

# Vera Institute of Justice

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://www.vera.org/publications/cultivating-change-middlesex-incarcerated-young-men>**

## Policy Issue Resources

### Publication

Traditional criminal justice responses have fallen short on meeting the needs of young adults involved in the justice system. Across the country, policymakers are starting to address the legacy of unbalanced policies and practices that have resulted in the uniquely American phenomenon of 2.2 million people being incarcerated a legacy that disproportionately impacts poor, young men of color.

Under the leadership of Middlesex County Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian, the Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) in Massachusetts has blazed a trail for youth justice reform in the United States by partnering with the Restoring Promise initiative and the MILPA Collective. The MSO's P.A.C.T. community People Achieving Change Together is a repurposed housing unit, innovatively designed for young adults ages 18 to 24. P.A.C.T. opened in February 2018 as the second Restoring Promise site, and Middlesex is the first county jail to have taken this leap.

The release of this report marks the one-year anniversary of P.A.C.T., providing an overview of the unit and reflections on lessons learned to-date. The foundation of P.A.C.T. is inspired by the German and Norwegian jail and prison systems: anchored in a commitment to human dignity for incarcerated people, and organized around the goal of preparing people to return home and be successful.

### NEWS

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