

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/research/cost-benefit-analysis-for-justice-policy-a-step-by-step-guide-part-1>

Policy Issue Resources

This is Part 1 of a training that explains how to conduct a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) in justice policy. The training is led by economist Michael Wilson, who worked with the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission and is former director of the state's Statistical Analysis Center. Part 1 provides a detailed overview of CBA in criminal justice; explains the economics of incarceration; discusses cost estimates, probabilities of criminal justice resource use, and sentencing distributions; and defines effect size.

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As of 2019, a typical New York county spent more than \$225 to keep someone behind bars for a single night. These high costs are driven largely by overstaffing. Understanding staffing levels, therefore, is key to understanding counties jail spending. Using data from the New York State Commission on Correction, Vera compared staffing levels from 201 ...

In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder in May 2020, nationwide calls for reallocation of law enforcement budgets forced elected leaders to consider the values underlying their budgetary choices. But discussions largely remained limited to policing. Few major U.S. cities took a hard look at the billions invested in their increasingly vacant jail ...

Data tool on jail and prison populations in every U.S. county

In 2014, the nationwide jail incarceration rate of 326 per 100,000 county residents exceeded the highest county rates registered in the 1970s, which rarely exceeded 300 per 100,000.

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