



I'M THE GUY YOU PAY LATER

Sheriffs, Chiefs and Prosecutors Urge America to Cut Crime by Investing Now in High-Quality Early Education and Care

A REPORT BY:



Acknowledgements

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is a national, bipartisan, nonprofit, anti-crime organization. The organization has a membership of more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys, other law enforcement leaders and violence survivors. The members take a hard-nosed look at what approaches work—and what don't—to prevent crime and violence. They then recommend effective strategies to state and national policymakers. It operates under the umbrella of the Council for a Strong America.

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Executive Summary



Sheriff Baca has a direct message for everyone who cares about the impact and cost of crime:

“My jail is filled with people who took the wrong path in life. It didn’t have to be that way. Law enforcement leaders nationwide know that one of the best ways to keep young people from dropping out of school and becoming criminals is to make sure they have a foundation for success in their earliest years. We are coming out in force to support high-quality early education and care for kids today so we can lower the devastating impact and cost of crime in the years to come.”

Law enforcement leaders like Sheriff Baca base their views on personal experiences and research. A study that followed children who participated in high-quality preschool and parent coaching programs through Chicago’s Child-Parent Centers found they were 20 percent less likely to be arrested for a felony or be incarcerated as young adults than those who did not attend. In recent years, studies of state preschool programs have found significant increases in academic performance, and also important decreases in the need for special education and in being held back in school. Studies of voluntary home visiting programs document reductions in child abuse and neglect, and later crime as well.

Reducing crime is one of the key reasons why governors and state legislators across the political spectrum are making bold commitments to high-quality early education and care. And now we are at a key fork in the road: policymakers nationwide have an outstanding opportunity to bring quality preschool to low- and moderate-income children in America.

The cost of the state-federal partnership that will make this possible is \$75 billion over 10 years – a smart move when you

consider the fact that we currently spend \$75 billion every year on corrections nationwide to incarcerate over 2 million criminals.

By one estimate, this 10-year investment in preschool will produce over 2 million additional high school graduates. And if we can reduce the number of young people who commit felonies and the number who are incarcerated by 10 percent each – roughly half the reduction achieved by the Chicago Child-Parent Center program – we can reduce the number of individuals who are locked up by 200,000 each year. The resulting savings – \$75 billion over the 10-year investment – could pay the federal costs of the preschool program.

These benefits have a tremendous bottom-line economic impact. An independent analysis of over 20 preschool programs demonstrated that quality preschool returned an average “profit” (economic benefits minus costs) to society of \$15,000 for every child served, by cutting crime and the cost of incarceration, and reducing other costs such as special education and welfare.

The state-federal proposal also offers states and communities resources for voluntary home visiting programs to coach new parents and for improving the quality of child care. One home visiting program, the Nurse-Family Partnership, cut abuse and neglect in half and cut later criminal convictions of participating children by more than half.

As stated by Sheriff Baca, the choice is simple: “Pay for quality early education and care now, or pay far more for the costs of crime in the decades to come.”

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Sheriffs, Chiefs and Prosecutors Urge America to Cut Crime By Investing Now in High-Quality Early Education and Care

A Fork in the Road

Our number one priority is protecting the safety of our communities. We do this by arresting, prosecuting and, when necessary, incarcerating people who commit crimes. But ultimately our best opportunity to improve public safety is to keep people from becoming involved in crime in the first place. To do so, we urge our elected leaders to invest in strategies and practices that have proven, positive and long-term impacts on crime reduction.

We already know where our current path is leading us:

- Although crime rates have fallen over the past 20 years, there are still 1.2 million violent crimes and 9 million property crimes committed against people in our communities every year;¹
- There are more than 2 million American adults in local, state or federal jails or prisons;²

- Nationally, we spend nearly \$75 billion a year to incarcerate adults in federal and state prisons or local jails; and,³
- Seven out of ten state prisoners do not have a high school diploma and finding stable employment once they leave prison is very challenging.⁴

While these facts are daunting, they do not even begin to reflect crime's other economic costs, or the suffering of crime victims. The path we are on is both fiscally unsustainable and devastating in its impact on human lives.

Making a Smarter Choice, at a Pivotal Time

Fortunately, we can steer millions of children toward successful lives through high-quality early education and care, which has been proven to lead to less abuse and neglect, better performance in school, fewer high school drop-outs and, ultimately, fewer crimes committed and a reduction in the number of prisoners.

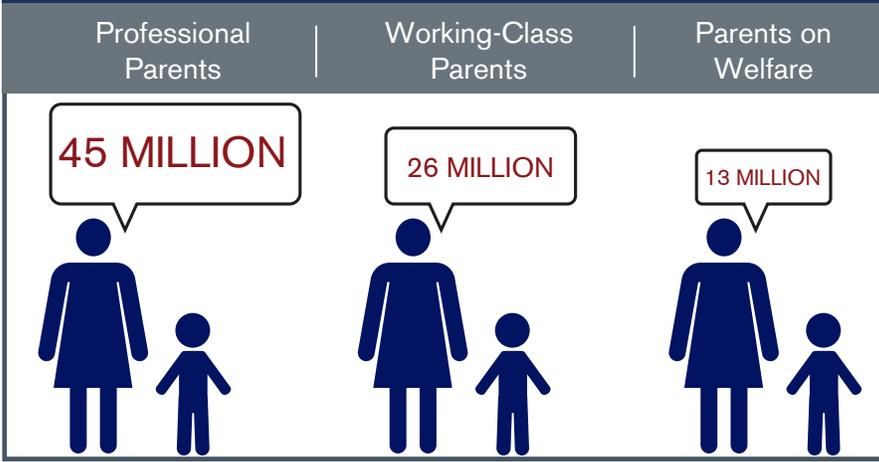
2 MILLION Adults in Prison - OR - **2 MILLION** Additional High School Graduates

\$75 BILLION EACH YEAR for Corrections - OR - **\$75 BILLION** OVER 10 YEARS for Preschool

A FORK IN THE ROAD

FIGHT CRIME: Invest in Kids

Words Spoken By Parents to their Young Children



Source: Hart & Risley, 2004

spoke to them. There were large differences in the average number of words spoken to the children by professional parents, working class parents, and parents receiving welfare:

- Professional parents 45 million words;
- Working-class parents 26 million; and
- Parents receiving welfare 13 million.⁶

These differences affected the children’s vocabulary development: by age three, children with professional parents had average vocabularies of 1,116 words, compared to 749 words for working-class and 525 for children of parents receiving welfare. By the time children reach kindergarten, too many are not only far behind in vocabulary

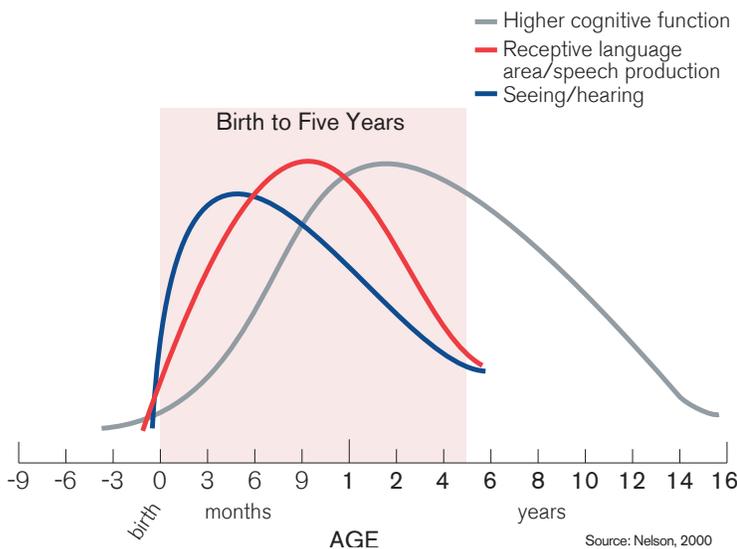
development, but on pre-literacy and pre-math skills (such as knowing their alphabet or being able to count to ten), as well. Many also face challenges in learning to control impulses and behavior so they can get along with other students and teachers.

James Heckman, a Nobel-winning economist from the University of Chicago, has conducted groundbreaking work with economists, statisticians and neuroscientists and has proven that the quality of early childhood development strongly influences health, social and economic outcomes. He argues that we should invest sufficiently in younger children and in coaching their parents because those early investments will generate the greatest return. But the opposite is happening: we actually spend far less on younger children than on older children and adults.⁷

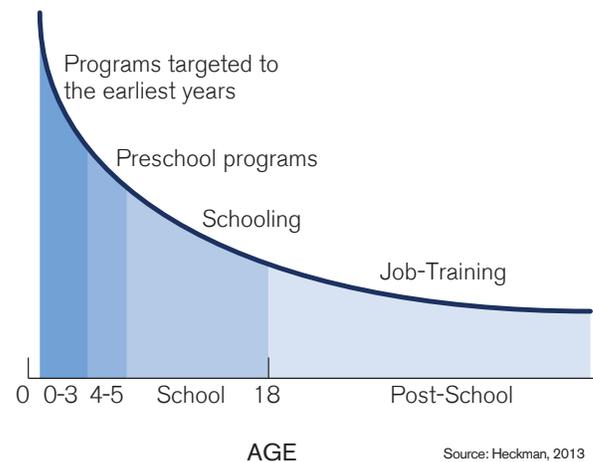
The research behind these outcomes shows that the early childhood period (birth to age 5) is a time of rapid brain development, and that hundreds of new connections in the brain form every second.⁵ Early experiences play a large role in determining how brain connections are formed and this “wiring” becomes the foundation on which all later learning is built.

For example, by age 6 months, babies start to understand the link between words and their meanings. This sets the stage for language development and later reading. Yet children from different backgrounds have very different early experiences in how often their parents talk with and read to them. Researchers observed children in their own homes monthly for over two years, until the age of three, and recorded how many words their parents

Synapse Formation in the Developing Brain



Rate of Return



A FORK IN THE ROAD

CURRENT PATH WITH BAD RESULTS

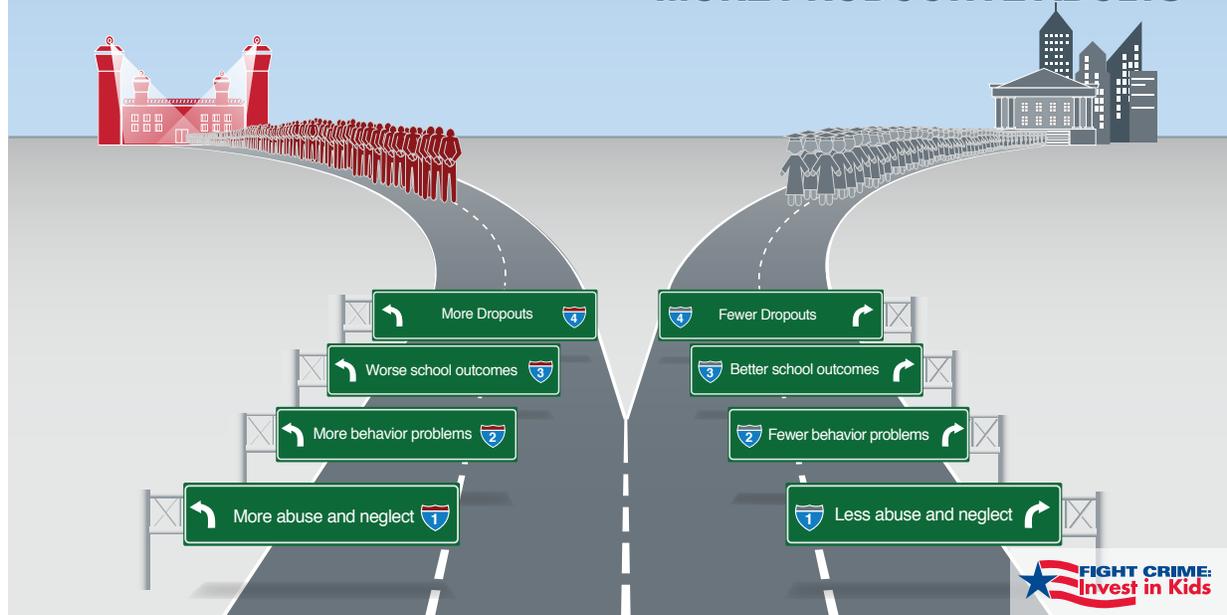
Many parents and child care providers don't know the value of talking and reading to young children, and fostering creative play to develop cognitive, physical and behavioral skills. Too many young parents don't have good parenting mentors; some become overwhelmed and neglect or lash out at their children.

BETTER PATH WITH PROVEN RESULTS

- 1) Voluntary home visiting helps new parents learn how to keep their children safe and encourage their development;
- 2) High-quality early care and education helps children thrive; and
- 3) High-quality preschool for 4-year-olds helps teachers and parents ensure their children can hit the ground running in kindergarten.

**MORE CRIME
MORE PRISONERS**

**MORE GRADUATES
MORE PRODUCTIVE ADULTS**



THE PATHWAY TO LESS CRIME

The path we set children upon, in their earliest years, can make a huge difference as they proceed through school and beyond. Research has shown that high-quality care and education from birth through preschool will result in more successful outcomes:

1 Less abuse and neglect:

- The Nurse-Family Partnership is a nationwide voluntary home visiting program. The Chicago Child-Parent Center (CPC) is a preschool program that has served over 100,000 children and followed them up to age 28. Both programs coach parents to help them understand their children's health needs, create safer home environments and develop parenting skills.
- They cut child abuse and neglect in half for the children served, compared to children from families not being helped.⁸

2 Fewer behavior problems:

- Pennsylvania's Pre-K Counts program cut the portion of children at risk for problematic social and self-control behavior (such as taking things from others or not waiting your turn) from 22 percent to 4 percent.⁹

3 Better school outcomes:

- Ready for school: Boston's universal preschool program improved mathematics, literacy and language skills among participating children equivalent to seven months of additional learning, compared to children who did not attend.¹⁰ State preschool programs are also reporting important improvements.¹¹
- Less special education: Pennsylvania's pre-k program's success in helping children learn self-control indicates

fewer of those children will need special education. New Jersey, which has followed its children through the 4th and 5th grades, found that the children served were 31 percent less likely to be placed in special education than a control group.¹²

- Not held back in school: Participants in Michigan's state preschool, the Great Start Readiness Program, were held back in school 51 percent less often than non-participants.¹³ Children served in Tennessee's preschool program were half as likely to be held back in kindergarten.¹⁴ New Jersey's preschool program found its children were held back 40 percent less often.¹⁵ A home visiting program, Healthy Families New York, cut first grade retention rates by half.¹⁶
- Ahead in reading and math with no "fade-out": North Carolina's Smart Start and More at Four initiatives to improve early education found that the children in counties that invested more in these efforts were five months ahead in reading at third grade and three to five months ahead in math by third grade when compared to children in counties that invested less.¹⁷

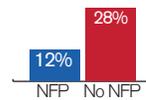
New Jersey's preschool program serving disadvantaged school districts statewide reported that children in the program were three-fourths of a year ahead in math and two-thirds of a year ahead in literacy in 4th and 5th grades.¹⁸

These findings show that academic benefits from high-quality preschool need not "fade out." The New Jersey researchers report that their findings are on par with the earlier results achieved by Chicago's CPC program, that later went on to achieve very strong graduation and crime reduction outcomes.

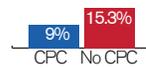
4 Fewer drop-outs:

- The Chicago CPC's preschool program reported a 29 percent increase in high school graduation rates by age 20 among its participants.¹⁹
- Michigan's Great Start Readiness program reported a 35 percent increase in graduates,²⁰ and
- The Perry Preschool Program saw a 44 percent increase in graduation rates by age 40.²¹

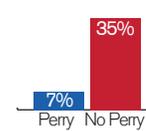
5 Less crime:



The Nurse-Family Partnership children were **half as likely to be convicted of a crime** by the time they reached age 19.²²

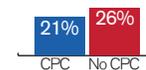


Children not served by the Chicago CPC program were **70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime** by age 18.²³

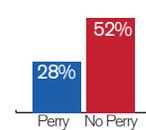


By age 27, children not served by the Perry Preschool Program were **five times more likely to be chronic offenders** with five or more arrests.²⁴

6 Fewer prisoners:



By age 24, the children served by CPC were **20 percent less likely to have served time in a jail or prison.**²⁵



By age 40, the individuals served by the Perry Preschool program were **46 percent less likely to have been sentenced to prison or jail.**²⁶

It All Adds Up

No baby is destined, at birth, to become a criminal. The road to criminal behavior is paved with childhood abuse and neglect, inadequate preparation for school, unaddressed behavior problems, poor academic performance and dropping out of high school. The path to success in life is driven by school readiness, the ability to get along with others, academic achievement and high school graduation. We need to take action, right now, to ensure children have the opportunity for high-quality early education and care so they are on the right path for life.

No Excuses

Results from New Jersey, North Carolina and Michigan should effectively end the debate on whether high-quality state preschool efforts can be brought to scale and deliver strong and lasting results. If a particular state preschool program isn't achieving meaningful and lasting results, such as reductions in children's behavior problems or improved math and literacy skills, the program administrators need to find out what successful programs are doing differently. Steve Barnett, the Director of

the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) argues “An accountability and continuous improvement system is a prerequisite for quality, as is adequate funding for those being held accountable.”²⁷ Administrators of our most successful state preschool programs take nothing for granted and are constantly working to learn from each other and make improvements.

States Know Early Learning Works

States recognize the benefits of high-quality early learning programs. In the past decade, the percentage of four-year-olds served in state preschool doubled, from 14 to 28 percent.²⁸ Preschool has received support from both sides of the aisle. In 2013, 25 states, more than half of them with Republican leadership, proposed and/or signed into law expansions of preschool.²⁹

Access to preschool, however, varies widely across the states, and most states do not serve the majority of their four-year-olds. In 2012, 10 states did not have any state preschool programs. More than half of the remaining states served 30 percent or fewer of their four-year-olds.³⁰ [See *The State of Preschool in America, 2012*, by the National Institute for Early Education Research, for more state information.³¹] In a time of budget cuts, states have struggled to pay for preschool despite their commitments to early

Increasing graduation rates decreases serious crime

University of California at Berkeley economist Enrico Moretti and Canadian economist Lance Lochner studied the relationship over time between changes in graduation rates and crime. They concluded that a 10 percentage point increase in graduation rates – going from 50 percent to 60 percent, for example – reduces murder and assault rates by about 20 percent.

Source: Lochner & Moretti (2004) *The American Economic Review*

learning. And the cost of high-quality preschool—an average of \$9,076 per year—is higher than many families, particularly low- and moderate-income families, can afford.³²

Voluntary home visiting programs have also received widespread, bipartisan support. In 2012, 47 of the 50 states applied for and received federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grants to deliver home visiting services to

Support for Preschool Across America and Across the Political Divide

Twenty-Five Examples of Bipartisan Support for New or Expanded Pre-K in 2013

Gov. Bentley AL \$9.4M	Gov. Brown CA \$25M											Gov. Hickenlooper CO \$10M	Gov. Deal GA \$13M		
Gov. Abernethy HI \$6.4M	Gov. Patrick MA \$26M*	Gov. Snyder MI \$65M											Gov. Dayton MN \$40M	Gov. Nixon MO \$3.4M	Gov. Bryant MS \$3M
Gov. Bullock MT \$1M	Gov. McCrory NC \$12.4M	Gov. Dalrymple ND \$5M	Gov. Heinemann NE \$5M	Gov. Christie NJ \$14.4M	Gov. Martinez NM \$16.5M	Gov. Cuomo NY \$25M	Gov. Kasich OH \$12M	Gov. Kitzhaber OR \$6M	Gov. Corbett PA \$4.5M	Gov. Chafee RI \$0.5M	Gov. Haley SC \$26M	Gov. McDonnell VA \$5M	Gov. Inslee WA \$22.4M	Gov. Tomlin WV TBD*	

Note: MA: \$26.5 increase primarily for childcare; preschool funding increase failed. WV: Education bill passed establishing universal preschool by 2016; however funding not yet determined.

high-risk families.³³ Although comprehensive information on the proportion of high-risk families served by home visiting programs is not available, relevant data indicate that the programs reach only a fraction of eligible families.³⁴ The current proposal represents a serious effort to address this unmet need.

An Unprecedented Opportunity

We now have an opportunity to increase the number of children served in voluntary high-quality early education and care. In its 2014 budget proposal, the Administration has proposed \$75 billion over 10 years for a state-federal partnership to offer high-quality preschool programs to low- and moderate-income four-year-olds.³⁵ The proposal also includes \$15 billion over 10 years to increase access to voluntary home visiting programs, and additional funds for improving the quality of child care for children birth through age three through the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and child care partnerships with Early Head Start.

\$75 Billion Every Year to Lock Up Criminals vs. \$75 Billion Over 10 Years for Quality Early Education

We know from projections made by the national security organization, Mission: Readiness, that investments that bring high-quality preschool to scale for low-income children could produce 2 million additional high school graduates over 10 years, once the programs are established.³⁶

We don't know exactly how much high-quality state preschool programs could cut the costs of corrections. But, as recently as 2008, America spent nearly \$75 billion a year to incarcerate adults in federal and state prisons or local jails.³⁷ That contrasts with \$75 billion in federal funding over 10 years to bring preschool to scale for low- to moderate-income children nationwide.

Obviously we cannot simply stop paying the cost of incarcerating criminals. However, given that the federal cost of the proposed



Stronger parents

The most successful early care and education programs with long-term results—such as the Perry Preschool, CPC, New Jersey's state preschool and the Nurse-Family Partnership—work with parents to teach them how to reinforce positive behaviors and encourage them to routinely read and speak to their children, so they are better prepared for success in the years to come.

state-federal preschool partnership is one-tenth the cost of corrections nationwide, cutting the number of people who become prisoners by just 10 percent, or 200,000 people – half the 20 percent reduction realized by Chicago's CPC program – could begin to pay all of the federal costs of the preschool program (\$75 billion). This does not even take into account the many other benefits that accrue from high-quality preschool.

“Cutting the number of people who become prisoners by just 10 percent, half the 20 percent realized by Chicago's program, could begin to pay all of the federal costs of the preschool proposal.”

That 10 percent reduction figure is presented to illustrate the potential of preschool to pay for itself from reductions in crime alone, rather than as a hard and fast projection. But a well-respected, independent cost-benefit analysis of more than 20 different studies of preschool programs showed that preschool can return, on average, a “profit” (economic benefits minus costs) to society of \$15,000 for every child

served.³⁸ Other estimates are much higher. Clearly, preschool works and more than pays for itself.

The same cost-benefit analysis determined that the Nurse-Family Partnership voluntary home visiting program can return, on average, net benefits of \$13,000 per child served.³⁹

A Different Path for Our Country

As law enforcement leaders, we make no apologies for putting criminals behind bars. But we all agree that a better and less expensive way going forward is to prevent as many young children as possible from growing up to become involved in crime.

If America invests wisely now in preschool and in services such as evidence-based home visiting and high-quality child care, millions of children can become successful, productive adults, instead of individuals who fail themselves and cost taxpayers dearly. Over time, this may help America reduce the number of prisoners well below 2 million a year, while cutting costs dramatically.

When we support what works for our disadvantaged children, we put them – and our country – on a different, safer path. It's time to do what works, America.

Endnotes

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Potential savings from preschool by reducing those who become prisoners by 10 percent

STATE	CURRENT		FUTURE	
	TOTAL INMATES IN STATE-FUNDED FACILITIES	TOTAL STATE CORRECTIONS BUDGET FY 2013-14 (IN MILLIONS)	10% FEWER INMATES	10% SAVINGS IN CORRECTIONS (IN MILLIONS)
Alaska	4,661	\$334	466	\$33
Alabama ¹	25,279	389	2,528	39
Arkansas	14,057	370	1,406	37
Arizona	40,686	1,017	4,069	102
California	132,996	11,169	13,300	1,117
Colorado	17,379	753	1,738	75
Connecticut ¹	16,414	670	1,641	67
District of Columbia	2,315	142	232	14
Delaware	5,943	274	594	27
Florida	100,884	2,146	10,088	215
Georgia	45,794	1,132	4,579	113
Hawaii	5,738	203	574	20
Iowa	8,108	385	811	39
Idaho	6,987	204	699	20
Illinois	48,124	1,310	4,812	131
Indiana	27,711	720	2,771	72
Kansas ¹	9,508	347	951	35
Kentucky	12,653	480	1,265	48
Louisiana	18,599	497	1,860	50
Massachusetts ²	10,852	1,257	1,085	126
Maryland	20,562	1,306	2,056	131
Maine	2,072	161	207	16
Michigan	43,270	2,057	4,330	206
Minnesota	9,193	481	919	48
Missouri	31,400	677	3,140	68
Mississippi	20,217	359	2,022	36
Montana	2,403	185	240	19
North Carolina ³	37,588	1,365	3,759	137
North Dakota ⁴	1,146	108	115	11
Nebraska	4,796	189	480	19
New Hampshire	2,554	104	255	10
New Jersey ¹	16,433	1,084	1,643	108
New Mexico	6,766	292	677	29
Nevada	12,682	264	1,268	26
New York ⁵	66,159	2,824	6,616	282
Ohio	50,418	1,581	5,042	158
Oklahoma	25,188	464	2,519	46
Oregon ^{3,4}	14,578	769	1,458	77
Pennsylvania	50,557	1,948	5,056	195
Rhode Island	3,118	205	312	21
South Carolina	21,705	431	2,171	43
South Dakota	3,526	107	353	11
Tennessee ¹	20,507	909	2,051	91
Texas	150,931	3,131	15,093	313
Utah	7,068	267	707	27
Virginia	29,782	1,058	2,978	106
Vermont	2,081	151	208	15
Washington	17,280	842	1,728	84
Wisconsin	21,802	1,114	2,180	111
West Virginia	6,992	188	699	19
Wyoming	1,952	311	195	31

Due to different methodologies of reporting state budgets, we do not recommend comparing one state budget to another. This data was collected in July 2013. Budgets refer to the total enacted operating budget for each state's corrections department, unless otherwise noted. Inmate populations do not include federal, county jail and parole or probation populations.

1. General Fund budget. 2. Includes prisons, probations and parole; not agency budget. 3. FY 2012-13 budget.

4. Corrections budget estimate for one year from two-year appropriation.

5. Includes both NY State Department of Correctional Services and NY City Department of Corrections.



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