

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/appearance-assistance-program-fact-sheet>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

The United States detained 486,190 immigrants in prison-like conditions in 2019, inflicting unnecessary physical and emotional harm on vulnerable people at a \$3.1 billion cost to American taxpayers. The government justifies this mass detention by assuming that immigrants will fail to show up to deportation proceedings unless they are confined. The Vera Institute of Justice (Vera's) Appearance Assistance Program (AAP) study disproved this theory 20 years ago. The AAP provided community supervision as an alternative to detention for people subject to deportation proceedings in New York City from 1997 to 2000. Vera evaluated the program and found it to be effective, showing that more than 90 percent of immigrants released from detention and provided with support and case management attended their legal proceedings.

Vera's evaluation showed that reducing reliance on detention would allow the U.S. government to treat each immigrant more fairly and humanely, save taxpayer money, and successfully maintain compliance with court proceedings.

More than 90 percent of supervised noncitizens appeared in court, compared to 71 percent of nonparticipants.

Among asylum seekers, 93 percent of program participants attended all of their court hearings.

Even without supervision, many people, particularly asylum seekers and people with criminal records, attend immigration court hearings without having to be detained.

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