



REDUCE, REINVEST, AND DO RIGHT:

A MODEL TO ESTIMATE SAVINGS FROM REDUCING CONNECTICUT'S YOUTH DETENTION, INVEST IN NONPROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, AND HELP COMMUNITIES THRIVE

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CONTENTS

Statement of Partnership.....	3
Glossary of Key Terms	4
Introduction.....	6
Background.....	7
<i>Connecticut's Carceral System is Steadily Shrinking</i>	7
<i>Racial Disparities in Policies and Investments Make Connecticut's Carceral System Unjust</i>	8
<i>Finding Funding for Community Services and Supports</i>	13
<i>An Overview of Detention in Connecticut and National Detention Outcomes</i>	13
<i>Community Investments are Research-Based Avenues to Reduce Crime</i>	15
<i>Connecticut's Impacted Youth Call for More Services in their Communities</i>	16
Research Rationale.....	19
<i>Theoretical Model</i>	19
<i>Using Marginal Cost Analyses to Create Conservative Estimates</i>	20
<i>Underlying Assumptions of the Nonprofit Community Organization Analysis</i>	21
Methods.....	22
<i>Data Sources</i>	22
<i>Analysis Methodologies</i>	22
Results.....	25
<i>Estimate of Marginal Daily Costs of Detention and Associated Transportation in Connecticut</i>	25
<i>The Annual Costs of Nonprofit Community Organizations Across Connecticut</i>	28
<i>Nonprofit Community Organization to Arrest Relationships</i>	31
<i>Arrest to Detention Relationship</i>	33
Limitations and Discussion.....	34
<i>Limitations of this Research</i>	34
<i>Conclusions We Can Reasonably Draw from These Analyses</i>	35
Policy and Investment Recommendations.....	37
<i>Policy Recommendations to Decrease Detention Child-Days</i>	37
<i>Policy Recommendations to Invest Funding Such that Connecticut Reduces Arrests and Serves Communities</i> ..	43
<i>Policy Recommendations to Improve the Transparency of Justice Costs</i>	46
Conclusion	47
Acknowledgements.....	48
References.....	49

STATEMENT OF PARTNERSHIP

This paper is the result of a collaboration between Connecticut Voices for Children and the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance Justice Advisors from beginning to end. We are grateful for the Justice Advisors allowing us access to their Vision Session data to guide ideas for the research, providing guidance on which research ideas best met the needs of impacted communities, and sharing their stories to bring these data to life. Thank you for your incredible work.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Adjudicated refers to a legal ruling in which a court has found a youth guilty of committing a delinquent act

Benefits refer to the economic results of reducing a government workload, such as through reducing the numbers of arrests or the number of children admitted to detention centers; a budget process is required to determine whether benefits become savings ¹

Carceral system refers to the network of systems and community roles that rely on the exercise of state sanctioned physical, spatial, and economic control and violence to preserve the interests of the State and dominant communities²

Child-day is a unit of measurement in which one child or youth resides at an institution for one day

Community organizations in this report refer specifically to local nonprofit organizations whose work functions to tackle the underlying social and economic factors that lead to crime and build stronger communities; we operationalize this through organizational activities that intervene in substance abuse, focus on crime prevention, focus on neighborhood development, provide job training and workforce development programs, or provide recreational and social activities for children and youth

Decarceration is the opposite of incarceration and involves reducing the number of people in conditions of carceral confinement as well as reducing early contact with the carceral system through reducing interactions with the police and arrest rates

Delinquent acts include crimes against other people, against property, drug offenses, and crimes against public order³

Delinquency referral is the legal term referring to police reports and notices of probation violations among youth; because the term “delinquent” is used pejoratively, we seek to utilize this term only when necessary to refer to a legal decision

Detention refers to being held/confined in official custody; in Connecticut the Judicial Branch oversees detention

Family with Service Needs (FWSN) refers to a former type of status offense in which the court determined that a child or youth under the age of 18 has runaway from home without just cause, is beyond the control of guardians, has engaged in ‘indecent or immoral conduct,’ has been truant from school or continuously defies school rules, or has engaged in sexual intercourse with another child or youth within a two-year age difference⁴

Hardware secure facilities control the movement of confined individuals both through staff supervision and through hardware such as locks, bars, fences, and at times prone restraints such as handcuffs

Justice system refers to a series of government agencies and institutions that exist to enforce the criminal law through a defined set of procedural rules and limitations; in this paper, we utilize the

term “carceral system” to underscore the fact that due to its extreme racial disparities, the justice system does not treat all justly

Marginal cost is the amount total operating costs change when a pre-determined unit of output (such as one arrest or one day in detention) changes; these are the costs most impacted by policy changes⁵

Pretrial detention refers to the practice of keeping individuals accused of crime in a carceral facility prior to a formal trial; it may be used for reasons of public safety or to ensure individuals appear in court for their hearings

Recidivism refers to a person who has been convicted or adjudicated of committing more crimes, also known as reoffending

Staff-day is a measure of the number of paid staff days meant to make units more similar to child-days; it is computed by multiplying the number of staff on a payroll by the number of days in a year

INTRODUCTION

A month into the coronavirus pandemic, youth in Connecticut's detention facilities began testing positive for the potentially deadly virus.⁶ Community members and youth-serving organizations around the state clamored for the release of confined youth to protect the health of the youth and the health of employees and contractors at the State's carceral facilities. The call for release was far from new, but given the pandemic, it was more urgent. The Judicial Branch reported troubles releasing youth, as already-limited services became even more difficult to access.⁷ Despite these limitations, the Judicial Branch reported a 45 percent reduction in the number of youth within detention centers between early March and late April,⁸ another step in Connecticut's decade-long trend of decarceration.

The Judicial Branch was not wrong to worry about releasing youth while unsure whether they would have enough food, access to tools for remote learning, and access to behavioral health supports to help weather the stress and trauma that the coronavirus pandemic brought to communities across the state. As this report will discuss, the State of Connecticut has woefully under-invested in Black and Brown communities while enacting policies that unfairly disadvantage—and sometimes punish—the majority of Black and Brown residents compared to the majority of white residents in the state. Connecticut's youth are raising their voices against these injustices. In June, the Connecticut Justice Advisors launched the #InvestInMeCT campaign calling for the decriminalization of children and youth who come from under-resourced neighborhoods and the redirection of funding to high-quality education, safe and stable housing, and other opportunities that all youth should enjoy.⁹

The research that follows seeks to quantify the amount of funding that can be saved through policies that decrease the use of detention by utilizing marginal cost analysis, a tool that helps illuminate costs that vary each day depending on the number of children and youth being detained. We pair this analysis with an analysis of the cost of running nonprofit community organizations in Connecticut's largest cities as well as a model of how investments in nonprofit community organizations would contribute to crime reduction. From there, we make concrete recommendations for policies that would reduce the number of children and youth in detention centers as well as the number of days children and youth spend in detention centers. We leverage benefits associated with these changes to recommend investing in programs, services, and creation of nonprofit community organizations.

The paper proceeds in six major sections. First, we present background information regarding Connecticut's carceral system, racial disparities in carceral and spending policies, and an overview of the use of detention in Connecticut and nationally. Next within the background section, we present a review of research on the role of nonprofit community organizations in meeting the needs of those who have broken the law and in crime reduction through meeting the needs of communities. We fit these pieces into the context of the #InvestInMeCT campaign. Second, we discuss the rationale behind the framework and research methods we utilize in our model. Third, we present our methodology. Fourth, we provide the results of our statistical analyses. Fifth, we discuss potential limitations to our methodologies as well as reasonable conclusions that can be drawn from our analyses; and sixth, we propose policies to reduce the use and duration of detention and make recommendations for investments that will fill gaps in the service array within Connecticut's large cities and produce value for communities.

BACKGROUND

CONNECTICUT'S CARCERAL SYSTEM IS STEADILY SHRINKING

Connecticut's population of incarcerated individuals has halved in size since a peak in 2008.¹⁰ This reduction reflects a combination of policy changes aimed at utilizing incarceration for purposes of public safety and rehabilitation, as well as strategic investment in services to meet the needs of at-risk individuals. These changes are noticeable within the adult carceral system as well as the youth carceral system.

In many aspects, Connecticut has led the country in reforming its youth carceral system to reflect cutting-edge research on child and adolescent development, clinical interventions, and public safety outcomes.¹¹ Notably, in 2016 Connecticut changed its law guiding the use of pretrial detention to eliminate the use of pretrial detention for cases where the court deemed that a child was a risk to themselves or in an unsafe environment.¹² Currently, Connecticut's law dictates that children may only be held in pretrial detention if:

- (A) *there is probable cause to believe that the child has committed the acts alleged,*
- (B) *there is no appropriate less restrictive alternative available, and*
- (C) *there is:*
 - (i) *probable cause to believe that the level of risk that child poses to public safety if released to the community prior to the court hearing or disposition cannot be managed in a less restrictive setting,*
 - (ii) *a need to hold the child in order to ensure the child's appearance before the court or compliance with court process, as demonstrated by the child's previous failure to respond to the court process, or*
 - (iii) *a need to hold the child for another jurisdiction.*¹³

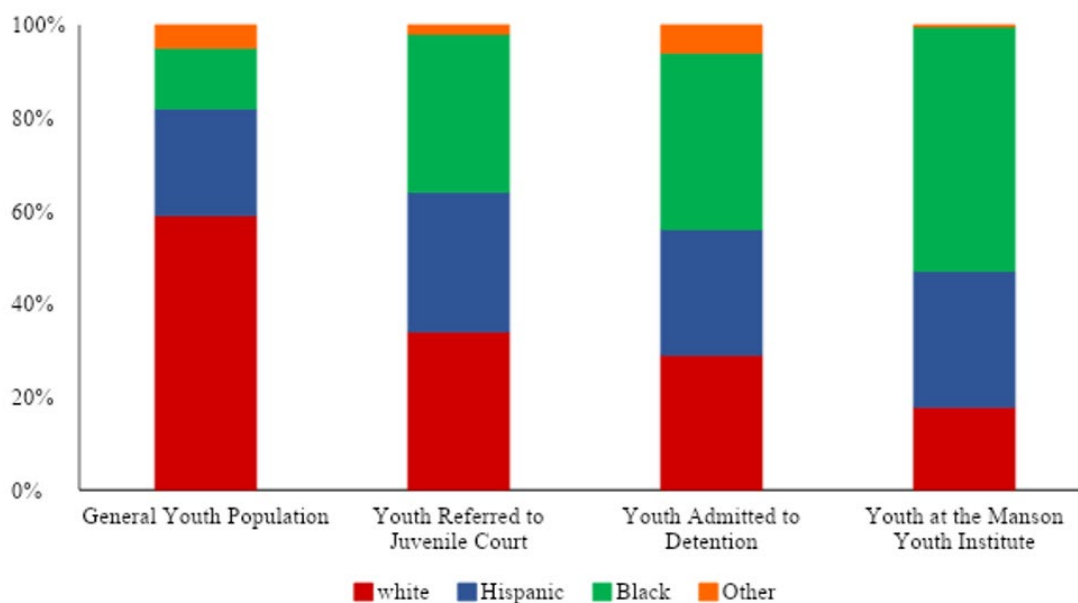
In 2017, Connecticut began to remove Family with Service Needs (FWSN) determinations including truancy, running away from home, and other status offenses from the courts.¹⁴ Additionally, in 2016 Connecticut closed its state-run secure facility for girls, the Pueblo Unit,¹⁵ and in 2018 Connecticut closed its state-run secure facility for boys, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS).¹⁶ Policy and practice changes such as these contributed to a 30 percent reduction in added delinquency cases between June 30, 2008 and June 30, 2018.¹⁷

These changes help ensure that when Connecticut youth make mistakes, they are less likely to become involved in a system that reduces access to critical needs such as housing,¹⁸ education,¹⁹ and employment,²⁰ and they are more likely to grow into thriving, productive members of their communities. Those working to advance these changes—including state and municipal policymakers, employees working within various aspects of the carceral system, advocates, service providers, prosecutors and public defenders, educators, and community leaders—have much to be proud of. There is still work to do, however, to continue these positive trends as well as to ensure that our carceral system truly becomes a justice system.

RACIAL DISPARITIES IN POLICIES AND INVESTMENTS MAKE CONNECTICUT’S CARCERAL SYSTEM UNJUST

Despite these laudable strides to reduce child and youth involvement in the carceral system, Black and Brown residents in Connecticut continue to be disproportionately arrested²¹ and incarcerated²² compared to white residents. This disparate impact is true of both the youth and the adult carceral systems, and it is true across different levels of the carceral system including admission to pretrial detention as well as within sentencing. **Figure 1** shows that in 2018, racial disparities became starker as youth moved deeper into the carceral system. The proportion of Black youth involved in the carceral system increased with each step deeper into the system, while for white youth, the proportion decreased across these same steps. Furthermore, Black youth are overrepresented at each stage in the carceral system compared to the general population, while white youth are underrepresented.

Figure 1. The Disparate Impact of Connecticut’s Carceral System on Black and Brown Children and Youth Increases as the System Deepens²³



*See reference 23 for data sources.

The overrepresentation of Black and Brown children and youth in Connecticut’s carceral system becomes even more unjust considered in conjunction with the systemically racist nature of resource distribution in Connecticut, perpetuated by state policies. Where people live determines access to critical resources and opportunities, including the quality of education children receive, the availability of employment opportunities for parents, and the cultural norms children see on a daily basis.²⁴ Connecticut is well known for being home to some of the wealthiest towns in the United States as well as some of the poorest. This uneven distribution of resources is highly racialized.

Research conducted in Connecticut found that 52 percent of Connecticut’s Black residents, 50 percent of Connecticut’s Latinx residents, nine percent of Connecticut’s white residents, and 40 percent of Connecticut’s residents belonging to other racial and ethnic identities live in areas defined

as “very low opportunity areas.”²⁵ A map of these areas shows that “very low opportunity” areas are concentrated primarily in Connecticut’s cities: Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury, Hartford, New Britain, and New London, with additional spots in Norwich, Danbury, and Norwalk. An additional 21 percent of Connecticut’s Black residents, 22 percent of Connecticut’s Latinx residents, 17 percent of Connecticut’s white residents, and 43 percent of Connecticut’s residents belonging to other racial and ethnic identities live in areas defined as “low opportunity areas.” Taken together, this means that 73 percent of Black families and 72 percent of Latinx families in Connecticut live in areas described as lacking access to high-quality education, fruitful and diverse employment opportunities, affordable housing, and enough economic resources to meet families’ basic needs.

It is true that the terms “low opportunity” area and “high opportunity” area have been widely used and accepted within the housing lexicon. Unfortunately, these terms misrepresent what these communities are and how they became that way. The more accurate reflection of a so-called high opportunity area is that it is wealthier by design and, as a result, higher resourced. The more accurate reflection of a so-called low opportunity area is that it is poorer by design and, as a result, not only lower resourced but has also been historically denied resources.

Connecticut’s public policies exacerbate the strain on these communities in numerous ways. First, because cities tend to be home to various nonprofits that benefit the entire state such as universities and hospitals, they are unable to tax much of the land within the cities, driving up property tax rates for residents.²⁶ Connecticut’s cities—the areas where Black and Latinx residents live—have some of the highest mill rates in the state. Hartford, Waterbury, Bridgeport, and New Britain top Connecticut’s scales in FY 2018 for the highest municipal Real & Personal Property mill rates (at 74.29, 60.21, 54.37, and 50.50, respectively),²⁷ meaning that Connecticut’s Black and Latinx residents are paying a greater share than other residents for their homes and apartments.

Furthermore, because property taxes are how municipalities fund public education, these cities also have less funding to spend on education. The cities of New Britain and Bridgeport, in particular, have the second and fourth lowest per-student expenditures in the state,²⁸ despite having some of the highest property tax rates. The State of Connecticut has a system, called Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT), to help reimburse cities for the property tax they lose on nonprofits that benefit the entire state, but it is woefully underfunded.²⁹ Thus, cities are forced to charge their residents—who make up the majority of Black and Latinx residents in the state—a higher tax rate on their property while being less able to afford a high-quality education for their children, fewer community support programs, and fewer extracurricular activities.

Across numerous levels, Connecticut’s tax system widens income and wealth disparities between Connecticut’s Black and Latinx residents and white residents.³⁰ While Black and Latinx workers pay a greater share of their income and wealth in taxes, they also face an unjust labor market that provides them fewer opportunities and pays lower wages.³¹ Taken together, Connecticut’s fiscal policies place a far greater burden on Black and Latinx residents while offering fewer opportunities and services than what is fair to Black and Latinx children and families.

And although the State has saved money through efforts to reduce costly incarceration, it has invested few of these funds to assist the communities most impacted by the carceral system. In 2016, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) downsized staffing at CJTS by over 100 staff, saving the State \$20.6 million.³² The same year, the Judicial Branch faced \$77 million in funding cuts, which prompted them to reduce their community-based programs meant to divert youth from incarceration by 25 percent.³³ This cut to community services came at the same time as a policy change determining that detention centers were not an appropriate place to serve youth who the courts thought were a danger to themselves or who were living in unsafe situations.³⁴ While this policy change helped reduce the likelihood of the carceral system being utilized as a defacto mental health system, DCF did not receive additional funding to increase their behavioral health services for at-risk youth accordingly. The following year, when Connecticut removed FWSN cases from the courts, it saved the State \$4 million yearly. The Legislature transferred a small portion of this funding—only \$648,859 per year—to the Youth Service Bureaus newly tasked with handling these cases.³⁵

Overall, Connecticut has cut funding from the very areas where it should be focused. Money needs to be focused on preventing youth from entering the carceral system. Furthermore, decisions and policies should be made with special concern to serve the Black and Brown communities that have most adversely been affected by the carceral system, and who continue to be overrepresented at each stage in said system.



ILIANA PUJOLS CTJJA DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

“

In high school, when I got expelled, they sent me to an alternative high school which was strictly for probation- referred kids. I think it was considered some form of a diversion program. Everything was still handled judicially. Like we had to have a case manager; we had to follow up with our probation officers. They made sure we went to court.

I think that my experience in the diversion program was probably the best I've had. It was a very small school. It was no more than 25 to 30 students at a time. It didn't really look like a high school setting, it was more like a hallway with tons of different rooms. So we were basically... I don't want to say forced, but it was really impossible for me not to build a really close relationship with all the staff. I still talk to those staff today. I go to their house, I spend the night; they're like family.

I think that they did a really good job trying to keep us out of the system, in terms of like, little things. Like if you're in regular high school you get kicked out if you get into an argument or a fight. They tried to handle a lot of issues in-house. Specifically to avoid sending people back to their probation officers, or violating them. I really can't even count on more than one hand how many times they've had to violate anybody during the whole entire two years I was there. So they were really big on just not trying to push kids back into the system.

The program director herself was really big on fighting to keep the kids she had there, there. Because there was a lot of... they defunded her in a lot of areas at certain times. Then they took certain school districts from her, and she put up a really big fight to keep those kids in that school because, one, they were already comfortable, and two, she had a 100 percent graduation success rate. So it was like, why would you take these kids and put them into other school districts when they're doing fine here? It was just a funding issue. So I think they were really big on that, and really good at just keeping kids out of the system, and again, handling things in-house.

And they supported more than just education. They supported our basic needs. When it came down to holidays and stuff, they distributed gift cards; made sure that everybody was good. Again, it was very much run like a family. So it was really different.

For example, I did a lot of couch surfing in high school; I had a lot of issues with stability at home.... I ever got kicked out, they gave me a house to stay in.... We used to have the pantry. They used to have to lock the pantry, because we would all go in there and take all the snacks. But when it really came down to it, around the holiday times specifically when we would be gone for multiple days, they would allow us to go into the pantry and grab whatever we needed for our house. So if we need to grab like, packs of oatmeal, or cereal;

any kind of food that was in there that we wanted, we could utilize at home, they would let us take it.

So they helped with little stuff like that. In regular high schools you have gym class, and they used to take us off site for gym. The girls would go to hot yoga, and the boys would go to Crossfit, and even for that they understood that not everyone would have the proper clothes to go to these places. So they bought everybody, especially the girls, they bought the girls yoga clothes probably every week. They always made sure we didn't go without, no matter what little thing it was. It wasn't always about education. So that was really dope too.

The way that they would pick up students, because we were from all over the state, they had their individual company vans. All the teachers would go pick up the students in the morning, and if you weren't trying to come outside, they were outside knocking on your door. More specifically, my best friend-- I used to go to high school with her there-- her mother, she was dying of cancer my first year there, which was my junior year. She used to take care of her mother in the morning until like 11. And then the staff would go pick her up as soon as she was done with her mother, and still bring her to school. And the only thing that would keep her in school was if she was allowed to make a coffee when she walked in. So she would go straight to the pantry, make a coffee, and go about her day. They always made sure they met people where they were.

Her mother passed away, and they 100 percent contributed to her funeral costs. We had another student who lost his mom, and that was after school, we all had graduated; and we all went together, and the school still paid for all her funeral costs. Again, that's not something that a normal high school would do. And some people saw that as crossing their boundaries, but it was really just the fact that we all had a really tight relationship, and it was impossible for them not to be there when stuff happened.

It made me value...like before I didn't really value staff at the school. There were too many staff for me to like all of them. In this setting, it made me value my relationships a lot. Not only that, they based their curriculum throughout the year off of like... one quarter of the year was focused on resiliency, one quarter was focused on integrity, one quarter was focused on respect and resourcefulness. They kind of built that into our curriculum throughout the year, and I just feel like it helped me to become a better person.

Going into that program, I was young, I was really ignorant. Going through that program, they just made me realize that there's so much more that's bigger than [the trouble I was getting into]. If I didn't have the relationship that I had with them, I wouldn't have been able to soak up that knowledge. They respected me to a level where I felt like I had no choice but to respect them. We knew how above and beyond the staff would go, so if a new person came to the school and disrespected staff, that would bother us. Like it felt like you were disrespecting my mom or my aunt. I think it was the most beneficial thing for me. Even my mom, to this day, says she doesn't know what she would do without Susan and the rest of the people there who helped me get my life together. Even now they still help me. They really care about relationships. ””

FINDING FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

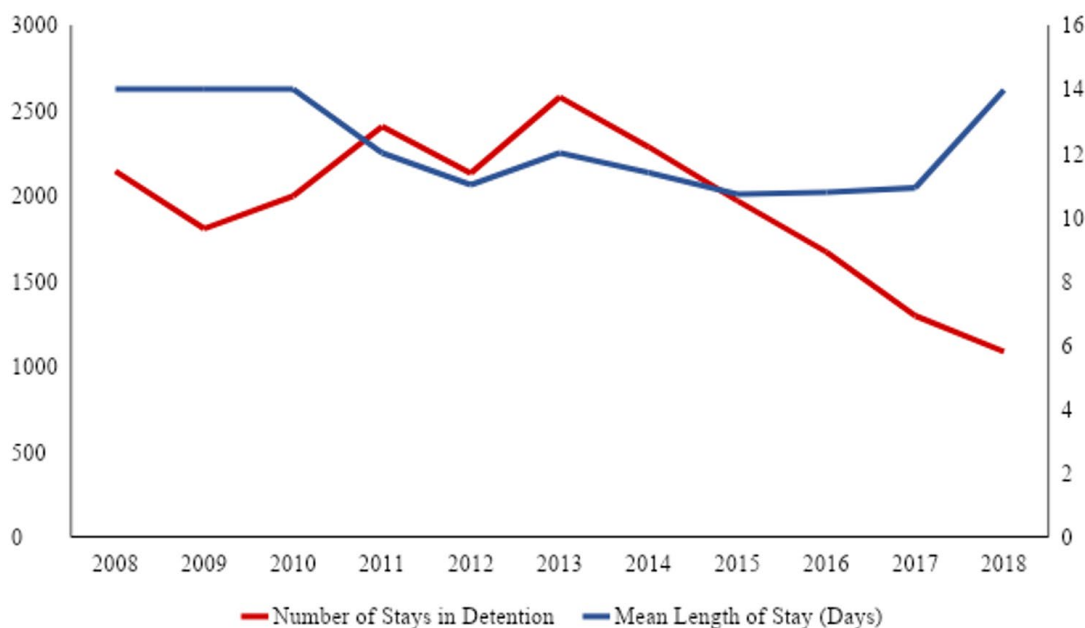
Now that Connecticut has closed its state-run hardware secure facilities, policymakers are recognizing that in order for children and communities to be safe, at-risk children and youth need to be able to access services close to home. State statute dictated that Connecticut's statewide committee tasked with overseeing juvenile justice reform, the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC), needed to create a justice reinvestment plan to utilize a portion of the savings from decreased incarceration for in home, school, and community based behavioral health services by January 1, 2020.³⁷ But after years of tight budgets, consistent cuts, and now a national pandemic that has created a \$2 billion dollar deficit in Connecticut's budget,³⁸ the money lost appears to be gone for good.

In order to create money that can be invested in communities, Connecticut must continue to innovate and create new policies to reduce the population of individuals involved in the carceral system. It must also invest that money wisely to ensure that programs are developed where they are most needed, are accessible to the communities they are intended to support, and that new programs will provide a return on investment by reducing future arrests. This paper will explore reducing the population of youth in detention as one route to generate savings coupled with a model guiding new investments in community-based services to generate reductions in crime.

AN OVERVIEW OF DETENTION IN CONNECTICUT AND NATIONAL DETENTION OUTCOMES

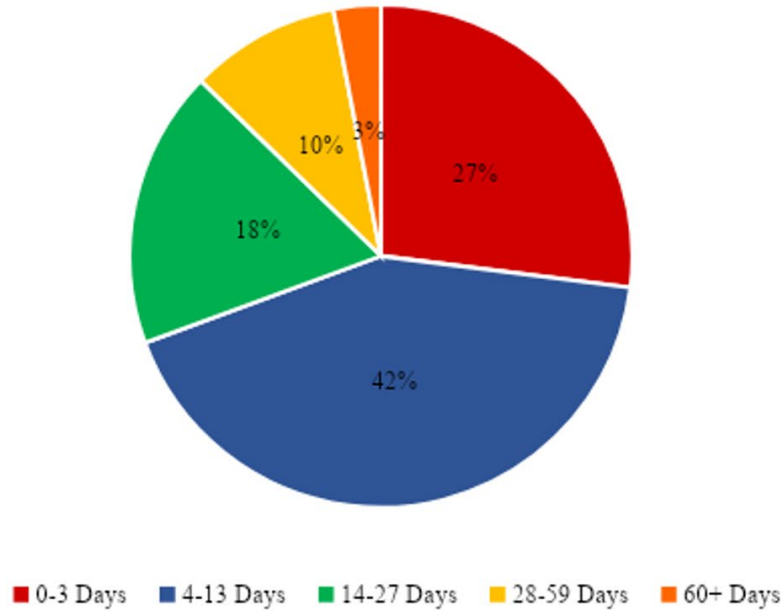
Generally speaking, Connecticut's use of detention over the last 10 years has declined in both frequency and length. See **Figure 2** for details. While most youth stay in detention for less than two weeks at a time, in 2018, 30 percent stayed longer than two weeks, and three percent stayed longer than two months. See **Figure 3** for details.

Figure 2. The Number of Stays in Detention are Declining and on Average Last Between 10 and 14 Days³⁶



*See reference 36 for data sources

Figure 3. Length of Stay in Detention (Days), FY 2018³⁹



*See reference 39 for data sources

Connecticut's decreased use of detention and trend of reducing the length of time youth spend in detention are both positive developments. Nationally, many states decide to detain youth as the result of severity of crime rather than need for treatment or risk of recidivism.⁴⁰ This decision—while intuitively feeling like it prioritizes public safety—may work against its intended outcomes. Although research on the impact and outcomes of detention is limited, the current body of literature suggests that detention can have harmful impacts on youth and contribute to public safety risks.

A recent, large-scale, longitudinal study conducted by Sarah Walker and Jerald Herting from the University of Washington's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences compared recidivism of youth who spent time in pretrial detention and matched youth who did not. They found that pretrial detention was associated with a 33 percent increase in felony recidivism, an 11 percent increase in misdemeanor recidivism, and an additional one percent increase *per day* in felony recidivism.⁴¹ This study found an interaction effect with prior history; the increased odds of felony recidivism disappeared for youth with more than four previous criminal filings, suggesting that stays in detention increase the risk of recidivism for children and youth who are not as deep into the carceral system.

Another longitudinal study spanning 16 years found that youth who experienced detention were nine percent less likely to graduate high school than justice-involved youth who did not spend time in detention and 16 percent more likely to experience incarceration as an adult than justice-involved youth who did not spend time in detention.⁴² Another study found that for gang-involved youth, detention stays worked to strengthen gang affiliations rather than intervene in them.⁴³

Possible explanations for the deleterious effects of detention on youth include peer contagion due to interacting with a greater number of system-involved peers than one would at a community organization,⁴⁴ stigma and community push-out that operates through parents actively steering their children away from socializing with children and youth who have been detained,⁴⁵ and/or experiencing trauma while detained.⁴⁶

Even amongst therapeutically oriented institutions, there is evidence that skill acquisition (rather than length of time spent at the institution) best predicts recidivism rates.⁴⁷ Connecticut's detention system does indeed qualify as therapeutically oriented, as it provides clinical assessments, crisis intervention, psychotropic medication management, evidence-based substance-use intervention, additional referrals to outside health care specialists, group programming, and five-day per week education programming that utilizes a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support framework (September through May).⁴⁸ However, compared with the national literature on the negative ramifications of detention and pathways explaining those outcomes (including peer contagion and stigma, both of which remain even within a therapeutically oriented institution), we must keep developing pathways to grow youth skills and positive connections to their communities in ways that do not risk pushing youth deeper into the carceral system.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS ARE RESEARCH-BASED AVENUES TO REDUCE CRIME

Sociological research sheds light on pathways to grow youths' skills and positive connections to their communities through direct and indirect models that link community organizations with crime reduction. Numerous case studies have explored how community activism creating affordable housing, green spaces, job development, community centers, and other services that target the root causes of crime, has successfully reduced crime.⁴⁹ Considered together, these case studies begin to illuminate the role of community mobilization in declining violence and crime.⁵⁰ In addition to targeting root causes of engaging in crime, activities building and beautifying community space provide opportunities for neighbors to connect and look out for each other, and they create surveillance networks.⁵¹ These activities help communities develop a sense of collective efficacy, defined as a community's sense of "social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control."⁵²

A 2017 American Sociological Review study published by Dr. Patrick Sharkey of Princeton University and his colleagues Gerard Torrats-Espinosa and Delaram Takyar, builds upon these case studies by examining the relationship between the rise of community-based nonprofits created with the intention of reducing crime and the drastic reduction in crime throughout the United States between the 1990s and the 2010s.⁵³ The researchers defined these nonprofit community organizations as those that focus on violent crime (crime prevention and substance abuse programs) and those that create stronger neighborhoods (neighborhood development, workforce development, and youth organizations). The study controlled for numerous other factors so as to isolate the unique impact of community nonprofit organizations (including community demographics, educational attainment in communities, proportion of young adult males, unemployment and employment availability, and—importantly—the increase in the prevalence of other types of nonprofit organizations).

It found that every 10 additional nonprofit community organizations that were created to help reduce crime in cities with 100,000 residents led to a nine percent reduction in the murder rate, a six percent reduction in the violent crime rate, and a four percent reduction in the property crime rate.

The researchers stress the important role of community-based nonprofit organizations in crime reduction through myriad pathways:

Community-oriented organizations can establish or strengthen ties between residents and connect individuals to other residents, organizations, or community resources, facilitating voluntary associations, improving social cohesion and informal social control, and building interpersonal trust. Organizations within a community are embedded within larger networks of public and private agencies and organizations extending across a city's neighborhoods and beyond the city limits. Those extra-local networks connect communities to external sources of influence, resources, and political power, all of which strengthen the capacity to achieve common goals and values.⁵⁴

Evaluations of community-based models developed as alternatives to detention and incarceration, such as the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)⁵⁵ developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and New York's Alternatives to Placement and Alternatives to Detention programs,⁵⁶ provide additional evidence that communities can reduce the rate of utilizing confinement practices such as detention and incarceration without increasing youth crime levels. An evaluation on the effectiveness of JDAI after 25 years found that JDAI sites reduced youth arrests by 57 percent, felony petitions by 39 percent, and the average daily detention population of youth of color by 41 percent.⁵⁷ Although JDAI is among the most-researched alternatives to detention, other successful alternatives exist that keep youth in their communities and deepen their bonds with their communities.

Through Connecticut's budget cuts that have created a multi-year reduction in community-based services, we risk weakening the bonds of communities to regional and statewide networks of agencies and organizations and weakening the power of communities—particularly the Black and Brown communities that are already overburdened and under-resourced from Connecticut's regressive tax structure and are disproportionately suffering during the pandemic.

CONNECTICUT'S IMPACTED YOUTH CALL FOR MORE SERVICES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Investing in community-based organizations is a research-supported mechanism to help meet the needs of at-risk youth without pushing them further into the carceral system, reduce crime within disenfranchised communities, and strengthen the connections of communities with regional and state networks. It is also what impacted communities say they want and need, as demonstrated by the #InvestInMeCT campaign launched by Connecticut's Justice Advisors.

The Justice Advisors are a group of 18 through 25-year-old youth and young adults who have first and second-hand experience with Connecticut's carceral system. They work as a team within the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (CTJJA) to ensure that the voices of directly impacted youth and communities are part of all discussions around justice policy, practice, and reform.⁵⁸ Since 2017, the Justice Advisors have hosted conversations with impacted youth and community members. They teamed up with researchers at Sacred Heart University to conduct a qualitative analysis of the conversations and distilled the conversations into seven themes explaining the root causes of justice system involvement.⁵⁹ A number of the themes overlap with the community-based services shown to reduce crime in communities, including:

- Economic insecurity, caused by:
 - Implicit and explicit bias related to race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, and sexual orientation
 - Location and transportation issues
 - Educational attainment level
 - Criminal background
 - Lack of employment options
 - Childcare needs
 - Age
- Need for more credible messengers and positive influences
 - Young people need to connect with individuals who understand their life and are emotionally invested in them. These adults can help guide youth when they face impossible situations and give them hope that they, too, can succeed.
- Lack of equal opportunity and underinvestment in communities
 - The cities where children and youth of color overwhelmingly live have fewer investments in their schools and extracurricular activities. They know that white children and youth will have more opportunities.
- Trauma caused within communities
 - Housing insecurity and economic insecurity cause trauma that oftentimes leads to substance use and violence, which causes additional traumas. Trauma impacts a person's physical and mental health, and it impacts all members of a family.



To address these root causes, the Justice Advisors have released 10 calls to action. These calls to action include (but are not limited to):

- *The state must remove all youth under the age of 18 from prison-like environments within the adult and juvenile justice systems.*
- *To better meet the needs of youth identified by system-impacted individuals, and to improve outcomes for system-involved youth, the state must invest money into non-prison-like, rehabilitative programs.*
- *State and local leaders must fully invest in a variety of individualized activities, programs, and resources to better serve communities.*
- *The state must invest in mental health and other support services to prioritize healing individual and community-level trauma faced by youth and families.*
- *State and local leaders must create strategic plans to address and eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in our justice systems.*
- *State leadership must acknowledge there is racial inequality when it comes to accessing basic resources like employment or housing and to develop a plan to address the inequalities that lead to economic and housing insecurity.⁶⁰*

The following analysis estimates marginal savings the State could realize through reducing the number of days children and youth serve in detention centers, referred to as child-days. Notably, the state can reduce child-days through reducing the number of children and youth admitted to detention centers as well as through decreasing the number of days children and youth spend in detention centers. Decreasing the number of children and youth in detention centers and the time spent in detention centers helps reduce the likelihood that children and youth coming from the most disenfranchised communities in the state are pushed further into the carceral system, and it is one way to address the call to remove youth from prison-like environments.

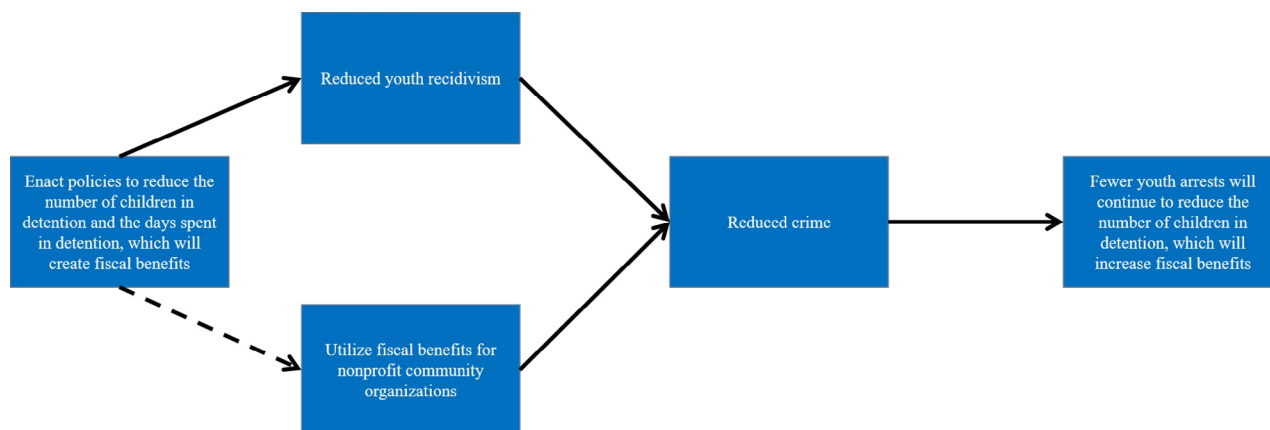
Next, the analysis will examine the distribution of community organizations actively working to build-up communities and reduce crime (crime prevention, neighborhood development, substance abuse programs, workforce development, and youth organizations) in Connecticut's cities with populations of 100,000 or more people, and it will examine the cost of running such organizations. We will utilize the model created by Sharkey, Torrats-Espinosa, and Takyar⁶¹ to estimate potential decreases in arrests from establishing community organizations within these cities, and make recommendations based upon cost and estimated benefits. Developing community organizations to address the root causes of crime and violence helps to bring the Justice Advisor's calls to action to fruition. These organizations benefit people throughout the community and contribute to stronger communities, more stable families, and a more just state.

RESEARCH RATIONALE

THEORETICAL MODEL

Figure 4, below, is a visual depiction of the dual relationship between enacting policies shown to reduce recidivism and investment in nonprofit community organizations on crime reduction and fiscal benefits.

Figure 4. The Relationship Between Detention Reduction Policies, Reduced Crime, and Fiscal Benefits



*The dotted line in the model above indicates that the second pathway only exists if Connecticut policymakers utilize fiscal benefits from decarceration policies to fund nonprofit community organizations.

The first pathway, depicted toward the top of the model, is a direct relationship between enacting decarceration policies for detention, reduced crime, and fiscal benefits. The research by Walker and Herting⁶² discussed earlier indicates that reducing the use of pretrial detention for youth with four or fewer prior interactions with the court, as well as reducing the number of days youth spend in pretrial detention, will lead to reduced youth recidivism. Reducing youth recidivism will lead to lower numbers of arrests, which will cyclically lead to fewer children and youth in detention. These fewer children in detention will result in fiscal benefits for the state. This paper will not attempt to quantify the potential crime reduction and fiscal benefits of this direct relationship, as it would require more granular data on the court records of youth in detention centers.

The second pathway, depicted toward the bottom of the model, requires two policy interventions. First, enacting decarceration policies for detention can create initial fiscal benefits. Second, if the State utilizes those fiscal benefits to fund nonprofit community organizations within Connecticut's cities, the prevention and intervention work of these organizations will lead to fewer arrests, which will cyclically lead to fewer people (children, youth, and adults) held in detention, which will increase fiscal benefits. This piece of the model reflects the research completed by Sharkey, Torratis-Espinosa, and Takyar,⁶³ discussed earlier. The dotted line in our theoretical model indicates that the second pathway only exists if Connecticut policymakers utilize fiscal benefits to invest in nonprofit community organizations. The research in this paper quantifies possibilities to create the second pathway, and utilizes the analysis to make recommendations for investments.

USING MARGINAL COST ANALYSES TO CREATE CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATES

When Connecticut closed CJTS, many people in the state—including the Governor—believed it would save the state money.⁶⁴ There was much confusion, however, regarding *how much* money would actually be freed up through the closure. The FY 2018 budget transferred \$17 million of the annual funding to the Judicial Branch⁶⁵ despite the center costing \$57 million to create⁶⁶ and \$20,411,312⁶⁷ - \$31,322,776⁶⁸ annually to run. Ultimately, the State continues to pay for the property and building upkeep, and rather than being laid off many staff were transferred to other positions. Additionally, some costs, such as administrative costs and the provision of certain services, were diffused across the Department of Children and Families. While it is not incorrect to include all funding in an analysis of costs, not considering tied-up funds can make it hard to create realistic policy from analyses.

For example, if we estimated the overall “per diem” cost for CJTS in 2018 by looking at the total projected budget of \$19,147,469, and dividing it by the number of projected child-days, 18,250, we’d estimate that each child-day costs \$1,049. From this, we might conclude that if we decrease child-days by 95, we have \$100,000 to spend toward something else, such as new motor vehicles. However, when we consider that staffing expenses account for \$12,119,171, and workers comp expenses account for \$5,015,744, we can see that there is only \$2,012,554 in money that could *possibly* be spent on child costs such as food, medical supplies, and clothing. This would bring our predicted per diem cost down to \$110.28. Utilizing this amount, we would need to reduce child-days by 907 to purchase \$100,000 worth of motor vehicles. That being said, once facilities reduce child-days by a certain amount, they can also reduce staff members, which may produce benefits such as saving funds.

If we instead try to estimate the marginal costs—that is, those associated with a particular unit, in this case a child-day—we can avoid making the conclusion that reducing utilization reaps benefits beyond the costs spent within a specific period of time on that unit. Estimating marginal costs requires more detailed analysis, and it leads to more conservative estimates of costs and benefits. This analysis considers marginal costs that are variable—that is, they relate directly to the number of children in detention for a unit of one day, and they change immediately as that number increases or decreases. These are costs such as food, fuel, behavioral health services, and recreational activities. Other types of costs include fixed costs that are not typically affected in relationship with short-term changes, such as rent and utilities costs, and step-fixed costs that are constant within a certain range and then can change when workload increases or decreases beyond a specific range, such as staff salaries and benefits.⁶⁹

This analysis seeks to estimate the marginal costs of keeping one child in detention for one day, which we call child-days. We will then make recommendations for how to reduce child-days and for how to use benefits reaped from reduction of child-days to reduce arrests in Connecticut’s cities. Because the unit is child-days, we can reduce costs through reducing the number of children and youth who enter detention—a trend already happening in Connecticut—or through reducing the length of time that children and youth spend in detention, or both.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS OF THE NONPROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION ANALYSIS

In addition to estimating the marginal cost of child-days in Connecticut, this analysis utilizes a model of the causal effect of local nonprofits on violent crime, developed by Professor of Sociology Patrick Sharkey and colleagues⁷⁰ to examine where investments in nonprofit community organizations may help reduce arrest rates in Connecticut, which nonprofit services are most needed in our cities, and how much it costs to provide those services. To use this model, we must make four assumptions.

First, we assume that the degree of causal effect found nationally is also true in Connecticut. While this assumption is empirically testable, that is beyond the scope of this current project. Second, we assume that because youth arrests in addition to adult arrests were originally included in the causal model of the effect of local nonprofits on violent crime, the relationship will hold true for youth as well as adults. Testing this assumption would be more challenging and less precise because of the relatively small number of youth arrests in comparison to adult arrests. Again, it is beyond the scope of this project. Third, we assume that because the causal model was created using OLS regression, we can estimate the impact of each unit of community organizations utilizing simple division. This assumption, while mathematically sound, does not account for the possibility of amplification effects or saturation effects. Fourth, the model on the causal effect of local nonprofits on violent crime examines quantity of nonprofits rather than quality. When breaking apart the nonprofits by type, it finds variability in estimated effectiveness, which suggests that the quality of the service and the nonprofit leadership and staff additionally have an impact on reducing crime.



METHODS

DATA SOURCES

To calculate the marginal average cost of holding one child in detention for one day, we utilized two data sets. First, we calculated the total number of days children spent in detention per year using Connecticut Judicial Branch yearly statewide detention admissions data for the years 2014 through 2018.⁷¹ After 2018, the Judicial Branch also began serving adjudicated youth placed into secure longer-term care, which will add additional costs to the detention centers.

To calculate expenses, we used general fund expenditure data on Court Support Services Division juvenile detention/transportation by account code, provided by the Connecticut Judicial Branch to the Council of State Governments (CSG) for the Improving Outcomes for Youth Project; the Judicial Branch approved the use of this data by Connecticut Voices for Children.

We obtained arrest data for 2014-2018 from annual “Crime in Connecticut” reports, which are publications of the Connecticut Uniform Crime Reporting Program, maintained by the Connecticut State Police Crime Analysis Unit.⁷² Data on cities in Connecticut come from the United States Census for year 2018.⁷³

We calculated the average cost of running community-based organizations in Connecticut utilizing data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), a part of the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute. The analysis focused on NCCS’ 2017 Core File of Public Charities.⁷⁴ The core file includes all active reporting organizations in 2017, giving detailed financial information on revenue, expenses, and assets of each. 2017 is the most recent year in which these data are currently available. The key columns of interest in this analysis were city, state, annual expenses, and National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) classification codes. The NTEE system is used by the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and NCCS to classify nonprofit organizations. In general, each organization is assigned a three digit code, the first digit being alphabetic, and the second two being numeric. The letter assigns each organization to a “major group” such as health or education, while the first numeric digit further divides organizations in this major group by activity area, such as early education. The third digit even further subdivides into specific types of organizations, such as daycare.

ANALYSIS METHODOLOGIES

To calculate an estimate of the total number of days children spent in detention per year, we added together the discrete number of stays in a year (which includes children returning to detention) and multiplied that number by the average length of stays in a year. We refer to this variable as “Child-days.” To calculate an estimate of the total number of days for which staff were paid during a year, we multiplied the number of staff in both detention centers and both transportation centers by the number of days in a year. We refer to this variable as “Staff-days.” We also consider the number of facilities in operation within our analyses.

To simplify expenditure data, we combined expense types that had the same name and Special Identification Code but were paid through different line items. We excluded capital expenses, deleted expense types in which zero dollars were spent over the duration of the five years,⁷⁵ and deleted

expense types in which dollars were only spent in one of the five years.⁷⁶ Our final data preparation step was to adjust all dollars for inflation by calculating them into 2018 rates.⁷⁷

We calculated short-term marginal costs per child-day spent in Connecticut detention centers utilizing two methods: modified bottom-up calculations⁷⁸ and stepwise linear regression analysis. We did not have information regarding which expense categories are used entirely for children versus which are used for staff, administrative, and general upkeep purposes, so prior to calculating bottom-up costs we ran one-tailed correlations examining the relationship between our child-day variable, our staff-day variable, and the number of transportation centers open (one center closed in 2016, reducing the number of staff). We hypothesized that costs associated with the number of children per day would increase with more children per day, which is why we chose to utilize one-tailed correlations. Due to the small number of years of data (n=5), only very strong correlations emerged as statistically significant.

To calculate the relationship between the number of children and youth aged 17 and younger arrested and the number of child and youth stays in detention centers, we added the number of discrete detention stays in a year within the Connecticut Judicial Branch yearly statewide detention admissions data for the years 2014 through 2018.⁷⁹ This number includes youth who return to detention due to multiple arrests. To estimate the relationship, we ran a simple linear regression analysis predicting the number of stays in detention centers from the number of arrests. We ran the analysis statewide (rather than localized to cities) because we did not have data regarding the town of origin for the children in detention centers.

Our first step to calculate the cost of investing in nonprofit community organizations was, in our NCCS dataset, to separate all Connecticut nonprofits from the rest in the file as the analysis was limited to Connecticut. After this, we distinguished which Connecticut organizations are community focused using the NCCS data codes defined by Sharkey and colleagues.⁸⁰ We further divided the nonprofit community organizations into five subcategories: crime prevention, neighborhood development, substance abuse prevention, job training and workforce development, and children. In their online supplement to their publication, Sharkey and colleagues list NTEE codes corresponding to each subcategory of community organization, allowing us to categorize Connecticut's nonprofit community organizations according to their methods.⁸¹

To make sure the expense data best represented the organizations in Connecticut, we utilized a simple interquartile range (IQR) analysis to remove outliers. We calculated outliers within each of the five subcategories to account for the nature that some categories of nonprofits would likely have higher spending than others. Any organizations that had spending above $Q3 + 1.5 \times IQR$ of their subcategory's data were considered outliers. Due to the fact that $Q1 - 1.5 \times IQR$ was negative for all five subcategories, there were no outliers on the low end of the expenses. We additionally excluded organizations with annual expenses of \$0 remained from the data set. Nonprofit organizations with expenses equal to, or close to, \$0 are likely volunteer-run organizations. Removing outliers changed "n" for the number of total community organizations from 505 to 425, and decreased the range from \$67,920,728 to \$10,691,881. Removing organizations with expenses of \$0 further reduced the number of total community organizations to 418.

After doing an analysis on all of Connecticut's nonprofit community organizations, we focused in on the cities in Connecticut with over 100,000 residents. The paper by Sharkey and colleagues based their analysis on cities with at least 100,000 residents, so it was important to recreate this with

Connecticut's data. Connecticut has five cities over 100,000 residents: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, and Waterbury. The NCCS file labels each organization with its respective city, so by sorting by city, we targeted organizations in these cities over 100,000 residents. Within the five subcategories of nonprofit community organizations, we looked individually at each city with more than 100,000 residents, and their combined average. Our final data preparation step was to adjust all dollars for inflation by calculating them into 2018 rates.⁸²

To predict how juvenile arrest rates would change with the addition of nonprofit community organizations, we used data from Connecticut State Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection's Crimes Analysis Unit.⁸³ We used arrest data from their annual Crime in Connecticut report from 2018 and categorized this data the same way as it was categorized in the model created by Sharkey and colleagues. This model estimated that year-over-year every additional 10 community based organizations in communities with 100,000 people or more leads to a nine percent decrease in the murder rate, a six percent decrease in the violent crime rate, and a four percent decrease in the property crime rate. The violent crime rate is defined by the Crime in Connecticut report as the sum of all murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault offenses over a given period of time. The rate of property crime is the sum of all burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft offenses over a given period of time

First we looked at arrest rates for murder, violent crime, and property crime for juvenile offenders in Connecticut as a whole. To estimate the effect each one additional community based organization would have, we divided nine percent by 10, and subtracted 0.9 percent of the arrest rate for murder for each additional nonprofit. The same was done for the violent crime rate, dividing six percent by 10, and for the property crime rate, dividing four percent by 10. We repeated this method for youth arrest data in each of the five cities in Connecticut with over 100,000 residents, as well as for the combination of the data from all cities over 100,000 residents. To examine predicted year-over-year reductions in arrests, we utilize the following equations, derived from Sharkey and colleagues' model:⁸⁴

$$\text{predicted violent crimes} = (\text{n violent crimes}) * (1 - [\text{n additional nonprofit community organizations} * .06])$$

$$\text{predicted property arrests} = (\text{n property arrests}) * (1 - [\text{n additional nonprofit community organizations} * .04])$$

Because the model by Sharkey and colleagues estimated crime rates for all ages decreasing by nine percent, six percent, and four percent (for murder, property crime, and violent crime respectively) with the addition of 10 community based nonprofits, it was important to look at adult data as well. For Connecticut as a whole, and for the cities with over 100,000 residents, we performed the same analysis to estimate the arrest rates for murder, property crime, and violent crime with each additional community based nonprofit.

RESULTS

ESTIMATE OF MARGINAL DAILY COSTS OF DETENTION AND ASSOCIATED TRANSPORTATION IN CONNECTICUT

A traditional analysis of cost per child-day, in which we divide total annual expenses (adjusted to 2018 dollars) by the number of child-days each year, yields a daily cost per child of \$635.70-\$971.30. If we utilize the average of these daily costs per child (\$830.18) we might predict that the substantial drop in child-days between 2014 and 2018 would result in the Judicial Branch being able to reduce the detention costs accordingly. While child-days have dropped 42 percent between 2014 and 2018 (by 10,990 child-days), inflation-adjusted expenses have only decreased by \$3,904,277 (23.6 percent). To avoid too-high estimates of daily expenditures and potential benefits, we turned to running a marginal cost analysis instead.

We hypothesized that costs associated with the number of children per day would increase with more children per day, so we utilized one-tailed correlations to examine which costs vary with the number of child-days. Due to the small number of years of data (n=5), only very strong correlations emerged as significant. The expenses that emerged as significantly correlating with children/day included: employee travel, rental and maintenance equipment, motor vehicle costs, premise security, clothing and footwear, drugs and pharmaceuticals, food and beverage, general office supplies, kitchen and dining supplies, personal hygiene supplies, recreational supplies, and government buildings. See **Table 1** for details.



Table 1. Correlations Between Detention Center and Transportation Center Expense Categories, Number of Children Per Day, Number of Paid Staff Days, and Number of Transportation Centers

Expense Description	<i>r(p)</i>		
	Child-Day	Staff-Day	<i>n</i> Transportation Centers
Total personal services	.761(.068)	.959**(.005)	.979**(.002)
Education and training for employees	-.280(.324)	-.012(.495)	.170(.392)
Tuition reimbursement	-.306(.308)	-.008(.495)	.165(.395)
Employee travel	.864*(.029)	.759(.068)	.716(.087)
Prof, scientific, and tech services	.396(.24)	.372(.269)	.383(.262)
Other services	.794(.054)	.871*(.027)	.819*(.045)
Rental and maintenance equipment	.812*(.048)	.864*(.029)	.842*(.037)
Client services	-.123(.422)	.284(.322)	.463(.216)
Motor vehicle costs	.939**(.009)	.864*(.029)	.811(.048)
Premise security	.908*(.017)	.756(.070)	.685(.101)
IT services	-.356(.278)	-.544(.172)	-.550(.169)
Communications	.613(.136)	.851*(.034)	.911*(.016)
Clothing and footwear	.960**(.005)	.838*(.038)	.735(.079)
Drugs and pharmaceuticals	.918*(.014)	.783(.059)	.701(.094)
Food and beverage	.962**(.004)	.977**(.002)	.918**(.014)
General office supplies	.869*(.028)	.848*(.035)	.812*(.047)
Kitchen and dining supplies	.974**(.002)	.969**(.003)	.905*(.017)
Medical supplies	.612(.136)	.835*(.039)	.829*(.041)
Minor equipment controllable	.522(.183)	.215(.364)	.112(.429)
Minor equipment non-controllable	-.413(.245)	-.491(.200)	-.499(.196)
Personal hygiene supplies	.884*(.023)	.862*(.030)	.795(.054)
Recreational supplies	.818*(.045)	.533(.178)	.420(.241)
Government buildings	.808*(.049)	.561(.163)	.472(.211)
Medical services non-profits	-.449(.224)	-.125(.420)	-.026(.483)
Medical services for-profits	-.577(.154)	-.577(.154)	-.572(.157)
Fees and permits	-.559(.163)	-.589(.148)	-.600(.142)

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .005$

We then added each of these expenses for each year and divided them by the child-day variable to estimate the predictable expenses spent per child in a detention facility per day (**Table 2**), and then we calculated the mean of those predictable expenses. We arrived at an estimated marginal per child per day expense of \$76.91.

Table 2. Bottom-Up Marginal Child Per Day Detention Costs by Year

Year	Child-day	Bottom-up added costs	Marginal costs per child per day
2014	26037.54	\$2,206,669.85	\$84.75
2015	21098.70	\$1,523,475.37	\$72.21
2016	17985.90	\$1,475,038.19	\$82.01
2017	14139.36	\$1,042,024.75	\$73.70
2018	15157.45	\$1,014,665.53	\$66.94
Average	18883.79	\$1,452,374.94	\$76.91

While this bottom-up analysis provides a reasonable starting estimate for marginal per child per day costs, there are some obvious limitations of the methodology that bring the conclusion into question. First, there are strong causal relationships between the number of children in detention per day, the number of staff paid on a daily basis, and the number of centers in operation (**Table 3**). This relationship makes it difficult to determine that the money significantly correlated with the number of children per day is actually spent in totality on children (rather than partially). Second, there are expenses (such as medical services) where logically money is spent on children, but the need to use these monies may vary wildly based on the needs of individual high-need children. Because these are not monies spent predictably and clearly linked to the aggregate number of children, they are not considered in our bottom-up marginal cost analysis.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix for Child-days, Staff-days, and Number of Transportation Centers

	Child-day	Staff-day	<i>n</i> Transportation Centers
Child-day	1	.895*(.040)	.801(.104)
Staff-day		1	.980**(.003)
<i>n</i> Transportation Centers			1

*p<.05, **p<.005

To provide additional validity to our analysis, we also ran a stepwise regression analysis to estimate the proportion of variance in spending that is accounted for by variance in number of children per day. We used a stepwise model to allow us to determine the growth in variance explained based upon the addition of each factor. We found a high level of collinearity between the number of staff days in a year and the number of transportation centers, so we excluded the number of transportation centers from our analysis.

When we regressed the number of child-days each year on the total spending minus the amount spent on personal services (which is money used for staffing), the model explained 85.5 percent of the variance, $F(1,3)=17.691$, $p=.025$. When we added the number of staff-days each year to the model, the model explained an additional 0.3 percent of the variance, $F\Delta(1,2)=.047$, $p=.848$. Therefore, we only consider the first step of our model.

We find that yearly cost (minus personal costs) = $106.205(\text{number of child-days}) + \$2,580,589.16$, $\beta=.925$, $p=.025$. That is, our regression analysis estimates that each additional day a child spends in detention costs Connecticut a marginal expense of \$106.21.

Taken together, we estimate that our marginal cost of detention per child per day likely falls between \$76.91 and \$106.21. For the purposes of this paper, we will utilize the more conservative cost estimate. We think it is important to note that this is an *exceedingly* conservative estimate in that it does not account for education costs, which the Hartford and Bridgeport school districts pay.⁸⁵ It also does not account for staff reduction that corresponds with a predictable and steady decrease in the number of child-days, nor does it account for shared costs across the Judicial Branch such as administration.

Personal costs are a major driver of detention costs, accounting for around 75 percent of what CSSD spends on detention centers and transportation centers. We are unable to compute a reliable estimate of how the number of staff employed decreases with a reduction in number of children per day due to the small number of years in this data set and the closing of a transportation center in 2017, after which there was a significant reduction in number of staff. To obtain a clearer sense of how the number of staff decreases as the result of decreases in the number of children per day in detention, we would need to explore data going back to 2008, so that it includes data five years prior to when the New Haven Detention Center stopped admitting children.

THE ANNUAL COSTS OF NONPROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS CONNECTICUT

We ran simple demographic analyses including arithmetic mean, median, standard deviation, spread, and average daily cost on the entirety of nonprofit community organizations in Connecticut, in each of the five cities larger than 100,000 residents, and on all the cities larger than 100,000 residents, which we display in **Table 4**. This analysis allows us to see which cities have greater need for additional nonprofit community organizations and which type of nonprofit community organizations are needed. It also allows us to estimate how many child-days must be reduced to fund additional nonprofit community organizations. We calculated these estimates by dividing mean expenses by the cost of one child-day, \$76.91. Additionally, we display the spread of nonprofit community organizations statewide in **Figure 5**, because expenses varied wildly from \$102.44 (indicating the organization is unlikely to have paid staff) to more than \$10 million.

Across the state, job training organizations are scarce, followed by crime prevention organizations and substance abuse intervention organizations. With a mean expense rate of \$198,370.33 annually, job training organizations in Connecticut's cities have lower costs than mean expenses statewide. These expenses are equivalent to 2,579 child-day costs, which would require a 17 percent reduction in child-days. As a reminder, we are utilizing our lower-bound estimate of \$76.91 as the variable cost of one child in detention for one day. Crime prevention programs have higher mean expenditures in the cities—around \$383,215.10 annually. These expenses are equivalent to the cost of 4,983 child-

days (the cost of one child in detention for one day), which would require a 33 percent reduction in child-days. And substance abuse programs in the cities, while they have a wide spread of expenses, have a mean expense (within the 5 largest cities) of \$906,004.20. These expenses are equivalent to 11,780 child-day costs (the cost of one child in detention for one day), which would require a 78 percent reduction in child-days.

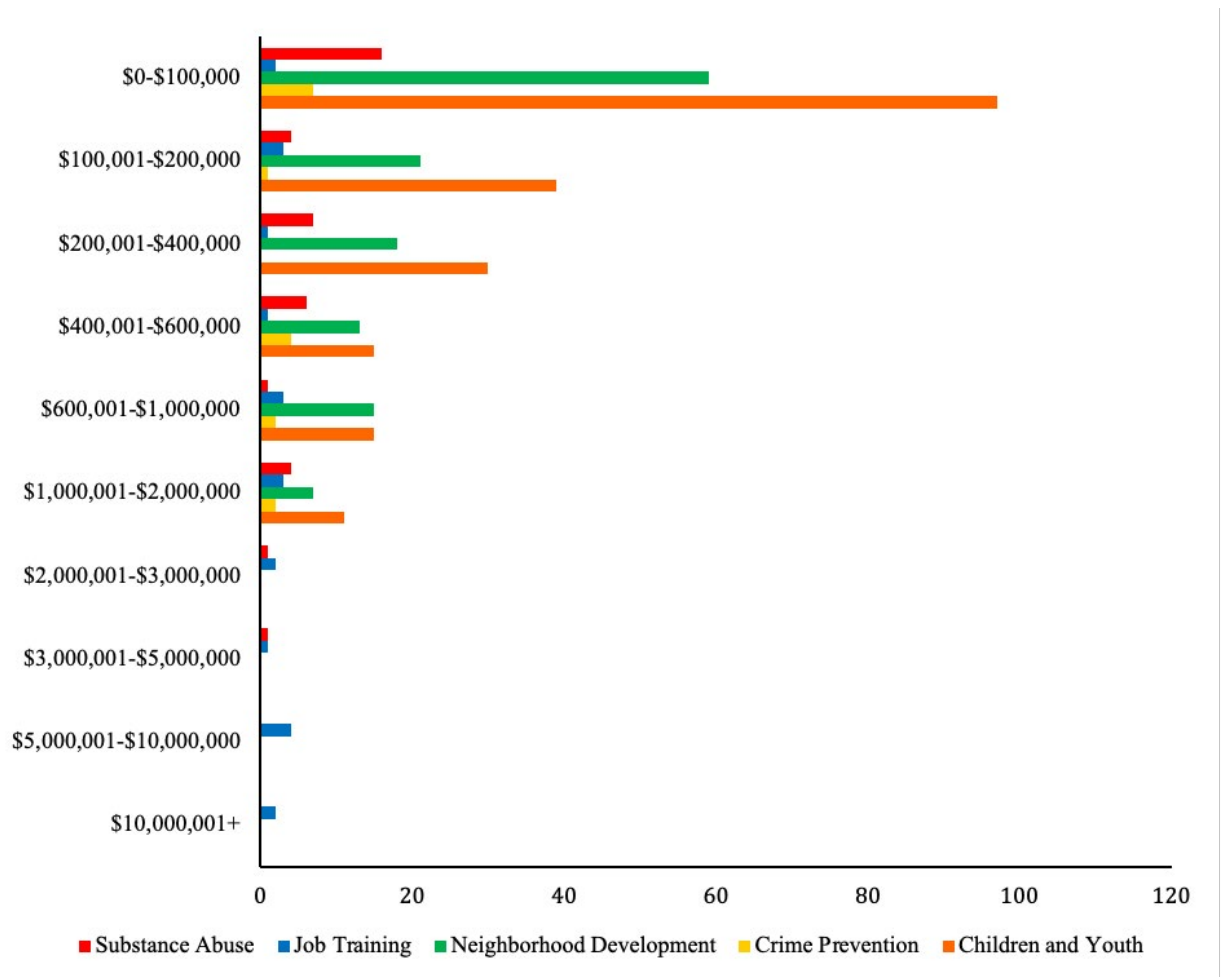
Overall, Waterbury has the smallest number of nonprofit community organizations for a city with a population over 100,000 people. In particular, in 2017, none of Waterbury's nonprofit community organizations were considered crime prevention organizations or substance abuse intervention organizations. It also has about half of the number of child and youth services organizations compared to the other cities greater than 100,000 people. While Stamford also has a small number of nonprofit community organizations, it has at least one within each category of services, which, combined with being a higher-resourced city, may help contribute to its relatively low arrest rates. New Haven and Hartford have higher numbers of nonprofit community organizations, but they each have some large service gaps. New Haven had zero nonprofit community organizations focused on job training in 2017, and Hartford only had one. Hartford also only had one crime prevention nonprofit community organization.



Table 4. Nonprofit Community Organizations Statewide and in Connecticut Cities

Level of Analysis	Descriptive Statistics	Class of Nonprofit Community Organization					
		Overall Nonprofit Community Organizations	Substance Abuse	Job Training	Neighborhood Development	Crime Prevention	Children and Youth
Statewide	<i>n</i>	418	40	22	133	16	207
	Mean Expenses	\$448,318.80	\$539,698.70	\$3,070,318.95	\$284,684.78	\$440,146.50	\$257,762.48
	Median Expenses	\$137,220.20	\$215,226.52	\$1,596,643.86	\$138,032.02	\$314,439.50	\$114,537.86
	Standard Deviation	\$1,114,362.29	\$970,762.00	\$3,621,655.60	\$331,236.93	\$529,514	\$343,357.24
	Spread	\$102.44-\$10,953,027.75	\$500-\$5,053,610.40	\$16,210.0-\$10,952,631.80	\$146.49-\$1,295,718.06	\$4,373-\$1,964,519.70	\$102.44-\$1,620,090.90
	Mean Expense per Day	\$1,228.28	\$1,478.70	\$8,411.90	\$779.96	\$1,205.90	\$706.20
All CT Cities with Populations 100,000+	<i>n</i>	129	14	3	58	6	48
	Mean Expenses	\$384,237.25	\$906,004.20	\$198,370.33	\$337,661.88	\$383,215.10	\$300,078.40
	Median Expenses	\$146,146.49	\$332,978.50	\$198,030.53	\$169,701.09	\$293,768.70	\$138,757.82
	Standard Deviation	\$588,874.64	\$1,422,079.63	\$181,934.50	\$348,677.10	\$436,795.70	\$350,263.63
	Spread	\$512.21-\$5,053,622.62	\$500-\$5,053,110.41	\$16,605.93-\$363,868.51	\$3,341.67-\$1,295,718.06	\$4,479.81-\$1,075,178.87	\$768.32-\$1,544,454.54
	Mean Expense per Day	\$1,052.70	\$248.12	\$543.48	\$925.10	\$1,049.90	\$822.13
Bridgeport	<i>n</i>	27	5	0	11	1	10
	Mean Expenses	\$542,404.44	\$1,814,311.20	N/A	\$164,768.89	\$28,290.51	\$373,261.56
	Median Expenses	\$245,992.05	\$590,822.65	N/A	\$79,996.30	\$28,290.51	\$332,862.24
	Standard Deviation	\$1,051,191.04	\$2,079,086.31	N/A	\$172,487.65	N/A	\$322,199.46
	Spread	\$23,991-\$5,053,622.62	\$245,992.05-\$5,053,622.62	N/A	\$23,991.00-\$489,756.99	N/A	\$38,211.04-\$885,673.61
	Mean Expense per Day	\$1,486	\$4,970.71	N/A	\$451.42	\$77.51	\$1,022.63
Hartford	<i>n</i>	34	4	1	18	1	10
	Mean Expenses	\$518,798.92	\$753,761.81	\$380,474.43	\$477,053.31	\$1,079,658.68	\$457,702.33
	Median Expenses	\$478,706.01	\$605,146.66	\$380,474.43	\$492,912.74	\$1,079,658.68	\$272,926.22
	Standard Deviation	\$473,400.00	\$742,451.74	N/A	\$422,197.46	N/A	\$481,705.41
	Spread	\$3,341.67-\$1,781,800.44	\$22,953.26-\$1,781,800.44	N/A	\$3,341.67-\$1,295,718.06	N/A	\$37,557.46-\$1,544,454.54
	Mean Expense per Day	\$1,421.40	\$2,065.10	\$1,042.39	\$1,306.99	\$2,957.97	\$1,253.98
New Haven	<i>n</i>	34	2	0	19	3	10
	Mean Expenses	\$279,640.61	\$57,222.30	N/A	\$387,653.50	\$212,012.18	\$139,188.39
	Median Expenses	\$129,339.26	\$57,222.30	N/A	\$311,296.05	\$32,232.50	\$63,472.33
	Standard Deviation	\$306,738.87	\$80,200.20	N/A	\$319,018.86	\$335,709.05	\$237,950.20
	Spread	\$512.21-\$942,639.82	\$512.21-\$113,932.43	N/A	\$19,925.06-\$942,639.82	\$4,479.81-\$599,324.35	\$11,891.52-\$806,535.77
	Mean Expense per Day	\$766.17	\$156.78	N/A	\$1,062.02	\$580.86	\$381.29
Stamford	<i>n</i>	20	3	1	3	1	12
	Mean Expenses	\$192,007.32	\$161,004.03	\$16,605.93	\$201,230.11	\$555,304.81	\$181,794.42
	Median Expenses	\$142,631.69	\$192,802.89	\$16,605.93	\$99,899.85	\$555,304.81	\$142,631.69
	Standard Deviation	\$213,464.10	\$88,726.83	N/A	\$256,760.41	N/A	\$223,816.88
	Spread	\$768.32-\$718,109.47	\$60,759.66-\$229,449.64	N/A	\$10,596.65-\$493,193.94	N/A	\$768.32-\$718,109.47
	Mean Expense per Day	\$526	\$441.11	\$45.49	\$551.31	\$1,521.38	\$484.79
Waterbury	<i>n</i>	14	0	1	7	0	6
	Mean Expenses	\$281,042.84	N/A	\$198,030.53	\$173,694.70	N/A	\$420,117.62
	Median Expenses	\$90,827.04	N/A	\$198,030.53	\$80,382.51	N/A	\$352,332.97
	Standard Deviation	\$365,794.43	N/A	N/A	\$333,715.14	N/A	\$416,574.24
	Spread	\$5,360.81-\$1,075,949.24	N/A	N/A	\$5,360.81-\$925,188.74	N/A	\$46,524.25-\$1,075,949.24
	Mean Expense per Day	\$770	N/A	\$542.55	\$475.88	N/A	\$1,151.00

Figure 5. The Count of Connecticut Nonprofit Community Organizations Statewide by Annual Expense and Type of Service*



*This dataset only includes nonprofit organizations in Connecticut whose charge fit into the ones defined as “nonprofit community organizations:” namely, those in the five categories presented. They do not include other nonprofits such as those dedicated to arts and culture. There is a total of 418 nonprofit community organizations from all across the state of Connecticut represented within this dataset.

NONPROFIT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION TO ARREST RELATIONSHIPS

To begin to imagine the impact of adding nonprofit community organizations to cities in Connecticut, we modeled the predicted drop in violent crime, property arrests, and total arrests for youth and adults. Examining **Table 5**, we can see that because youth arrests are so low in Connecticut, the addition of a single nonprofit community organization is unlikely to reduce arrest rates. When combined with adults, though, investments in nonprofit community organizations in cities with high arrest rates could yield important results. For example, each nonprofit community organization added in Hartford would lead us to predict a drop of 11.33 arrests annually.

Table 5. Predicted Arrests as a Function of Additional Nonprofit Community Organizations

Level of Analysis	N Additional Nonprofit Community Organizations	Predicted Arrests for Youth			Predicted Arrests for Adults			Total Predicted Arrests		
		Violent Crimes	Property Arrests	Total Youth Arrests	Violent Crimes	Property Arrests	Total Adult Arrests	Violent Crimes	Property Arrests	Total Arrests
Statewide	0	328	1,378	1,706	3,109	11,210	14,319	3,437	12,588	16,025
	1	326.03	1,372.49	1698.52	3,090.35	11,165.16	14,255.51	3,416.38	12,537.65	15,954.03
	2	324.06	1,366.99	1691.05	3,071.69	11,120.32	14,192.01	3,395.75	12,487.31	15,883.06
	3	322.1	1,361.46	1683.56	3,053.04	11,075.48	14,128.52	3,375.14	12,436.94	15,812.08
	10	308.32	1,322.88	1,631.20	2,922.46	10,761.60	13,684.06	3,230.78	12,084.48	15,315.26
All CT Cities with Populations 100,000+	0	115	350	465	1,402	2,742	4,144	1,517	3,092	4,609
	1	114.31	348.6	462.91	1,393.59	2,731.03	4124.62	1,507.90	3,079.63	4,587.53
	2	113.62	347.2	460.82	1,385.18	2,720.06	4,105.24	1,498.80	3,067.26	4,566.06
	3	112.93	345.8	458.73	1,376.76	2,709.10	4,085.86	1,489.69	3,054.90	4,544.59
	10	108.1	336	444.1	1,317.88	2,632.32	3950.2	1,425.98	2,968.32	4,394.30
Bridgeport*	0	26	34	60	208	149	357	234	183	417
	1	25.84	33.86	59.7	206.75	148.4	355.15	232.59	182.26	414.85
	2	25.69	33.73	59.42	205.5	147.81	353.31	231.19	181.54	412.73
	3	25.53	33.59	59.12	204.26	147.21	351.47	229.79	180.8	410.59
	10	24.44	32.64	57.08	195.52	143.04	338.56	219.96	175.68	395.64
Hartford	0	23	90	113	502	978	1,480	525	1,068	1,593
	1	22.86	89.64	112.5	498.99	970.18	1,469.17	521.85	1,059.82	1,581.67
	2	22.72	89.28	112	495.98	966.26	1,462.24	518.7	1,055.54	1,574.24
	3	22.59	88.92	111.51	492.96	962.35	1,425.31	515.55	1,051.27	1,566.82
	10	21.62	86.4	108.02	471.88	938.88	1,410.76	493.5	1,025.28	1,518.78
New Haven	0	27	100	127	385	835	1,220	412	935	1,347
	1	26.84	99.6	126.44	383.46	831.66	1,215.12	410.3	931.26	1,341.56
	2	26.68	99.2	125.88	381.92	828.32	1,210.24	408.6	927.52	1,336.12
	3	26.51	98.8	125.31	380.38	824.98	1,205.36	406.89	923.78	1,330.67
	10	25.38	96	121.38	369.6	801.6	1,271.20	394.98	897.6	1,292.58
Stamford	0	12	66	78	129	250	379	141	316	457
	1	11.93	65.74	77.67	128.23	249	377.23	140.16	314.74	454.9
	2	11.86	65.47	77.33	127.45	248	375.45	139.31	313.47	452.78
	3	11.78	65.21	76.99	126.68	247	373.68	138.46	312.21	450.67
	10	11.28	63.36	74.64	121.26	240	361.26	132.54	303.36	435.9
Waterbury	0	27	60	87	178	530	708	205	590	795
	1	26.84	59.76	86.6	176.93	527.88	704.81	203.77	587.64	791.41
	2	26.68	59.52	86.2	175.86	525.76	701.62	202.54	585.28	787.82
	3	26.51	59.28	85.79	174.8	523.64	698.44	201.31	582.92	784.23
	10	25.38	57.6	82.98	167.32	507.8	675.12	192.7	565.4	758.1

*Note that 2018 was a uniquely low-arrest year for Bridgeport. In 2017, Bridgeport police arrested 370 adults for violent crimes and 300 adults for property crimes. In 2016, Bridgeport police arrested 330 adults for violent crimes and 280 adults for property crimes.

ARREST TO DETENTION RELATIONSHIP

There is not a perfect correlation between the number of children arrested and the number of stays in detention centers, $r=.863$, $p=.030$ (one-tailed), which is understandable given differences in city police and Superior Court justice decisions. Additionally, beginning in 2017, policy changed such that the Superior Court may only determine a child should be held in detention if there is probable cause that the child committed a crime, there is no less restrictive alternative available, and there is belief that the child poses a public safety risk, will not appear in court, or needs to be held for another jurisdiction.⁸⁶

A simple linear regression analysis allows us to estimate the possible reduction of youth or child stays from a reduction in youth or child arrests utilizing the formula $\text{number of detention stays} = .546(\text{number of arrests}) - 2871.633$, $\beta=.863$, $p=.060$. These results are not statistically significant, and therefore should be interpreted with caution and further research, however they suggest that for about every two fewer arrests of children and youth aged 17 and younger, we should expect about one less stay in a detention center.

If we utilize 2018 data indicating that the average length of detention stay is 13.97 days and our conservative marginal cost estimate of \$76.91, for each two fewer children arrested, the Connecticut General Fund saves an estimated \$1,074.43 that can be re-invested into a nonprofit community organization that will help further reduce arrest rates.⁸⁷



LIMITATIONS AND DISCUSSION

LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

The most glaring limitation of this research is the highly conservative nature of its marginal cost analysis. While conservative estimates help to keep from spending dollars an agency or government body does not have, this particular model did not include the cost of educating youth in detention, the cost of administration for detention centers, and the cost of staffing the detention centers. We would need to access more years of data to provide reliable estimates for these step-fixed costs, but they might provide insight on whether policies helping to reduce detention use could feasibly pay for more expensive and higher-reward investments.

Another limitation is the fact that the cost analysis is limited to youth detention while nonprofit community organizations contribute to the reduction of arrests for both youth and adults. Understanding the costs of detention and incarceration for adults in Connecticut could help establish an estimate of when nonprofit community organizations begin producing benefits fiscally equivalent to or beyond their expenses.

We utilized publically available datasets, which presents three limitations. First, public datasets only allow for estimates. Second, they are not current. Third, within our nonprofit community organization dataset, the coding system captures some of the work of nonprofit community organizations, but not all of its work. For example, Connecticut Junior Republic in Waterbury provides child and youth services, and it also provides crime prevention and substance abuse services. Since it only serves children, it is coded as a child and youth program rather than a crime prevention or substance abuse program. While the coding system may underrepresent the complexity of the work done within cities, it should provide a reasonable estimate of the availability of organizations within one city compared to another. The data set is also from 2017, adjusted for 2018 inflation. Our fiscal data used to analyze detention costs provide some ideas of what money spent purchases, but as noted previously some items are impossible to tell how much goes towards children and youth and how much might be spent on staff. We would need to analyze at least six additional years of data (going back to 2008) to make conclusions regarding step-fixed costs for numbers of facilities and for how numbers of staff vary with child-days rather than numbers of facilities. Ideally we would need more data. We were also unable to analyze education costs due to being unable to find costs spent by the Bridgeport School District on the Bridgeport Detention Center.

Additionally, and as we stated earlier, the model we utilized looked at the causal impact of the quantity of nonprofit community organizations on arrest rates. While our model attempts to extrapolate those findings to the Connecticut context, we cannot stress enough that the *quality and type* of nonprofit community organizations matter, too. We predicted Connecticut's arrest reduction rates based on the average declines in crime rates presented by Sharkey and colleagues, but their research provides an interesting dive into what these rates mean when nonprofit community organizations are broken out by their service type.⁸⁸

Nationally, substance abuse programs are limited, so there is a lot of variance in the predicted impact of organizations on reducing arrests, but on average each additional nonprofit focused on substance abuse per 100,000 residents leads to a 23 percent decline in the murder rate, a 15 percent decline in the violent crime rate, and an 11 percent decline in the property crime rate.⁸⁹ While potential impacts on murder reduction are high, at an average of 23 percent, 95 percent confidence intervals range from

an estimate 5 percent reduction to an estimated 35 percent reduction. This large variance provides insights to the degree that the efficacy of substance abuse organizations differ based on quality.

Compared to child-serving organizations, neighborhood development organizations, and crime prevention organizations, workforce development programs are also limited in number, leading to a larger variance in estimates of their impact on crime reduction. On average, each additional nonprofit community organization focused on helping community members access meaningful work in a city of 100,000 residents leads to a 21 percent reduction in murder rates, a 14 percent reduction in violent crime rates, and a 10 percent reduction in property crime rates.

Crime prevention organizations proliferated in the 1990's and early 2000's, leading to much smaller variance estimates.⁹⁰ These programs reliably produce reductions in murder by around 6.7 percent, reductions in violent crimes by around 4.4 percent, and reductions in property crime by about 3.3 percent.⁹¹

Child and youth-serving organizations and neighborhood development organizations have the smallest average impact on crime reduction, but the high numbers of them across the state and country contribute to the aggregate crime reduction. Sharkey and colleagues found each youth organization to reduce murder rates by an average of 3.6 percent, violent crime rates by 2.4 percent, and property crime rates by 1.8 percent, with tight 95 percent confidence intervals.⁹² They found each neighborhood development organization to reduce murder rates by an average of 1.5 percent, violent crime rates by an average of one percent, and property crime rates by an average of .8 percent. Due to the high number of these organizations, the 95 percent confidence intervals were close to zero.

While we cannot overstate that quality of service matters, quantity of services matters in that where services do not exist or exist in too small quantities, communities cannot benefit from them. This paper helps to illuminate where that is happening in Connecticut, and we utilize the above estimates for impact in combination with considerations about where organizations exist.

CONCLUSIONS WE CAN REASONABLY DRAW FROM THESE ANALYSES

Our marginal cost analyses provide a very conservative estimate on how much it costs the State of Connecticut to hold a child in detention for the duration of one day. Adjusted to 2018 dollars, we estimate that the variable cost is between \$76.91 and \$106.21 per child per day.

Our analysis of the cost of nonprofit community organizations in Connecticut reveal that the mean for running a nonprofit community organization in one of the largest cities (those with populations of 100,000 or more) is about \$384,237.25 per year (refer back to Table 4 for descriptive statistics of nonprofit community organizations in Connecticut), which is equivalent to the marginal cost of 4,996 child-days, in detention centers. To sustainably fund the average nonprofit community organizations in a large city in Connecticut, the Judicial Branch and/or Connecticut General Assembly would need to implement a policy change that reduces child-days by 33 percent.

We find that nonprofit community organizations that provide child and youth services are somewhat more affordable to run, with a mean annual cost of \$300,078.48 to run in the cities; they are also the most plentiful nonprofit community organizations.

Workforce development organizations are both scarce in cities and provide the greatest value in terms of potential crime reduction. The mean cost of running a workforce development organization in one of Connecticut's cities is \$198,370.33 annually, which is equivalent to 2,579 child-days (the cost of one child for one day) in detention centers and would require a policy change reducing child-days by 17 percent to sustainably fund.

Crime prevention programs have smaller average impacts on crime reduction but reliably contribute to lowering arrest rates in cities. While these programs sprang up around the country in the 1990's and early 2000's, Connecticut only has 16 nonprofit community organizations whose NTEE codes specify that they focus on crime prevention, and only six of these are in cities. The mean cost of operating a crime prevention organization in a city is \$383,215 per year, which equates to the cost of 4,982 child-days. A 33 percent reduction in the use of detention could sustainably fund the creation of a crime prevention nonprofit community organization.

Substance abuse organizations are also scarce in many cities and have possible large impacts on crime reduction. The mean annual cost of running a substance abuse treatment and intervention organization in a Connecticut city is \$906,004.20, which is equivalent to 11,780 child-days in detention centers and would require a policy change reducing child-days by 78 percent to sustainably fund. While Connecticut has great need for more substance abuse treatment programs, they are expensive programs to run. This suggests the need to innovate in how we think about creating a reinvestment plan in Connecticut.

We also find that Waterbury has very low numbers of nonprofit community organizations compared to Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford.

None of Waterbury's nonprofit community organizations have NTEE codes specifying that they focus on crime prevention or substance abuse. While Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford have more nonprofit community organizations, all three cities would benefit from the addition of a job training focused nonprofit community organization, and New Haven could benefit from additional substance abuse treatment and intervention organizations.

Our model (**Table 5**) of the predicted impact of each nonprofit community organization added to cities in Connecticut illustrates that much of the benefit to communities actually comes from reducing adult arrest rates. In 2018, Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury stood to benefit more greatly from additional nonprofit community organizations.

POLICY AND INVESTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Former President Barack Obama said, “A budget is more than just a series of numbers on a page; it is an embodiment of our values.” All too often, Connecticut’s juvenile justice reform efforts have been undercut by budget cuts and restrictions, underfunding of community-based diversion and rehabilitation services, and a lack of investment in our youth affected by the justice system. As this paper points out, Connecticut’s ongoing failure to fully fund reform efforts carries several costs: it comes at the cost of the General Fund’s bottom line, but more importantly, it comes at the cost of our youth today, and at the cost of the potential of Connecticut’s future. Within this section, we organize our recommendations first with policy changes that will help to decrease the number of youth sent to detention centers as well as the time youth spend in detention centers, and then we make recommendations regarding how to invest the benefits of reduced detention to best-serve impacted communities. Finally, we make recommendations for data collection and reporting to improve the transparency of carceral system costs and spending. By elevating policy, practices, and investments that emphasize diversion and community-based services, rather than detention, we hope to not only relieve some of the burden of Connecticut and their taxpayers, but also create a Connecticut that can undeniably say it values the youth in its care.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO DECREASE DETENTION CHILD-DAYS

Detention is an important point in the juvenile justice system. Being in detention increases the likelihood that youth will become further involved in the justice system and committed.⁹³ Detention also removes youth from their support groups; while detained, youth are separated from their families, friends, schools, religious organizations, and their communities. Even after detention, stigma associated with time spent in confinement can lead to social separation.⁹⁴ Not only can work, school, and community connections be disrupted by stays in detention, but these disruptions can also harm youth’s mental health and the ability to be successful in the short and long term.⁹⁵

For the amount of harm and lasting impact that detention can cause, one would expect significant justification for keeping youth detained. However, a Sentencing Project report states that nationally about 70 percent of youth being detained or incarcerated are being held for non-violent offenses.⁹⁶ Another Maine Juvenile Justice System Assessment report found that “almost half of detained youth were charged with non-violent offenses”⁹⁷ and over 80 percent of youth detained were deemed low or moderate risk. The study also found that many youth were being detained due to a shortage of more appropriate programs, with many youth being detained “for extended periods while awaiting placement or community-based services.”⁹⁸ Simply put, detention is not what is best for Connecticut’s youth, and the State should take action in the following ways:

The Connecticut General Assembly should amend the Statutes so that youth may not be held in detention pending a hearing. Sec. 46b-133 (e) of the Connecticut General Statutes currently allows for police to arrest children for “delinquent acts” and detain them pending a hearing. Hearings must be held the business day following the arrest of a child or youth.⁹⁹ Given that the mere act of placing a child in detention has been shown to have deleterious effects that can compound by day,¹⁰⁰ we recommend that the State end the practice of allowing for child and youth detention prior to judicial hearings. Furthermore, if a child or youth is arrested on a Friday, that child or youth may serve three days in a detention facility prior to a judicial hearing, meaning that the practice of pre-hearing detention costs Connecticut \$76.91-\$230.73 per child or youth. According to the data we presented

in the background section of this paper, in 2018, 27 percent of admissions to detention centers were cases that lasted three days or fewer. Although we do not have information on the reasons for these short cases, we can estimate that policies that reduce the use of short stays in detention can create benefits of \$22,530.78-\$67,603.89 annually.

The Connecticut Judicial Branch should assess the risk and needs of youth outside of detention centers. Upon entry to detention, the Statutes direct that a child should be administered a detention risk screening instrument and then, unless the child or youth was arrested for a serious juvenile offense, has an order not to release, an arrest warrant, or an order to detain, may be released to his or her guardian.¹⁰¹ This process may account for many of Connecticut's short detention cases. As mentioned, short cases make up a significant portion of detention admissions (27 percent of cases); this accounts for up to 879 child-days. One could argue that youth and children are unlikely to reap any therapeutic benefits over the course of a few days, and the research we have discussed throughout this paper shows that much harm to children's well-being and to public safety can result from even short stays in carceral facilities. We recommend piloting new ways to assess youth outside of detention centers such as by phone or video conferencing¹⁰² or within courthouses. This pilot may need to utilize the entirety of predicted immediate benefits from implementing policies that will effectively eliminate the need to use detention facilities for three days or fewer. The resulting reduction in entry to detention, however, should result long-term in reduction of child and youth recidivism and fewer arrests, thereby yielding additional fiscal benefits.

The Connecticut General Assembly should raise the minimum age of juvenile court jurisdiction at minimum to age 12. Prior to the 2020 legislative session ending due to the coronavirus pandemic, the JJPOC recommended to the Legislature that it raise the minimum age of juvenile court jurisdiction such that children under the age of 12 could not enter the carceral system.¹⁰³ There's a large body of evidence that children this young do not understand the legal process and that court involvement can have significant harmful effects on young children.¹⁰⁴ While the number of children under the age of 12 in detention centers in Connecticut is small, it exists. In FY 2017 there was one child aged 10 and 12 children aged 11-12 who spent time in Connecticut's detention centers.¹⁰⁵ Assuming that each of these 13 children spent the average number of days in detention in 2017, 10.91,¹⁰⁶ this equates to 142 child-days, which costs an estimated \$10,921.22. In light of new guidance from the United Nations, we recommend raising the minimum age of juvenile court jurisdiction even higher; the United Nations recommends raising the minimum age to 14 and commends states with higher minimum ages of 15 or 16.¹⁰⁷

The Connecticut Judicial Branch should stop admitting youth to detention for misdemeanors and violations. The 2020 study by Walker and Herting that we discussed earlier found a causal relationship in which a stay in detention for committing a misdemeanor resulted in an 11 percent increase in likeliness of future arrests.¹⁰⁸ Misdemeanors are generally considered to be crimes that have less serious harm to others, and there is evidence that detaining individuals for misdemeanors results in more serious long-term consequences to detained individuals than for people who committed the same crime but were not detained.¹⁰⁹ The research we have surveyed finds few benefits to detaining individuals for misdemeanors but many risks, so we advocate to end this practice. In 2018, 176 admissions to detention for new arrests (32 percent) were for misdemeanors or violations.¹¹⁰ Assuming that each child or youth stayed for the average number of days,¹¹¹ this equates to 2,459 child-days, which costs a conservative estimate of \$189,121.69.

The Judicial Branch should not admit youth with fewer than five referrals to juvenile court to detention. The model created by Walker and Herting to unearth the causal relationship between admittance to detention and future risk of engagement in crime found that admittance to detention *increased* the risk of committing future crimes for youth who had four or fewer cases of court involvement.¹¹² The relationship was no longer significant for youth who had more than four prior cases of court involvement. In 2018, 28 percent of youth admitted to detention had three or fewer prior referrals, and 30 percent had four to six prior referrals.¹¹³ Using community-based services for these youth rather than commitments to detention could reduce their risk of committing future crimes by 11 percent or *more* (depending upon the charge and the amount of time these youth spend in detention). Assuming that the youth with three or fewer prior referrals spent the average number of days in detention in 2018,¹¹⁴ this equates to around 4,244 child-days, which costs a conservative estimate of \$326,412.

The Connecticut Judicial Branch and Department of Children and Families should partner to create appropriate processes and services so that no child or youth spends more than two weeks in detention. Section 46b-133 (j) of the Connecticut General Statutes determines a process for detaining children and youth for longer than seven days, but the language only extends the period an additional seven days for a dispositional hearing to be held.¹¹⁵ In FY 2018, however, 31 percent of youth cases in detention (336 cases) lasted longer than two weeks. Assuming the absolute minimum number of child-days within the data ranges provided by the Judicial Branch,¹¹⁶ these long stays account for an estimated minimum of 7,762 child-days, which costs a conservative estimate of \$596,975.42.

It is probable that the youth who are committed to detention for more than 14 days have very high levels of need,¹¹⁷ and appropriate services may be scarce. While Connecticut continues creating its Family First Prevention Services Act plan, we encourage the Department of Children and Families and the Judicial Branch to work together closely to ensure that Connecticut can propose appropriate services for the needs of these youth and draw-down federal funding to reimburse the State for providing these services. While the appropriate services for these youth are not inexpensive, providing these services through the Department of Children and Families rather than trying to provide them while youth are detained can help ensure that youths' families are involved in treatment and able to support these youth long-term, and it may allow for the State to recoup some of the costs of care from the federal government.

The Connecticut General Assembly should amend the Statutes such that a research-based combination of risk level and prior offenses is used to determine appropriate placements for youth. Sec. 46b-133 (k) of the Connecticut General Statutes dictates that when considering whether a child or youth should be detained, a judge may determine two or more prior felony offenses to constitute a "public safety risk."¹¹⁸ While prior offenses are *one* predictor of risk, it is best practice to utilize a validated risk assessment tool to determine whether youth pose a substantial enough public safety risk to outweigh the costs of detention.¹¹⁹ The research discussed by Walker and Herting¹²⁰ finds that commitment to detention *increases* risk of recidivism for youth with four or fewer prior referrals. We suggest combining the use of a validated tool with the knowledge that public safety risk increases for detained youth with four or fewer cases of prior court involvement.¹²¹

Furthermore, language that allows judges to override the recommendations of risk assessment instruments can lead to widening racial and ethnic disproportionality, as judges have been found to be less likely to extend mitigating overrides to Black youth than to white youth.¹²² We recommend amending or removing the language in Sec. 46b-133 (k) from the General Statutes.

The Connecticut General Assembly should amend the Statutes so that judges may not re-admit youth to detention as the result of substance abuse and addiction. Sec. 46b-133 (g) of the General Statutes allows the courts to tie release from detention to participating in a treatment program for alcohol and drug testing and testing negative for use of these substances.¹²³ While many youth desperately need these services, addiction and substance abuse are behavioral illnesses, and relapse is common. Youth cite life stressors, emotions, and social circumstances as primary drivers of relapse.¹²⁴ Admittance to detention serves to exacerbate stress and social stigma, which may perpetuate youth use of substances upon release. We advocate that commitment to carceral facilities is not how the government should respond to behavioral illnesses, including substance abuse and addiction.

The Connecticut Judicial Branch and Connecticut General Assembly must deliberately address racial disparities in detention and diversion. As mentioned earlier, youth of color are disproportionately admitted to the carceral system, with systemic disparities increasing as system involvement becomes more serious.¹²⁵ Systemic and racial bias leads to youth of color being more likely to live in areas lacking resources, more likely to have interactions with law enforcement, more likely to be arrested, and more likely to be committed into the justice system rather than diverted. Efforts toward decarceration must take the biases into account when creating youth justice reforms. Sec. 2-24b of the General Statutes, which allows members of the Connecticut General Assembly to request racial and ethnic impact statements for proposed bills, provides a powerful tool for understanding the impact of public policy on communities of color.¹²⁶

In order to move Connecticut from having a carceral system to having a true justice system, the Legislature should make use of the racial and ethnic impact statement tool, and also consider the *interaction* of carceral policies and processes with historically racist laws and systems. This interaction results in punishing Black and Brown communities for trying to survive within economic conditions that make getting ahead in life the exception rather than the rule. The disproportionate involvement of Black and Brown youth in Connecticut's carceral system is anything but just.

We encourage the Judicial Branch to further unpack the ways in which judicial discretion may contribute to widening these disparities after Black and Brown youth enter the justice system through judges, probation, and parole officers providing more leniency toward white youth and less toward Black and Brown youth.

JORDYN WILSON
CTJJA COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS ASSOCIATE

“

I had a lot of family members that were incarcerated, and that has a lasting impact on you as a young child--constantly having family members going in and out of the system, and kind of feeling like you don't have a say so. You just kind of feel really helpless.

[In the] vision sessions [we lead as Justice Advisors], a lot of kids tell us, “I had this program that I went to, and this really worked for me,” and then the state cuts the funding. And a lot of the reentry programs, a lot of the diversion programs, they're being cut because they're not as data-driven or result-driven as the programs want to see. We find a lot of times something that works ends up being cut because no one wants to invest dollars into something they don't think is working, but in reality it is working for the kids. So I really just wanted to touch on that, because it really ties into our campaign and the work we do at the Alliance. We're basically begging for legislators, senators, and people in positions of power to invest in our youth, and they do, but then they go back and it's like, “we can use that money somewhere else.” And then that investment, and that care, and that love and support gets cut, and they don't have that anymore.

Coming from somebody like me who has secondhand experience, seeing that, knowing that, it's like “well what am I supposed to do?” I'm going to end up in the system myself, or my cousins or my brothers are going to end up in the same system, because we don't have those supports, because they're being cut.

I would honestly say, when [kids'] programs get cut, they have a lot of free time on their hands. So they end up doing things that they're not supposed to be doing. They end up system-involved. Instead of being in their programs that meet Friday nights until 10 p.m... they're out joyriding and looking for things to do because they don't have anything in their communities. They don't have anything to help them stay out the streets, and out of trouble, because their programs are being defunded. They don't have various outlets other than to be out in the streets. They don't have places where they can go out to find employment, so they have to go find money elsewhere. They don't have places to go and get food so they have to steal. They don't have clothes. They don't have the supports Iliana [talked about in her story]. Because those programs were defunded, so they have to go get these things by any means necessary, and on their own. So everything goes full circle, they end up right in the system.

What's also important is the trust factor. It's like, “I had this program, I really trusted these people....” Being a kid, coming from these communities, especially being kids of color who don't necessarily have two parent households, finding somebody that you connect with like that, and then the program gets completely cut...Why would I ever trust anybody else?

Anything that I love or anything in my life that supports me, it goes away. So why would I ever want to trust something else that's supposed to step into place for that. I finally find something that's working for me; I'm trusting it, I'm trusting the staff that's there. They're providing me with everything I need to survive, to be able to live so that I don't become system-involved. It gets cut, and everything I knew and trusted, and put time and care into, got cut, so why would I want to care about anything else? It's like a circle where these kids are constantly taking losses, and they shouldn't.

I am a mentor with Family Reentry in Bridgeport--and I've been doing that since January--and I have this mentee, she has no family support. Between me and her therapist, we're the only two women that she actually trusts. I had been with her a while-- and I just found out earlier this month that the program is being defunded by the state. I don't know why honestly, but they basically sent us all an email that was like, "Hey, sorry, this program is being cut by October 31st," and I was like woah! That's crazy. First of all it took me forever to build this relationship with her, and to build that trust with her. She trusts no one, but she was willing to commit to this program, commit to mentoring; doing the necessary things that she needed to better her situation and better her life, and it was cut.

They have these mentoring programs that get cut, and these kids are looking for people they can trust, and establish relationships with, and build themselves professionally and as just... human beings. And they're being defunded. ””

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO INVEST FUNDING SUCH THAT CONNECTICUT REDUCES ARRESTS AND SERVES COMMUNITIES

The Connecticut General Assembly should tie policy benefits to investments within statute.

As we have discussed, there have been numerous instances in which Connecticut enacted policy changes that reduced arrest and incarceration rates without *immediately* recouping and redirecting those fiscal benefits into prevention organizations and services. In order to ensure that this does not happen further, we encourage legislators to include language within bills specifying that any anticipated revenue should be redirected to services that provide neighborhood development and crime reduction benefits and to areas that lack critical services.

Connecticut should create a holistic reinvestment plan that includes making policy changes to create and reinvest fiscal benefits from both the adult and youth carceral systems. Connecticut treats juvenile carceral policy differently than adult carceral policy, and it has served the state well as policymakers sought to ensure that children are treated as children and given the services and opportunities needed to learn and grow. The high cost of establishing needed substance abuse treatment services, however, suggests that carceral reinvestment may require a different approach. While this paper has examined the ways in which reducing child and youth involvement in the carceral system can yield fiscal benefits, Connecticut's adult carceral system is much larger than its child and youth system. Many nonprofit community organizations serve both youth and adults, and the crime reduction benefits they contribute decrease crime among youth and adults, as depicted in **Figure 4**. Considering these systems separately may result in finding fewer fiscal benefits as well as spending dollars that duplicate services in communities rather than plugging much-needed holes. Thus, in considering where Connecticut may find potential for fiscal benefits to invest in nonprofit community organizations, it makes sense to consider both the youth and adult systems as a whole.

Connecticut should invest in structured day programs as an alternative to keeping youth in detention centers. One of the most damaging aspects of detention is the way it isolates youth from their communities and supports. However, national organizations like AMIkids provide day treatment services that allow youth to continue to reside at home, while checking in to daily programs that help them focus on education, treatment, and behavioral goals. This U.S. Department of Justice recognized program keeps kids within the community to address the core issues of their problems, with the community and family. According to AMIkids statistics, 81 percent of youth enrolled in their programs do not reoffend.¹²⁷ While the AMIkids program is a several month to year-long program targeted towards adjudicated youth, a similar structure could be directed towards low to moderate risk youth being detained for indefinite periods of time. Furthermore, investing in similar programs could potentially save money. An examination of AMIkids day programs shows that the vast majority have daily per-child costs below \$80, with exceptions for their specialized military and marine science programs. For example, the day programs in Orlando, Jacksonville, and Miami-Dade County, Florida cost \$69.43, \$73.78, and \$59.17 respectively.¹²⁸ Programs like the day treatment service would allow youth to address their problems in productive, less harmful ways than separating them from supportive structures.

Connecticut should invest in programs like Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP) alternative to detention programs. Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. provides a model that shows an alternative to arrests and detention for high-risk youth. Instead of being detained, youth in areas with active programs are referred to YAP where youth are provided "several hours a week, 15, 20 hours a

week of intensive support to them and their families.”¹²⁹ The program works with youth in their communities, homes, and schools to provide the supports they need. A University of Maryland study of YAP 456 youth in Maryland, Ohio, and Pennsylvania shows that the program improves well-being and stability significantly over the course of the program.¹³⁰ Another study showed that 86 percent of youth referred to YAP remained free of arrest during their time in YAP programs, with the time in a program ranging from two weeks to 20 months, with an average time of 4 months. Additionally, 93 percent of YAP clients remained in their communities at the time of discharge from the program.¹³¹ Instead of detention, youth are involved in pro-social activities and given support to ensure best outcomes.

Connecticut should fully fund implementation of the Community-Based Diversion System.¹³²

Connecticut Voices for Children uplifts the recommendation of the Tow Youth Justice Institute and Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee (JJPOC) that no child should enter the juvenile justice system “*without having exhausted community resources.*”¹³³ The Community-Based Diversion System is supposed to serve as a network that pieces together the many mechanisms, supports, and community care programs that exist in Connecticut for the purpose of connecting families with resources and diverting youth away from the care of state agencies. This plan for implementing this plan was placed at \$3 million. Funding this plan entirely through the reduction of detention may also require the implementation of policies that reduce the use of detention enough to close one of Connecticut’s detention centers, or funding could come from a reinvestment plan that considers both youth and adult services.¹³⁴ According to the JJPOC, taking such steps would have the potential to decrease referrals to Juvenile Court, increase service and program participation, increase family engagement, decrease recidivism, reduce justice system involvement stigma, and reduce the costs of incarceration.¹³⁵

A University of Southern Maine report on juvenile justice system responses shows that there is truth to these expectations. The study shows that of all of the youth involved in Maine’s juvenile justice system between 2010 and 2014, those that were diverted from the justice system without formal charges saw the lowest recidivism rate by far at about seven percent. Youth that were charged and then placed in supervised community care, were committed and then released into community reintegration programs, or were committed and simply discharged from all supervision saw recidivism rates of 35 percent, 42 percent, and 53 percent respectively.¹³⁶

Connecticut should invest in programs other states use to prevent youth carceral involvement.

The Annie. E. Casey Foundation and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention determined YAP’s Gang Prevention and Gang Intervention programs as “promising practices.”¹³⁷ While there are gang intervention programs that offer services to justice involved youth, it is important in the attempt to decrease detention that resources are made available to at-risk youth before they become justice involved. The YAP programs services are “provided in the home, school and community through engaging a paid, trained and supervised ‘mentor’ recruited from the same community in which the youth resides.”¹³⁸ The evidence-based curricula that backs that program focuses on wrap-around services and supports, paid mentoring and coaching for the youth and family, education and life skill development, and paid short-term on site work experience opportunities.

Connecticut could also consider formal partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). The 25-year-old network of juvenile justice researchers and reformers has over 300 sites in 40 states.¹³⁹ Using data driven strategies and tools taken from learning sites and experience, the initiative works with state actors and advocates to decrease the

use of youth detention, with an explicit focus on the overrepresentation of youth of color in the carceral system.¹⁴⁰ According to the 25 year progress report on the initiative, jurisdictions with JDAI sites saw significant decreases in their justice-involved youth populations. Across 164 surveyed sites, there were 93,000 fewer admissions to detention centers per year compared to prior to JDAI involvement.¹⁴¹ Additionally, 162 sites reported 100,000 fewer juveniles being committed to state custody, a reduction of 57 percent from pre-JDAI levels.¹⁴² One-hundred and twenty-seven sites reported reduction in juvenile crime as well, reporting a 39 percent decrease in felony petitions against juveniles per year.¹⁴³

Connecticut should invest in more nonprofit community organizations in Waterbury. At 14 nonprofit community organizations for a population of 107,568,¹⁴⁴ Waterbury is underprepared to serve its at-risk populations (refer to Table 4 for details on nonprofit community organizations within Connecticut's largest cities). For comparison, Waterbury has 1.3 nonprofit community organizations per 10,000 residents while Stamford has 1.5, Bridgeport has 1.9, and Hartford and New Haven each have 2.8. In particular, Waterbury would benefit from investments in nonprofit community organizations focused on substance abuse treatment and intervention as well as nonprofit community organizations focused on crime prevention.

Connecticut should invest in more nonprofit community organizations focused on substance abuse treatment and intervention. Across Connecticut's cities with populations of over 100,000, there were only 14 nonprofit community organizations focused on substance abuse treatment and intervention. New Haven and Waterbury had the fewest number of nonprofit organizations helping to treat substance dependent residents. As mentioned above, substance abuse treatment programs can provide great value for states through high crime reduction, and they are desperately needed in Connecticut.

Connecticut should invest in more nonprofit community organizations focused on job training and workforce development in cities. Like substance abuse prevention programs, workforce development programs can produce high value in terms of large crime reduction outcomes. Statewide, Connecticut only reports 22 nonprofit community organizations focused primarily on helping communities access work, and only three of these programs are in Connecticut's big cities. In particular, Bridgeport and New Haven would benefit from the addition of job training and workforce development organizations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE TRANSPARENCY OF JUSTICE COSTS

The Hartford and Bridgeport Boards of Education should include within their annual budgets a separate analysis of funding spent on children and youth in detention centers. Connecticut has struggled educating confined children and youth for decades.¹⁴⁵ The Local Education Agencies in which detention centers reside are responsible for educating youth in the detention centers. Bridgeport Public Schools operates the detention center in Bridgeport, and the Capitol Region Education Council contracts with DOMUS Academy to provide education services in the Hartford Detention Center. Bridgeport Public Schools reported to the JJPOC that they billed \$200 per child per day in 2017, and Hartford reported that they billed \$213.40 per child per day.¹⁴⁶ For comparison, assuming a 180 day school year, Bridgeport's average per student per day spending was \$79.12, and Hartford's was \$108.98.¹⁴⁷ Hartford provides information on total expenditures for detention within their comprehensive fiscal reports, but has not provided detailed breakouts of expenses since 2017.¹⁴⁸ Bridgeport's financial statements do not provide separate information on detention expenditures.¹⁴⁹ Having annual access to these expenditures will help policymakers consider carceral system costs and reduction benefits more holistically and reinvest funding more accurately.



CONCLUSION

Although Connecticut faces a \$2.1 billion budget deficit for FY 20-21, the coronavirus pandemic has increased the urgency of making long-overdue changes to the carceral system.¹⁵⁰ Among these needs, Connecticut residents have seen that conditions of confinement can pose great harm to incarcerated individuals and their communities,¹⁵¹ and that under-investments in communities of color can be deadly.¹⁵² Connecticut's impacted communities call for the State to end policies that can harm children and youth and can contribute to moving deeper into the carceral system.¹⁵³ They call for fair investment in supports and services to help ensure their families are healthy and economically stable.

The research within this paper works to provide an estimate of benefits that could reasonably be recouped and redirected through reducing the use of juvenile detention. While modest, the amount it costs every additional day that a child does not spend in detention can be redirected toward nonprofit community organizations that contribute to making communities safer and stabilizing individuals in need of support.

Because nonprofit community organizations often serve *both* youth and adults, we recommend creating a holistic community reinvestment plan that proposes changes to reduce the youth and adult carceral systems and invests fiscal benefits into nonprofit community organizations according to the needs of each community. While our paper only examines the marginal costs of youth detention and does not consider the costs of the adult carceral system, we pair our marginal cost analysis with an analysis of the availability of nonprofit community services in Connecticut's large cities. We recommend specifically that the Connecticut General Assembly invest in additional workforce development and substance abuse programs and that policymakers work to make more community organizations available to Waterbury residents.

Finally, we include policy recommendations to help the Connecticut General Assembly and the Connecticut Judicial Branch reduce the use of detention safely and recommend where the State should invest funding to create safer and more thriving communities. Continuing to reduce the use of youth confinement and investing more into our cities are the right and just policies that our communities need.



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A note on the way we talk about ethnicity within this paper: Connecticut Voices for Children strives to present data as accurately as possible. Thus, when we present data on ethnicity, we reflect the terminology utilized by those who collected the data. In other instances within our paper, we strive to reflect the identity presented by the individuals and communities whose stories and ideas we are privileged to uplift within our work. The result is that occasionally the way we discuss communities within data and the way we discuss communities elsewhere in the paper are not entirely aligned.

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