

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/research/skipping-school-can-get-kids-locked-up>

Policy Issue Resources

Every year, thousands of American children are shuffled through the justice system for misbehaviors like skipping school and running away referred to as status offenses when their families, schools, and communities don't know how else to help them. While it may seem like the best option, research shows that the juvenile system just isn't equipped for these kids' needs. Instead, it criminalizes them and increases their risk of engaging in future criminal behavior. Meanwhile, they continue to grapple with developmental changes or other underlying issues that may be causing them to act out.

In this video, Mahsa Jafarian, program associate for Vera's Center on Youth Justice, and youth advocate Dinae discuss status offenses and the importance of community-based solutions to better help teens grow into healthy adults.

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Resources for developing and implementing effective status offense reform strategies

Many jurisdictions across the U.S. seek to reform punitive responses to status offenses, and implement support-focused strategies instead. However, transforming a juvenile-justice oriented status offense system one that is likely complex into one that is community based, family focused, and service oriented can be challenging. Questions commonly ...

A primer on status offenses

Every year, thousands of kids face charges in court, are held in detention, and end up in locked facilities for status offenses. This infographic explores the problem and explains how we can safely keep kids out of the justice system.

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

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