

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/end-of-an-era-the-impact-of-drug-law-reform-in-new-york-city>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

In 2009, the latest in a series of reforms essentially dismantled New York States Rockefeller Drug Laws, eliminating mandatory minimum sentences for people convicted of a range of felony drug charges and increasing eligibility for diversion to treatment. To study the impact of these reforms, Vera partnered with the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University to examine the implementation of drug law reform and its impact on recidivism, racial disparities, and cost in New York City. The National Institute of Justice-funded study found that drug law reform, as it functioned in the city soon after the laws were passed, led to a 35 percent rise in the rate of diversion of eligible defendants to treatment. Although the use of diversion varied significantly among the city's five boroughs, it was associated with reduced recidivism rates, and cut racial disparities in half.

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