

**SMALLER  
SAFER  
FAIRER**

**A roadmap  
to closing  
Rikers  
Island**



**NYC** Criminal  
Justice



The City of New York  
Office of the Mayor

# Table of Contents

<b>Letter from the Mayor</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Smaller</b>	<b>10</b>
Strategy 1: Reduce the number of lower-risk people in jail by providing judges with an updated risk assessment tool	19
Strategy 2: Make it easier for people to pay bail	20
Strategy 3: Expand diversion programs for low-and medium-risk defendants	21
Strategy 4: Replace short jail sentences with programs that reduce recidivism	21
Strategy 5: Reduce the number of people with mental illness and substance use disorders in the jails	22
Strategy 6: Reduce the number of women in city jails	24
Strategy 7: Reduce the number of State technical parole violators in New York City jails	25
Strategy 8: Speed up case processing times	26
Strategy 9: Develop additional strategies to reduce the jail population further	27
<b>Safer</b>	<b>29</b>
Strategy 10: Improve city jails to ensure they are safe, secure and humane	31
Strategy 11: Complete movement of all 16-and 17-year-olds off Rikers Island	32
Strategy 12: Expand housing for individuals with mental illness	32
Strategy 13: Use technology to reduce violence and support Department of Correction operations	33
Strategy 14: Improve officer safety through a new training academy and fully staffed DOC	35
<b>Fairer</b>	<b>38</b>
Strategy 15: Reduce recidivism through programming and reentry planning	40
Strategy 16: Foster connections to families and community by improving visiting options	43
Strategy 17: Continue to create alternatives to punitive segregation	44
Strategy 18: Expand supportive services for correctional officers	46
<b>The Future of Rikers</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>49</b>

# Letter from Mayor Bill de Blasio



New York City is at the forefront nationally of both ending mass incarceration and reducing crime. Our criminal justice reforms have resulted in a big city that is one of the safest in the nation and has the lowest rate of incarceration. In order to truly end the harms of mass incarceration, we cannot stop now. This is why we have made it the official policy of the City of New York to close the jails on Rikers Island.

For this administration, simply making the statement that we are going to close down Rikers Island is not enough. New Yorkers deserve a concrete and achievable plan to get the job done. That plan is detailed in this report.

We are not offering a quick fix. Rikers Island cannot be closed overnight. It would be much simpler for us to tell people what they want to hear and say we can achieve this goal quickly and easily, but we won't do that. Instead, we are realistic. It will require the work of many—city and state criminal justice agencies, elected officials, prosecutors, defenders, courts, program providers, New Yorkers and their communities—to ultimately close Rikers Island. This will be a long and difficult path.

The central challenge involved in closing Rikers Island is reducing the number of people in jail to a number that can be safely and effectively accommodated elsewhere. At the beginning of this Administration, it would have been impossible to even conceive of a Rikers population small enough to consider such a change. New Yorkers should be proud that we have already come far enough to contemplate the steps we are now going to take.

Thanks to the hard work of NYPD and communities across the city, we have driven crime down to historic lows. Last year was the safest in the modern recorded history of New York City. Overall crime is down nine percent since 2013. Some of the biggest reductions in the jail population have come from new city investments to ensure that low-risk people do not enter jail, and our efforts to work with every part of the criminal justice system to reduce case delay. These initiatives have come together to bring the city jail population down by 18 percent in just three years.

Today, in a city of 8.5 million people, there are about 9,400 people in custody on any given day in our entire jail system—down from a daily average of over 20,000 in the early 1990s. Of the total jail population only approximately 2,300 can be housed off of Rikers Island with the existing capacity in the Department of Correction's borough facilities. That's why none of this is possible without first reducing the number of people in our jails significantly.



**For the first time in history, closing Rikers Island can be and is the official policy of the City of New York.**

Under our plan, within five years we will bring the daily number of people in our jails down to 7,000. We will also establish a Justice Implementation Task Force, chaired by Elizabeth Glazer, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and Zachary Carter, Corporation Counsel of the City of New York. This Task Force will bring together all of the entities that affect the size of our jail population—including, the police, prosecutors, defenders, state courts, local and state corrections agencies and service providers—to help us identify and implement strategies that will ultimately reduce the daily jail population to 5,000 people. The Task Force will also examine other issues essential to the creation of a smaller, safer and fairer jail system, including improving safety and opportunity for people inside the jails and designing modern jail facilities that are well integrated into New York City's dense, urban communities. Regular meetings of this Task Force will ensure greater levels of accountability and coordination as we drive towards closure.

Once the jail population reaches 5,000, the City will be in a position to close Rikers Island for good. Doing so will depend on the desires of neighborhoods and their elected officials, as even a jail population of 5,000—significantly smaller than the jail population today—will still require identifying and developing appropriate sites for new jails as well as renovating existing facilities in the boroughs. We are committed to an open, ongoing conversation with New Yorkers and the City Council to work through these issues.

We also have a responsibility to those who are in our jails right now. They cannot afford to wait a decade. Even as we plan the end of Rikers Island we must do all we can to ensure that it is safer and fairer now. That isn't just the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do. We are confident that upgrading the facilities and offering more and better support for incarcerated people will help us reduce the size of the jail population by curbing recidivism. Better facilities, programming and services will also allow us to provide safer working conditions and more professional development opportunities for corrections officers.

The plan we lay out in this report builds upon the work of many, including the Independent Commission on Closing Rikers Island convened by City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and chaired by former Chief Judge of the State of New York Jonathan Lippman. We look forward to partnering with all New Yorkers to achieve the milestones laid out in our roadmap. Closing Rikers Island is an enormous undertaking with profound implications for our future. It is the right thing to do and together we can do it.



Mayor Bill de Blasio  
City of New York

# Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

## Our plan is to close Rikers Island and replace it with a smaller network of modern jails.

Our goal is a jail system that is smaller, safer, and fairer—one consistent with the overall criminal justice system we are building in New York City, in which crime continues to fall, the jail population drops significantly, and all New Yorkers are treated with dignity. Our newer system of jails will be focused on helping those incarcerated find a better path in life and maintain access to community supports. And it will ensure that officers have safer places to work and more support.

What follows is a credible path to that goal by continuing to reduce both crime and incarceration and by ensuring that the City’s jails are humane productive places for those who work and are incarcerated there now. Specifically, this report includes 18 concrete strategies that will move the City toward a smaller jail population, safer facilities, and fairer culture inside jails.

This plan will not be easy. Historically, community opposition, land use requirements, and the high cost of acquiring and developing new land have prevented the City from siting new jails or even expanding existing jails. And it will not be fast. We estimate it will take at least a decade. In order to achieve our goal, we must have a jail population that is small enough to be housed safely off-Island. On an average day in 2017, there were approximately 9,400 people incarcerated in city jails with space for just 2,300 of these people in existing facilities in the boroughs. To close Rikers and replace it with a new, smaller network of jails, we will have to continue to bring the jail population down while ensuring that we sustain the City’s historically low crime rate—which is down 76% from 1990.

We believe these obstacles are surmountable with the partnership of many. Through a Justice Implementation Task Force (“Implementation Task Force”), we will ensure the transparent partnership with New Yorkers across the City and with government, including the City Council and the State, required to close Rikers Island for good. The Implementation Task Force will ensure the effective execution of the strategies laid out in this report to ensure a correctional system that is:

**This report is a concrete plan to create a correctional system with a smaller jail population, safer facilities, and fairer culture inside.**

- **Smaller:** our goal is to reduce the average daily jail population by 25% to 7,000 in the next five years. To achieve this goal, the City will work with every part of the criminal justice system to implement strategies that:
  - Make it easier to pay bail;
  - Expand pre-trial diversion to allow more defendants to wait for trial in the community instead of in jail;
  - Replace short jail sentences with programs that reduce recidivism;
  - Reduce the number of people with behavioral health needs in city jails;
  - Reduce the number of state parole violators in city jails;
  - Reduce the number of women in city jails; and
  - Speed up case processing times.

Fully implementing the strategies in this report to reduce the population to 7,000 will require the partnership of the entire criminal justice system, the health and education systems, and New Yorkers themselves in keeping crime low. With 7,000 individuals in city jails, New York City will be using jail almost exclusively for individuals facing serious charges or who pose a high risk, making further safe reductions difficult. But closing the jails on Rikers Island for good requires a daily jail population of 5,000 or fewer. To reach this goal, violent crime will have to decline in New York City and we will need to address the problem of chronic offending, which to date has been intractable nationwide and in which our shelter and health systems play an important role as well. As part of the Implementation Task Force, a Working Group on Safely Reducing the Size of the Jail Population will develop strategies to address these issues.

- **Safer:** our goal is to ensure that those who work and those who are incarcerated in city jails have safe and humane facilities as quickly as possible. We must start improving the conditions of our jails today. To achieve this goal, the City will:
  - Continue to make long-needed physical improvements to all city jails on-and off-Rikers Island using the more than \$1 billion in funding that the Administration has already added to its capital plan over the last three years;
  - Triple the number of dedicated housing units designed for individuals with serious mental illness, which have been shown to reduce violence;
  - Improve officer safety by building a new training academy to ensure all corrections officers receive the best possible training; and
  - Enhance safety by implementing full camera coverage in all city jails by the end of 2017.

A Design and Facilities Working Group, part of the Implementation Task Force, will convene design experts and neighborhood and community development leaders to help drive thoughtful design of new facilities and renovation of existing facilities.



- **Fairer:** our goal is to improve the culture inside city jails by increasing support and opportunity for corrections officers and everyone in the City's custody. The City has already invested over \$90 million in professional development for corrections officers and in educational, vocational and recreational programming for incarcerated people to help reduce future returns to jail. To further improve the culture inside city jails, the City will:
  - Offer everyone in city custody five hours per day of education, vocational, and therapeutic programming by the end of 2018;
  - Provide everyone in city custody with reentry support and implement new programs for those who have served a city sentence, including support from trained, formerly incarcerated mentors and new transitional employment programs;
  - Foster connections to families and community by improving visiting;
  - Continue to develop and refine alternatives to punitive segregation that can safely house people who commit acts of violence; and
  - Better support correctional officers by offering peer mentoring for new recruits to reduce attrition and supportive services for staff to deal with distress and trauma.

A Culture Change Working Group—part of the Implementation Task Force and comprised of corrections officers, formerly incarcerated individuals and their families, as well as representatives from government and non-profits that provide programming in jails—will guide implementation of the new strategies contained in this report to improve visits, programming, reentry, and support for officers and staff.

Ultimately, closing all the jails on Rikers Island will depend not only on reducing the size of the city jail population to 5,000, but also on the willingness of neighborhoods and their elected officials to identify appropriate new sites. We are committed

to an open, ongoing conversation with New Yorkers and the City Council to work through these issues. The Design and Facilities Working Group will partner with communities to address issues related to the complicated siting process, including looking at how jails can be designed to better integrate into New York City neighborhoods.

The City cannot accomplish these goals alone. It will require the work of many partners. We will need the NYPD to build on its success in keeping crime at historic lows through precision policing efforts. We will need continued investment in neighborhoods and in our people to keep New Yorkers from getting involved in the criminal justice system in the first place. We will need the active partnership of residents to help reduce and solve crimes. Courts will need the resources to manage case processing effectively and justly. We will need prosecutors and the defense bar to prioritize reducing case delay while promoting justice. We will need to provide incarcerated people with the quality programming that has a demonstrated effect on reducing recidivism. And we will need to support corrections staff to serve the public at the highest levels of integrity.

This plan outlines the commitment we are making to New Yorkers. We will need your help to achieve these goals and invite you to join us at [nyc.gov/rikers](https://nyc.gov/rikers)

**Smaller:**

Safely reduce  
the City's jail  
population by  
25% over the  
next 5 years

## The Plan: Smaller

**Our goal is to operate the smallest jail system possible without compromising public safety.** This is a matter of justice: no one should be incarcerated who does not pose a risk, either to public safety or of not returning to court. It is also a matter of pragmatism: the smaller the jail population, the easier it becomes to close the aging, isolated facilities on Rikers Island and replace them with a smaller network of safe, humane and modern facilities.

In the last three years, New York City has made great strides toward this goal. Major crime has fallen by 9% and the size of the jail population has dropped by 18%, giving us the lowest incarceration rate of any big city. On an average day in the first quarter of 2017, there were roughly 9,400 people incarcerated in New York City. Our strategy to reduce the population further while maintaining safety has two phases:

**1** First, over the next five years, we will work toward the goal of safely reducing the size of the jail population by an additional 25% to 7,000. Doing so will require full implementation of the strategies laid out below to reduce the number of people who enter jail and the length of time they stay – both of which necessitate the commitment of every part of the criminal justice system and the partnership of New Yorkers in keeping crime at historic lows.

**2** Second, working with our partners in the criminal justice system, we will develop innovative ways to reduce the population further, with a goal of reaching 5,000. As the size of the jail population falls to 7,000, jail will increasingly be reserved only for individuals charged with serious crimes or who are a high risk of flight. Further reductions will require developing solutions to complicated problems like chronic recidivism and reaching a consensus as to the appropriate use of confinement for those charged with violent crimes (discussed in further detail below).

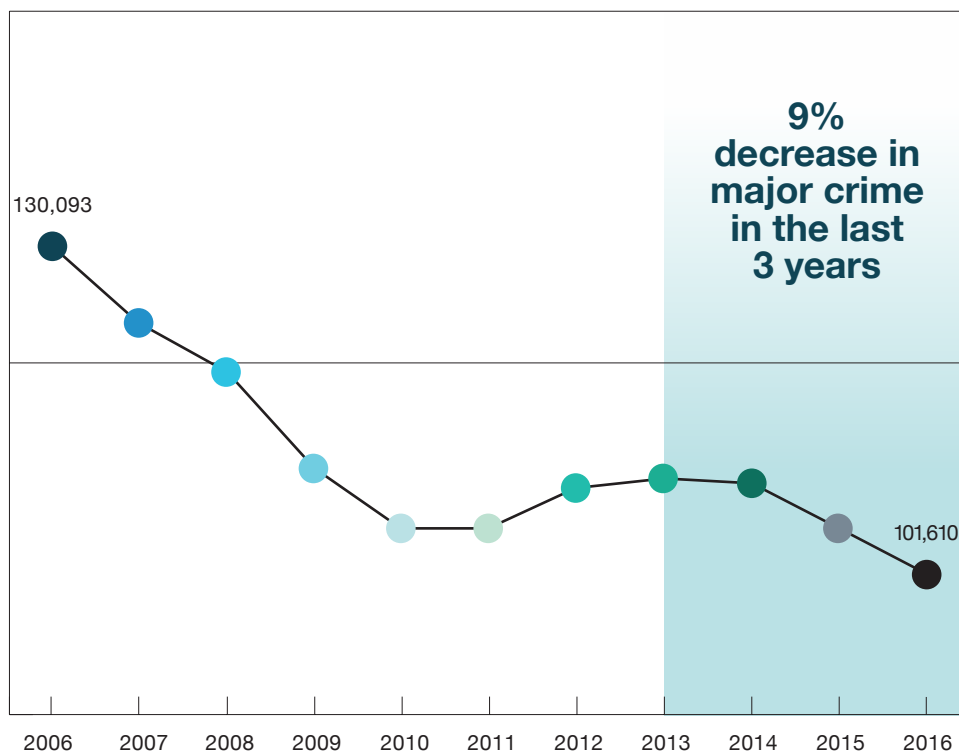
On the next pages are the concrete strategies that will move us toward these goals. To help shape further interventions and ensure effective implementation, this work will be guided by a Working Group on Safely Reducing the Size of the Jail Population, which will be part of the Implementation Task Force and comprised of experts and practitioners from inside and outside of city government.

**For real-time updates on this work, please visit [nyc.gov/rikers](http://nyc.gov/rikers).**

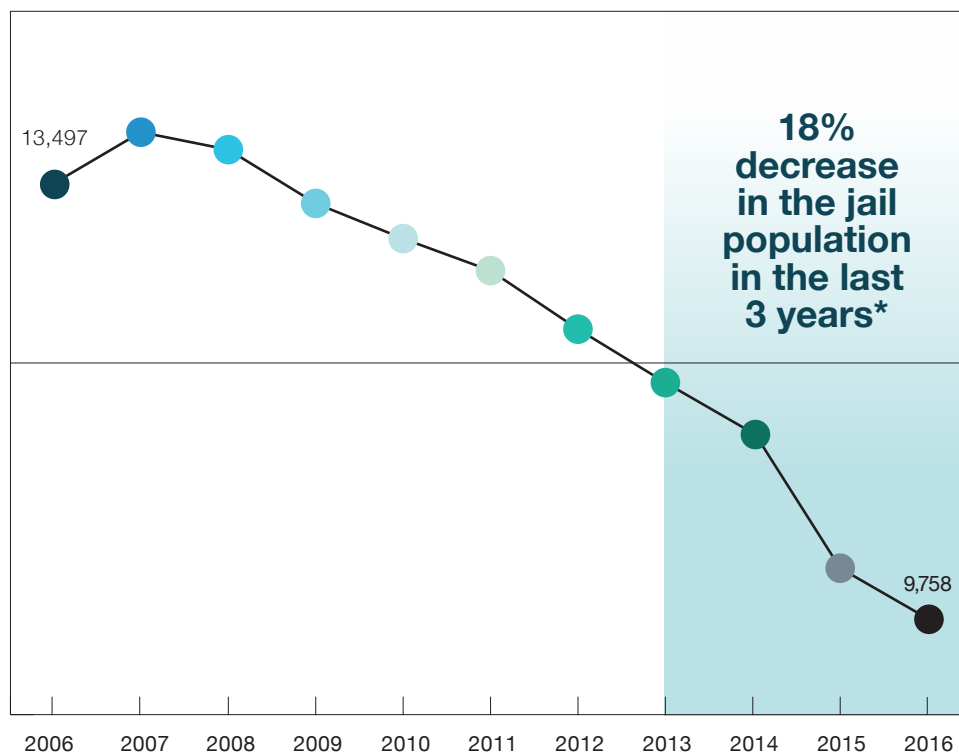
The data used throughout this section comes from city and state agencies. For a complete data breakdown of the current jail population and opportunities to reduce, please see the Justice Brief available at [www.nyc.gov/rikers](http://www.nyc.gov/rikers).

**Both crime and the size of the jail population are falling in New York City**

### Major Crime in NYC



### Average Daily Jail Population



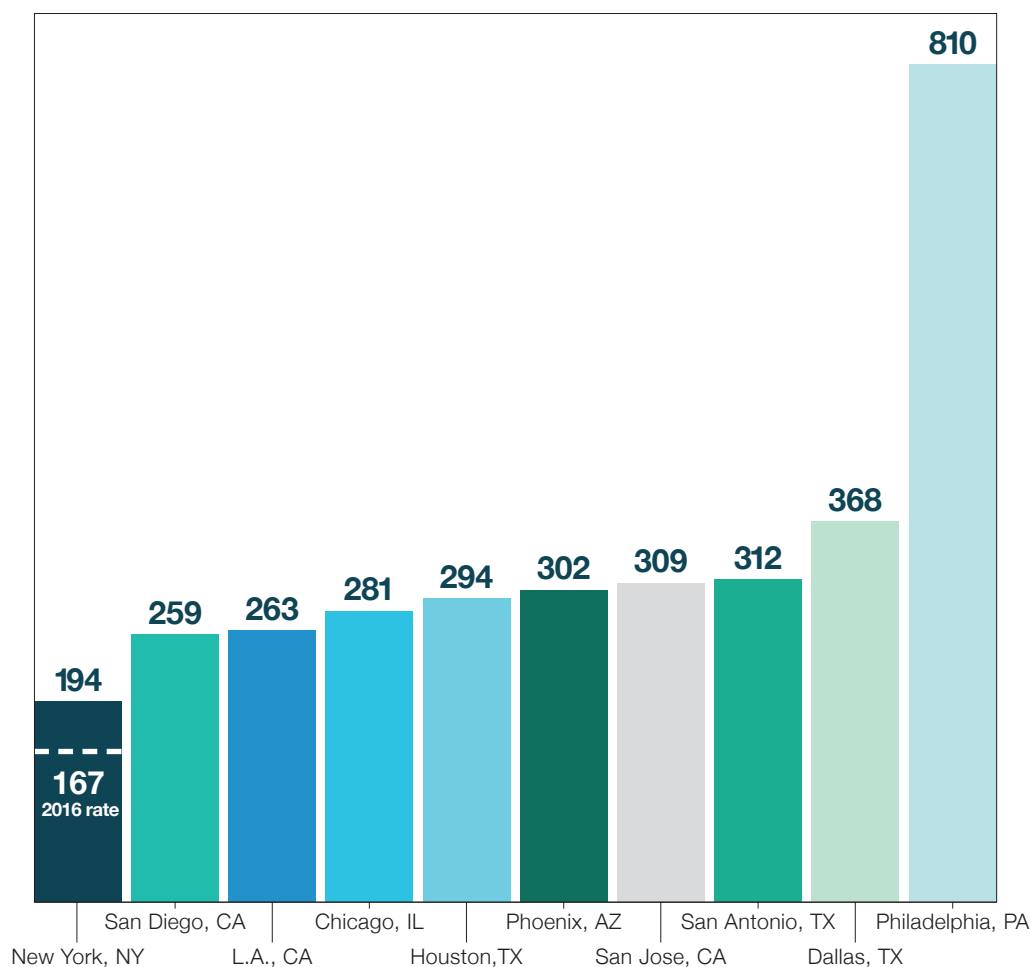
\*The average daily jail population has continued to decline. In 2017, the average daily population is 9,400.

## Current Context

The size of the jail population in New York City has been steadily declining for thirty years. While jail and prison populations around the country increased, New York City's jail population has fallen by half since 1990 even while major crime fell by 76%. This experience has shown that it is possible to have both more safety and less incarceration. In fact, New York has the lowest rate of incarceration among the largest cities in the country while retaining its status as one of the safest big cities.

### New York City's use of jail is the lowest among large U.S. cities\*

2014 incarceration rate per 100,000 people



The trends toward less crime and less use of jail have accelerated in New York City over the last three years. Because of deliberate efforts to rethink policing strategy, expand alternatives to jail, and reduce the time it takes cases to move to conclusion, fewer people are entering city jails and the number of people in city jails for longer than one year has declined. Steep declines in the number of people admitted to New York City jails are evident across a number of different categories, including those detained pretrial on misdemeanors (down 25%), those serving sentences (down 34%), and those detained on bail of \$2000 or less (down 36%). After increasing for decades, the average length of time it takes a Supreme Court case to reach disposition has shrunk by 18 days over the last two years.

\*The chart contains the top ten cities by population size in the United States, 2015.



## New York City jail populations with the steepest declines over the last three years

Population		Decline		Reduction Strategy
Misdemeanor detainees	➤	5600 fewer jail admissions (-25%)	➤	<b>Reduce number of people who enter jail</b> (Supervised Release, bail reform, enforcement strategy)
City-sentenced population*	➤	3900 fewer jail admissions (-34%)	➤	<b>Reduce number of people who enter jail</b> (alternatives to incarceration)
Non-violent felony detainees	➤	2530 fewer jail admissions (-13%)	➤	<b>Reduce number of people who enter jail</b> (Supervised Release, bail reform, enforcement strategy)
Mental health service users	➤	297 fewer in custody on an average day (-7%)	➤	<b>Reduce number of people who enter jail</b> (diversion) and <b>reduce length of stay</b> (enhanced programming and services in custody to avoid decompensation and case delay)
Detainees with bail up to \$2,000	➤	244 fewer in custody on an average day (-36%)	➤	<b>Reduce number of people who enter jail</b> (Supervised Release, bail reform, enforcement strategy)
People in custody for longer than one year	➤	110 fewer in custody on an average day (-8%)	➤	<b>Reduce length of stay</b> (shortening case processing times)
Adolescents (16-to-17) and young adults (18-to-21)	➤	64 fewer adolescents in custody on an average day (-30%); 233 fewer young adults in custody on an average day (-18%)	➤	<b>Reduce number of people who enter jail</b> (diversion) and <b>reduce length of stay</b> (shortening case processing times)

\*These are individuals who have been convicted and are serving a sentence of one year or less. Sentences of longer than one year are served in State prison.

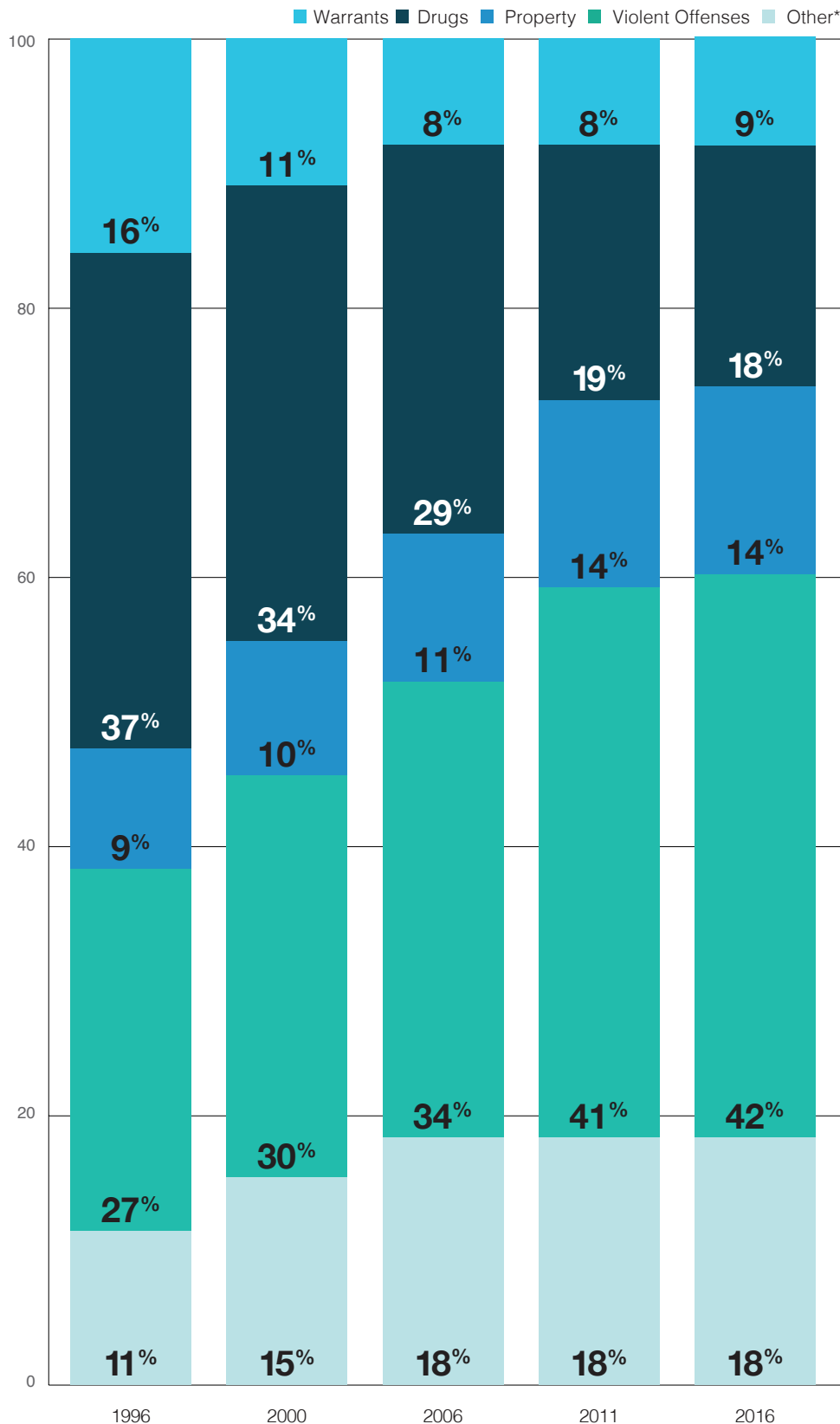
### A number of factors have driven these declines in New York City's jail population:

- **New Yorkers commit fewer crimes.** Every type of major crime has fallen in New York City in the last three years: violent crime is down 8%, property crime is down 10%, and shootings are down 10%.
- **The NYPD arrests fewer people.** Although not every arrest leads to jail—approximately 15% of arrests do—enforcement trends do affect the size of the jail population. Police in New York City have increasingly focused enforcement resources on violent crime, while de-escalating their activity around lower level offenses. This has led both to a steep reduction in arrests for misdemeanors (down 22% since 2013) and a greater emphasis on arrests for more serious offenses that could lead to jail. For instance, gun arrests are up 23% since 2013. However, because gun arrests are such a small proportion of arrests overall, the large reduction in misdemeanor and non-violent felony arrests have helped to drive down the overall jail population.
- **The City has expanded reliable, effective alternatives to jail.** New York City has multiple diversion options that judges can use instead of setting bail at arraignment or sentencing a defendant to jail. Approximately 4,000 people are diverted from city jails every year through these alternatives to incarceration. One of the newest and largest options, which started in March 2016, is called Supervised Release. Crafted by judges, prosecutors, and defenders, Supervised Release is a program that gives judges the option at arraignment to release low-and medium-risk defendants, with modest mechanisms such as weekly meetings with a social worker or text message reminders to ensure defendants return to court. To date, the program has served over 3,700 people with a 92% success rate in defendants returning to court.
- **Judges continue to allow a larger percentage of defendants than in any other city to wait for trial in the community instead of in jail.** Nearly 70% of all defendants are released without conditions (such as bail), known as released on recognizance (“ROR”). New York City’s 70% ROR rate is more than double that in Washington, D.C., the next largest user of this form of pretrial release<sup>1</sup>.
- **Every part of the criminal justice system is working together to reduce case delay.** After increasing for decades, the average length of a Supreme Court case in New York City has shrunk by 18 days since April 2015, when the Mayor’s Office, the courts, the City’s five district attorneys and the defense bar launched Justice Reboot, an initiative to reduce case delay in a lasting, systemic way.

Today, as a result of these efforts to reduce the use of jail for people charged with lower-level offenses or at low risk of failing to appear for court if released, a greater percentage of those in jail are facing serious charges or a higher risk of not returning to court. The percentage of the jail population held on violent offenses has increased 56% over the last twenty years, while those held on lower level offenses (in particular drug offenses) has dropped 51%. Today, 91% of the pretrial population in city jails is held on a felony charge (49% on violent felony charges), over half of the jail population is facing multiple cases—the resolution of which can delay discharge from Rikers—and 69% are at medium or high risk of failing to appear in court, the primary basis on which a New York State judge can hold a defendant.

## Fewer individuals in jail for drugs, more for violent offenses

Over the past 20 years, the composition of the jail population has shifted as it has decreased in size. Changes in police enforcement and an expansion of diversion programs have reduced the number of people held on misdemeanor and non-violent felony charges (such as drug possession). As the population has become smaller, a greater percentage are held on serious or violent charges or a judge has determined that they pose a high risk of missing a court appearance.



\*Top other charges include larceny and criminal contempt.

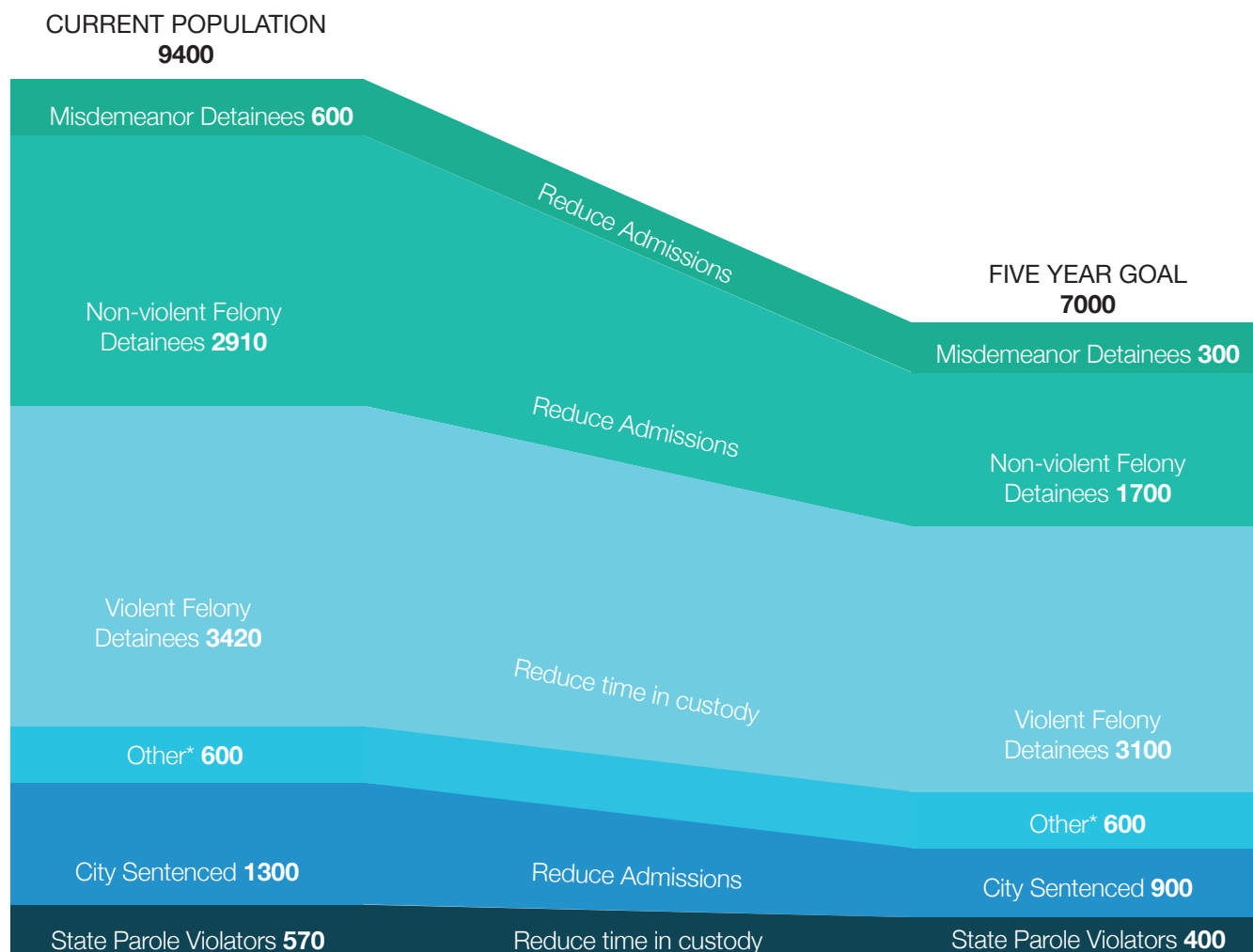
Although the majority of people in our jails are charged with serious crimes, have multiple cases or pose a medium or high risk of failing to appear in court, there are still opportunities to reduce the jail population safely. The strategies below will expand appropriate alternatives to jail for those who could be safely supervised in the community, make it easier to pay bail, and increase the speed at which cases are resolved (so that people can be released or start serving their sentences either in the jails or in prison). It will take the focused commitment of every part of the criminal justice system and the partnership of New Yorkers in keeping crime at historic lows to ensure that these strategies are successful. With that partnership, these strategies can reduce the average daily jail population by 25% over the next five years while protecting public safety.

At 7,000, our jails will consist primarily of those charged with violent offenses and chronic offenders. Thus, further reductions will require significant changes in how we prevent and address both kinds of behavior. A Working Group on Safely Reducing the Size of the Jail Population, which will be part of the Implementation Task Force, will be charged with developing concrete ways to achieve the eventual goal of reducing the size of the jail population to 5,000 (more below in Strategy 9).

### **Five Year Goal: Reduce the jail population by 25% to 7,000**

Reducing the average daily jail population to 7,000 will be accomplished by (a) reducing the number of people who enter the jails, and (b) reducing the amount of time people spend in the jails. Admissions and length of stay are the two drivers of the size of the jail population. Please see Appendix A for additional information on how each population reduction was calculated.

**The strategies in this section are projected to reduce the jail population by 25% over the next 5 years**



## STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ENTER JAIL

About half of the jail population turns over every nine days. These individuals, who only stay in jail for a short time, tend to be charged with lower-level offenses and most are able to make bail after a few days in jail. Others plead guilty and receive short jail sentences. With appropriate, evidence-based guidance and programming that judges and prosecutors can rely upon, it is possible, without sacrificing public safety, to divert from the jails some additional individuals who pose a lower risk, for the most part, misdemeanor and non-violent felony detainees and those serving a city sentence.

\*Other includes those held on warrants and state holds.



**Projected  
reduction:  
approximately**

**710**

**over 5 years**

For more information on how the population reduction projections in the section were calculated, please see Appendix A.

### **Strategy 1: Provide judges with modern tools that assess the likelihood a defendant will return to court, assisting decisions to release or detain while a criminal case is pending**

Providing better information to judges to assist in their assessment of a defendant's risk of flight will further reduce the jail population. The City's pretrial services agency interviews all arraigned individuals and provides an assessment to the courts on that person's likelihood of returning for future court dates. While this type of assessment has been in use in New York City since the 1960s, the City is currently working to update the instrument using more recent data and new technologies that will allow for more accurate assessments. An updated instrument that accurately reflects risk could reduce the average daily population in city jails by approximately 710 people in the five years following implementation.

New York City is also seeking to improve the tools available to judges to assess risk by continuing to advocate for a change in state law that would allow judges to consider a defendant's risk to public safety, and not just the risk that the defendant might fail to appear for future court appearances, when making bail decisions. Currently, New York is one of only four states that prohibit judges from considering public safety when making decisions about release, with a few narrow exceptions<sup>2</sup>. Allowing judges to consider danger when making bail decisions is a common sense reform. It would improve public safety by ensuring that judges take into account a defendant's risk to public safety, and not just the risk that he or she might fail to appear for court appearances.

### **Why risk assessment matters**

The goal of effective risk assessment instruments is to improve the criminal justice system's accuracy by ensuring we can separate the few individuals who should be detained from the many who should not. When used well, risk assessment instruments can improve both safety and fairness.

Risk assessment instruments are used across the country to evaluate defendants' likelihood of pretrial success, meaning their likelihood of attending all court dates and not getting re-arrested while awaiting trial in the community. These risk instruments are constructed by taking historical data and calculating what factors are most associated with missing a court

appearance or getting re-arrested—for example, a past record of missing court dates—and building a model to predict future outcomes.

These models are validated by researchers to ensure they are accurate, and then they are assessed by policy-makers, practitioners and researchers to ensure they do not produce biased outcomes

based on race and gender. Risk assessment has been used for decades in New York City, and through developing and validating more accurate tools while ensuring that we are avoiding biased outcomes, risk instruments will help New York City's criminal justice system to continue reducing unnecessary incarceration while protecting public safety.

**Projected  
reduction:  
approximately  
**200**  
over 5 years**

## **Strategy 2: Reform the bail system by making it easier for people to pay bail**

Money bail can undermine fairness if low-risk defendants are held in jail because they cannot afford relatively small bail amounts. And it can undermine public safety if higher-risk individuals are able to post high bail amounts and secure release. For the last two years, New York City has been working to reduce reliance on money bail by expanding alternative-to-bail programs such as Supervised Release, a new program that allows judges to release lower risk defendants to a supervisory program in the community instead of setting bail. This new program, coupled with the efforts described below to make it easier to pay bail, has led to a 36% reduction in the number of people in jail on bail of \$2,000 or less in the last three years. (Learn more about the City's efforts to reduce reliance on money bail at [www.bail-lab.nyc](http://www.bail-lab.nyc)). Taken together, the two strategies below could reduce the average daily jail population by 200 over the next five years:

### **Reduce inefficiencies in the bail payment process to allow those who can post bail to do so more easily:**

- Approximately three-quarters of people who pay bail do so within seven days of arraignment. Often they end up at Rikers because they were not able to raise bail in time; they did not have access to cash or some other reason not associated with the merits of their case. To remedy these issues, the City is working to make it easier for defendants and their family members to pay the bail the judge has set. An online bail payment system and ATMs in every courthouse will be in place by late 2017. Additionally, the City is investing \$490,000 per year to add 50% more "bail expeditors" citywide, staff who can help families pay bail before their relative enters jail by interviewing defendants about who could help them post bail, contacting family members to let them know bail has been set, and helping to ensure that defendants are held at the courthouse while their contacts make the trip to court to post bail.

### **Help people charged with misdemeanors who pose a low or medium risk of flight post bail when it is unaffordable:**

- For some defendants and their families, low amounts of bail can be out of reach financially, even though the judge may have intended it to be met. New York City has launched a charitable bail fund that expands the availability of this resource from the Bronx and Brooklyn to all five boroughs. Created by the City Council with public funds, it pays bail of \$2,000 or below for an estimated 1,000 low-and medium-risk misdemeanor defendants annually. Three programs that perform the same service have been in place in the Bronx and Brooklyn since 2012 and defendants bailed under this program return to court on time in 97% of cases.

For more information on how the population reduction projections in the section were calculated, please see Appendix A.

**Projected  
reduction:  
approximately**

**500**

**over 5 years**

**Strategy 3: Expand diversion programs that allow low-and medium-risk defendants to remain in the community while their case is pending**

New York City has multiple diversion options that judges can use instead of setting bail at arraignment. Currently, judges divert to city-funded programs approximately 4,000 New Yorkers from jail every year. One of the newest options, which started in March 2016, is called “Supervised Release,” a new citywide alternative to jail program that allows individuals to wait for trial in the community, working and living with their families. To date, the program effectively diverted over 3,700 people from jail, 92% of who successfully returned to court. Beginning in June, the City is investing an additional \$2.3 million per year to enhance Supervised Release’s capacity to serve people with behavioral health needs, including additional masters-level clinical social workers and peers, as well as increasing by 10% the number of people who can be diverted from jail through Supervised Release every year.

**Projected  
reduction:  
approximately**

**300**

**over 5 years**

**Strategy 4: Replace short jail sentences with programs that reduce recidivism**

Beginning in July 2017, the City will start a new \$5 million per year program that could dramatically reduce jail sentences of less than thirty days. Over the course of a year, there are approximately 9,000 admissions to jail on these short sentences. Many of these individuals have had multiple, short stays in jail over the course of their adult lives—a pattern often exacerbated by homelessness and behavioral health needs. Beginning in the summer of 2017, judges will have the option to assign individuals to short-term programs that can include community service, vocational training, case management, and health treatment. Programs will be specifically tailored to individuals’ risks and needs and will help address some of the issues—such as chronic homelessness or substance use—that could be leading to repeated jail stays, providing instead a pathway to stability and self-sufficiency. The City will closely evaluate the program to ensure effectiveness. New York City is the first jurisdiction in the country to launch a program explicitly to reduce these short jail sentences.

For more information on how the population reduction projections in the section were calculated, please see Appendix A.

**Projected  
reduction:  
approximately**

**50+**

**over 5 years**

Other strategies in this section will further reduce the number of people with behavioral health needs in city jails. This projection is solely for a program specifically serving this population.

**In the three years since the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and the Criminal Justice System launched, the number of individuals with a mental health diagnosis in city jails has dropped by 7%.**

#### **Strategy 5: Reduce the number of individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders held in the jails through continued implementation of the Mayor's Action Plan on Behavioral Health and the Criminal Justice System**

In December 2014, Mayor de Blasio announced the Mayor's Action Plan on Behavioral Health and the Criminal Justice System, 24 interlocking strategies to reduce the number of people with behavioral health needs cycling through the criminal justice system. These strategies included reducing arrests and diversion to treatment where appropriate, ensuring that those who do enter the criminal justice system are treated in a therapeutic way, and that the City provides support for individuals to live stable lives in their communities to prevent future returns to jail. Before the launch of this Action Plan, the number of people with behavioral health needs in city jails had been increasing for years—despite the decline in overall jail population. In the three years since this concerted effort began, the number of individuals with a mental health diagnosis in city jails has dropped by 7%.

The City will continue these efforts, training more police officers on how to intervene effectively in situations where people are in crisis, opening community-based drop off centers that provide short-term case management as an alternative to arrest, and offering permanent supportive housing. To date, 102 individuals have been placed in supportive housing. These individuals are among the highest users of jail in New York City, are chronically homeless and are dealing with severe behavioral health issues. Collectively, these individuals have served over 36,000 days in jail and spent over 22,000 days in shelter over the last five years. Permanent housing, coupled with supportive services to help these individuals stabilize, will save the City an estimated \$1.6 million annually through reduced hospital visits, shelter admissions, and trips to jail. These efforts are expected to reduce the average daily jail population by 50. Other strategies in this section—including Supervised Release, the new program offering alternatives to short jail sentences, and efforts to reduce case delay—will also contribute to further declines in the number of people with behavioral health needs in city jails.

For more information on how the population reduction projections in the section were calculated, please see Appendix A.

## New Resources for Behavioral Health Citywide

Both in New York City and across the country, a relatively small number of people consume a disproportionate share of shelter, jail and emergency room resources. These individuals tend to be chronically homeless, struggle with severe behavioral health issues, and return to jail frequently on lower-level charges. This problem of frequent use remains a large, unsolved issue that jurisdictions nationwide are working to solve, one prominent example being through the federal Data-Driven Justice Initiative.

New York City has launched several city-wide initiatives, including ThriveNYC and HealingNYC, which broadly expand services for people with behavioral health needs and aim to help the population that frequently cycles between jail and shelter.

ThriveNYC is an unprecedented commitment of over \$850 million for 54 initiatives to improve the mental health of NYC. The focus on prevention, including a new network of school-based services, will keep people from going down a path toward instability that so often leads to cycles of arrest and incarceration. Closing treatment gaps, expanding services like supportive housing, building our mental health

workforce, and creating NYC Well—a single point of entry for New Yorkers who need any kind of connection to behavioral health services—will improve the health of our city.

HealingNYC, which launched in March 2017, is a comprehensive, \$38 million initiative to prevent opioid overdose and includes several programs that specifically target people in the criminal justice system. Through HealingNYC, the City is committed to locating more evidence-based substance use treatment services, like Medication Assisted Treatment, in jails while increasing reentry planning to serve the approximately 1700 individuals with substance use disorders in the jails on an average day. These new and expanded programs will not only reduce the risk of drug overdose for people leaving jail (a leading cause of death for people recently released from jail), but will help put incarcerated people with behavioral health disorders on a stable path toward recovery—making them less likely to return to jail. Tools of the criminal justice system should not be the default response to people in crisis, and the City is dedicated to targeting initiatives that get people the public health services they need to avoid incarceration and ultimately thrive.



**Projected  
reduction:  
approximately  
**20+**  
over 5 years**

Other strategies in this section will further reduce the number of women in city jails. This projection is solely for a new program specifically serving women.

For more information on how the population reduction projections in the section were calculated, please see Appendix A.

**Strategy 6: Reduce the number of women in city jails by providing programs inside and outside of the jails focused on their unique needs**

There are approximately 630 women in custody on an average day. A limited survey of women in New York City jail found a high need for employment upon release and also that women in jail are often caregivers, and many have experienced domestic violence<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, approximately 75% of women in jail use mental health services while in custody, compared to 42% for the jailed population as a whole. The most common diagnoses are depression, anxiety, adjustment disorder, and personality disorders.

Similar to the overall jail population, 50% of women who enter custody leave within one week. Forty-three percent of women detained pretrial face either misdemeanor or non-violent felony charges (compared to 37% for the overall jail population). The City's strategies to reduce the use of jail for individuals facing misdemeanors and non-violent felonies—including Supervised Release and bail reform, mentioned earlier in this section—will help to reduce the number of women in city jails.

In addition to bringing down the number of women in the jails through broader population reduction strategies, the City also plans to implement a new program tailored specifically to homeless women. Rolling out in the summer of 2017 and back by a three-year investment of \$7 million, the new program will be focused on the approximately 510 women who are admitted to city jails every year who report they are homeless—some of whom could be diverted from jail if their housing needs are addressed. This new program will offer transitional housing to women who are homeless to make it easier for them to participate in alternative to jail programs, many of which require permanent housing as a requirement for eligibility. This program is projected to divert 250 women from jail per year; given the relatively short jail stays of this population, this will reduce the average daily jail population in city jails by approximately 20.

In addition to these targeted programs to reduce the number of women who enter jail, the City has an array of programs for women in custody. There are currently more than 25 programs operating in the Rose M. Singer Center (RMSC), the jail where all women are housed, including:

- Seeking Safety, an evidence-based, trauma-informed therapy that has been proven effective for women with behavioral health needs;
- Manhattan College, which allows women with a high school diploma or GED the opportunity to earn credits toward a college degree while incarcerated;
- Single Stop, a partnership with the Center for Urban and Community Services that assists women serving a sentence in jail with public benefits and other civil legal matters;
- Steps to End Family Violence, which offers workshops that promote healing and social change and provides real assistance for women with custody issues; and
- HOUR children-parenting class, which focuses on women with children, including those women who have babies with them in the RMSC nursery.

These programs address the unique needs of women, laying the foundation for future stability and reducing the number of women who return to jail. Also, moving forward, women leaving jail after serving a city sentence will qualify for the City's new transitional employment program as well as an array of supportive services to help prevent future returns to jail.

Finally, as part of the Implementation Task Force, the City will work with partners inside and outside of government to develop additional strategies tailored to the issues facing women in the criminal justice system.

**Projected  
reduction:  
approximately**  
**170**  
**over 5 years**

### Strategy 7: **Reduce the number of State technical parole violators in New York City jails**

New York State technical parole violators constitute 6% of the average daily population in city jails, approximately 570 individuals on any given day. Technical parole violators have violated a condition of their State parole (such as failing to show up for a meeting or failing to update an address), not committed a new criminal act. Even though 70% of the technical parole violators are ultimately returned to state prison after their parole hearing process is completed, state law still requires them to be housed locally, to the extent practicable, at an average annual cost to New York City of tens of millions of dollars.

To reduce the number of state parolees in city jails, the City is recommending that the State:

- **Reduce the number of State technical parole violators who enter city jails:**
  - **Expand funding for alternative to jail programs.** The State currently funds one parolee diversion program for state parole violators in New York City at Edgecombe Correctional Facility. The State's investment in available diversion programs for state parolees should be expanded.
  - **Change state law to allow for immediate, safe diversion from jail.** Current state law requires that everyone arrested on a parole violation be immediately jailed. The City is calling on the State to replace this law with a risk-driven system in which those who pose a high risk are detained and those who pose a lower risk have an opportunity to remain in the community by being assigned to an alternative to jail program.
  - This change to state law, coupled with an expanded investment in alternative to jail programs for State technical parole violators, could prevent 480 of the 4,000 yearly admissions to jail for state technical parole violators, reducing the average daily jail population by 70.
- **Reduce the length of time state parolees spend in city custody:** State parole violators spend an average of 55 days in city custody. The State should take steps to reduce the length of time it takes to process a parole violation and the length of time it takes to transfer an individual from city jails back to state prison after the parole hearing. These strategies could reduce the number of people in city jails by 100.

For more information on how the population reduction projections in the section were calculated, please see Appendix A.

## The average length of a Supreme Court case in New York City has fallen by 18 days in the last two years.

### STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF TIME PEOPLE SPEND IN JAIL

The length of time that people spend in jail, particularly for pretrial detainees who make up 74% of the jail population, is a significant driver of the size of the jail population. In 2016, pretrial detainees spent an average of 57 days in custody, with those detained on misdemeanors staying an average of 22 days and those detained on violent felonies staying an average of 111 days in jail. Those detained on homicide charges stay an average of 390 days, far longer than any other charge.

The City is particularly focused on reducing the length of time that detainees spend in jail not just because it will reduce the size of the jail population but because long periods of pretrial detention present problems of justice and safety. As cases drag on, delays can be compounded by the turnover of attorneys and the disappearance of witnesses, making cases more difficult to resolve. Most importantly, victims of serious crime should not have to wait long periods of time to see justice served, individuals who are innocent of any crime should be swiftly returned to their communities and those who are guilty of serious crimes should be sent to state prisons to serve their sentences.

Reducing length of stay in jail requires significant cooperation and coordination among a number of different entities, including the courts, Mayoral agencies, state corrections, district attorneys and defense attorneys. The City will continue to work with all the relevant actors to reduce further the length of time people spend in the jails while their cases are resolved.

**Projected reduction: approximately**  
**450**  
**over 5 years**

For more information on how the population reduction projections in the section were calculated, please see Appendix A.

#### Strategy 8: Speed up case processing times

The single largest driver of the jail population is the length of time people are held pretrial. In April of 2015, the Mayor and then Chief Judge of the State of New York Jonathan Lippman launched “Justice Reboot,” an initiative to reduce case delay by addressing systemic causes. Over the last two years, this effort has regularly brought together leadership from the courts, Mayoral agencies, district attorneys’ offices and the defense bar to identify and resolve causes of delay. After increasing for decades, the average length of a Supreme Court case in New York City has fallen by 18 days in the last two years.

With the full participation of every part of the criminal justice system to continue reducing the time between court appearances and ensuring that each court appearance is used productively, case delay for felony cases could be reduced by an additional 20 days over the next five years. Doing so would result in 450 fewer people in city jails.

## Eventual goal:

## Reduce the jail population to 5,000

### Strategy 9: Develop additional strategies to reduce the jail population further from 7,000 to 5,000

Once the jail population reaches 7,000 through implementation of the strategies laid out above, jail will be increasingly reserved in New York City for individuals who are facing very serious charges or who pose a high risk of flight. We project that in five years, the pretrial population will be: 61% individuals facing violent felony charges (3100 individuals), 33% individuals facing non-violent felony charges (1700), and 6% individuals facing misdemeanor charges (300). Some individuals charged with low-level crimes are deemed high-risk because they have a history of chronic offending and/or a history of prior failures to appear in court. Given this, further reductions to the size of the jail population will require developing new approaches for both those facing violent felony charges and chronic offenders.

Because of this composition, further safe reductions to the size of the jail population will become increasingly difficult: we will need to develop strategies to reduce the number of admissions and time spent in jail by both violent and chronic offenders. There are some additional strategies for that effort:

- **Developing reliable alternative to jail programs for individuals charged with felonies.** Other jurisdictions have experimented with more intensive community supervision models for higher risk populations, including elements such as electronic monitoring, home confinement, or mandated outpatient treatment. New York City could explore whether these approaches, as well as others, could safely divert defendants facing felony charges from jail. For every four defendants charged with a felony who are diverted from jail, the average yearly population in city jails could be reduced by one.
- **Significantly reducing violent felony case processing times.** Strategy 8 focuses on reducing the length of time it takes to process all felony cases, which could help to reduce the jail population to 7,000 over the next five years. Reducing beyond 7,000 will require focusing specifically on shortening case processing times for violent felony cases, as these cases tend to be the most complex and protracted. For every 10% reduction in the length of homicide cases, the jail population could reduce by approximately 50. However, speeding up violent felony case processing times will require developing new strategies as well as sustained coordinated effort from the court system, the City, defense attorneys, and district attorneys. It will also require New Yorkers to show up as jurors, grand jurors and witnesses, as lapses in attendance are a driver of court delay and thus of the jail population.

For more information on how the population reduction projections in the section were calculated, please see Appendix A.

- **Pursuing effective strategies to reduce chronic offending.** In New York City, a small segment of the population frequently cycles between jail, shelter and hospitals. These individuals tend to have severe behavioral health needs. To reduce this number, we will need to identify solutions for the high utilizers of shelters, jail, and hospitals—an issue that jurisdictions across the country have yet to entirely solve.

Each of these steps would require a seismic shift in culture and expectations by New Yorkers and the justice system. While research has demonstrated that individuals charged with more serious offenses often have the lowest re-offending rates and typically return for their court appearances<sup>4</sup>, will judges and prosecutors be confident enough to release these individuals while they await trial? And while there is broad agreement that jail is not the right response for chronic low-level offending, we do not yet have, but are dedicated to developing, interventions that work and that judges can rely on as alternatives to jail.

One key focus of the Working Group on Safely Reducing the Size of the Jail Population, part of the Implementation Task Force, will be to develop specific strategies to address these issues and help to reduce the population from 7,000 to 5,000. This work will happen alongside implementation of the strategies we have already developed to reduce the jail population to 7,000 over the next five years and will bring together criminal justice agencies, defense attorneys, prosecutors, the courts, nonprofit service providers, state government and New Yorkers.

# **Safer:**

Ensure safe, humane and safe and human facilities for staff and for incarcerated individuals as quickly as possible

## The Plan: Safer

**Our goal is to ensure safe, humane and productive environments for staff and incarcerated individuals as quickly as possible.”**

The physical conditions in jails have a profound effect on safety and on whether jails are places of isolation and despair or opportunity and hope<sup>5</sup>. The City’s goal is to make safe and humane housing a reality for every person in the city jails. While violence is decreasing in city jails, much more needs to be done to achieve this goal. We are committed to the goal of closing Rikers Island altogether. But that will take time as we work toward lowering the number of people incarcerated in city jails. While we drive this important work forward, we must improve now both the infrastructure and conditions for the people who work and are incarcerated in the City’s jail facilities both on and off the Island. Better conditions inside of the jails, including better physical spaces for housing, improved programming and visits, are not just a matter of safety and fairness, they also play a role in the City’s goal of reducing the population, by contributing to recidivism reduction. To achieve the short and long term goals for jails, the City will:

**1** First, continue the work already begun to make long-overdue improvements to the conditions in jails on Rikers Island while also renovating existing facilities off-Island utilizing the more than \$1 billion in funding the Administration has added to the Department of Correction’s capital plan over the last three years. Doing so is the fastest way to ensure that the tens of thousands of people who move through our jails each year are adequately housed and that those who work in our jails have decent conditions, even while the City works toward the longer-term goal of closing Rikers completely.

**2** Additionally, beginning now, undertake a cooperative planning process with New Yorkers, elected officials, and many others to identify appropriate sites for additional jails. A working group of the Implementation Task Force will work with neighborhoods and their elected officials on these issues.

The strategies below chart a plan to provide safe housing and working conditions for all, dedicated housing units specifically designed for the needs of some special populations, the installation of key technology infrastructure, and the construction of sufficient space to improve culture through expanded programming and staff development.

A Design and Facilities Working Group, part of the Implementation Task Force, will be convened to serve as an advisory body with design experts and neighborhood and community development leaders. This Working Group will help to drive thoughtful design of new facilities and renovation of existing facilities.



## Strategy 10: **Ensure that all individuals in city custody are housed in safe, secure and humane facilities by making necessary repairs to the jails**

### The City's Investments in Safer Jails

More needs to be done to reduce violence and provide a safe environment for those incarcerated and those who work every day on Rikers Island and in borough facilities. In March 2015, the Department of Correction began implementation of a 14-point reform plan targeting the root causes of violence in New York City's jails—many of which relate to physical design and conditions. Since then, violence indicators have consistently dropped: Uses of Force (UOF) resulting in serious injury have decreased by 35%, and UOF resulting in minor injury decreased 18%. Fewer incarcerated people and fewer corrections officers are experiencing serious injury in facilities stemming from fights or assaults. Through the 14-Point Anti-Violence Plan, DOC has made the following important

changes to create safer environments in city jails:

- **Keeping weapons and drugs out of Rikers:** DOC has increased contraband finds by 37% through revamped processes for conducting searches, including during visits and in housing areas. The City will continue to advocate for a change in state law to allow for the use of state-of-the-art body scanners that can adequately detect the most dangerous weapons brought into facilities.
- **Infrastructure and housing improvements:** DOC began 'restarting' housing units in 2015 by transforming them into cleaner and calmer housing areas with less violence, more programming, and improved officer training.

Since that time, the proportion of incarcerated individuals housed in these units has increased from 4% of the population to 12% across dozens of units in four facilities. Incarcerated individuals who enter restarted units consistently demonstrate decreased rates of violence during their time there (see page 41 for more information about Restart).

- **Transformation of organizational culture:** DOC has designed and implemented a new recruitment, hiring, and staff selection plan, resulting in three back to back record-breaking recruit classes. To guarantee DOC leadership and staff are held accountable, DOC has re-imagined the investigations division and improved intelligence gathering. To ensure targeted

training is working and accountability is taken seriously, all DOC staff are on track to have evaluations on record by the end of 2017 as part of a newly designed staff performance management plan. Because safety and security in every jail is vital, DOC has relaunched TEAMS, which is modeled on NYPD's CompStat, that tracks safety metrics and holds management accountable for safety within each facility.

- **Modern, robust training:** Training in the Academy, as well as in-service training for Corrections Officers, has been expanded to make sure all officers are trained on the new Use of Force policy, conflict resolution and crisis intervention, safe crisis management, de-escalation, and defensive tactics.

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### Strategy 11: **Complete the movement of all 16- and 17- year-olds from Rikers Island to a newly designed facility**

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The City is committed to ensuring that as few young people are in detention as possible in New York City. Since 2014, the number of adolescents in the custody of DOC has been reduced from 489 to an average daily population of 150 in 2017. This reduction of 339 has been driven by providing case expediting services, case review and reentry services at the point of intake.

In addition to reducing the number of young people in custody, the City is also committed to providing developmentally appropriate detention facilities for this population. In the summer of 2016, the City began work to move 16- and 17-year-olds off of Rikers Island through beginning a design process for a more developmentally appropriate facility for young adults. With the recent passage of Raise the Age legislation in New York state, the City will continue its commitment to transition 16- and 17- year-olds off of Rikers Island when the law takes effect in 2018. The City is currently working to design and develop age-appropriate facilities that prioritize education, vocational programming, provide therapeutic services, and have space for outdoor recreation. Providing educational, vocational and therapeutic services to individuals while they are incarcerated has been shown to prevent future returns to jail<sup>6</sup>.

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### Strategy 12: **Expand dedicated housing designed for the unique needs of individuals with serious mental illness**

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Since 2015, the City has opened intensive therapeutic housing units in the jails for people with serious mental health disorders, known as Clinical Alternatives to Punitive Segregation (CAPS) and Program to Accelerate Clinical Effectiveness (PACE) units. In PACE units, health and security staff train and work together to engage and stabilize patients. To date there is one CAPS unit and four PACE units, which have dramatically improved the level of clinical care and coordination between health and security staff for incarcerated individuals with the most severe mental illness. By early fiscal year 2018, the City will create a PACE unit for women in Rose M. Singer Center (RMSC), the women's facility on Rikers Island, and a PACE unit in George Motchan Detention Center (GMDC), where young adults are housed. By 2020, the City will triple the number of PACE units to a total of 12, bringing more intensive interventions and related clinical and safety benefits to additional people with serious mental illness.

The enhanced staffing and clinical care available in these units has led to the lowest incidence of verified injuries per incarcerated individual of any housing unit in city jails. Since inception, PACE has served over 1,000 individuals and CAPS has served over 1,300 people. The use of force rates in PACE and CAPS units are lower: use of force rates are 67% lower for individuals in CAPS and 74% lower for individuals in PACE, compared to projected use of force rates had these same individuals been housed with the general jail population. The PACE units serve patients returning from inpatient hospitalization, those who may require hospitalization, those with complex diagnostic challenges, and those returning from court-based competency evaluations.

Approximately 11% of the New York City jail population has been diagnosed with a serious mental illness, and almost one third of the population has some kind of psychiatric diagnosis. Even more incarcerated individuals have some kind of behavioral health need. The City has many strategies in place to reduce the number of people with behavioral health needs in city jails (see Strategy 5). A key piece of this strategy is ensuring that those who do enter jail have access to high-quality therapeutic spaces and clinical care while incarcerated. This has been shown to reduce violent incidents and can help provide a foundation for future stability and prevent returns to jail<sup>7</sup>.

Expanding dedicated units for those with mental health needs will also help to reduce the average length of stay for this population. Currently, those with mental health needs spend approximately twice as long in city jails as those without mental health needs—129 days versus 67 days, on average. The enhanced staffing and clinical care available in dedicated mental health units has led improved mental health outcomes, including fewer incidents of self-harm, and fewer overall violent incidents which can reduce length of stay.

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### **Strategy 13: Use technology to reduce violence and support more efficient and effective Department of Correction operations**

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Technology will play a key role in the modernization of our jails and in making available the kind of information that will ensure they are safe and productive environments. Planned technology improvements include security cameras and state of the art contraband detectors, wireless-enabled tablets that will enable self-paced learning and give incarcerated people direct access to the grievance system.

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**Strategy 13a: Expand the use of a technology tool to ensure incarcerated individuals get to medical and court appointments on time and help reduce violence**

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In order to ensure that incarcerated people are transported to programming, health care appointments, visits with family, and court on time, it is important to have real-time and reliable information about where individuals are located within correctional facilities. This has been a challenge both in New York City and in jurisdictions across the country. Other correctional systems have had success with Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) wristbands, similar to hospital wristbands, which contain a unique identification code that incarcerated people can scan to “check in” at various locations around the jail. These hypoallergenic, tamper-resistant, and water-resistant wristbands can also help in other ways, including speeding up discharge by improving validation of an individual’s identity and enhancing safety by making it easier to enforce necessary separation of specific individuals.

An RFID system has been used in the Robert N. Davoren Center (RNDC), the facility that houses adolescents and older males, and in the Queens courts since early October 2016. By the end of 2018, the City will expand the RFID system to all facilities.

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**Strategy 13b: Improve the system for submission, tracking and responding to incarcerated individuals’ grievances**

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A well-functioning grievance system is essential to ensuring that DOC can fully and swiftly respond to individuals’ concerns about all manner of issues in the jails, including those related to basic needs (e.g., delays in obtaining essential items, such as toothpaste, toilet paper and laundered clothing), requests for assistance (e.g., help in conducting legal research related to a criminal case), and the need for accommodation (e.g., to address a person’s physical limitations). Such a system provides an outlet for concerns and issues and thus has a role in reducing the tensions that lead to violence in the jails. In order to improve the grievance process, DOC, working with the Board of Correction, developed a new grievance resolution model which streamlines the tracking of grievances, prioritizes and escalates the most serious concerns (e.g., medical access and requests for protective custody) and seeks to resolve transparently all issues raised by people through the grievance process.

DOC is currently building on the new grievance resolution model by piloting a digital system for tracking and responding to grievances. By the end of fiscal year 2017, the digital grievance system will be operational in the model housing units (called “Restarts”) in one jail facility, the George R. Vierno Center (GRVC), which houses approximately 630 adolescent and adult men. This system should improve transparency in the grievance process by providing incarcerated people, in their own housing units, with real-time tracking of their grievances and the response from DOC staff. It will also assist DOC in tracking the number, type, and resolution of grievances submitted to ensure accountability and allow for better identification of systemic issues requiring resolution (e.g., broader issues with providing necessary services or supplies to a particular housing area). Assuming the digital grievance tracking pilot is successful, DOC will expand it throughout the jails.

### Strategy 13c: **Reduce violence through full camera coverage by the end of 2017**

DOC has invested over \$64 million in full camera coverage in every jail on and off Rikers Island so that all housing units on Rikers Island now have complete coverage. Coverage will be complete in all city facilities by the end of the year. This camera footage deters violence, improves intelligence, and enables DOC to quickly respond to incidents, leading to increased accountability for jail staff and incarcerated people alike.

### Strategy 14: **Improve officer safety through investment in a new training academy and full headcount at DOC**

#### Supporting Effective Prosecution of Violence in the Jails

A new partnership between the City and the Bronx District Attorney, along with heightened internal investigations within the City's Department of Correction, are helping to address violence as well as enhance accountability for both corrections staff and incarcerated individuals.

#### **Enhanced prosecution**

The Department of Correction's partnership with the Bronx District Attorney's Office is vital to ensuring prosecution of people who commit crimes on Rikers Island and preventing violence in the City's jails. In the fall of 2016, with an additional \$1.842 million allocated by Mayor de Blasio in the city budget, the Bronx District Attorney's Office

The City is committed to providing corrections officers with the appropriate training, equipment and supports to ensure they are safe and prepared to do the difficult job of serving in the jails. The City has made large-scale investments in DOC's emergency response strategy and in professional development for DOC staff, creating a college program specifically for employees and partnering with Columbia University's Senior Leadership Management Institute.

The City has also invested in the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed in the jails, to ensure accountability and reduce violence and will continue its commitment to make the job of corrections officers as safe as possible and to ensure safety for all incarcerated individuals.

officially opened its new prosecution bureau on Rikers Island. For the first time, the Bronx District Attorney has a physical presence on Rikers, consisting of investigators, administrators, and assistant district attorneys who investigate and prosecute crimes committed by incarcerated people and visitors to Rikers Island. The Bureau ensures faster prosecutions of crimes and expanded investigations of gang violence and the smuggling of contraband, two of the major drivers of violence in the jails.

#### **Enhanced internal investigations**

The Department of Correction has recently enhanced its multi-pronged internal investigation strategy to include assigning a dedicated team to each individual jail and creating an Immediate Action Committee to review force incidents soon after they occur, in order to immediately correct bad practice and identify troubling trends. This approach has led to:

- The Investigation Division resolving 1,800 cases involving

corrections officers in 2016, a 183.8% increase over the 634 cases closed in 2013. In 2013, only 93 cases resulted in criminal charges; in 2016, the number of cases resulting in criminal charges increased to 276.

- The DOC Trials and Litigation Division imposing discipline in 744 cases in 2016, an increase of 120% from the 338 cases in 2013. This resulted in 108 suspensions and 94 terminations of corrections Officers.

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### Strategy 14a: **Provide corrections officers with a new training academy and a revamped, modern training curriculum**

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The City recognizes the need for more, and more thorough, training for staff at every level. To achieve the goal of providing the best possible training, in keeping with modern day best correctional practices, the City has allocated \$100 million for a new Department of Correction Training Academy.

While the new Training Academy is being constructed, DOC will continue implementing strategies to improve training. The overarching goal is to provide training that equips all recruits with the tools necessary to become successful officers, and ongoing professional development opportunities for in-service staff to promote career satisfaction.

To drive toward this goal, DOC is already implementing and will build upon the following:

#### **Comprehensive and enhanced Academy training.**

DOC's new recruit Academy is longer by several weeks now than it was even a few years ago, deepening new recruit training in de-escalation and tactical skills.

- In November 2016, nearly 3,000 officers and captains, including over 700 recruits, completed 24 hours of DOC's new defensive tactical and de-escalation training, called START (Special Tactics and Responsible Techniques), designed to promote jail safety.
- De-escalation training for all DOC recruits in the Academy is integrated into safe crisis management, conflict resolution, and suicide prevention, where multiple de-escalation techniques are taught and reiterated.
- All recruits receive 35 hours of training (much of it provided by licensed psychologists) to effectively interact with incarcerated individuals who have behavioral health needs.

#### **Enhanced skill-based training for in-service officers.**

More opportunities for specific skill-based training are offered to all recruits and are being rolled out for staff already on the job.

- *Limiting use of force and expanding de-escalation training:* All staff will be trained in the new Use of Force policy by September 2017.
- *Specialized training in mental health:* Mental Health First Aid assists staff with identifying signs and symptoms of mental illness and de-escalating potentially violent situations. Crisis Intervention Teams' (CIT) training, which about 400 officers have already received, is a 40-hour specialized training for in-service staff. CIT training is a joint venture between DOC and Correctional Health Services, providing corrections officers and mental health clinicians, who work together every day in our jails, joint training on the best practices for responding to crises and reducing violence. Any officer working with individuals with mental health needs receives additional crisis management skills training.



- *Specialized training for officers working with adolescents and young adults:* Officers working with adolescents and young adults get Safe Crisis Management training, which provides information on youth brain development, crisis prevention, and trauma-informed care practices, as well as the nationally known evidence-based Dialectical Behavior Therapy that helps individuals increase their emotional and cognitive regulation and improve coping skills.
- *Improving responses to violent incidents:* Staff in the Emergency Services Units (ESU) who respond to violent incidents have received specialized training designed to reduce these officers' injuries and minimize use of force. In September 2016, the Mayor announced improvements to ESU that increase their effectiveness. ESU teams, once centrally-located, are now stationed within key facilities on Rikers to drastically decrease the time it takes to respond to incidents, providing critical assistance to facility staff. These teams focus on the facilities with the most significant violence issues.

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#### Strategy 14b: **Increase stability and safety through adequate staffing levels, steady staffing models, and higher staff ratios**

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DOC is in the process of completing the hiring and training needed to bring DOC staffing to full head count. The Department will then be able to increase officer-to-incarcerated individual ratios in order to implement population management best practices and improve culture inside jails. Specifically, it will enable the Department to steadily assign the same staff members to the same posts in all housing units. This practice provides staff with more insights into how a particular housing area operates, helps both to develop rapport with incarcerated individuals and identify issues before violence erupts. Steady assignment of staff also means that DOC can provide even more tailored training for staff typically assigned to work with difficult populations, including the most violent incarcerated individuals and those with mental illness. Further, operating at full headcount, DOC will be able to improve efficiency, including by significantly reducing overtime and providing in-service staff training in a timely and comprehensive manner without affecting operations.

Fully staffed, DOC will be able to appropriately supervise the various populations with adequate staff-to-incarcerated individual ratios depending on each population's unique needs. For example, younger populations like adolescents and young adults require higher staff numbers than general population adults, and more violent adolescent and young adults require even higher staff ratios, sometimes reaching as high as 1-to-1 or 1-to-2 staff per young person. In addition, the high classification adult populations, or adults most likely to be violent, require a robust staff to incarcerated individual ratio to maintain safety and security for both staff and other incarcerated individuals.

DOC is training recruit classes of record size to achieve the goals above. In November 2016, over 700 new officers joined DOC's ranks. Approximately 900 recruits graduated in May 2017, and will be followed by a class of over 1300 recruits. A full headcount will allow the Department to promote a culture of safety in the jails by ensuring a targeted approach to staffing the various populations in its custody.



**Fairer:**  
Provide  
staff and  
incarcerated  
individuals  
with paths  
to success

## The Plan: Fairer

### Provide staff and incarcerated individuals with paths to success

The culture inside jails—whether one of fairness and accountability or isolation and instability—can have profound effects on safety inside and on the likelihood that those discharged from jail achieve stability on the outside. Educational and therapeutic programming—instead of idle isolation—can reduce violence and the likelihood that detainees will return to jail in the future. And professional development opportunities for staff can support them to serve the public at the highest levels of integrity.

**To make the culture inside jails fairer, the City is pursuing four goals:**

- 1** Preventing future returns to jail by providing incarcerated individuals with support to lay a foundation for future stability;
- 2** Improving visits to reduce isolation and support more effective reintegration;
- 3** Replacing overly punitive population management strategies with evidence-driven approaches that enhance safety and fairness; and
- 4** Expanding professional development opportunities and supportive services for correctional officers.

The work described below builds on the City's investment over the last three years of \$52.5 million in programming for those who are incarcerated and \$39 million in professional development for staff. Each investment and reform is made in order to support a culture in which each person is treated with dignity and respect and jails become places of calm and order.

A Culture Change Working Group, part of the Implementation Task Force, will be convened to shape this work as well as ensure effective implementation. This Working Group, which will be comprised of corrections officers, formerly incarcerated individuals and their families, as well as representatives from government and non-profits that provide programming in jails, will focus on topics including visits, programming, reentry, and support for corrections officers and staff.

### Strategy 15: **Prevent returns to jail by laying a foundation for future stability**

When Mayor de Blasio took office, individuals detained in city jails had access to an average of less than one hour per day of programming. Idle time can lead to violence. It can foster conditions that encourage crime instead of inhibit it.<sup>8</sup> Conversely, programming that is wisely designed and connected to life upon release can lift people up and set them on a path of productivity and advancement.<sup>9</sup>

The City is building a system in which every person who enters city jails will be provided with new tools and services that will help to promote a stable future. By addressing vocational, educational, therapeutic and other needs in an individualized way, time inside jail can be used productively to lay a foundation that can prevent future interaction with the criminal justice system. This new system will begin with expanded risk and needs assessment on the first day that someone enters jail, offer five hours every day of programming that addresses an individual's unique needs, and continue with support—including new employment and educational programs—after someone leaves jail and returns to the community.

#### Supporting Productive Futures for Young Adults

A recently launched program for young adults, managed in partnership with the Friends of Island Academy, serves as a model for providing comprehensive

programming and reentry services to the entire jail population. Through this program, 16-to-21-year olds are interviewed at admission to understand with greater depth their unique needs; they are matched with programming while inside that addresses these needs;

encouraged to form connections to educational, therapeutic and other community-based supports while in jail; and then supported for up to a year after leaving jail to assist with successful reentry. This model has proven to reduce reoffending and encourage instead positive, productive outcomes.

### Strategy 15a: **Offer everyone in city custody five hours per day of educational, vocational, and therapeutic programming to lay the foundation for future stability and prevent returns to jail**

By the end of 2017, the City will offer everyone confined in a New York City jail a minimum of five hours of structured programming daily. Activities will include vocational training, group and individual counseling, art therapy, pet therapy, recreation, and more. People enrolled in post-secondary courses will receive assistance so that they do not fall behind in their studies while they are in jail, and efforts will be made to engage individuals who are not currently enrolled in school. To ensure that these gains count in the community, transition specialists will help people transfer school credits earned in jail to their neighborhood schools and leverage vocational and educational achievements to land jobs or internships after release. Transitional specialists will also help people apply for available public benefits and connect them with housing and employment assistance, counseling, and any other needed services.

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**Strategy 15b: Offer everyone in city custody dedicated reentry planning before discharge as well as support after returning to the community**

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Also by the end of 2017, the City will build on the five hours of in-custody programming to ensure that everyone in city jails is offered reentry support, beginning on the first day that individuals are admitted to jail and continuing after returning to the community. Reentry service plans will be individualized and offered based on the needs of the individual. A network of non-profit organizations with deep expertise in helping individuals involved in the criminal justice system stabilize will provide a range of services inside the jails, as well as support in the community after individuals leave jail. Programming and support will include educational, rehabilitative, and vocational training and services, as well as educational assistance for high school equivalency tests and training for industry-recognized credentials.

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**Strategy 15c: Implement a new technology tool that will ensure continuity of stabilizing support**

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To facilitate effective in-custody programming and in-community reentry support, the City is developing state-of-the-art program and case management technology. This new tool will help counselors to assess the risks and needs of every person who enters city custody and match individuals to the right combination of therapeutic, vocational and educational programming while they are in jail. The tool will track how people are doing in programs and whether programs are effectively addressing an individual's risk and needs. The network of non-profits that provide reentry services to individuals after they leave city jails will have access to this technology, allowing this network to connect people to appropriate, available supports such as health care, benefits, employment, and education to continue building on the foundation laid while in jail.

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### Strategy 15d: **Prevent returns to jail by expanding the network of available reentry services in the community**

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By the end of 2017, the City will have in place a new program, Jails to Jobs, to offer the opportunity for paid, transitional employment to everyone who leaves jail after serving a city sentence. The Jails to Jobs program includes five components:

- *Peer Navigators*: Everyone leaving city jails after serving a sentence will be paired with a Peer Navigator from a new public health-informed program in which peers who have successfully stabilized after incarceration help those who are recently released to achieve this same stability.
- *Transitional employment*: Everyone leaving city jails after serving a sentence will be offered paid, short-term transitional employment to help with securing a long-term job. Research has shown that connecting those recently released from prison to short-term transitional jobs can reduce recidivism by 22%<sup>10</sup>.
- *Career advancement support*: Additionally, the City will continue its partnership with the City University of New York to offer 500 people per year who leave City jails after serving a sentence educational subsidies to support getting certificates and other credentials that promote career advancement, including the opportunity to become a certified peer and join the Peer Navigators for the Jails to Jobs program. This subsidy will be the equivalent of one semester of education at CUNY and can be used toward a degree or certificate program that can qualify individuals for higher paid employment in the long term.
- *Trained workforce providers*: All City-funded workforce professionals will be trained on issues and laws related to working with people with criminal records, including the Fair Chance Act, legislation signed by Mayor de Blasio that prohibits discrimination based on a person's arrest record or criminal conviction.
- *Jails to Jobs* will be folded into the larger network of non-profit reentry providers in New York City. These providers will help individuals in securing longer-term employment as well as provide them with connection to housing, health care, benefits, and other supports that can help to build a stable future.

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### Strategy 16: **Foster connections to families and community by improving visits**

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Maintaining community connections is vital for people who are incarcerated. Established research has shown that incarcerated people's ability to maintain community connections, including through visits, is key to breaking the cycle of recidivism<sup>11</sup>. DOC has been working to improve visits through construction and renovations to visit areas, staff training on department policy and community engagement, and revamped protocols that encourage families with children under six to visit. A Visit Working Group comprised of several organizations including Brooklyn Defenders, Jail Action Coalition, the Osborne Association, the Board of Correction, and the Department of Correction uniform and non-uniform staff meets regularly to discuss ways to improve the visit process. Several recommendations have already been put in place.

For instance, in the Central Visit House, DOC has separated the bail payment and package drop-off windows to increase efficiency, which reduces the time it takes go through the visit process. DOC has installed information kiosks with look-up systems so that visitors can easily determine which facility they must go to in order to visit a loved one, hired dedicated visit greeters to answer questions, and instituted streamlined registration. DOC is in the process of updating the Visitor Handbook in order to issue a new one for the first time since 2013.

DOC will seek to expand opportunities for meaningful visits, working with the Board of Correction to increase the maximum visit length to up to two hours. But more improvements are needed to maximize the ability for people who are incarcerated to have contact with families and obtain all of the benefits that come along with having strong community supports. The Visit Working Group will become part of the City's Implementation Task Force to continue to work toward achieving these goals.

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#### Strategy 16a: **Create expedited transportation to Rikers Island through dedicated buses that transport visitors from more convenient locations**

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To reduce the time and inconvenience of visiting someone in jail, the City is piloting an express shuttle bus service to Rikers Island from major public transit hubs in Manhattan and Brooklyn. These buses will transport passengers directly to Rikers Island and back, bypassing many of the difficulties inherent in traveling to the Island, drastically reducing travel time and increasing the feasibility of visitors going to see their incarcerated family member or friend. Once established by the end of 2017, these routes and timetables will provide an expedited process for visitors arriving via the shuttle buses, saving people valuable time on transportation that can now be used visiting with loved ones. The buses will operate regularly throughout the visiting hours, ensuring visitors won't miss a shuttle.

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**Strategy 16b: Renovate the Central Visits facility to allow for better initial screening and reduce the need for additional searches that slow the visit process**

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Recognizing that people's experiences during visits are as important as the visiting policies themselves, DOC will transform the physical experience through immediate renovations to the Central Visit House and a strong effort to improve facility visit areas. There will be new seating, construction, and painting to bring the Central Visit facility to a state of good repair. DOC will also increase signage, phones, and on-site staff to resolve issues as quickly as possible. Combining these renovations and new technology will allow DOC to create a more robust screening process at a single point of entry, significantly reducing the number of searches and wait times throughout the process while increasing security. Dedicated staff in visiting areas, including on-site supervisors, will receive training on the visiting policies and other relevant directives to prioritize a safe, positive visiting experience and a relationship of mutual respect between visitors and staff. DOC, working with the Board of Correction, will overhaul the visiting process to maintain security while creating a process and environment that values the quality of visits.

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**Strategy 17: Continue to create alternatives to punitive segregation to improve safety and fairness**

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In the last three years, the City has taken bold steps to reduce the reliance on punitive segregation. New York City is the first jurisdiction in the country to announce a complete end to solitary confinement for individuals under 22 years of age and has ended the practice entirely for women. The City has also placed significant restrictions on the use of punitive segregation for those who are still eligible, including allowing its use only for serious, violent infractions, and limiting the length of time someone can be held in punitive segregation to 30 consecutive days or a total of 60 days in six months, with a few limited exceptions.

Further, DOC has created viable alternatives to punitive segregation such as the Clinical Alternative to Punitive Segregation (CAPS) program which places individuals with serious mental health diagnoses in a housing unit that offers therapeutically appropriate strategies for addressing violence. DOC has also created dedicated housing units for adolescents and young adults, who are no longer eligible for punitive segregation, to address the root causes of violent behavior with higher staff-to-incarcerated-individual ratios and targeted programming options. DOC will continue to work to develop and refine alternative housing options to punitive segregation that can safely house people who commit acts of violence while incarcerated without subjecting them to extensive periods of isolation. These alternatives will build on the incentive-based, phased approach that has already proven effective at both managing problematic behavior and encouraging positive development.



## Model Facilities: Restart Units

Many reforms in the 14 Point Anti-Violence Reform Agenda are incorporated into DOC's model facilities or "Restart units"—housing units that have been transformed, through focused implementation of key reforms, into clean, calm housing areas with low levels of violence and expanded programming offerings. Currently, DOC has such units in four facilities including George R. Vierno Center (GRVC, which houses adolescent and adult men), Anna M. Kross Center (AMKC, which houses women), George Motchan Detention Center (GMDC, which houses men ) and Otis Bantum Correctional Center (OBCC, which houses detained and sentenced men). DOC is rapidly expanding the number of such units for people in general population housing. These units have demonstrated that instituting a comprehensive suite of reforms can effectively reduce violence by simultaneously addressing multiple drivers of violence. Over 1,000 people in DOC custody are in Restarts. As of December 2016, people who entered Restart units had over 30% fewer assaults on staff and 50% lower Use of

Force rates (instances in which corrections officers use force), both for uses of force without injury and those with minimal injury. In fact, there are almost no uses of force that result in serious injury in Restarts. For example, there are units in AMKC that have gone over 200 days without any incident, the longest any unit has gone without violence since before such numbers were tracked.

### Key components of these reformed housing units include:

- **Reclassification:** Incarcerated people are classified by security risk, using a new tool that includes reviews of behavior, age and gang affiliation in order to minimize potential violence and target programming.
- **Added programming:** Incarcerated people in Restarts receive five hours a day of programming, including weekends, to reduce idleness and violence and help ensure success once they leave jail.
- **Staffing:** Restart units have steady staffing, meaning officers

are assigned consistently to one unit, and in turn act as a team. Additionally, there are higher staffing ratios. Steady teams and higher ratios mean officers are familiar with one another, those housed in the units, and the rules and expectations of Restart units.

- **Additional training:** Officers receive an additional eight hours of training, including training on expectations, management protocols, and de-escalation and engagement skills. This training has become standard for new recruits.
- **Repairs:** Restart units are painted and their infrastructure repaired. Each housing unit contains three televisions with transmitters that allow for incarcerated individuals to quietly listen to TV through headsets, which greatly contributes to the reduction in fights.

For people housed in general population housing, Restart units have been shown to work. They reduce violence and increase programming participation.

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### Strategy 18: **Expand supportive services for correctional officers**

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This Administration has increased support services for DOC staff to fulfill the 14 Point Anti-Violence Reform Agenda's mission to improve leadership development and culture. Through several initiatives, DOC is expanding training to help staff deal with stress and other effects of their demanding jobs. DOC is currently offering peer mentoring for new recruits to reduce attrition and supportive services for staff to deal with distress and trauma. Additionally, the City will implement the DOC Injury Treatment Service, so officers who are injured on the job will have a dedicated clinic inside every facility by the end of 2018.

In 2016, DOC started the Correction Assistance Response for Employees (CARE) Unit, a division that addresses the needs of uniformed and non-uniformed staff by providing continuous support and resources to staff who may be experiencing personal or family issues. The City is expanding the staffing, scope, and work of the CARE Units to include trauma debriefing, as well as support on issues such as domestic violence, high anxiety, family crisis, PTSD, job related stressors, terminal illness, financial difficulties, and substance use. The CARE Unit also provides referrals to community resources as an additional source for employees to obtain further assistance when coping with unexpected situations. For example, CARE provides bereavement related services, including a family liaison that assists with obtaining deceased employee's benefits. The victim service staff provides support for employees affected by criminal acts on-and off-duty, accompanies staff members to physical therapy and doctors visits, and coordinates service referrals for staff members who have been victims of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, stalking, or other kinds of abuse. CARE conducts incident response for employees involved in on-duty use of force incidents, accidents, illness, or other traumatic events, and coordinates psychiatric referrals. This Unit also coordinates military support, the Employee Assistance Program, and religious outreach.

# The Future of Rikers Island

**We are continuing to dramatically reduce the size of our jail population.**

**We are improving the culture in our jails.**

**We are ensuring safe and humane conditions as quickly as possible.**

**And we are creating a future where people are no longer incarcerated on Rikers Island.**

With crime and incarceration at historic lows—and a concrete plan to reduce both even further—New York City can credibly commit to closing Rikers Island. This is the right thing to do: the aging, isolated facilities on Rikers Island exacerbate security threats, have limited space for programming and staff development, and are cut off from the neighborhoods to which those released will ultimately return. Closing the jails on Rikers Island and replacing them with a smaller, safer, and fairer correctional system is the next key piece of the City’s larger work to create a safer and fairer city for all New Yorkers.

For the thousands of people detained and thousands of corrections employees who work in our jails every year, the City’s plan prioritizes moving with urgency—both to improve conditions now and to move with creativity and efficiency toward the long-term goal of closing the jails on Rikers Island for good.

To ensure effective progress and navigate the inevitable obstacles that will arise, the Implementation Task Force will guide work toward a correctional system that is:

- **Smaller:** The Population Working Group will help achieve our goal of ensuring that no one who could safely remain in the community enters jail and that those in custody are not there longer than needed.
- **Safer:** A Design and Facilities Working Group will help drive thoughtful renovations to existing facilities and development of new facilities, creating environments that foster opportunity and hope instead of isolation and despair.
- **Fairer:** The Culture Change Working Group will ensure that incarcerated people have access to stabilizing services and staff have support to serve the public at the highest levels of integrity.

Ultimately, closing all the jails on Rikers Island will depend not only on reducing the size of the city jail population to 5,000, but on the willingness of neighborhoods and their elected officials to identify appropriate new sites. The Design and Facilities Working Group will partner with New Yorkers, the City Council, and others to address issues related to the complicated siting process.

As the population declines and we are able to close the jails on Rikers Island, we will repurpose the newly freed up space on the Island. One possible plan would be to move municipal functions such as fleet storage from the boroughs to Rikers Island, freeing up space in neighborhoods across the City that could be used for new affordable housing. The Implementation Task Force will work with New Yorkers and experts to solicit ideas and develop a plan.

Beginning today, real-time updates on our progress and opportunities to get involved in work that will affect the long-term safety and vibrancy of our city are available at [nyc.gov/rikers](https://nyc.gov/rikers).

# Appendix

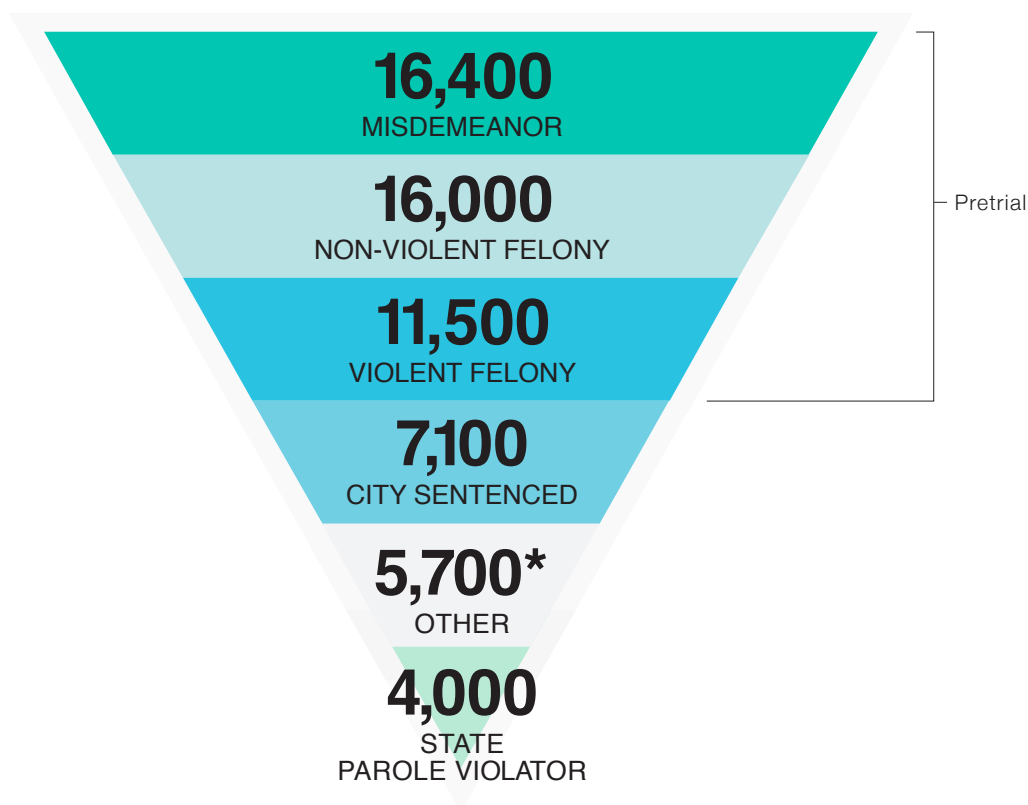
# HOW TO MEASURE REDUCTIONS IN JAIL USE

When people talk about reducing jail populations, they usually refer to two metrics: how many people enter jail each year (admissions) and how many people are in jail on any given day (average daily population).

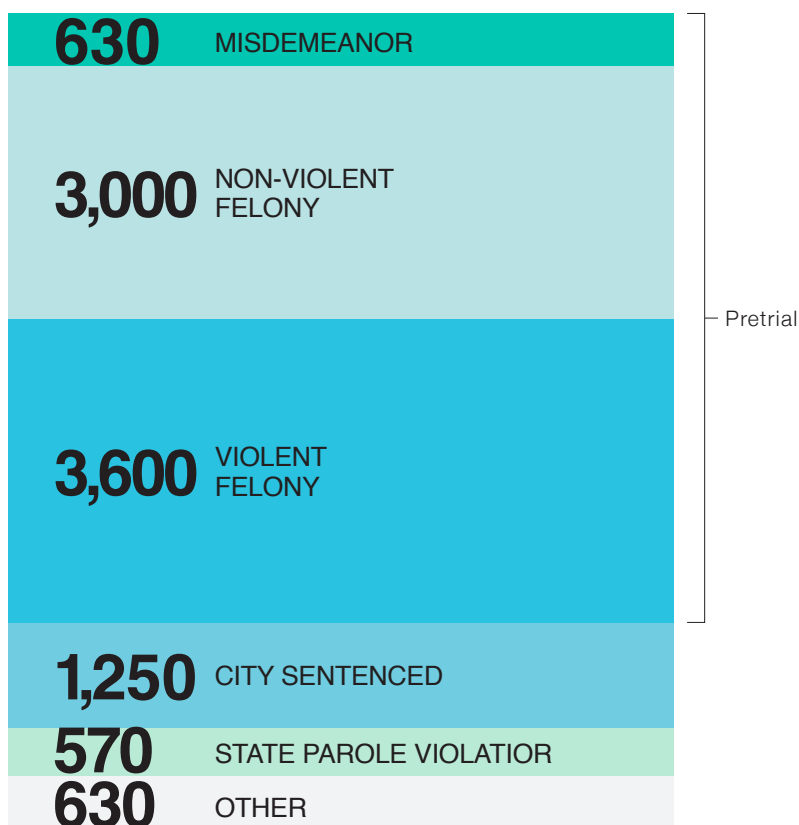
Admissions are always a much bigger number than average daily population. For example, in New York City, there were 61,000 admissions in 2016 but the average daily jail population was 9,680. This is because some people are in and out in a short period of time while some stay much longer.

**One jail “bed” could be used by 365 people OR by one person over the course of a year.**

There were approximately **61,000 admissions** to New York City Jails in 2016



But because some **people only stay** a few days, the **average daily population** on any given day was **9,680**



# WHAT IS A “BED”?

We measure the effect of our jail population reduction strategies by estimating their effect on the number of beds.

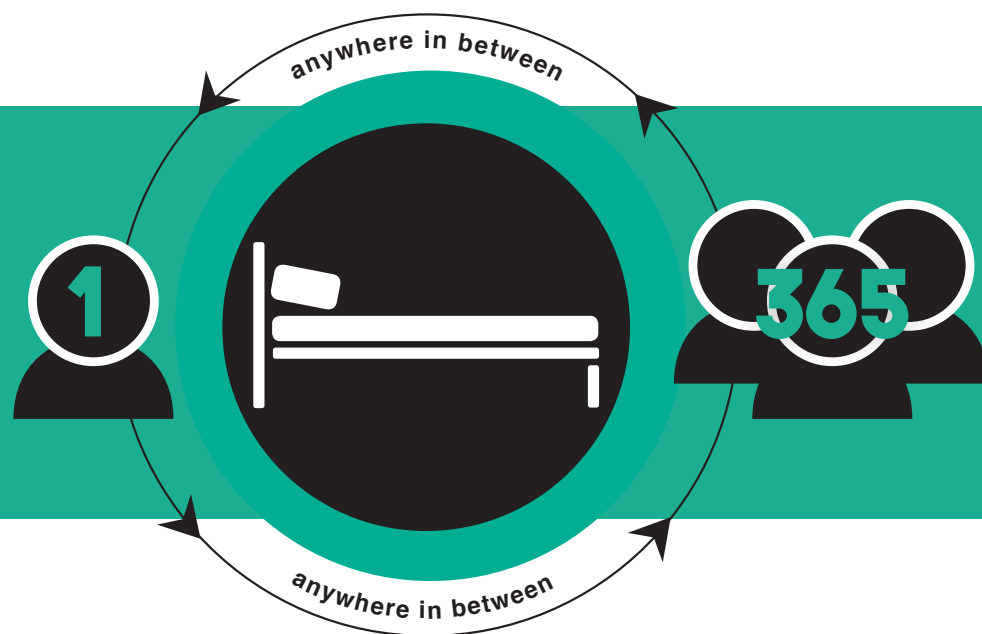
**The daily jail population is a measure of beds occupied on any given day.**

To reduce the jail population, we need to reduce the number of beds occupied. Specifically, to close Rikers Island, we will need to shrink the size of the jail population so that just 5,000 beds are occupied on any given day.

If one person is in jail for 365 days, that equals one bed.

If two people are in jail, each for six months, that is also one bed.

If 365 people are in jail for one day each, that is also one bed.



**To save 1 bed annually, the system would need to divert or release, on average:**



## How are beds calculated?

$$([\text{number of individuals affected}] * [\text{their average length of stay}]) / 365 = \# \text{ beds}$$

**There is not a 1 to 1 correlation between people diverted from the system and beds reduced.**

For example: 3,300 people served annually by Supervised Release would not translate to 3,300 beds saved in city jails. Using an average 15-day stay for misdemeanors and 50-day stay for felonies (calculated using eligibility requirements for Supervised Release), the estimated bed savings is 330 in one year. Over five years, as more people are diverted, the total estimated bed savings is 500.

**Both reducing admissions and length of stay affect bed days, to varying degrees.**

Interventions that aim to keep people out of city jails all together tend to focus on populations that cycle in and out of jail quickly. This means that more people would have to be diverted in order to save one bed.

Interventions that aim to reduce length of stay tend to focus on individuals with more complex cases who spend months or years in city custody.





# MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE 5 YEAR PROJECTION CALCULATIONS FOR JAIL POPULATION REDUCTION

By reducing admissions and length of stay, we can shrink the number of people held in jail on any given day. This will require that all partners in the criminal justice system continue to work toward a common goal of reducing unnecessary incarceration.

## Improved Risk Assessment

(Projected reduction: 710 beds)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: CITY, STATE COURTS,  
DISTRICT ATTORNEYS, DEFENSE COUNSEL

Assumes that 4,700 individuals will be reclassified as lower risk of flight in the first year, with smaller, ongoing reductions after that.

Assumes a 15% detention rate for reclassified individuals and accounts for natural reductions in population.

Assumes people diverted would otherwise stay an average of 20 days on misdemeanor charges and 84 days on felony charges (calculated using estimated lengths of stay for eligible population).

## Reform the Bail System

(Projected reduction: 200 beds)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: CITY, STATE COURTS

Expected to divert 1,500 people in the first year, with smaller, ongoing returns after that.

Assumes that people diverted though bail fund would otherwise stay an average of 15 days, and that expediting bail would speed up the bail payment process by one day (calculated using estimated lengths of stay for eligible population).

## Supervised Release

(Projected reduction: 500 beds)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: CITY, STATE COURTS,  
DISTRICT ATTORNEYS, DEFENSE COUNSEL

Assumes 3,300 people will be diverted annually.

Assumes people diverted would otherwise stay an average of 15 days on misdemeanor charges and 50 days on felony charges (calculated using eligibility requirements for Supervised Release).

## Divert Short Jail Sentences

(Projected reduction: 300 beds)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: CITY, STATE COURTS,  
DISTRICT ATTORNEYS, DEFENSE COUNSEL

Assumes 1,700 people will be diverted annually who would otherwise receive a short city sentence of, on average, 15 days (calculated using estimated lengths of stay for eligible population).

## Reduce Length of Stay

(Projected reduction: 620 beds cumulative)

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: CITY, STATE COURTS,  
DISTRICT ATTORNEYS, DEFENSE COUNSEL

Assumes a 20% reduction in case length for non-homicide violent felony cases (from 111 days to 89 days). Projected reduction: 450.

Assumes a 20% reduction in length of stay for state technical parole violation cases (from 55 to 44 days). Projected reduction: 170.

