

Ending Girls Incarceration (EGI)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Ending Girls Incarceration (EGI)?

- The intention of EGI is to significantly reduce the number of girls and gender expansive youth in detention facilities that are low and medium risk levels and do not fit the need to be incarcerated based on concern for public safety. In California, EGI is working towards the goal of reaching population numbers of zero for youth in the girls' side of the courts youth legal system.
- Ending Girls Incarceration efforts are in partnership with the Vera Institute for Justice who has vast research throughout the country specifically on incarceration.
- Launched in 2017, EGI has had significant impacts in New York City, Hawaii, Maine, North Dakota, and Santa Clara County in California.
- Through this initiative, Vera and the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) will support a collaborative effort to bring together leadership from juvenile justice and other urgent child-serving agencies (including mental health, child welfare, and housing), advocates, service providers, and directly impacted young people to do the following:
 - Identify the root causes of girls' arrests via data diagnostics through Vera's analysis.

- Identify strategies and work to develop court-based policy and practice solutions. These solutions will work to stop the funneling of girls and gender expansive youth into detention and placement through the technical assistance and concept development provided with both Vera and OYCR's expertise while leaning on existing data.
- Build the gender responsive, community-based programs needed to properly support them at home through funding for capacity development and program implementation through OYCR.

Why EGI?

- EGI is a matter of race and gender equity as disparities of these issues are drivers of girls' incarceration rates¹.
- Juvenile Justice reforms are often centered on boys and negate the very different issues that impact girls and gender expansive youth of color³.
- EGI has identified the lack of gender responsive programming that is preventative of girls' incarceration and recidivism that deters from further systemic entrenchment.
- California has a long history of addressing girls' incarceration through a gender biased approach that has been harmful.
- In California, over 70% of girls' arrests, 70% of girls' petitionsⁱ, and over 50% of girls' detentions were for misdemeanor or status offenseⁱⁱ charges in 2020¹.
- Most incarcerated girls and gender expansive youth have experienced multiple forms of chronic generational adversity, usually from a young age—including poverty, housing instability or homelessness, child welfare involvement, sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, domestic violence, parental incarceration, historical trauma, discrimination, and many others².
- This critical work will require government and community leaders to build gender-responsive solutions imbedded in the community and can address these challenges to be effective in achieving this goal.

VERA, OYCR and the EGI Action Network?

- The Vera Institute of Justice (“Vera”) and California’s Office of Youth and Community Restoration (“OYCR”) are partnering to reduce and eliminate girls’ incarceration in California.
- The Ending Girls’ Incarceration in California (EGI-CA) Action Network (or “Network”) aims to support California counties in implementing court-based policy changes and community-based programming that will help keep young people out of court and incarceration, address race and gender disparities in the youth legal system and promote the well-being of girls and gender expansive youth in the community.
 - Through the EGI-CA Action Network, four selected counties that include Sacramento, Los Angeles, Imperial, and San Diego—led by their probation offices in collaboration with other system leaders—will receive technical assistance, connections to national and local experts, access to resources on national best practices and research, and opportunities to learn from and support their peers in California and nationally.
 - The selected counties will also receive funding from OYCR to support participation in this network with the potential to receive a second year of funding based on successful completion of network deliverables. Deliverables include enabling formal policy shifts, program implementation and development of a Reform and Sustainability Plan to ensure the work continues beyond the Action Network.

Is EGI Successful?

- In 2019, Vera launched a partnership with Santa Clara County’s Juvenile Justice Gender Responsive Task Force.
 - This effort brought together stakeholders across juvenile justice agency sectors to align best practices with court and probation policy and procedures that focused on urgent partnerships with gender-responsive community-based organizations like the Young Women’s Freedom Center.
 - Through this initiative Santa Clara County has significantly reduced annual detention admissions by more than 60%.
- In June 2022, Santa Clara County—a county of nearly two million people—celebrated the one-year anniversary of having [zero girls in their long-term placement facility](#) and maintaining an average daily population of two or fewer young people in the girls’ unit of its short-term detention facility.

- In 2022, through EGI collaborative efforts rooted in Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiatives (JDAI), the state of Hawaii achieved the milestone of having 0 girls in detention throughout the state.
- In August 2023, through the collaborative efforts across government entities, Imperial County reached 0 girls incarcerated down from 6 in recent months and will continue with collaborative efforts to maintain this milestone.

Works Cited:

- 1) Vera analysis of 2020 California's Juvenile Court and Probation Statistical System (JCPSS) data available at <https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/data>.
- 2) Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Malika Saada Saar, Rebecca Epstein, Lindsay Rosenthal, and Yasmin Vafa, *The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: A Girls' Story* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Law Center, 2015), [Hyperlink: The Sexual Abuse To Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story \(georgetown.edu\)](https://www.georgetown.edu/lawcenter/sexual-abuse-to-prison-pipeline-a-girls-story). See also National Crittenton Foundation, *Beyond ACE: Summary Findings from the Crittenton Family of Agencies 2014-2015 Administration of the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Survey* (Washington, DC: National Crittenton Foundation, 2016), <https://perma.cc/7SEV-8HUH>. In a survey of children involved in the juvenile justice, mental health, and child welfare systems, the authors found a 32 percent difference in experiences of sexual abuse between females and males; Francine T. Sherman and Annie Balck, *Gender Injustice: System-Level Juvenile Justice Reform for Girls* (Portland, OR: The National Crittenton Foundation, 2015) <https://nicic.gov/gender-injustice-system-level-juvenile-justice-reform-girls>
- 3) Klein, S. (2012). *Girls in the Juvenile Justice System: The Case for Girls' Courts*. American Bar Association, (*Girls in the Juvenile Justice System: The Case for Girls' Courts*). <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/litigation/committees/childrens-rights/articles/2012/girls-juvenile-justice-system-case-for-girls-courts/>

ⁱ Petition: A document filed in juvenile court alleging that a juvenile is a delinquent or a status offender and asking that the court assume jurisdiction over the juvenile or that an alleged delinquent be transferred to criminal court for prosecution as an adult. Glossary of Terms (ojp.gov)

ⁱⁱ Status offenses—Includes acts or types of conduct that are offenses only when committed or engaged in by a juvenile and that can be adjudicated only by a juvenile court. Although State statutes defining status offenses vary and some States may classify cases involving these offenses as dependency cases, for the purposes of this Report the following types of offenses were classified as status offenses:

Runaway—Leaving the custody and home of parents, guardians, or custodians without permission and failing to return within a reasonable length of time, in violation of a statute regulating the conduct of youth.

Truancy—Violation of a compulsory school attendance law.

Ungovernability—Being beyond the control of parents, guardians, or custodians or being disobedient of parental authority. This classification is referred to in various juvenile codes as unruly, unmanageable, and incorrigible.

Status liquor law violations—Violation of laws regulating the possession, purchase, or consumption of liquor by minors. Some States treat consumption of alcohol and public drunkenness of juveniles as status offenses rather than delinquency. Hence, some of these offenses may appear under this status offense code.

Miscellaneous status offenses—Numerous status offenses not included above (e.g., tobacco violation, curfew violation, and violation of a court order in a status offense proceeding) and those offenses coded as “other” in a jurisdiction’s original data. Glossary of Terms (ojp.gov)