

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/first-lady-of-nyc-announces-6-million-plan-to-break-the-cycle-of-incarceration-for-women-at-rikers>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Today, the First Lady of New York City, Chirlane McCray, announced a \$6 million plan to help reduce the population of incarcerated women in the city.

[The proposal](#) will provide much-needed support to NYCs incarcerated women by improving the frequency of family visits, building access to mental health services, and providing programs such as career counseling and in-home therapy that help prevent future returns to jail.

Most women who are incarcerated are parents and primary caregivers to young children, and are more likely than incarcerated men to have histories of trauma, mental illness, and substance use. One of the biggest challenges of getting 600 women off Rikers which is how many are in the jail on any given day is that they're often facing serious charges or have long criminal records or warrant histories that have kept them incarcerated for long periods of time.

Driving down the unique population of incarcerated women at Rikers is not an easy lift, said Insha Rahman, program director at Vera. However, the bold proposals of the Mayors Office to maintain family connections and build support systems for incarcerated women are a strong step forward in addressing the complex factors that lead them to jail and keep them there.

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