were receiving special education.¹⁸⁰

Investing in special education and resources for children who have with special needs will improve these children's chances of succeeding academically and socially as well as helping them avoid contact with the juvenile justice system. Lack of services and resources for students, whether they are in need of special education or counseling, contributes to increased problems in school, including truancy, decreased academic achievement, and sometimes involvement in the juvenile justice system.

D.C. Public Schools allocated about 12 percent (\$96 million) of its 2009 budget for local special education needs,¹⁸¹ but due to lack of teacher training and support staff, DCPS is still not able to provide the necessary services for students needing special education.¹⁸² Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, public school systems are required to provide appropriate services for students or pay for students to go to private schools to obtain appropriate services. Frequently, families in the District are forced to enroll their children in specialized private schools where they receive better services but are more isolated and must travel outside of their communities. About 20 percent of D.C. children in special education are enrolled at a private institution, costing about \$200 million per year.¹⁸³ In 2006, there were more than 2,500 D.C. students waiting for the special education services they needed, up from only 300 in 2001.¹⁸⁴ In 2008, despite a court order demanding that DCPS improve services, 1,000 students still had not received services.¹⁸⁵

D.C. is not alone in underfunding for special education; a 2009 study of Pennsylvania schools found that 391 of the state's 501 school districts are spending less than a basic adequacy level on special education. Combined, that amounts to a shortfall of \$380 million annually or \$1,947 per student.¹⁸⁶ Currently, the Washington Supreme Court is deliberating on a lawsuit brought by parents and advocates regarding potential underfunding of that state's special education programs.¹⁸⁷

Investing in out-of-school activities can create positive opportunities for youth.

Youth also need constructive activities during after-school hours that foster positive development. Studies show that youth who participate in after-school activities are less likely to engage in certain risky behaviors and are more likely to have higher levels of academic achievement and self-esteem than

youth who do not.¹⁸⁸ Most crime committed by youth occurs during the after-school hours between 3 pm and 6 pm,¹⁸⁹ and illegal behaviors tend to increase during the summer when youth are out of school and do not have as many scheduled activities. Finding appropriate and engaging activities for youth during these times, including after-school programs and employment, can reduce the chances that a young person will engage in illegal activities that lead to justice involvement and the negative consequences that result.

“Incarceration should not be considered a viable life option for these kids, but it is.” —Carolyn Dallas, Time Dollar Youth Courts¹

Evidence suggests that youth who are considered “high-risk” benefit the most from after-school programs,¹⁹⁰ and targeting programs for youth from lower-income families can have an even greater impact, as otherwise these youth are less likely to participate in positive activities.¹⁹¹ Especially during the summer months, children from lower-income families may not have the same opportunities to improve their skills that middle and upper-income children do. The gap in summer learning can impact a child’s success in the future, including whether they earn a high school degree or go to college, or whether they become involved in the justice system.¹⁹²

Youth that come from lower-income families may face various obstacles to participating in after-school programs. Many times their families do not have the resources to pay for after-school programs or sports; sometimes just the cost of transportation can be a challenge for youth to get to after-school programming.¹⁹³ Youth may not feel comfortable participating because the program may be in a neighborhood that is considered “enemy turf,” an issue that is very real for D.C. youth.¹⁹⁴ These turf wars sometimes make it difficult for youth to travel outside of their neighborhood due to the fear of entering rival territory.

Youth development programs are especially critical for children who have a parent in prison. In 2007, about 1.7 million children under age 18 had a parent in prison; 70 percent were children of color.¹⁹⁵ Most families face an increased financial burden when a parent is incarcerated, making it difficult for youth to access programming and services like after-school activities. Children of incarcerated parents frequently face a higher risk of being involved in the criminal justice system themselves. As many children undergo emotional trauma if a parent is incarcerated, and face social and institutionalized stigma and shame,¹⁹⁶ it is important to reach out to these children and provide positive activities and supports to make sure that they do not become involved in the justice system.

Carolyn Dallas, Time Dollar Youth Courts¹⁹⁷

Carolyn Dallas is the executive director of Time Dollar Youth Courts (TDYC), a D.C.-based organization that provides alternative sentencing for youth who are arrested for first-time, nonviolent offenses. In the youth court, a young person goes before a jury of his or her peers and is given an alternative sentence, ranging from serving as a juror, performing community service, writing an apology letter, or attending various counseling or therapy programs. Youth avoid formal processing within the juvenile justice system and are given an opportunity to give back to their community. Those serving as jurors gain community service hours, experience empowerment, and learn about the legal system. In an interview with this report's author, Ms. Dallas shared these thoughts:

Time Dollar Youth Court serves about 1,000 youth per year, ages 13-18. Most (95-98 percent) are African American and come from some of the poorest neighborhoods in D.C., which are often overcrowded and racially segregated. There is a very strong "ward identity" in D.C.; many youth do not leave their wards, which contributes to isolation as well as tensions between youth from different wards. Time Dollar Youth Courts is an opportunity for teens to meet other teens from different parts of the city. They are not allowed to "beef" at Youth Court and learn how to work together to better help their communities.

In addition, many TDYC participants come from low and moderate income families with single females as the head of household. The youth struggle with school issues such as bullying, school safety, and truancy. Other issues include substance abuse, trauma in their lives, and low self-esteem. The staff at TDYC witnesses the constellation of challenges that youth and families face every day and try to make appropriate referrals to other collaborative and community-based organizations. They recognize that increased access supportive programs, as well as social and economic resources are vital for youth to have successful life outcomes and become productive members of the community.

For more information on the Time Dollar Youth Courts, please visit www.tdyc.org

Various youth development programs and after-school programs in cities across the country have found that after the instatement of the program, youth involvement in illegal activities dropped significantly.

- When Baltimore founded its Police Athletic League, in which 4,000 youths were involved, youth crime dropped by 33 percent in just one year.¹⁹⁸
- In Phoenix, when recreation centers decided to stay open later in the summer months, the city found that youth crime dropped 55 percent.¹⁹⁹
- Children and teens who have a mentor through the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program are 46 percent less likely to begin using drugs and 52 percent less likely to skip school.²⁰⁰

Eduardo Ferrer, D.C. Lawyers for Youth²⁰¹

Eduardo Ferrer is the Chief Operating Officer of D.C. Lawyers for Youth (DCLY). DCLY believes that proactive measures that promote a youth's success are more effective than reactive, punitive policies. In addition to supporting effective juvenile justice legislation, DCLY also conducts educational outreach to youth and parents. DCLY works to improve the juvenile justice system by focusing on prevention, legal representation, and rehabilitation for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. In an interview with this report's author, Mr. Ferrer shared these thoughts:

D.C.'s negative perception of D.C. youth contributes to over-policing and disproportionate minority contact. While public safety is a commonly held goal in the city, there are varied perspectives on how to achieve this goal. The perception of kids in D.C. is heavily influenced by the media, which youth advocates believe tends to "hype up" stories of youths involved in crime. There is an image of "packs of unruly young kids" roaming the streets. In reality, youth really have too few places to go to do constructive activities or hang out. Of course, the "juvenile problem" almost always refers to low-income youth of color; law enforcement efforts are primarily focused on communities of color, resulting in few to no white youth involved in the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services.

Policing in schools is one reason that youth of color are disproportionately represented in the juvenile justice system. Local schools with more white students typically use in-school action to handle certain behaviors whereas in low-income, heavily African American areas of D.C., schools turn to the police much more quickly if there are problems. One student was arrested for being in a food fight and charged with felony assault with a deadly weapon (missile) for throwing a pear. One reason schools turn to the juvenile justice system as a first resort is the lack of financial and staff resources to deal with problems of students "in-house." It is easier and less expensive for these schools to outsource to the police and juvenile justice system. The politics of "zero tolerance policies" make it so that policing schools is seen as making it a safer environment.

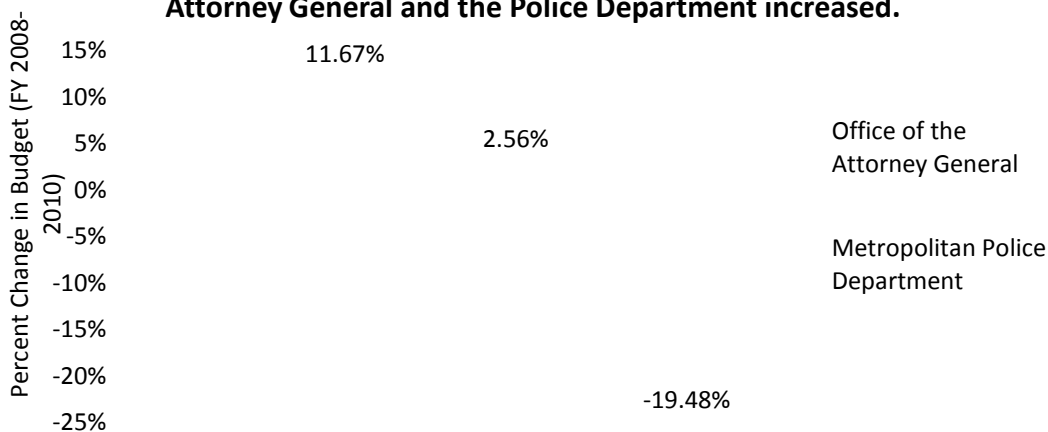
D.C. needs a different model for its public schools. The model should seek to provide more wrap-around services and opportunities for youth, including increased after-school tutoring and activities, in order to more closely approximate a "middle class" lifestyle for D.C.'s poor young people. Such an expanded model would help lessen the impact of the negative influences D.C. youth may be exposed to in their communities and will help build bridges for youth outside their community. They will be able to see that other paths are possible. It really is a battle for the hearts and minds of these young people. Many young men see jail as a part of life or a rite of passage. A buffer needs to be built against these environmental factors. Models like KIPP or SEED schools are good examples. KIPP schools are open to any student and the majority are students of color and come from low-income families.²⁰² The extended school days, high expectations, quality educators, strong leadership, and an emphasis on results in standardized testing help make the KIPP model successful. More than 85 percent of KIPP students are enrolled in college. Schools that focus on the strengths of students and their potential instead of on punishing them are critical to reducing the number of youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

For more information on D.C. Lawyers for Youth, please visit <http://www.dcly.org>

District Officials have chosen to cut funding for the Department of Parks and Recreation, which provides vital youth programming as well as maintains safe spaces for children to play.²⁰³ In the last two years, as the budgets for the Office of Attorney General and the police have ballooned, funding for the Department of Parks and Recreation has shriveled by almost 20 percent. Programs such as those that the Department of Parks and Recreation provide are especially valuable to children and teens whose families cannot afford private camps, classes, or after school programs. Increased funding for youth programs would increase public safety and provide youth with safe, positive activities that enrich their lives.

“It really is a battle for the hearts and minds of these young people. Many young men see jail as a part of life or a rite of passage.”—Eduardo Ferrer, D.C. Lawyers for Youth¹

The budget for D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation fell by almost 20 percent in the past 2 years while the budgets for the Attorney General and the Police Department increased.



Source: Track D.C., “Office of the Attorney General,” <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/CB0>; Track D.C., Metropolitan Police Department,” <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/FA0>; Track D.C., “DPR,” <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/HA0>

Across the country, residents are being forced to defend the value of Parks and Recreation. In Dallas, where the per person expenditure on these resources has fallen to \$37 per person, Dallas residents packed a town hall meeting in August 2010 to protest any more cuts to parks and recreation.²⁰⁴ In Baltimore, Maryland, FY2011 budget cuts to recreation included a 33 percent cut to Recreation Centers and a 59 percent cut to sports programs;²⁰⁵ a 57 percent cut to aquatics temporarily closed Baltimore’s swimming pools in the middle of the August 2010 heat-wave, until public outcry and over \$600,000 in private donations helped re-open them.²⁰⁶

Recommendations:

Education and positive youth development are protective factors against future illegal behavior and incarceration; investments in keeping youth engaged in quality education are some of the most important ways we can spend our money. Investing in education and youth programming will reduce

incarceration rates, improve public safety, save money in the long-run and promote community well-being.

- 1) **Improve access to quality education for all children.** Education is one of the most important investments that can be made in a child, as it opens doors to the future. All youth, regardless of race or income-level should be afforded a quality education.
- 2) **Invest in special education services for children who need it.** Youth with special education needs may be more likely to end up in the justice system. Providing early education specifically tailored to these youth can help improve graduation rates and the likelihood of success later in life.
- 3) **Invest in after school and recreational programs for youth.** As the majority of youth offenses occur in the off-school hours, providing constructive activities for youth during this time will improve the safety of youth and of communities and provide youth the opportunity to expand their horizons with different activities, including sports, the arts and other extra-curriculars.



True Reformer Building, Northwest Washington, D.C.

Increasing access to mental health and substance abuse treatment will reduce incarceration rates, improve public safety, and promote community well-being.

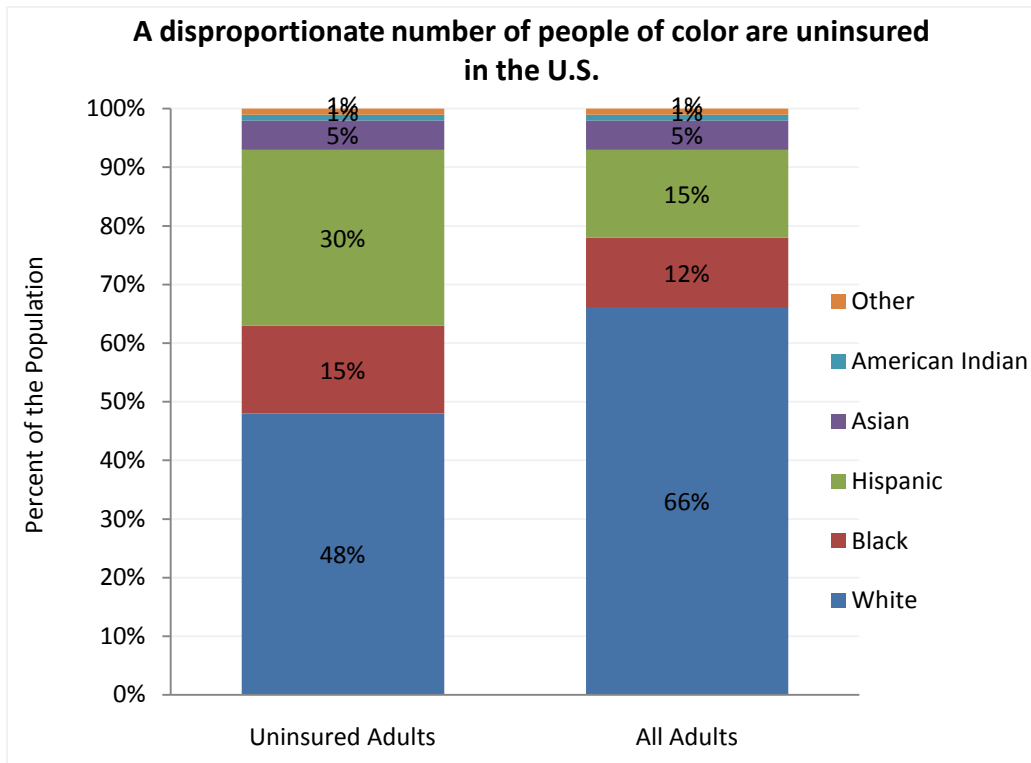
Access to regular, quality healthcare is critical in keeping individuals, families, and communities healthy and safe. Healthcare is particularly important for infants and children so they can develop properly and succeed academically and socially. While regular checkups are necessary as a preventative measure, so too are treatment options for people who need them. In particular, resources for people with mental illness or substance abuse issues are vital; with treatment, people can recover and lead productive, healthy lives, but without treatment, it can be difficult to provide for oneself and one's family, increasing the risk of poverty.

People with untreated mental illness may also be more likely to be involved in the justice system; over half of people in prisons and jails report mental illness of some kind, compared to 25 percent of the general population.²⁰⁷ And people who cannot access drug treatment in the community are more likely to be arrested on a drug-related offense. People entering prison have higher rates of chronic health, substance abuse, and mental health problems than the general population.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, without access to appropriate medical and mental health treatment while incarcerated or upon re-entry, a person may be more likely to end up back in prison.

While the importance of treatment is undeniable, it can be prohibitively expensive and inaccessible for those without quality insurance coverage. The high costs of health care can be a significant financial burden particularly when a family member has a chronic illness; families and individuals may be plunged deeper into poverty, or illness may go untreated, including mental health or substance abuse problems. Research has shown that socio-economic status impacts directly on rates of mental illness, as well as indirectly through the impact of economic hardship on low- and middle- income groups.²⁰⁹

In 2008, the Center for Disease Control reported that 43.6 million people were uninsured, including 20 percent of adults between the ages of 18 and 65.²¹⁰ While people of color made up 34 percent of the adult population in the U.S in 2008, 52 percent of all uninsured adults were people of color.²¹¹ More than 8 million children (one out of every 10) in the United States do not have any form of health insurance. The racial and ethnic disparities among uninsured children are striking: one in 13 white children is uninsured, compared to 1 in 5 American Indian children, 1 in 6 Latino children, 1 in 9 black children, and 1 in 9 Asian/Pacific Islander children.²¹²

In 2007-2008, 9.8 percent of D.C. residents were uninsured, down from 13 percent in 2000-2001.²¹³ While D.C. has one of the smallest uninsured populations in the country, this high level insurance is not equitably distributed; of D.C.'s 7,600 uninsured children and 48,600 uninsured adults, 80 percent were people of color, even though only 60 percent of the population of D.C. is made up of people of color.²¹⁴ In 2003, the Urban Institute found that African Americans were 2 ½ times more likely and Latinos were 8 times more likely than whites to be uninsured in the District. And while 19 percent of District residents lived in the Southeast quadrant in 2003, residents of the area represented 23 percent of the uninsured.²¹⁵



Source: The Kaiser Family Foundation, *Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2008*, <http://facts.kff.org/chart.aspx?cb=57&sctn=160&ch=1259>

The financial burden of healthcare costs tends to be highest for people of lower income, who are less likely to have insurance. And even with insurance, costs can still be a barrier to receiving needed care for those with lower incomes. Low-income families (those who make less than 100 percent of the federal poverty line) pay a disproportionately larger share of family income for total out-of-pocket health care expenditures than all other income groups. Families who make less than 100 percent of the federal poverty line put almost 30 percent of their income toward health care.²¹⁶ In contrast, families who make 400 percent or more of the federal poverty line spend only 6 percent of their income on health care. In 2003, 18.7 million people (almost 8 percent of the population) spent 20 percent of their family income on out-of-pocket healthcare expenses.²¹⁷

Cecilia Thomas, Roving Leaders Program for Teens²¹⁸

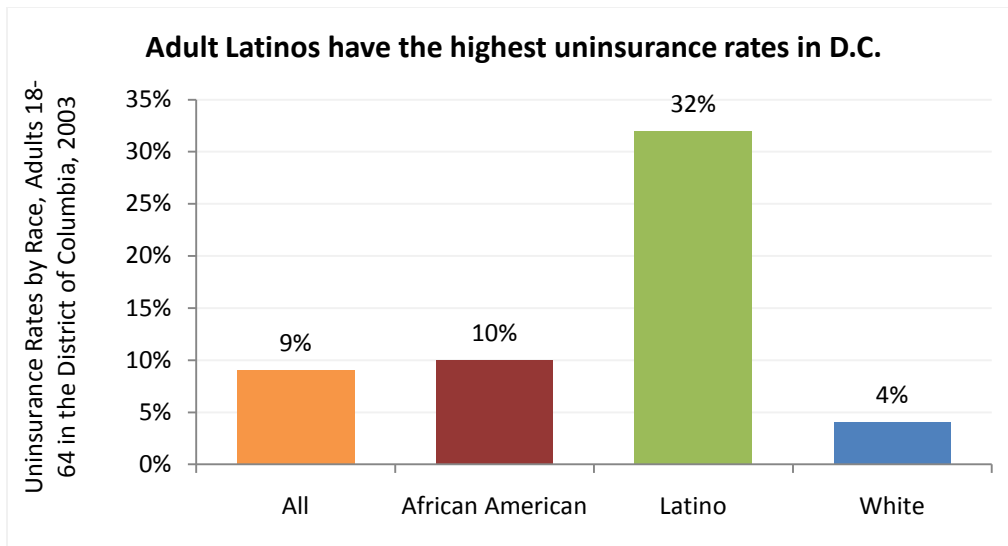
Cecilia Thomas is a Youth Outreach Coordinator at the Roving Leaders Program for Teens, an initiative of the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation. Through outreach efforts and planned social and recreational events, the staff builds positive long-term relationships with young people whom others may perceive as hard to reach. Many of the children they work with have untreated mental illness or learning disabilities, often leading them to the justice system. In an interview with this report's author, Ms. Thomas shared these thoughts:

The behavior that lands a youth with a referral to court may be a result of acting out because of an un-diagnosed learning disability or mental illness. Because mental health resources are scarce in schools and evaluations tend to happen in elementary and middle school, many youth slip through the cracks, especially if they are quiet or their issues are not outwardly visible. Even if schools identify issues in a child and recommend treatment, families may not take the advice to get their kids the help they need, or they may not be able to access appropriate treatment. Often, parents are reticent to admit that their child needs special education, due to the perceived stigma attached. The juvenile justice system frequently acts as a safety net in D.C.; in wealthier communities, families can generally afford treatment or rehabilitation for their children, but in certain areas of D.C., the only way a child can access treatment is through the juvenile justice system.

Many of the youth that the staff of the Roving Leaders Program works with struggle with mental health issues, as do their parents. Many also have substance abuse issues, but drug treatment services in D.C. are limited, and sometimes people must be referred by the justice system. The District does not have a drug treatment program for the youth.

Whether a youth is struggling with a learning disability, mental health issue, or is in need of counseling, it is more effective to find out why a youth is in trouble than to punish him. Sometimes teens who are arrested for truancy are avoiding school because they feel unsafe there. When working with youth, it soon becomes apparent that they often face a whole host of challenges; family drug abuse, financial difficulties, and trauma often contribute to a youth's wayward behavior. Increasing services for youth and their families will help build a stronger future for children.

For more information on the Roving Leaders Program for Teens, please visit http://app.dpr.dc.gov/DPR/services/community_service_programs.asp?id=4

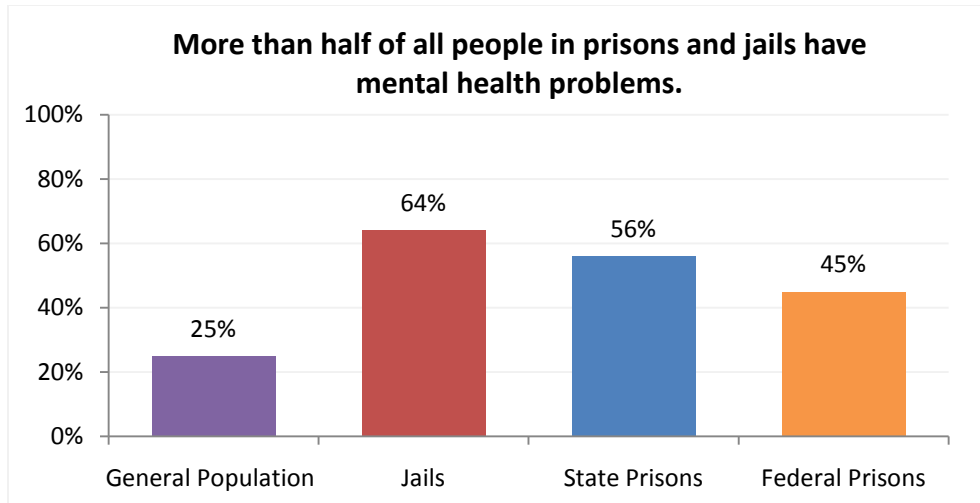


Source: Jennifer King and the State Planning Grant team, *Insurance and Uninsurance in the District of Columbia: Starting with the Numbers* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 2003)

Untreated mental illness can result in criminal justice involvement.

According to recent reports, more than 25 percent of adults in the United States have a diagnosable mental health disorder.²¹⁹ Studies show African Americans are just as much at risk for mental health disorders as their white counterparts, yet receive substantially less treatment. In 2005, African Americans were 7.3 times as likely to live in high poverty neighborhoods with limited or no access to mental health services,²²⁰ which may make them more likely to end up in the criminal justice system. Similarly, almost 20 percent of young people nationwide experience one or more mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders at any given time. Mental health care interventions, however, have been shown to successfully treat these disorders as well as reduce accompanying behaviors like aggression, high-risk sexual activity, and substance use. Participation in mental health treatment has also been shown to help improve self-esteem and academic performance in youth.²²¹

At midyear 2005, more than half of all people in prisons and jails in the U.S. had a mental health problem;²²² 56 percent of people in state prisons, 45 percent of people in federal prisons, and 64 percent of people in jails had a mental health problem. Close to three quarters of those with mental health problems in correctional facilities were also substance dependent and incarcerated women had higher rates of mental health problems than incarcerated men; almost three quarters of women in state prisons and jails had mental health problems.

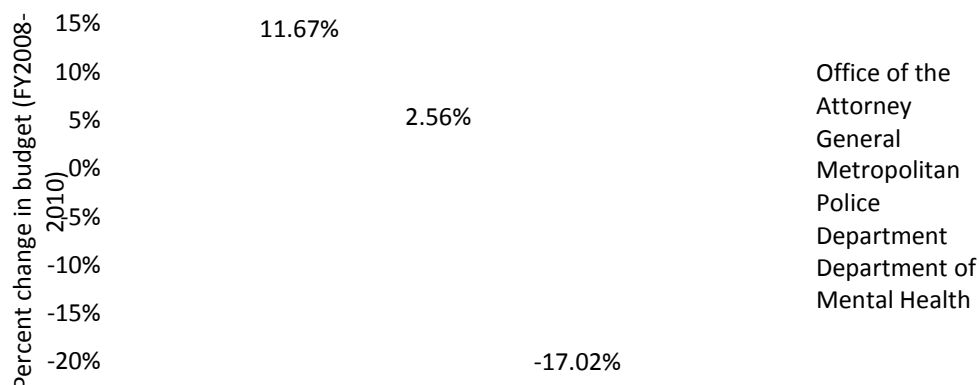


Source: Doris J. James and Lauren E. Glaze, *Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates* (Washington D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006).

Despite the clear need for mental health services, especially for low-income populations and at-risk children and teens, the budget for the D.C. Department of Mental Health has been severely reduced.²²³ While funding for police and the Attorney General’s office has increased, the Department of Mental Health has suffered a 17 percent cut from 2008 to 2010. Over 5,000 children in need of mental health treatment in D.C. do not receive it and only 1.2 percent of children enrolled in D.C. Medicaid access mental health services for moderate mental health needs.²²⁴ According to the D.C. Behavioral Health Association:

Nearly all of the D.C. children in need of mental health treatment qualify for Medicaid, and could have accessed these services paid by federal matching dollars, through D.C.’s Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). However, a 2007 D.C. Inspector General report found that the MCOs made \$97 million in excess profits, arising from their failure to deliver mental health services to D.C. residents that needed them.²²⁵

The budget for D.C. Department Mental Health fell by more than 17 percent in the past 2 years while the budgets for the Attorney General and the Police Department increased.



Source: Track D.C., “Office of the Attorney General,” <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/CB0>; Track D.C., “Metropolitan Police Department,” <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/FA0>; Track D.C., “DMH,” <http://track.dc.gov/Agency/RM0>

Mental health issues are even more prevalent in the juvenile justice population, where approximately 65 to 70 percent of youth in the criminal justice system have a diagnosable mental health disorder and 25 percent have disorders serious enough to require hospitalization.²²⁶ Recent reports indicate that many young people enter the juvenile justice system solely to access mental health care that is unavailable in the community. In 2001, more than 12,700 children with mental illnesses were placed in state custody because their families could not access treatment for them.²²⁷ About 70 percent (9,000) of these children entered state custody through the juvenile justice system.

Additionally, many children involved in the juvenile justice system have experienced trauma of some kind, such as sexual abuse, community violence, or maltreatment. Research shows that while up to 34 percent of children in the United States have experienced at least one traumatic event, between 75 and 93 percent of youth entering the juvenile justice system annually in this country are estimated to have experienced some degree of traumatic victimization.²²⁸ These experiences may increase risk of mental illness or emotional or behavioral disorders.²²⁹

Across the U.S., mental health budgets are being slashed due to the fiscal crisis. According to the National Association of State Mental Health Planning Divisions (NASMHPD), 92 percent of reporting states cut their mental health budgets in FY2010. Over half – 58 percent – had cut services for people with low incomes who were not eligible for Medicaid. This is at a time when almost three in five states reported an increase in demand for community mental health services, and 21 percent had an increased demand for crisis services.²³⁰

Investing in mental health treatment – or at least maintaining current funding will reduce incarceration for both adults and children, lead to more positive life outcomes, and save tax dollars in the long run. It is vital for both young people and adults to have access to counseling and mental health services in their communities, be it through schools or community-based clinics, especially because those who need it the most may not be able to afford private therapy or counseling. Addressing the needs of residents

with mental health issues and trauma-related emotional or behavioral disorders will increase public safety as well as provide people with the resources they need to live healthy and productive lives.

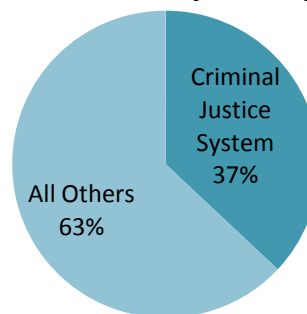
Untreated substance abuse can lead to criminal justice involvement.

In 2008, 22.2 million people aged 12 and over in the U.S. (close to 9 percent of the general population) were dependent on illicit drugs and/or alcohol,²³¹ but only four million people received treatment. During that same time, 3.7 million people living in poverty needed treatment for substance addiction, but less than 18 percent received it.²³² Substance abuse is particularly prevalent among incarcerated populations; in 2004, about 80 percent of both federal and state prisoners reported ever using drugs, and about 25 percent of prisoners incarcerated for violent crimes reported using drugs at the time of their offense.²³³ Furthermore, one-half to two-thirds of inmates in jails and State and Federal prisons meet standard diagnostic criteria (DSM-IV) for alcohol/drug dependence or abuse.²³⁴

Often receiving treatment through the criminal justice system is the only way people can access help. In 2007, the criminal justice system was the largest single source of referrals to substance abuse treatment nationally, comprising 37 percent of all admissions.²³⁵

As in many areas, substance abuse is a serious issue in D.C.; the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) reports that about 60,000 D.C. residents are addicted to alcohol and other drugs.²³⁶ But from 2005 to 2006, about 16,000 D.C. residents reported needing but not receiving treatment for substance abuse. Nationally, the biggest reason people seeking drug treatment don't receive it is that they can't afford it;²³⁷ it should come as no surprise then, that the highest need for substance abuse treatment is in wards that are most economically distressed. In Wards 5 and 8, where median household incomes are significantly lower than the city average, more than 4 percent of people are in need of but not receiving treatment.²³⁸

The largest single source of referrals to substance abuse treatment come from the criminal justice system.



Source: The TEDS Report, "Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions Referred by the Criminal Justice System," August 13, 2009. www.oas.samhsa.gov/2k9/211/211CAdmits2k9.htm

	Median Household Income (1999)	Needed but did not receive treatment for drug use (averages 2004-2006)
Ward 1	\$59,140	3.27%
Ward 2	\$130,891	3.03%
Ward 3	\$187,709	1.98%
Ward 4	\$81,500	2.22%
Ward 5	\$54,479	4.43%
Ward 6	\$67,454	2.82%
Ward 7	\$45,039	3.12%
Ward 8	\$35,228	4.23%
All D.C.	\$78,192	3.06%

Source: Neighborhood Info D.C., "Neighborhood Profiles: Council Wards," Department of Health and Human Services, *Substate Estimates from the 2004-2006 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health* (Department of Health and Human Services; Washington, D.C., 2008).

In D.C., substance abuse is also prevalent in people who have contact with the criminal justice system. Of the over 2,000 people under the supervision of the Substance Abuse Treatment Branch of the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency,²³⁹ about 34 percent have co-occurring substance abuse problems. Approximately 25 percent of women supervised by D.C.'s Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) identify as having various mental health conditions and about 40 percent reported histories of substance abuse and addiction in 2009.²⁴⁰

Mandated treatment through the criminal justice system is not the answer; instead, with more funding for community based substance abuse treatment programs, people may be less likely to have contact with the criminal justice system in the first place. The District recently took a positive step in substance abuse prevention by applying for and winning a \$10.6 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).²⁴¹ Increased funding for programs focused on sober living would have public safety benefits as well as allow people be better able to live, study, and work successfully while investing in their families and communities.

Recommendations:

Lack of treatment for mental illness and substance abuse contributes significantly to increases in correctional populations. Investing in treatment before people become involved in the justice system will reduce incarceration rates, improve public safety and promote community well-being.

- 1) Increase access to community-based mental health and substance abuse treatment.** Providing treatment to people before they come into contact with the justice system can help increase public safety, improve the lives of individuals with mental health or substance abuse problems, and save money in the long run. Research shows that treatment based in the community is both more effective and more cost-effective than treatment in the justice system.

2) Address youth mental health needs before they come into contact with the justice system.

The majority of youth in the juvenile justice system has either a mental health problem or have experienced trauma. Addressing youth's needs before they become involved in the justice system can save them the often traumatic experience of being involved in the system and can improve their lives and futures.



Navy Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Increasing investments in job training and employment will reduce incarceration rates, improve public safety, and promote community well-being.

The recent recession and subsequent loss of over 7 million jobs has been tremendously difficult for communities across the country. Low-income communities and communities of color have been hit particularly hard. As of March 2010, the unemployment rate in D.C. was 11.6 percent, compared to the national average of 9.7 percent,²⁴² but there are stark differences in unemployment among the eight wards. The highest rates of unemployment are in communities of color: over 28 percent in Ward 8, 20 percent in Ward 7, and 15 percent in Ward 5. In contrast, Wards 2 and 3, which are majority white, have unemployment rates of about 6 and 3 percent, respectively.²⁴³

	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8	All D.C.
% People of Color-2000	75%	39%	20%	85%	92.6%	70%	98.8%	94.9%	72%
Unemployment-2009	10.1%	5.8%	3.2%	9.6%	15.5%	11.5%	19.5%	28.3%	14.4%
Violent Crime (per 1,000 pop.)-2007	17	13	1.7	12	17	16	16	22	14

Source: Neighborhood Info D.C., "Neighborhood Profiles: Council Wards;" Department of Employment Services, "Ward Unemployment Rates," Accessed May 2010.

Employment, wages, crime, the economic health of a community, and incarceration rates are all interrelated. This is evident in D.C., where Ward 8 has over 28 percent unemployment and 22 violent crimes per 1,000 people, the highest levels in the city.²⁴⁴ Increased employment is associated with positive public safety outcomes; research shows that states with lower rates of unemployment also have lower crime rates.²⁴⁵ Conversely, high rates of incarceration in a community are also associated with reduced job opportunities, creating a toxic cycle of poverty, unemployment, and incarceration.²⁴⁶

People who are incarcerated are more likely to report extended periods of unemployment and lower wages than people in the general population. In 2002, about one-third of people in jail in the U.S. reported that that were unemployed prior to their arrest, compared to the national unemployment rate of 6 percent.²⁴⁷ During that same year, 83 percent of people in jail reported income in the month prior to arrest of less than \$2,000.²⁴⁸ Once a person has been incarcerated, it is even more difficult to find employment, as jail time can reduce the probability of employment by between 15 and 30 percent.²⁴⁹ Formerly incarcerated people often face employment discrimination and limited access to job training, making it difficult to find and keep a job that pays enough to support oneself and one's family.

Reverend Tucker, New Commandment Baptist Church²⁵⁰

Reverend Tucker is Pastor of the New Commandment Baptist Church in the Park View neighborhood of D.C., founded in 1990. When Reverend Tucker arrived, he estimated that 80 percent of the church members were unemployed, just out of jail, just off drugs, or still on drugs; it was rare to get a “normal” person. In an interview with the author of this report, Reverend Tucker shared these thoughts:

A parishioner started a drug and substance abuse ministry that began with only 2-3 people but within two months, the program had so many attendees, it had to be moved out of the church basement and across the street. There was a clear desire of the church community to get help in a supportive environment. I soon realized, however, that unemployment had to be dealt with if they wanted to help people get off drugs and out of the criminal justice system; it is easy to fall back into old patterns with idle time.

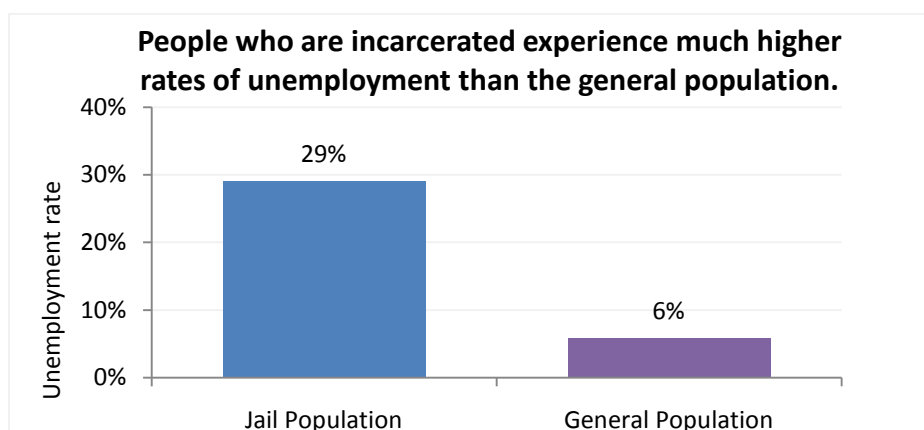
In 1997, I helped found the Jobs Partnership, which is modeled after a program in North Carolina that brings the faith and business community together to provide jobs for people who are unemployed. He co-founded Jobs Partnership with a Catholic Church and a Presbyterian Church. In the 13 years since it began, the partnership has helped 3,000 people find employment, many of whom had been formerly incarcerated. The program provides 48 hours of intensive training, which includes job and life skills and provides mentors for those seeking employment.

The Jobs Partnership also advocates for fair employment practices. Recently we discovered that a legislator in another state introduced a bill that would ban people coming out of prison from working a Census job. These Census jobs would create a large opportunity for employment for a number of people coming to Jobs Partnership. Jobs Partnership and others organized a petition to fight against the bill and planned a press conference to discuss the proposal. We feel that this proposed law would increase hostility toward a population against whom the deck is already stacked and increase unemployment, particularly among people coming home from prison. Fighting to end employment discrimination and increasing opportunities to earn a fair wage are at the heart of my battle to improve the quality of life for his parishioners. Our work highlights how economic justice is critical to strengthening communities and reducing incarceration.

For more information on Jobs Partnership, please visit <http://www.newcomma.org>

Creating jobs can improve public safety and reduce incarceration.

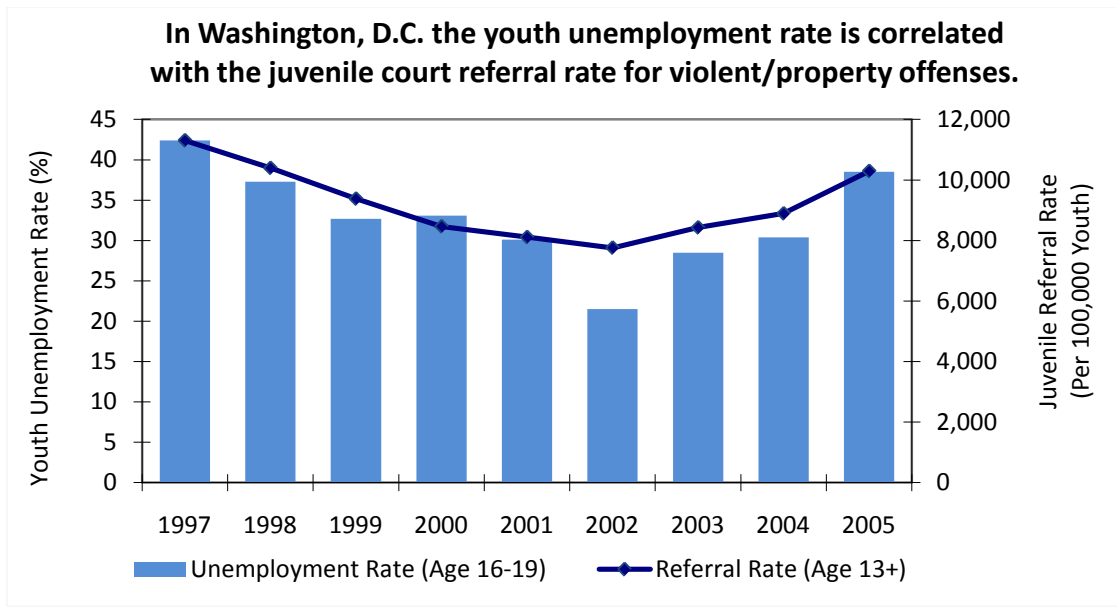
Creating more job opportunities so individuals and families can support themselves is one way to improve public safety and reduce incarceration;²⁵¹ one study found that a 10 percent increase in wages would reduce the amount of hours young men spend participating in illegal activities by 1.4 percent.²⁵² Local jobs could be created by supporting a community’s local economy in ways that are informed by residents’ voices. Programs that provide small business loans and investments in “green” technology would increase capital investment in the community as well as create jobs.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," Access May 2010.

*"Youth in the United States are facing an unprecedented crisis in employment. In April 2010, youth unemployment (16-19) remained close to its all time high at 25.4 percent. The Center for Labor Market Studies (CLMS) at Northeastern University estimates that the 2008 employment rate for teens is at the lowest rate in more than 60 years – 32.8% for all teens and 22.7% for black teens. The Center also estimates that individuals under the age of 25 represented 60% of the 1.2 million jobs lost last year. Youth and young adults ages 16-24 represent nearly a third of those who are currently unemployed across the country. **Minority youth and young adults are often the first and last to feel the impacts of a recession.** Our nation is facing a silent crisis – hundreds of thousands of youth lack the opportunities they need to develop the skills they must possess in order to succeed in today's global economy. Investing in job training and employment services for youth will provide immediate economic stimulus and enduring benefits to our youth and to our nation."* – **National Youth Employment Coalition**²⁵³

Youth employment is also an important component of positive youth development, helping youth earn money and build self-esteem. Employment opportunities for youth have also been shown to have public safety benefits. From 1997 to 2004, the District experienced evidence of the value of employment opportunities for youth. As the unemployment rate for D.C. youth increased, the referral rate of youth to juvenile court also increased.²⁵⁴ Rather than focus on corrections, law enforcement, and the judiciary system when allocating funding, jurisdictions could turn their attention to employment resources, employability training, and the availability of well-paying jobs, for both adults and youth. D.C.'s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) has had both successes and challenges, with most of the problems being administrative. Over 21,000 youth participated in 2009, but the lack of quality placements and issues around payment delivery affected the program's ability to serve the high number of youth in the District interested in participating.²⁵⁵



Source: Superior Court of D.C.: Family Court, *Annual Report to Congress, Family Court, 2006*, www.dccourts.gov; Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov/lau

Recommendations:

Research shows that employment is one of the key predictors of crime rates and that investments in improving employment rates will improve public safety. Having stable employment also reduces the chances that someone will become involved in the justice system. Investing in employment and job training will reduce incarceration rates, improve public safety, and promote community well-being.

- 1) Invest in job training for people in underserved communities.** Access to training for people in lower-income communities can open doors to more jobs and careers, leading to better life outcomes and less justice-involvement.
- 2) Remove barriers to employment for people with prior arrests or convictions.** People with prior arrests or convictions face obstacles to employment based on both the law and on individual discrimination by employers. As having a job is one of the most important keys to success after release from prison, removing these barriers can open up opportunities for success.
- 3) Encourage economic development in low-income communities.** Creating jobs in low-income communities will have lasting impacts on individuals, families and the entire community, including improved public safety and less need for social services.
- 4) Provide programs that help youth find employment, especially during the summer months.** Youth need constructive activities during the school year, but especially during the summer months to keep them engaged and productive. Youth employment programs encourage youth and teach responsibility and other marketable skills. Engaging youth now will help them build the skills they need to stay competitive in the job market.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The use of incarceration and the justice system as a response to social problems is destructive, ripping families apart and having devastating impacts on communities of color and low-income communities. We must invest in policies and programs that prevent people from coming into contact with the justice system in the first place. A future where people feel safe and have the opportunities and resources to flourish must first be imagined in order to be achieved. The best public safety strategy will build strong communities of healthy, engaged children, and employed adults who have access to quality healthcare, education, housing, and supportive services that are affordable, and where people are treated fairly and respectfully by the justice system. Components of this vision include:

All residents have access to quality, affordable housing. Communities across the country would have plentiful affordable and supportive housing options. Adequate funding for federal housing support programs such as Housing Choice Vouchers would help reduce the risk of homelessness and incarceration. Formerly incarcerated people would not experience housing discrimination, which would also reduce homelessness and reliance on shelters, as well as give people returning from prison a real chance to turn their life around. As stable, affordable housing is the foundation for education, employment, and access to other social programs and services, people in stable living environments are better able to make investments in themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods. With quality, affordable housing, families can afford other necessities such as health care, education, and healthy food. Communities would reap the benefits in public safety, cost savings, and long-term community enrichment.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Advocate for an increase in funding for housing vouchers which allow families choice in where they live, and maintain the number of publicly-financed housing units in areas that are experiencing “gentrification.”
- Advocate for the increase of incentives for property owners to participate in “Section 8” housing program to increase the availability of quality, affordable housing.
- Demand an end to predatory loaning practices the target low-income residents.
- Demand an increase in publicly subsidized supportive housing programs for people transitioning out of homelessness or prison.
- Work with local housing and homeless coalitions to change public housing policies that discriminate against families in which one member may have an arrest or conviction.

All children have access to quality public education in their neighborhood. All children, especially those from disadvantaged neighborhoods, would be afforded the resources they and their schools need for quality education. States and communities would make long-term investments in education. Resources would be available for improving facilities, providing needed materials for students, hiring quality

educators, and providing counseling services as well as special education. This long-term investment would create lasting changes for communities in terms of economic development, civic involvement, and reductions in crime. The investment in education, especially for students from low-income families, would not only promote social justice, it would also improve public safety and overall prosperity.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Hold schools and school officials accountable for enacting a serious plan to improve student academic achievement and graduation rates, particularly in schools with high levels of poverty.
- Demand that policymakers provide the needed funding to make the improvements in teacher quality and resources that schools need to improve.
- Demand an increase in quality in-school support and counseling services for students who have experienced trauma, have learning disabilities, or emotional disturbances.

All young people have the opportunity to pursue higher education. All people who desire to continue their education would have the opportunity to pursue affordable post-secondary education and vocational training. Scholarships and grants would allow young people to continue their education, increase their earning potential, and give back to their communities.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Advocate for an increase in funding for scholarship and grants that would help youth attend college.
- Demand quality, affordable community college courses that are accessible to working residents who want to further their education while pursuing a career.
- Eliminate barriers to federal school loans for students with drug offense convictions.

Youth would not be unnecessarily criminalized. Schools would follow a positive youth development agenda, which would guide decisions around how to address youth delinquency. Educators would have the resources and will to handle school incidents appropriately themselves, instead of turning to police. Schools would recognize that zero-tolerance policies do not make schools safer, but instead contribute to a negative learning environment and disproportionately affect students of color. By coping more effectively with challenging students, schools would decrease the number of students “pushed out” of school and into the justice system.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Demand more accountability from school systems. Ask for data around school suspensions and expulsion, and insist on adequate funding for special education and other services.
- Advocate for the end of “zero-tolerance” policies in schools and the over-policing of schools.

Youth are involved in positive activities during after-school time and throughout the summer. All youth would have access to quality after-school and summer time programming. These programs would be accessible, affordable, relevant, engaging, and located in geographically sensitive locations. After-school and summer time activities and mentoring programs increase a youth's academic, social, and emotional wellbeing and reduce the risk of involvement in illegal behaviors. Youth would have opportunities to help improve their communities, reduce crime, and improve public safety. Empowerment programs that give young people the opportunity to participate in problem-solving activities, leadership development, advocacy, and direct service would play a role in reducing negative youth behavior, including illegal activity.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Demand an end to funding cuts for government agencies that provide critical after-school and summertime programming for youth.
- Advocate for an increase in affordable and accessible after-school and summertime activities for youth from low-income communities and communities of color.

All people have access to health care, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment in their communities. Residents would have access to the full spectrum of healthcare, both physical and mental, which is crucial to increasing public safety. Decreasing the cost of healthcare, especially for those already struggling financially, would allow people to access care without becoming further impoverished. People who are healthy and have access to treatment for mental illness and substance abuse are more likely to be productive citizens, less likely to participate in illegal activities, and more likely to invest in themselves, their families, and their communities.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Demand that policymakers encourage doctors and hospitals to increase their locations in underserved areas.
- Demand that government insurance plans cover mental health and substance abuse treatment.
- Increase reimbursement rates for those who are covered by public insurance plans so that low-income residents can afford to access care.
- Support the public/private partnership called Medical Homes DC, which seeks to improve access to quality primary care in the District's medically underserved neighborhoods.

All people would have the opportunity to engage in substantial employment as well as increase their job skills through training programs. All residents, regardless of level of education, would have access to employment opportunities that provide fair wages. Increasing opportunities for job skills training and vocational training would allow people to be better able to acquire and keep a job that pays enough to provide for oneself and/or one's family, which would also have important public safety benefits for

communities. People with more employment opportunities and earning potential would be better able to make other investments in their communities, their families, and themselves. Ending employment discrimination against people who have been involved in the justice system would enable them to be successful and make the changes necessary to contribute positively to the community.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Advocate for the creation of jobs that pay well in areas of the city that need them the most, as well as job training programs to prepare residents for new jobs.
- Press for an increase in the minimum wage for both public and private sector jobs.
- Demand a change in any tax system that is regressive and taxes low-income residents at a higher rate than high-earning residents.
- Advocate for an increase in funding and access to unemployment insurance to support families and individuals as they look for a new job.

Policing would focus on protecting public safety rather than ensnaring people in the criminal justice system. Ineffective and unfair sentencing enhancement zones in high-density areas would be eliminated. And an end to targeted policing in low-income communities and communities of color would help reduce the disproportionate representation of people of color in the criminal justice system, and better utilize public resources.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Demand information regarding the density of police officers in certain neighborhoods to evaluate targeting of low-income communities and communities of color.
- Consider policies that make simple possession of marijuana a citation rather than an arrest.
- Learn how your public safety dollars are spent. Demand that law enforcement officers live in the communities they work.

All community members have access to affordable public transportation options. Residents would be able to travel easily to work, school, and needed services using affordable public transportation. Public transportation is particularly critical in low-income neighborhoods where residents may not own cars and jobs and services may not exist. Affordable transportation would allow people improve their quality of life and thus improve public safety.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Advocate for public transportation decisions during the economic downturn that keep transportation affordable and available for low-income neighborhoods.
- If plans are being made to expand public transportation, demand that plans account for the needs of under-served communities and low-income communities.

Communities are well-cared-for and green spaces and recreational facilities are available for residents to enjoy. When looking to reduce incarceration and increase public safety, it is critical to address the environmental conditions that contribute to incarceration of community residents. A thoughtful design of the physical environment of a community can improve public safety. Abandoned buildings would be repurposed, vacant lots developed for uses such as a community parks and community gardens, street lighting replaced or increased, and graffiti removed. Residents would be integrally involved in planning for their neighborhood's future.

What can community residents, advocates, and public officials do?

- Demand that planning agencies attend to the needs and voices of residents of low-income communities when undertaking “beautification” or “revitalization” projects.
- Advocate for the creation or refurbishing of parks, community gardens, and playgrounds in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Appendix 1

	Ward 1	Ward 2	Ward 3	Ward 4	Ward 5	Ward 6	Ward 7	Ward 8	All D.C.
% People of Color-2000	75%	39%	20%	85%	92.6%	70%	98.8%	94.9%	72%
Median Household Income-1999	\$59,140	\$130,891	\$187,709	\$81,500	\$54,479	\$67,454	\$45,039	\$35,228	\$78,192
Violent Crime (per 1,000 pop.)-2007	17	13	1.7	12	17	16	16	22	14
Persons Receiving Food Stamps-2009	8,168	3,160	331	10,217	16,407	13,396	24,370	31,570	13,452
Unemployment-2009	10.1%	5.8%	3.2%	9.6%	15.5%	11.5%	19.5%	28.3%	14.4%
Persons Receiving TANF-2009	3,002	892	43	3,608	6284	4,042	11,212	16,053	5,642
% graduated High School	68%	87%	96%	78%	72%	79%	71%	66%	78%
% graduated College	39%	64%	79%	33%	21%	44%	13%	8%	39%
Needed but did not receive treatment for drug use-averages 2004-2006	3.27%	3.03%	1.98%	2.22%	4.43%	2.82%	3.12%	4.23%	3.06%

Sources:

% People of Color, Median Household Income, Violent Crime, Food Stamps, TANF, % graduated High School, % graduated college: Neighborhood Info D.C., "Neighborhood Profiles: Council Wards," www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/wards/wards.html;

% graduated High School, % graduated college: D.C. Office of Planning, "2000 Educational Level by Ward," <http://planning.dc.gov/planning/cwp/view,a,1282,q,569859.asp>

Unemployment: Department of Employment Services, "Ward Unemployment Rates," Accessed May 2010. www.does.dc.gov/does/frames.asp?doc=/does/lib/does/SeptemberWards09.pdf;

Treatment for drug use: Department of Health and Human Services, *Substate Estimates from the 2004-2006 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health* (Department of Health and Human Services; Washington, D.C., 2008). www.oas.samhsa.gov/substate2k8/substate.pdf

Appendix 2: Metropolitan Police Arrests by Offense Type and Adult/Juvenile Status, January 1 – June 26, 2010



METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT
 Number of Adult and Juvenile Arrests (1/1-6/26/10),
 by Top Arrest Charge, compared to the same period in 2009



Top Arrest Charge ¹	Number and Percent	2009			2010			% Change		
		Adult (18+ years)	Juvenile ³ (< 18 years)	Total	Adult (18+ years)	Juvenile ³ (< 18 years)	Total	Adult (18+ years)	Juvenile ³ (< 18 years)	Total
Aggravated Assault	Count	601	93	694	621	69	690	3.3%	-25.8%	-0.6%
	% within Arrest Type	86.6%	13.4%	100.0%	90.0%	10.0%	100.0%			
Arson	Count	7	1	8	3	4	7	-57.1%	300.0%	-12.5%
	% within Arrest Type	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%	42.9%	57.1%	100.0%			
Burglary	Count	121	35	156	106	35	141	-12.4%	0.0%	-9.6%
	% within Arrest Type	77.6%	22.4%	100.0%	75.2%	24.8%	100.0%			
Disorderly Conduct/POCA	Count	2430	73	2503	2555	51	2606	5.1%	-30.1%	4.1%
	% within Arrest Type	97.1%	2.9%	100.0%	98.0%	2.0%	100.0%			
Forgery/Uttering Check	Count	19	0	19	14	2	16	-26.3%	N/C	-15.8%
	% within Arrest Type	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%			
Fraud	Count	22	1	23	17	0	17	-22.7%	-100.0%	-26.1%
	% within Arrest Type	95.7%	4.3%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
Gambling	Count	1	0	1	0	1	1	-100.0%	N/C	0.0%
	% within Arrest Type	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%			
Homicide/Manslaughter ²	Count	42	4	46	35	8	43	-16.7%	100.0%	-6.5%
	% within Arrest Type	91.3%	8.7%	100.0%	81.4%	18.6%	100.0%			
Larceny/Theft	Count	655	62	717	530	44	574	-19.1%	-29.0%	-19.9%
	% within Arrest Type	91.4%	8.6%	100.0%	92.3%	7.7%	100.0%			
Liquor Laws	Count	17	1	18	36	0	36	111.8%	-100.0%	100.0%
	% within Arrest Type	94.4%	5.6%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
Narcotic Drug Laws	Count	4534	164	4698	4703	127	4830	3.7%	-22.6%	2.8%
	% within Arrest Type	96.5%	3.5%	100.0%	97.4%	2.6%	100.0%			
Offenses Against the Family and Children	Count	19	1	20	14	0	14	-26.3%	-100.0%	-30.0%
	% within Arrest Type	95.0%	5.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%			
Other Assaults	Count	2552	262	2814	2580	209	2789	1.1%	-20.2%	-0.9%
	% within Arrest Type	90.7%	9.3%	100.0%	92.5%	7.5%	100.0%			
Other Felonies	Count	687	175	862	688	171	859	0.1%	-2.3%	-0.3%
	% within Arrest Type	79.7%	20.3%	100.0%	80.1%	19.9%	100.0%			
Other Misdemeanors	Count	1983	449	2432	2175	655	2830	9.7%	45.9%	16.4%
	% within Arrest Type	81.5%	18.5%	100.0%	76.9%	23.1%	100.0%			
Prostitution & Commercialized Vice	Count	801	9	810	679	8	687	-15.2%	-11.1%	-15.2%
	% within Arrest Type	98.9%	1.1%	100.0%	98.8%	1.2%	100.0%			
Rape/Sexual Abuse	Count	8	2	10	1	1	2	-87.5%	-50.0%	-80.0%
	% within Arrest Type	80.0%	20.0%	100.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%			
Release Violations/Fugitive	Count	1978	68	2046	1837	30	1867	-7.1%	-55.9%	-8.7%
	% within Arrest Type	96.7%	3.3%	100.0%	98.4%	1.6%	100.0%			
Robbery/Carjacking	Count	256	156	412	219	212	431	-14.5%	35.9%	4.6%
	% within Arrest Type	62.1%	37.9%	100.0%	50.8%	49.2%	100.0%			
Sex Offenses ²	Count	107	17	124	104	2	106	-2.8%	-88.2%	-14.5%
	% within Arrest Type	86.3%	13.7%	100.0%	98.1%	1.9%	100.0%			
Stolen Property	Count	140	13	153	123	10	133	-12.1%	-23.1%	-13.1%
	% within Arrest Type	91.5%	8.5%	100.0%	92.5%	7.5%	100.0%			
Theft from Auto	Count	38	0	38	21	8	29	-44.7%	N/C	-23.7%
	% within Arrest Type	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	72.4%	27.6%	100.0%			
Traffic Violations	Count	4937	68	5005	5740	39	5779	16.3%	-42.6%	15.5%
	% within Arrest Type	98.6%	1.4%	100.0%	99.3%	0.7%	100.0%			
UUV	Count	247	155	402	194	94	288	-21.5%	-39.4%	-28.4%
	% within Arrest Type	61.4%	38.6%	100.0%	67.4%	32.6%	100.0%			
Vandalism/Tampering w/Auto	Count	225	13	238	214	28	242	-4.9%	115.4%	1.7%
	% within Arrest Type	94.5%	5.5%	100.0%	88.4%	11.6%	100.0%			
Vending Violations	Count	212	0	212	219	1	220	3.3%	N/C	3.8%
	% within Arrest Type	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	99.5%	0.5%	100.0%			
Weapons	Count	470	82	552	415	61	476	-11.7%	-25.6%	-13.8%
	% within Arrest Type	85.1%	14.9%	100.0%	87.2%	12.8%	100.0%			
TOTAL	Count	23,109	1,904	25,013	23,843	1,870	25,713	3.2%	-1.8%	2.8%
	% within Arrest Type	92.4%	7.6%	100.0%	92.7%	7.3%	100.0%			

¹ Source for non-homicide data : Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) data as of 7/1/10 Totals are based solely on the top arrest charge. One person may be booked on more than one arrest charge.

² Source for homicide data : Homicide Branch (HB) as of 7/1/10.

³ For the purposes of the CJIS Weekly Arrest Report, the term "juvenile" used above is defined as individuals under the age of 18 years (≤ 17 years of age). These "juvenile" totals may include Title 16 cases where juveniles are tried as adults.

"N/C" = Not calculable, division by zero is not allowed.

The above non-homicide arrests reflect arrests made by all agencies in the District of Columbia.

Appendix 3: Metropolitan Police Arrests by Ward, 2001 and 2009

Ward	2001			2009			% Change 2001-2009		
	Adult	Juvenile	All	Adult	Juvenile	All	Adult	Juvenile	All
1	6,802	357	7,159	6,064	346	6,410	-10.85%	-3.08%	-10.46%
2	7,433	210	7,643	5,731	349	6,080	-22.90%	66.19%	-20.45%
3	1,032	48	1,080	983	77	1,060	-4.75%	60.42%	-1.85%
4	3,287	242	3,529	3,467	387	3,854	5.48%	59.92%	9.21%
5	5,728	380	6,108	7,123	634	7,757	24.35%	66.84%	27.00%
6	7,171	478	7,649	8,580	524	9,104	19.65%	9.62%	19.02%
7	5,677	480	6,157	7,439	837	8,276	31.04%	74.38%	34.42%
8	7,056	631	7,687	7,868	878	8,746	11.51%	39.14%	13.78%
UNK	1,283	54	1,337	1,541	64	1,605	20.11%	18.52%	20.04%
Total	45,469	2,880	48,349	48,796	4,096	52,892	7.32%	42.22%	9.40%

Source: Metropolitan Police Department, Research and Analysis Division, July 2010.

About the Justice Policy Institute

The Justice Policy Institute is a non-profit research and public policy organization dedicated to reducing society's reliance on incarceration and promoting fair and effective solutions to social problems.

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