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Research Brief on ETI Prison Studies

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Research Brief on ETI Prison Studies

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2016

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute worked with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections and state Department of Public Instruction in the 1980s to improve educational programs at state correctional facilities incarcerating juveniles. In the 1990s ETI assisted the Milwaukee County Executive's Youth Initiative to identify youth populations in need of intervention if future incarceration was to be prevented. From 2007 to 2016 ETI research and technical assistance focused on employment needs of Milwaukee County adult males who had been incarcerated in Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities. The earlier ETI work in the 1980s and 1990s identified youth populations in need of intervention if future incarceration was to be prevented.

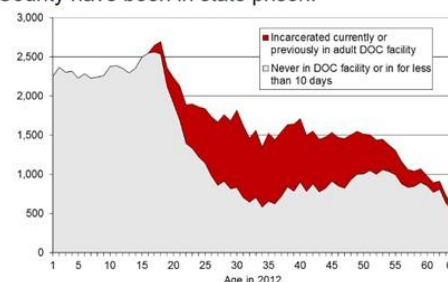
The ETI research on prison and incarceration barriers to employment are archived in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Digital Commons collection at http://dc.uwm.edu/eti_pubs/.

Mass incarceration of African American males is a statewide problem

Statewide Imprisonment of Black Men in Wisconsin (2014)

The Employment and Training Institute's analysis of Wisconsin State Department of Corrections public inmate files found incarceration rates at epidemic levels throughout Wisconsin and not just in Milwaukee County. In Milwaukee County over half of black men in their 30s had already spent time in prison. In the rest of Wisconsin, a staggering 43% of black men in their 30s have also been imprisoned by the state. The analysis of state correctional files for the period from 1990-2012 showed that while African Americans make up only 7% of the state men in their 20s, they make up 46% of Wisconsin men in their 20s who have been incarcerated (or are still incarcerated) in state correctional institutions.

Over half of African American men in their 30s and half of men in their early 40s from Milwaukee County have been in state prison.



The ETI report included recommendations for addressing workforce concerns related to the state's mass incarceration.

1. Make African American males the state's #1 jobs priority for job creation, training, and education, given Wisconsin's history of mass incarceration of black men and outlier in the United States for imprisonment of black males.
2. Modify the Wisconsin Circuit Court's CCAP public internet postings and municipal court public website postings to stop publishing all ex-offenders' charges and offenses for life.
3. Divert technical violators of Department of Corrections' probation, parole and extended supervision rules to community programs and change the rules to focus on more meaningful conditions supporting employment wherever possible.
4. Provide comprehensive employment training and job placement programs for black male youth.

5. Restore state school aids ensuring free driver's education in school districts where the families of more than half of the students are poor or near poor.
6. Support driver's license recovery programs locally and statewide for ex-offenders and non-offenders and allow community service work as compensation for license violations.
7. Reestablish the collection and public dissemination of race-specific data on traffic stop racial profiling and other criminal justice disparity monitoring measures supported by Wisconsin governors Tommy Thompson, Scott McCallum, and Jim Doyle.

Wisconsin has highest black male incarceration rate in U.S. (2010 Census)

Wisconsin's Mass Incarceration of African American Males: Workforce Challenges for 2013

Wisconsin has the highest incarceration rate for African American men ages 18-64 in the United States, according to the 2010 decennial census, almost double the national average. The census found 12.3% (or 1 in 8 men) in state prisons and local jails in April 2010. Wisconsin's rate was far higher than those of its neighboring states. The rate for Illinois was 6.8%; for Michigan the rate was 7.1%.

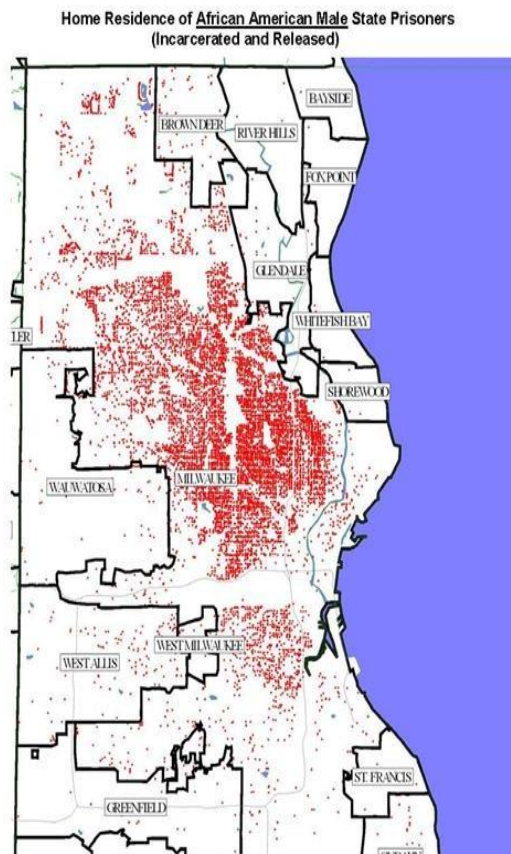
Wisconsin also showed the highest rate of incarceration for Native Americans, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, with 7.6% of men incarcerated in state and local correctional facilities. The state incarceration rate for white males was 1.24% (or 1 in 81 men), nearly identical to the national average of 1.25% (or 1 in 80). This rate was ten times less than the Wisconsin incarceration levels for African American men but still above the levels of imprisonment in the rest of the world.

By 2012 over half of black men in their 30s from Milwaukee County had been in state prison.

The 2013 ETI mass incarceration report examined in detail two decades of state Department of Corrections (DOC) and Department of Transportation (DOT) files to assess employment and training barriers facing African American men with a history of DOC offenses and DOT violations. The report focused on 26,222 African American males from Milwaukee County incarcerated in state adult correctional facilities from 1990 to 2012 (including a third with only non-violent crimes) and another 27,874 men with DOT violations preventing them from legally driving for failure to pay fines and civil forfeitures.

By 2012 over half of African American men in their 30s in Milwaukee County had served time in state prison. Prison time is the most serious barrier to employment, making ex-offender populations the most difficult to place and sustain in full-time employment. Yet, most of the recent state policy discussions about preparing the Wisconsin workforce and debates over redistribution of government job training dollars have largely ignored African American men and relegated ex-offender populations to a minor (if not invisible) place in Wisconsin's labor force.

The paper quantified Milwaukee County African American men in need of increased workforce policy attention and program support. It recommended that proposed state policies and legislation brought forward by religious groups, the Milwaukee County District Attorney, The Sentencing Project, and others be given serious consideration. Four groups were identified requiring high priority attention: (1) offenders not yet sentenced, (2) those incarcerated in state correctional institutions and approaching release, (3) ex-offenders previously released from DOC facilities and now living in the community, and (4) non-offending residents, including youth, who would immediately benefit from preventative initiatives supporting their employability.



Study Recommendations

The ETI studies recommended that policies and programs should be focused on four groups: (1) offenders not yet sentenced, (2) those incarcerated in state correctional institutions and approaching release, (3) ex-offenders previously released from DOC facilities and now living in the community, and (4) non-offending residents, including youth, who would immediately benefit from preventative initiatives supporting their employability. Funding for ex-offender populations' employment initiatives should be increased, using savings from reduced incarceration of non-violent offenders and diversion of drug offenders into treatment programs.

1. **Changes in laws contributing to mass incarceration** of lower-risk offenders and alternatives to imprisonment (funded with the savings from reductions in the prison population) are critically needed with the focus on increasing public safety, supporting employment, and strengthening families.
2. **Technical violators of probation rules** should be diverted, whenever appropriate, to community supervision to allow employed ex-offenders to continue working.
3. Programs such as **Windows to Work**, a joint effort between the DOC and workforce investment boards, should be expanded to improve employment readiness, including restoration and repair of the **driver's license** for those with fixable problems. Those unable to secure or repair their license should be given assistance obtaining a **state photo ID**. Obtaining a driver's license and clearing up license suspensions and revocations should also be a priority employment initiative for those already released into the community.
4. **Transitional jobs programs** for released inmates and for offenders diverted from incarceration are needed in communities with high unemployment and job gaps.
5. Funding for **employment training, job placement, and driver's licensing** should target the large population of black males approaching adulthood in Milwaukee County. Without such investments the population incarcerated will likely only increase and public safety problems escalate.
6. **State aids funding free driver's education** in school districts where the families of more than half of the students are poor or near poor would advance the engagement of low-income youth in the labor force.

INCARCERATION DISCUSSIONS

The following are examples of media coverage of the ETI studies and their implications for worker populations.

- Franz Strasser of the [BBC](#) investigated targeting African American men in Milwaukee for increased traffic stops as a strategy for "disrupting crime."
- Cheryl Corley of [National Public Radio](#) interviewed John Pawasarat, District Attorney John Chisholm, a spokesperson for churches allied to reduce Wisconsin incarceration levels, and Milwaukee ex-offenders.
- Ann-Elise Henzl of [WUWM](#) interviewed community leaders state Rep. Mandela Barnes and Rev. Joe Ellwanger on Wisconsin's high male incarceration rate.
- On [MPTV Black Nouveau](#) Joanne Williams and LaToya Dennis discussed black male Incarceration and asked why it has been ignored as a critical issue.
- [¡Adelante!](#) talked to Project Return about job opportunities for ex-offenders.



- Mitch Teich and Stephanie Lecci of [WUWM](#) explored why so many black men are behind bars.
- Erin Toner of [WUWM](#) [investigated](#) job prospects and challenges facing ex-offenders served by community programs
- [WUWM interviews by LaToya Dennis](#) of ex-offenders for segment on "Many of Wisconsin's black male offenders go back to prison, struggle to stay out"
- For an [MPTV Fourth Street Forum](#) on "Building a safe community for all," Marcus White interviewed Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn, UWM Social Welfare Dean Stan Stojkovic, and Safe Places, Safe and Sound director Norma Balentine.
- The Kathleen Dunn Show of [Wisconsin Public Radio](#) talked with Pawasarat and Rev. Willie Briscoe about labor force needs of ex-offenders and community alternatives to incarceration.
- Steve Walters' [WisconsinEye video interview](#) of John Pawasarat examined job training, prison diversion, and driver's license policies to address high rates of incarceration and job prospects for African American men from Milwaukee.
- John Pawasarat prepared a [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) editorial on addressing workforce issues related to incarceration and driver's license policies.
- Lily Bolourian of [Policymic.com](#) discussed the "deeply concerning study" of 1 in 8 black men in Wisconsin incarcerated and the Obama administration's plans to "pivot" the "War on Drugs" away from criminalization towards treatment.
- Michel Martin's [NPR "Tell Me More"](#) interview with Senator Lena Taylor discussed disparities impacting "ground zero" zipcode 53206, and Marc Mauer of the Sentencing Project talked about disproportionate drug law arrest and sentencing policies.
- [Bruce Murphy of Urban Milwaukee](#) focused on sentencing and drug enforcement policies, impacts on central city neighborhoods, and workforce investment policies.
- John Pawasarat [WUWM interview](#) with Marge Pitrof discussed the importance of using workforce investment funds for ex-offenders.
- Kenneth Harris [WUWM interview](#) with Marge Pitrof focused on supporting entrepreneurship and education priorities for ex-offenders.
- [The People's Mic \(92.1 FM Madison, WI\)](#) interviewed Marc Mauer about prison sentencing differences by community and his book *Race to Incarcerate*.
- [James Causey of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) authored a series of reports on trauma among inmates and inner city youth, life sentences, unemployment, need for more drug treatment options, and housing segregation.
- [The Sentencing Project](#) reported on "Wisconsin leads nation in black male incarceration rates."
- [Shepherd Express](#) identified "Wisconsin's shocking incarceration rate" as the staff issue of the week.
- [Gene Demby of NPR](#) asked, "Why does Wisconsin lock up more black men than any other state?"
- [Natelege Whaley of BET](#) addressed concerns regarding racial disparities in the prison system.
- The [BizTimes](#) cited factors leading to black mass incarceration including drug enforcement (rather than treatment), three-strikes laws, and mandatory sentence laws.



- Steven Elbow of The Cap Times interviewed Pamela Oliver of the University of Wisconsin Madison regarding reasons for Wisconsin's high incarceration rate for black residents compared to whites.
- Sarah Link of the UW-Madison Badger Herald examined Wisconsin's drug sentencing laws.
- Eugene Kane in OnMilwaukee.com discussed "a dubious national title" -- "number one in locking up black men".
- Brennan Center newsletter on "Justice Update: New Report on Right to Counsel, Debtors' Prisons, and Justice Reinvestment" examined research on unequal incarceration of poor defendants.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

The following are background readings on the incarceration issues.

Wisconsin research

- Governor Jim Doyle's Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Wisconsin Justice System "Final Report" and "Appendix" (2008).
- Wisconsin State Public Defender, Civil Consequences of Conviction: The Impact of Criminal Records under Wisconsin Law (November 2012)
- Research by Pamela Oliver, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Adult Corrections Programs, Informational Paper 56 (January 2013)
- Vera Institute of Justice, "The Cost of Prisons | Wisconsin: What Incarceration Costs Taxpayers" (2012)
- Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance "The Cost of Corrections: Wisconsin and Minnesota" (2010)
- Devah Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record" [research conducted in Milwaukee] and *Marked: Race, Crime, and Finding Work in an Era of Mass Incarceration* (University of Chicago, 2007)
- Human Impact Partners and Wisdom, "Healthier Lives, Stronger Families, Safer Communities" (November 2012)

National research

- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (The New Press, 2010); hear also Alexander's 35 minute interview with Bill Moyers on December 20, 2013.
- Marc Mauer and Ryan S. King, *A 25 Year Quagmire: The War on Drugs and Its Impact on American Society* and Sabrina Jones and Marc Mauer, *Race to Incarcerate: A Graphic Retelling* (2013)
- Bruce Western, *Punishment and Inequality in America* (Russell Sage Foundation, 2006). See also "The Prison Problem" in Harvard Magazine.
- William Julius Wilson, *More than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City* (W. W. Norton and Company, 2009)
- The PEW Charitable Trusts, *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility*
- James Forman Jr., "Racial Critiques of Mass Incarceration: Beyond the New Jim Crow"

A local success: driver's license recovery

Second Year Evaluation of the Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability (CDLRE) (2008)

The driver's license recover program showed high success rates for the CDLRE's efforts to help ex-offenders in Milwaukee County obtain their driving privileges. The Center for Driver's License Recovery & Employability was established in March 2007 to increase the number of licensed drivers among low-income Milwaukee County residents. Major partners in the program include Wisconsin Community Services, Legal Action of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the Municipal Court of Milwaukee. In the first 16 months of operation low-income residents seeking assistance from the CDLRE showed a daunting array of obstacles for restoration of their driving privileges. They owed \$782,815 in outstanding fines and had 4,140 cases involving 60 different municipal and county court systems. The CDLRE has secured a standing agreement to allow low-income residents to use payment plans and perform supervised community service work to pay off outstanding fines.

Over a fourth (27%) of men seeking out CDLRE program services had been formerly incarcerated in state correctional facilities, and 58% of these clients successfully addressed all financial and legal obstacles in order to obtain their driving privileges. The 58% recovery success rate is notable given the level of problems faced, including the potential for drug convictions, SR 22 (safety responsibility) insurance requirements, and damage judgments to limit any access to immediate license recovery and the extremely low rates of licensed drivers among Milwaukee County ex-offenders. [As of 2006, only 7% of Milwaukee County adults who had been released from state correctional facilities held a valid driver's license without recent suspensions and revocations.]

Based on the findings of the Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Wisconsin Justice System, in May 2008 Governor Jim Doyle issued an Executive Order 251 directing corrections staff to help prisoners restore their driving privileges prior to release.

Over 7,000 ex-offenders were laid-off and receiving UI in Milwaukee County in 2009

Understanding the Unemployed Workforce in Milwaukee County (2009)

Ex-offenders from the DOC system made up 15% of the 48,000 workers laid off and receiving unemployment insurance benefits in Milwaukee County in early 2009, according to an analysis of the UI population conducted for the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board.

- For ex-offenders, UI payments averaged \$258 per week. Men made up 91% of the ex-offender population on lay-off.
- On average women had lower payments than men; 32% of male ex-offenders receiving UI earned the maximum benefit payments (\$355/\$363), compared to only 12% of the female ex-offender population.

- Both males and females had low average wages prior to receiving UI -- men had wages averaging less than \$500 a week and women had wages of around \$340 a week.

42,046 Milwaukee County adults in the DOC system (prison, probation, parole) as of 2008

Ex-Offender Populations in Milwaukee County (2009)

For this report three Milwaukee County adult populations were examined: persons presently incarcerated in Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities, persons released from DOC facilities since 1993, and persons on probation and parole in 2008.

- The released prison population was mostly male (88%) and minority (67% African American, 8% Latino). Most released ex-offenders were of prime working age.
- Only 6% of released offenders had a valid driver's license with no suspensions or revocations, and only 8% of adults on probation and parole had a valid license. For many ex-offenders the license problems were fixable.
- Two-thirds of African Americans and 40% of Latinos from Milwaukee County were released into 9 Milwaukee inner city zip codes targeted by the Community Development Block Grant programs.
- A majority (77%) of the released adults were high school dropouts or GED holders. Only 10% had education beyond high school and another 13% were high school grads.

37,080 Milwaukee County residents had been incarcerated by the state, as of June 2006

Barriers to Employment: Prison Time (2007)

A report on analyzed state Department of Corrections records showed 26,772 adults released from Wisconsin correctional facilities since 1993 and another 10,308 residents still incarcerated as of June 2006. Among the findings:

- Milwaukee County saw an almost 400% increase in the number of prisoners released from state prisons annually. The number of adults admitted to Wisconsin correctional facilities from Milwaukee County surged to 6,992 in 2002 and then rose to 8,194 in 2004.
- Recidivism rates were high. For those released in the first half of 2006, only 28% had been in state correctional facilities for the first time.
- The rapidly increasing number of persons incarcerated in DOC facilities led to a disproportionate impact on young African American males. State corrections data showed that as of 2006 an estimated 40% of African American males ages 25 through 29 who lived in Milwaukee County had spent time in Wisconsin state correctional facilities. By contrast, only 5% of white and 5% of Hispanic males of that age group had done time in DOC facilities.
- Additional men had been incarcerated in city and county jail.

- Only 7% of the released prison population showed records of a valid driver's license without recent suspensions or revocations -- leaving the vast majority unable to legally drive to jobs in the metro area.
- Drug offenses were common and resulted in additional legal barriers for those with driver's license suspension and revocation problems. Of those released, 44% of Hispanics, 38% of African Americans, and 20% of whites had been incarcerated at least in part for drug-related offenses.

Nearly 2 out of 3 young men in African American poverty neighborhoods have been incarcerated

New Indicators of Neighborhood Need in Zipcode 53206 (2007)

A 2007 drilldown report on Milwaukee's ZIP code area 53206, arguably the poorest neighborhood in the state, found alarming rates of incarceration of men in state prison. The neighborhood population is 97% African American.

- By the time men reached ages 30-34, nearly two-thirds (62%) of men from zipcode 53206 had been incarcerated in state DOC facilities or were currently serving time, according to a first-time analysis of the population of adults incarcerated in DOC facilities (from January 1993 through June 2006).
- Many of the adults released subsequently return to prison. Recidivism rates of 53% were reported for those ages 25-34.
- This neighborhood saw a 336% increase in the number of adults released from prison since 1993 when 201 were released, to 879 released in 2005. The number serving time and released for "drug offenses only" has increased five-fold, from 43 in 1993 to 255 in 2005.

The zipcode 53206 drilldown report revealed interrelationships between high incarceration rates, increases in single parent families, stagnant income levels of employed residents, and high involvement in the subprime mortgage crisis. The research suggested that this neighborhood, decimated by high prison rates and absence of working age males, has utilized subprime and high-interest rate lending as an income source as well as an opportunity to purchase homes (as owner-occupants and landlords) and to refinance mortgages to help pay off credit card and other debts. No neighborhood appeared more at-risk of foreclosures and economic fallout from the housing crisis and lack of jobs.

See also the UWM feature article describing [the history of ETI's neighborhood research on ZIP code 53206](#) and a May 2006 WUWM public radio segment on ["Youth Violence in ZIP Code 53206"](#).

Data-driven improvements needed in employment programs for ex-offenders

The EARN (Early Assessment and Retention Network) Model for Effectively Targeting WIA and TANF Resources to Participants (2007)

In 2007 the Employment and Training Institute conducted a technical assistance project for the Private Industry Council of Milwaukee County to assist the Workforce Investment Board to improve delivery of job training services to Milwaukee County clients. For this report, John Pawasarat reviewed the WIA track record for delivery of services to ex-offenders. Among the findings:

- The poorest employment and earnings outcomes were analyzed for the growing number of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) participants with records of incarceration in state correctional facilities.
- Only 7% of WIA clients with a history of state incarceration had a valid driver's license.
- Measures of post-program employment of ex-offenders were very low -- with only 15% employed with earnings above family poverty in the first quarter after exiting WIA. This percentage dropped to 9% in the second quarter after leaving WIA.
- While employment outcomes were better for ex-offenders with more education, all groups showed declines in employment after exiting WIA programs. About 2/3 (65%) of those with more than 12 years of schooling showed at least some earnings in the first 2 quarters after exiting WIA, compared with only 40% of those with less than 12 years of schooling and 51% of those with 12 years of schooling.

EARN Model study recommendations

1. A first priority for WIA and TANF programs should be adoption of the EARN Model to more effectively target services to ex-offenders and residents with driver's license problems. The WIA and TANF agencies should use state Department of Corrections data to identify the growing numbers of participants with histories of incarceration in state prisons, and this population should be treated as the highest risk population. Similarly, current probation and parole databases should be accessed to make sure that DOC probation and parole reporting requirements DO NOT conflict with employment. There is no quick fix for this population.
2. The state Department of Corrections should assess the driver's license status of prisoners immediately upon their entry to the DOC facilities as part of an employability plan to target those likely to benefit from license restoration initiatives. Those prisoners should be identified who will be required to serve a waiting period after application for their driver's license so that the application wait period can be served during incarceration in the DOC facility.
3. The state Department of Corrections should redirect existing remediation and reentry resources to launch an in-house driver's license restoration initiative which would include preparing inmates to take the written driver's license test, allow inmates to apply for a driver's license if they do not have a current license, assign Department of Transportation staff to administer the driver's license written test prior to release, schedule appointments for the road test immediately upon release, and create a way for inmates to work off reinstatement and application fees and outstanding fines through prison work programs or points for good behavior.
4. The state Department of Workforce Development should regularly document the pre- and post-employment experiences of adults released from and admitted to DOC facilities using the state DWD wage match data to

gauge the effectiveness of post-release employment initiatives and to identify populations most likely to benefit from pre-employment and driver's license initiatives.

5. The City of Milwaukee should examine the negative cost impact of City imposed suspension-related fines for both the released and incarcerated populations. The City of Milwaukee is responsible for most of the driver's license suspensions in Milwaukee County, using suspension orders for failures to pay fines not related to serious driving violations.
6. Leadership and coordination between the Department of Corrections, Department of Workforce Development, Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, and community partners are necessary to target sufficient direct services to the DOC population in Milwaukee County.
7. Given the concentration of ex-offenders in Milwaukee, increased funding is needed for education and training support for Milwaukee residents who are ex-offenders.

Assisting troubled youth (1990s and 1980s research)

Identifying Milwaukee Youth in Critical Need of Intervention: Lessons from the Past, Measures for the Future (1991)

In the early 1990s ETI researchers prepared data analysis for the Milwaukee County Youth Initiative directed by Howard Fuller. This in-depth analysis of children referred for social services, children in need of protective care, and juvenile delinquency identified with chilling accuracy which pre-teens referred to the county and courts for services were likely to be incarcerated as teens and adults absent more effective interventions. Among the findings:

1. Abused and neglected boys of ten often became delinquent. 64% of boys first referred to Children's Court as Children in need of Protective Services (CHIPS cases) subsequently appeared again as delinquents. 66% of boys referred to Children's Court specifically for abuse or neglect became delinquent.
2. Many delinquent boys continued to return as delinquents. 51% of boys who first entered Children's Court as delinquents had repeat appearances for delinquency. 57% of boys placed on probation their first time at Children's Court had repeat appearances as delinquents. 74% of boys in group homes or residential treatment centers returned again as delinquents.
3. A portion of girls returned as delinquents but fewer than boys. 23% of girls who were first time delinquents subsequently returned again as delinquents. 32% of girls who were first time CHIPS cases returned as delinquents. 39% of girls referred to Children's Court specifically for abuse or neglect returned as delinquents. 24% of girls placed on probation their first time at Children's Court returned as delinquents.
4. Most of the population in Children's Court is poor. 76% of the boys were in the welfare system (i.e., income maintenance including food stamps) and 65% were in families receiving AFDC. 86% of the girls were in the welfare system and 73% in families receiving AFDC.

5. Girls previously in Children's Court were likely to later become young parents receiving AFDC in Milwaukee County. Of females who were in the Children's Court system 67% of those on AFDC had become parents by 1990 and 73% who became teen parents on AFDC were sanctioned under Learnfare.
6. School performance was also a problem. Of teens born in 1971, in the Children's Court system, and also monitored under Learnfare for school enrollment and attendance, 81% of the girls (mostly teen parents) and 69% of the boys received Learnfare sanctions.
7. Each year many children were placed outside the home. In 1989, 2,655 cases in Children's Court came from zipcodes 53204 and 53206.

Educational Follow-Up Study of Juveniles Released from Ethan Allen and Lincoln Hills Schools (1982)

In the 1980s at the request of then state superintendent Herbert Grover the Employment and Training Institute worked with the teachers at Wisconsin's two juvenile corrections facilities to redesign the curriculum to focus on competency-based coursework and vocational career building. This follow-up study examined the educational experiences of 759 youth released from Ethan Allen and Lincoln Hills Schools during 1979. The ETI team examined school records from 105 public and 16 private schools (attended by the youth before and after incarceration) and spoke with 43 parole officers for further information on youth whose school records were in question. Only 24 youth graduated from a traditional high school, and the teachers at the 2 schools subsequently collaborated to convert their high school curriculum to competency-based programs with closer ties to the local technical colleges.

Background on prison barriers to employment

Released prisoners are one of the most difficult populations to serve in jobs programs and least likely to be successfully engaged in sustained employment due to persistent legal problems, low education attainment levels, high recidivism rates, and driver's license suspension and revocation problems. The stigma of being an ex-inmate alone and the limitations this places on those released and expected to become gainfully employed are compounded by further legal sanctions place on those who have spent time in correctional facilities.

Parents and non-parents released from DOC facilities face **major barriers** which impact their chances of reuniting with their families and securing regular employment. These barriers include:

Housing barriers faced those released from prison and applying for public housing subsidies. Some may not have been eligible at all for subsidized housing, while others were subject to the practice of sharing criminal records with Section 8 landlords.

Education barriers have been instituted for the population of felons with drug-related convictions which prevent them from obtaining Pell grants to attend vocational classes, college and other post-secondary education programs.

Income maintenance barriers were most severe for those with drug convictions, making them ineligible for food stamps or TANF services.

The driver's license status and low educational levels of the prison populations stood in sharp contrast to the limited number of jobs available in the neighborhoods where most prisoners were released. The 2009 Milwaukee area employer job survey (conducted by the Employment and Training Institute for the Regional Workforce Alliance) found that three-fourths of the job openings in the metro area were located in areas not easily accessed by public transportation. In the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant-targeted) central city Milwaukee neighborhoods where most prisoners are released, the survey showed a job gap of 25 to 1, that is, 25 jobseekers for every 1 full-time job available. Further, ex-offenders seeking work in these (and other) neighborhoods must compete with jobseekers who have a valid driver's license and who do not have a prison record.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel coverage of ETI prison research and the mass incarceration issue



John Pawasarat MJS guest editorials:

"Mass incarceration of black males must stop"

"The brutal facts: Too few jobs for too many job seekers"



Lois Quinn talked with James Causey on Fourth and State about Wisconsin's epidemic rates of black male incarceration outside Milwaukee. (9 min. video, July 7, 2014)



MJS Columnist James Causey has tackled issues related to Wisconsin's mass incarceration of black males, including lifetime Internet postings of criminal records, trauma among inmates and inner city youth, life sentences, unemployment, the need for more drug treatment options, housing segregation, addressing homicides, and a proposed minority impact bill.

Similar cases yield very different results in Wisconsin prison system



MJS reporter Gina Barton in 2014 identified 2,700 state prison inmates eligible for parole but remaining in custody. A January 2015 story examined the current DOC practice of re-incarcerating ex-offenders without convicting them of new crimes.

A 2004 series by Barton and Mary Zahn on "Locked In: The Price of Truth in Sentencing" had warned that Wisconsin's harsh sentencing laws would lead to state Department of Corrections costs exceeding the state's investment in its University of Wisconsin System -- a condition reached in Wisconsin in 2011.

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JOURNAL SENTINEL

- MATC program helps children of incarcerated parents finish high school (Gina Barton, Apr. 4, 2016)
- Driver's ed can help get young people back on track (James Causey, Jan. 22, 2016)
- Time for a conversation about our priorities for Milwaukee (David Bowen, opinion piece, Oct. 4, 2015)
- Find better way to deal with suspensions (MJS editorial board, Aug. 18, 2015)
- Ticket to nowhere: The hidden cost of driver's license suspensions (Vivian Wang, Aug. 15, 2015)
- More tales of driving-while-black (James Causey, Aug. 28, 2015)
- Milwaukee aldermen to consider all but dropping fine for pot (Crocker Stephenson, May 11, 2015)
- Christian leaders launch effort to bridge Milwaukee's racial divide (Annysa Johnson, Mar. 2, 2015)
- Car thefts by teens illustrate shortfalls in criminal justice system (Ashley Luthern, Feb. 28, 2015)
- No new conviction, but sent back to prison (Gina Barton, Jan. 17, 2015)
- Overflow crowd gathers for discussion of racial issues in Milwaukee (Gina Barton, Dec. 3, 2014)
- Similar cases yield very different results in Wisconsin prison system (Gina Barton, Nov. 29, 2014)
- MJS editorial: Next attorney general should focus on African American male incarceration (Oct. 25, 2014)
- Milwaukee courthouse virtually closed for racial disparity discussion (Bruce Vielmetti, Oct. 17, 2014)
- Facing grim infant death rates, Milwaukee focuses on black fathers (Sarah Maslin, Oct. 11, 2014)
- Group calls for limits on use of solitary confinement in state prison (Gina Barton, Sept. 30, 2014)
- Second chances? Not for black men with criminal records (James Causey, Sept. 29, 2014)
- Author Michelle Alexander urges crowd to end mass incarceration (Gina Barton, Sept. 26, 2014)
- Milwaukee groups call on politicians to focus on causes of violence (Ashley Luthern, Sept. 16, 2014)
- More answers needed on mass incarceration crisis (James Causey, Sept. 12, 2014)
- Life expectancy gap: Again, Wisconsin blacks are near the bottom (James Causey, Aug. 16, 2014)
- A Wisconsin epidemic: Imprisoning black men (James Causey, July 12, 2014)
- A new public health crisis (James Causey, June 24, 2014)
- A retired police officer's nightmare (James Causey, May 16, 2014)
- Sentencing disparities (James Causey, May 16, 2014)
- The fear of driving while black (James Causey, May 13, 2014)
- Legislative remedies to mass incarceration (Rep. Nikiya Harris, Jan. 30, 2014)
- Minority impact bill addresses mass incarceration (James Causey, Jan. 14, 2014)

- Try drug treatment, not prison (James Causey, Dec. 7, 2013)
- A troubling tendency to lock up blacks (James Causey, Nov. 16, 2013)
- An epidemic of life sentences (James Causey, Sept. 28, 2013)
- BBC examines incarcerations of black males in Milwaukee and in Wisconsin (Tom Kertscher, Sept. 18, 2013)
- Justice, the Eric Holder way (James Causey, Aug. 13, 2013)
- Is Milwaukee set up like a plantation? (James Causey, June 25, 2013)
- Sesame Street tackles the issue of incarcerated parents (James Causey, June 17, 2013)
- Trauma is very common among prison inmates (James Causey, May 25, 2013)

Over half of black men in their 30s in Milwaukee County have been incarcerated (James Causey, Apr. 18, 2013)

WUWM and MPTV coverage of ETI prison research and the mass incarceration issue



WUWM Milwaukee public radio (89.7 FM) collaborated with MPTV on a year-long Project Milwaukee special series on "Black Men in Prison" examining the causes and consequences of Wisconsin's high rate of black male incarceration. *Partial list of programs below.*

REDUCING INCARCERATION AND RECIDIVISM LEVELS

- Republican "high hopes": Bipartisan legislative panels look at criminal justice reform (Jan. 5, 2015)
- Cutting Wisconsin's high black male incarceration rate: Progress, but a long way to go. (Nov. 11, 2014)
- Faith-based network demands: Allow parole to ex-offenders who have served their time under pre-1999 laws (July 9, 2014)
- Two Milwaukee mothers speak of need for forgiveness (July 8, 2014)
- Bi-partisan call to revisit Wisconsin's "truth-in-sentencing" amid swelling prison populations (June 9, 2014)
- Counselors say Wisconsin must invest more resources, time into helping offenders with mental illnesses (May 27, 2014)
- Community forum: Numerous changes needed, if Wisconsin is to reduce black male incarceration (May 23, 2014)
- Black men in prison, what we've learned so far (May 19, 2014)
- Essayist Paul Heinz: "We shouldn't charge children as adults" (May 15, 2014)
- Innercity teens need "grit" -- and so do state and local policymakers (May 14, 2014)
- Milwaukee's drug treatment court keeps some men out of prison (May 8, 2014)

- Felmers Chaney Correctional Center Advisory Board members: ways to reduce Wisconsin's \$1.2 billion corrections budget (May 6, 2014)
- Madison looks to close inequality gaps (May 6, 2014)
- Milwaukee community leaders hope job training in prison will bring down the numbers (May 5, 2014)
- Milwaukee father: My time in prison doesn't define me (Apr. 29, 2014)
- A Milwaukee mother reflects on son's life in and out of prison (Feb. 18, 2014)
- Felony records take toll on lives of black men (Feb. 11, 2014)
- Black men in prison: Stories behind the statistics (Dec. 9, 2013)
- Many of Wisconsin's black male offenders go back to prison, struggle to stay out (Nov. 15, 2013)
- Reaction to UWM study: Young black men should focus on education and entrepreneurship (Apr. 22, 2013)

COMMUNITY IMPACTS OF MASS INCARCERATION

- Reports show extreme racial disparities in Wisconsin (Nov. 12, 2014)
- Inner-city Milwaukee teens reflect on life among crime, poverty (Apr. 22, 2014)
- Impact of high black male incarceration reaches across state (Apr. 4, 2014)
- Black male incarceration devastates Milwaukee 53206 neighborhood (Feb. 25, 2014)
- Caring adults help black youth steer clear of prison (Nov. 21, 2013)

POLICING AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

- Uneven enforcement of marijuana laws and racial disparity (Aug. 21, 2014)
- Milwaukee leaders call for "ceasefire" ahead of surge in summer violence (May 13, 2014)
- Police seek end to "get even" violence (Mar. 21, 2014)
- Police say "more traffic stops mean less crime" (Mar. 20, 2014)
- Derelict properties often havens for wrongdoers (Mar. 19, 2014)
- Chief Flynn says policing not the cause of high rate of black male incarceration (Dec. 20, 2013)
- The role driver's licenses play in black male incarceration (Dec. 20, 2013)
- Nearly 100,000 driver's licenses suspended each year in Milwaukee (Dec. 17, 2013)

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

- A life of caring, Mother Clara cultivates love and hope on her Milwaukee block (May 21, 2014)
- Milwaukee urban farmer hopes to train ex-convicts, build entrepreneurial skills. (May 16, 2014)
- Efforts to instill hope in children of incarcerated men (May 13, 2014)
[See Sesame Street "Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration" toolkit]
- Parents behind bars help fund scholarships for inmates' kids (May 12, 2014)
- Milwaukee men get skilled on fatherhood (May 6, 2014)

WHY IS WISCONSIN'S INCARCERATION RATE SO HIGH?

- Why is Milwaukee so bad for black people? (Mar. 5, 2015)
- Rev. Brisco: Wisconsin's rate of incarceration of black men an "undeclared state of emergency" (Mar. 14, 2014)
- The role poverty, violence and despair play in black male incarceration (Nov. 26, 2013)
- Drug policies from 1990s led to high numbers of incarceration (Nov. 25, 2013)
- Why are so many black men in Wisconsin behind bars? (Nov. 15, 2013)
- Thousands of black men follow common path to prison (Nov. 13, 2013)
- Wisconsin's high black male incarceration rate concerns community leaders (Nov. 11, 2013)
- Study: Wisconsin far and away leads nation in black male incarceration (Apr. 21, 2013)

NATIONAL RESEARCH

- Khalil Gibran Muhammad, author of *The Condemnation of Blackness*, on how crime statistics were used to condemn African Americans (May 2, 2014)
- Imani Perry, Princeton University professor and author, on "racial inequality still a strong American cultural reality" (Apr. 24, 2014)
- Marc Mauer of The Sentencing Project on Wisconsin following U.S. trends imprisoning higher rate of black men (Nov. 23, 2013)



WUWM and MPTV sponsored a community forum in May 2014 to explore solutions to Wisconsin's mass incarceration levels with over 400 religious leaders, parents of inmates, ex-offenders, students, community activists, and concerned residents. WUWM provided a 5 minute radio summary and 2 hour audio recording of the forum, and MPTV developed a half hour televised highlights program of the discussion.



Community forum in March 2014 sponsored by MPTV and WUWM at the Wisconsin Black Historical Society and Museum: panelists Rev. Willie Brisco, Rev. Mark Evans, Torre Jackson, and E. Michael McCann said jobs are the number one issue. (1 hr. 30 min.)



WUWM interviewed former inmates and families of present inmates for a **"I am more than my record"** special web project. Profiles continue to be posted on **tumblr**.

February 28, 2014, **MPTV Fourth Street Forum** on "Black Men in Prison: Exploring the Crisis, Changing the Outcome." Denise Callaway of Milwaukee Public Schools moderated a panel discussion and community forum with LaToya Dennis of WUWM, Lois Quinn of UWM-ETI, and Clem Richardson of Project Return. (57 min. video)

MPTV Black Nouveau (#2209): Joanne Williams and LaToya Dennis discussed black male incarceration and why it has been ignored as a critical issue (Nov. 13, 2013)

Black Nouveau (#2216 at 13:46) talked with state Senator Nikiya Harris about her proposed legislation to measure racial impact of criminal justice legislation (Jan. 15, 2014)



Black Nouveau (#2221 at 17:34) interviewed UWM social welfare dean Stan Stojkovic and Atty. R.L. McNeely from the Felmers Chaney Correctional Center Advisory Board (Feb. 19, 2014)

Black Nouveau (#2222) looked at the "Building a Better Man" initiative with psychologists Drs. Ramel Smith, Bell Seymour, and Hector Torres (Feb. 26, 2014)

Black Nouveau(#2232) explored solutions proposed at the Milwaukee town hall meeting to address Wisconsin's high rates of incarceration of black men (June 11, 2014)

¡Adelante! talked to Project Return about job opportunities for ex-offenders (Nov. 12, 2013)

Fourth Street Forum: *Building a safe community for all* with Police Chief Edward Flynn, Norma Balentine from Safe and Sound, and Stan Stojkovic from UWM (Nov. 15, 2013)

Fourth Street Forum: *Racial and gender bias: Persistent and subtle?* with Paula Penebaker of the YWCA, Cheryl Maranto from Marquette University, and Nancy Hernandez from ABRAZO multicultural marketing (Nov. 22, 2013)