

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/the-human-toll-of-jail>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Jails exist in nearly every town and city in the United States. Although rarely on the radar of most Americans, jails are the front door to the criminal justice system in a country that holds more people in custody than any other on the planet. Their impact is far-reaching and profound: in the course of a typical year, there are nearly 12 million jail admissionsalmost 20 times the number of annual admissions to state and federal prisonsat great cost to individuals, their families and communities, and society at large. The Human Toll of Jail is an essential part of an emerging national conversation about changing this picture.

Presented by the Vera Institute of Justice with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as part of the [Safety and Justice Challenge](#). The Human Toll of Jail is a platform for true stories about and by ordinary people, both those who are or have been caught up in the criminal justice system, and those who work on its front lines. It aims to put a human face to the uses and abuses of jails in the United States, to expose the flesh-and-bone reality. Along with every story featured here, Vera brings information about and links to the research, policy analyses, and best practices that address the larger questions and issues.

Produced in Partnership with Narratively

An innovative alternative-to-jail program focuses on young adult development

A Small City Police Department Takes Aim at a Monster Epidemic

San Francisco hopes to lead the charge to address transgender inclusivity in the criminal justice system

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