

# Vera Institute of Justice

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://www.vera.org/blog/black-history-month-is-a-much-needed-chance-to-discuss-our-collective-future>**

## Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Fifty-five years after Dr. Martin Luther Kings Letter from a Birmingham Jail, black people make up [40 percent of Americas incarcerated population](#) despite comprising just 13 percent of the general population.

They also make up 40 percent of people who are incarcerated for drug offenses, despite using drugs at the same level as their white counterparts.

Vera is committed to addressing racial disparities in the justice system, as well as to [ending the era of mass incarceration](#) that has devastated communities of color.

As part of this commitment, we will be marking and celebrating Black History Month in our blog, and across our social media channels, using the hashtag #BHM. We will highlight a number of contributions to the body of research on the relationship between criminal justice and blackness in America [from books on mass incarceration](#) and the War on Drugs to documentaries about the direct path from slavery to incarceration, as well as key reports within Veras own body of work that relate to the black community, including an upcoming report on racial disparity in jails across America.

We'll also be sharing quotes, images, and statistics about the state of criminal justice and the black community taken from our own archives as well as from the Smithsonian's powerful [National Museum of African American History and Culture \(NMAAHC\)](#), located on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

We're proud and excited to spend this month highlighting issues that are central to the black community, including work we've been doing at Vera since 1961. We're also determined to keep pushing forward to drive change, in eager anticipation of the day when everyone will have equal justice under the law.

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

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