

PROBATION AND PAROLE PROJECT

 COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | JUSTICE LAB



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WHAT'S NEXT: COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON (RE)INVESTMENT AFTER LESS IS MORE NEW YORK

**BRONWYN HUNTER, KENDRA BRADNER,
and EMILY NAPIER SINGLETARY**

#LessIsMoreNY

Less Mass Supervision = More Safety and Justice

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Less Is More: Community Supervision Revocation Reform Act ([S.1144A](#) – Benjamin / [A.5576A](#) – Forrest) was signed into law in September of 2021. This act transformed the parole system in New York State, and has the potential to generate substantial cost savings that can be (re)invested into communities.

The Columbia Justice Lab Probation and Parole Project and Unchained partnered with the Less Is More advocacy coalition, led by Unchained and the Katal Center, to learn:

How do community members across New York State want the cost savings from Less Is More to be invested into their communities?

Through a series of town hall meetings held virtually across the state, community members shared insight into what resources should be invested in and how such investments should be made. Specifically, community members who participated in the town halls prioritized investments in:

- » housing,
- » behavioral healthcare,
- » employment and vocational training,
- » reentry supports,
- » and community spaces, among other resources.

Importantly, town hall attendees emphasized that funds should be invested in a way that:

- » enhances equity,
- » targets people and families who are affected by the criminal legal system,
- » and builds on local community and organizational capacity to meet community needs.

There are several pieces of legislation in various stages of the policy process that are consistent with community members needs for investments, and these are identified in sidebars throughout the report.¹

Community members who participated in the town halls reiterated what advocates and community members have previously called for – strategies that will invest in New Yorkers so that people can thrive in their communities. Policymakers can respond to these calls by taking action to invest in resources and strategies that move toward equity and justice.

¹ Discussion of pending legislation is for informational purposes only, and does not signify endorsement of these bills by the authors, the Justice Lab, Columbia University, or Unchained.

BACKGROUND: THE LESS IS MORE ACT

In September of 2021, Governor Hochul signed the Less Is More: Community Supervision Revocation Reform Act ([S.1144A](#) – Benjamin / [A.5576A](#) – Forrest) into law. This transformative act substantially changed the parole system across New York State in four key areas: 1) implementing earned-time credits so that people can earn 30 days off of their parole sentence for every 30 days they comply with the rules of parole (commonly referred to as “30 for 30”), 2) ending automatic detention for violations of parole supervision, 3) strengthening due process rights for people charged with parole violations, and 4) capping periods of incarceration when detention for parole violations is allowed (Singletary and sayegh, 2022).

Implementation of Less Is More happened in phases – some provisions took effect when the bill was signed on September 17, 2021, most provisions were enacted by March 1, 2022, and full implementation of the law was required by September 1, 2022 (Singletary and sayegh, 2022).²

FIGURE 1: TIMELINE OF LESS IS MORE PHASED IMPLEMENTATION



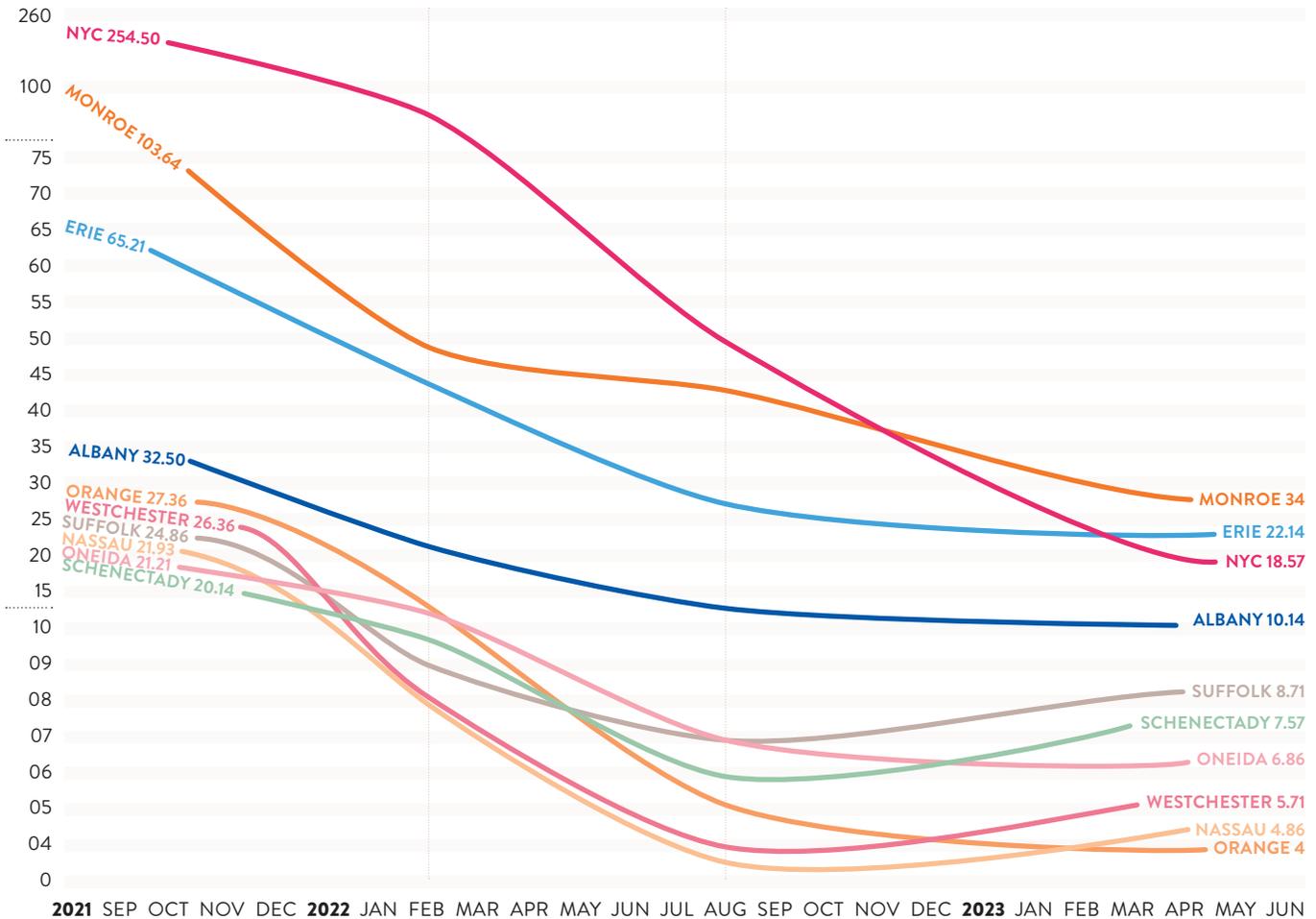
SOURCE: SINGLETARY AND SAYEGH, 2022

A full analysis of the impacts of Less Is More is beyond the scope of this report and would need to account for the effects of COVID and the impact of other external factors on changes in the criminal legal system. However, simple before-and-after comparisons of statistics that are relevant to the key provisions of the bill – e.g., the number of people on parole, and the number of people in jails and prisons for technical parole violations – suggest that the impacts may have been substantial. For example, it is estimated that over 20,000 people have earned early discharge from parole through the “30 for 30” provision (Personal communication, September 2023). Relatedly, there were approximately 7,000 fewer people on parole and 150 fewer parole and senior parole officers in the fall of 2023 compared to the fall of 2021 (New York State [NYS] Department of Corrections and Community Supervision [DOCCS] 2021a, 2023a). Notably, between 2021 (the year Less Is More was passed) and 2022, the number of people sent to New York State prisons for technical parole violations fell by more than 1300 during the same time period that overall prison admissions rose by more than 1000 people (NYS DOCCS 2023). In addition, the average number of people detained in local jails for technical parole violations across New York State counties decreased at each implementation date (see Figure 2 and Appendix 5).³

2 More details on the provisions and implementation timeline for Less Is More can be accessed at www.lessismoreny.org, which includes [fact sheets](#) and [stories](#) of the impact of the bill and is regularly updated by [Unchained](#) and the [Katal Center for Equity, Health and Justice](#).

3 These decreases were statistically significant based on a statistical test called a Repeated Measures ANOVA. See Appendix 5 for technical details of this analysis.

FIGURE 2: AVERAGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE JAILED FOR TECHNICAL PAROLE VIOLATIONS ACROSS KEY IMPLEMENTATION PERIODS, SELECTED COUNTIES



SOURCE: AUTHOR ANALYSIS OF [NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES JAIL POPULATION BY MONTH REPORTS 2020-2023](#).

Note: Figure 2 displays the average number of people in jail for technical violations in each of four time periods that are relevant for the phased implementation of Less Is More. This figure includes data for the eleven counties with the highest number of people in jail for technical parole violations in the first time period. See Table A5 in Appendix 5 of this report for data from all 62 New York counties.

Even if only some of these changes are attributable to Less Is More, the fiscal impact of the bill will have been significant. Prior to Less Is More, the cost of incarcerating people for technical violations alone was estimated at \$680 million in annual taxpayer dollars, and the state estimated that reducing state prison populations by 2,000 people was estimated to save approximately \$58 million per year (Independent Commission on NYC Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform et al. 2021).

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PUBLIC SAFETY INVESTMENT AFTER LESS IS MORE

Given the potential fiscal impact of the implementation of Less Is More, the Columbia University Justice Lab Probation and Parole Project and Unchained partnered with the Less Is More Coalition, led by Unchained and the Katal Center, on a qualitative study to learn, *“How do community members across New York State want the cost savings from Less Is More to be invested into their communities?”*

“How do community members across New York State want the cost savings from Less Is More to be invested into their communities?”

This research question starts from the position that the people and communities who were the most impacted by harmful parole policies prior to Less Is More will also be experts in what can make their communities whole.

Scholarship on community-driven models of public safety has outlined strategies for investing public funds into community-based programs and initiatives (Sakala, Harvell and Thomson 2018; Sakala and La Vigne 2019). While these models take a variety of formats and have some overlap with each other, three commonly cited models of community-driven public safety include: *reinvestment*, in which savings from reforms are used to fund community or other initiatives; *up-front investment*, in which new sources of funding are provided for community initiatives; and *invest-divest*, in which funds are shifted away from the criminal legal system and directed toward priorities in the community. Other scholars have taken the call for community-led investment a step further by transitioning the power of decision making about funding for those impacted by the legal system away from the state and into the hands of community members. The ‘*community repair model*,’ advocates for the use of publicly funded dollars to meet the basic needs of those who are impacted by the legal system, while, at the same time, investing in communities to repair histories of systematic divestment and mass criminalization. This framework fully relocates the oversight and management of such investments to care-based supports in the community (Okoh and Coronado 2022).

Thus, as states and local jurisdictions enact policy reforms, such as Less Is More, there is an opportunity to reduce spending in the criminal legal system and invest in supports identified as priorities by affected communities.

FIGURE 3: MODELS OF COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PUBLIC SAFETY INVESTMENT



METHOD

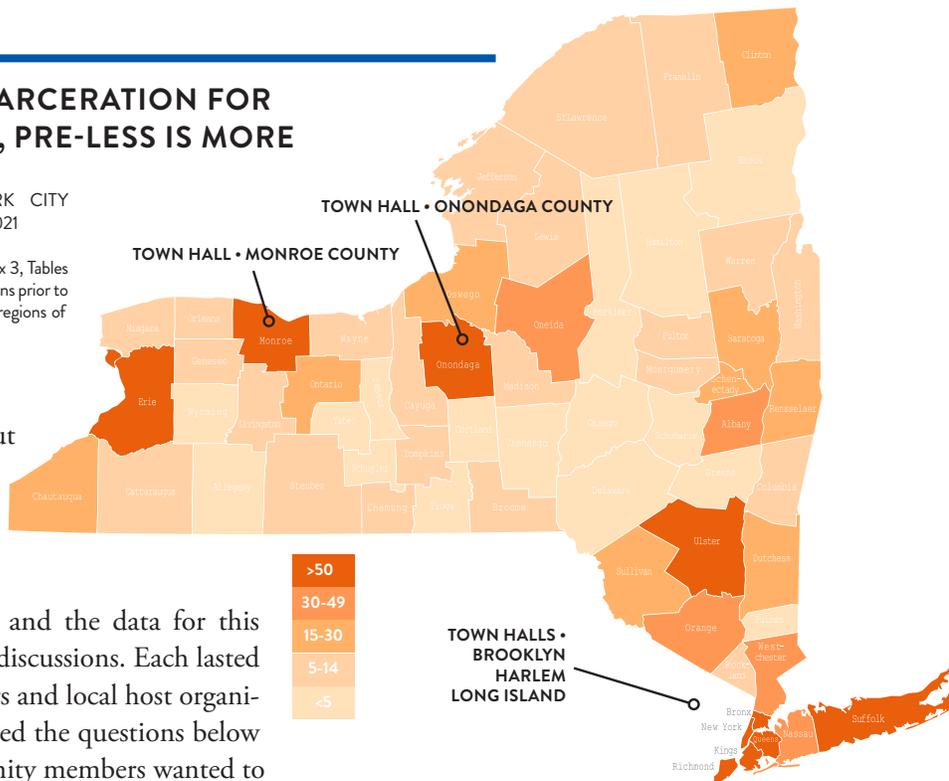
PROCEDURE

Between May 2022 and April 2023, the Less Is More Coalition and local partner organizations hosted five virtual town hall meetings focused on communities across New York State that had high rates of incarceration for technical parole violations prior to Less Is More: Harlem, Brooklyn, Long Island, Onondaga County, and Monroe County (See Figure 4 and Appendix 3).⁴

FIGURE 4: HEAT MAP OF JAIL INCARCERATION FOR PAROLE VIOLATIONS BY COUNTY, PRE-LESS IS MORE

SOURCE: INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON NEW YORK CITY CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND INCARCERATION REFORM ET AL. 2021

Note: Areas of focus for virtual town hall meetings are noted. See Appendix 3, Tables A2 and A3 for data on the average number of people jailed for parole violations prior to Less Is More implementation, and for the number of people on parole in regions of New York State.



Each town hall included a number of breakout room discussions, during which participants were asked to share their thoughts about how they would want savings from Less Is More to be spent. Across the five town halls, there were 16 breakout rooms, and the data for this study were drawn from those breakout room discussions. Each lasted approximately 20 minutes. Coalition members and local host organizations facilitated the breakout rooms and used the questions below to prompt a conversation about how community members wanted to see the potential cost savings invested into their communities:

- » If you could take the \$680 million New York has spent annually to incarcerate people for technical parole violations, where would you spend it in your community?
- » What doesn't exist in your community that you wish you had? What are the investments, resources, spaces (physical spaces or other types) or services that you need more of in your community?
- » What are the needs in your community that haven't been listened to?
- » What is the one thing you would tell the Governor right now on how to improve the quality of life for people in your neighborhood?
- » Who is missing and should be at the table from your community to answer these questions?

⁴ These locations were chosen because they represent all or part of four out of the five areas/counties with the highest number of people jailed for parole violations prior to Less Is More being enacted – see Tables A2 and A3 in Appendix 3. A sixth town hall meeting was scheduled for the fifth region (Buffalo/Erie County) and was canceled due to a low number of registrants.

PARTICIPANTS

Town hall attendees included advocates, attorneys, people with lived experience of parole and their family members, family members of those incarcerated, service providers, researchers, interested community members, and legislative staff. Across all locations, approximately 231 people attended the town hall meetings.⁵

DATA ANALYTIC APPROACH

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in qualitative data. All breakout room discussions were recorded, and, prior to the analysis, de-identified and transcribed by analysis team members. Given that the data were discussion groups from the town hall meetings, thematic analysis provided a strategy to search across the breakout room discussions to find repeated patterns of meaning in the data. This led to a collaborative and iterative process of identifying and interpreting data, with back and forth and revisions as needed. The analysis team followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis in this study, which are presented below in Table 1. The full analytic procedure, including a discussion of the limitations, is described in Appendix 1.

TABLE 1: PHASES AND DESCRIPTIONS FOR THEMATIC ANALYSIS

SIX PHASES OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS	DESCRIPTION
PHASE 1: Familiarize yourself with the data	The analysis team read and re-read the transcripts and recorded initial notes/ codes that were noticed as patterns in the data.
PHASE 2: Generate initial codes	The team met as a group to review the notes from Phase 1 and to discuss and organize codes from the data. After the initial codes were drafted, the transcripts were re-read and the codes were applied to the data. ⁶
PHASE 3: Search for themes	After the data had been coded, the codes were organized and the corresponding data were reviewed to identify larger patterns and themes under which the codes fell.
PHASE 4: Review and refine the themes	The coded data were reviewed to align and inform the themes and to ensure that there was not too much overlap across themes.
PHASE 5: Define and name themes	A story about each theme was constructed and the team reviewed the data with themes in mind, to ensure the names of the themes clearly reflected what the theme is about.
PHASE 6: Write the report	

SOURCE: AUTHORS' ADAPTATION OF BRAUN AND CLARKE, 2006.

5 This is an estimated number of participants, based on numbers provided by Zoom following each town hall.

6 Note: See Appendix 2 for the final codebook.

RESULTS

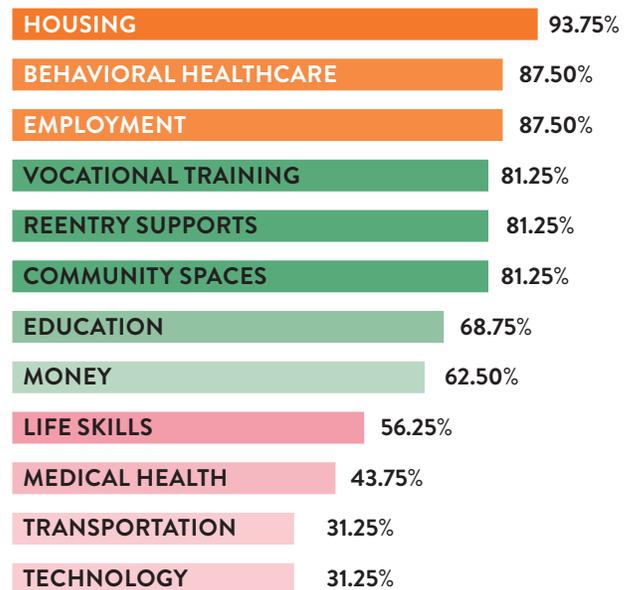
The primary goal of the town hall meetings was to learn how community members wanted to see potential cost-savings from Less Is More invested in their communities. These areas for investment are discussed in the first section below, and listed in Figure 5. Where applicable, pending legislation that could be responsive to town hall participants' calls for investment is briefly described in sidebars throughout the remainder of this report.

Notably absent from this list are the types of things that are often considered public safety investments by policymakers – community members in the town hall discussions were not calling for more law enforcement training, for enhanced parole supervision programs, or for specialized prosecutorial units to address drug use.⁷ Instead, the conversations reflected a highly nuanced understanding of the broader social conditions that are needed to make participants feel safer in their communities – resources long-recognized by social scientists as contributing to general stability and well-being: things like housing, employment and income supports, behavioral and physical health resources, and community spaces (e.g., Laub and Sampson 2003, Bozick et al. 2018, Kirk et al. 2018, Link et al. 2019).

One unexpected outcome that became evident through the analysis of the discussions was community members' recognition of structural barriers that restrict access to opportunities, even if funding is present. These insights clearly undergirded participants' understanding of community needs, and meant that the discussions moved beyond just *what* funds should be put toward, to include rich recommendations about the *how*: the structural, policy, and decision-making factors that affect the impact investments can have within communities. These insights suggest that it's not just the line items of state and local budgets that will matter, but also the policy infrastructure surrounding the implementation of those investments. A report on the community conversations in the town halls would be incomplete without these policy insights, and they are discussed in the second section below, with examples of legislation that target structural conditions that limit opportunities in the state. As New York frequently enacts significant policy change through the budget process, the state is well-positioned to be responsive to these recommendations.⁸

FIGURE 5: AREAS NEEDING INVESTMENT, AS IDENTIFIED BY TOWN HALL PARTICIPANTS

INVESTMENT AREA AND PERCENTAGE OF BREAKOUT ROOM DISCUSSIONS WHERE RESOURCE WAS MENTIONED



Note: See Appendix 4 for a more detailed breakdown of where and how these topics arose, including differences across NYC-focused discussions and upstate-focused discussions.

7 All of these are examples of proposed spending in the FY2023 budget – see Office of the New York State Comptroller, 2023.

8 While examples of state-level legislation and budget initiatives are most frequently presented in this report, county or local ordinances and programs could also be responsive to these investment and policy areas, as could federal programs directed toward New York localities. See Table A2 in Appendix 3 of this report, as well as Independent Commission on NYC Criminal Justice and Incarceration Reform et al. 2021, for data on local jail incarceration and spending for parole violations prior to Less Is More implementation.

THE ‘WHAT’: RESOURCE NEEDS

Town hall participants identified several specific areas of investment where they wanted savings from Less Is More to be directed. Figure 5 shows the specific resources mentioned by participants in the town hall discussions, organized by the percentage of breakout room discussions in which town hall participants discussed that resource.

INVEST IN SAFE, AFFORDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

Housing was mentioned more than any other single resource across the town hall discussions. Participants often discussed housing as a human right that influences the choices people make and their opportunities to thrive. One attendee stated, “*as I see it, the crime is not the disease in society, housing instability and poverty are. And so, I believe that if we invested more in housing, getting people off of the streets, into homes and making sure that people have quality housing that there would be a lot less incarceration and recidivism*” [Onondaga].

The lack of safe and affordable housing is a recognized and widespread problem. For example, the National Low Income Housing Coalition (2023) calculated that a New York State resident would have to work 98 hours per week at minimum wage to afford rent for a one-bedroom apartment, and would need an annual household income of \$83,375 to afford a two-bedroom rental unit. Town hall attendees also emphasized that housing should be safe, affordable, and sustainable for all New Yorkers.

Participants also recognized that housing is a critical resource for people transitioning from prison to the community, and discussed the importance of having one’s own space to call home as a foundation that affects all other areas of life and well-being. One attendee noted, “*in our city [NYC] in general, but especially for people who are formerly incarcerated ... it’s essential to your transition to have a place where you can reside in peace and have that stability and sense of...belonging...*” [Harlem]. Participants also voiced concern that sometimes, even where housing programs for formerly incarcerated people exist, there were issues of scale. For example, one attendee who had worked with a program that provides housing for people transitioning from prison to the community noted, “*We can provide people with some amount of resources and training, but one huge roadblock we came against was that even if they created housing, the housing could only accommodate such a small percentage of folks exiting incarceration that housing was still an issue for most. We often forget that even though housing is a human right, many people are denied access to it*” [Long Island].

OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION

Below is an example of legislation under consideration that has the potential to make housing more accessible to New Yorkers:

Housing Access Voucher Program (S.568A/A.4021A) – Sets up a statewide rental subsidy program for low-income New Yorkers who are homeless, facing eviction, or at risk of losing their housing because of domestic violence or hazardous living conditions. Expands eligibility for undocumented people, people without income, and people with felony convictions who are not currently eligible for local or federal rental assistance programs.

INVEST IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE RESOURCES

Approximately 25% of New York State residents have a behavioral health condition (Knott et al. 2022). Town hall attendees discussed the stigma surrounding and the lack of access to behavioral healthcare – or mental health and substance use services – across the state. For example, one attendee noted, “*we need to really invest in facilitating mental health, not saying it’s not out there, but it’s more looked down upon...*” [Brooklyn]. Attendees specifically voiced concerns that access to behavioral health services is limited in rural areas of New York, where treatment options are more spread out and less available. There were also discussions about how the costs of services restrict who can access them and the quality of care that is provided. For example, an analysis of the National Survey on Drug Use and Health from 2018-and 2019 indicated that, of the 850,000 adults in New York who did not receive needed mental health care, cost was the barrier for 33.2 percent (KFF 2019). Town hall attendees emphasized that the challenges associated with accessing mental health

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

The examples of legislation presented below target funds toward mental health and substance use resources in New York State:

Daniel’s Law (S.2398/A.2210) – This bill creates a structure to operate and finance high-quality emergency and crisis response services for people experiencing behavioral health emergencies. As of 2023, a **task force** was created to identify what is needed to move this bill forward.

Treatment Not Jail (S.1976A/A.1263B) – This bill would expand access to diversion programs so that people who need behavioral health treatment are not criminalized.

Safer Consumption Services Act (S.399A/A.338A) – This bill would establish a program to provide overdose prevention center programs across the state.

and substance use treatment were often linked to involvement in the criminal legal system. One town hall attendee noted, “I can’t tell you how many people who we talk about or who I’ve met who have family members who have mental health issues who committed crimes... because ... they have schizophrenia and couldn’t afford their medications...” [Onondaga].

The town hall discussions also recognized that a wide variety of approaches to provide behavioral healthcare is needed in communities, including, but not limited to: harm reduction, violence prevention, gender-responsive services, human centered approaches, and trauma informed care. Comprehensive services and wrap around supports – that is, ensuring that people have access to behavioral healthcare and other resources or services at the same time – were also identified as areas for investment. As explained by one attendee, “...we respond to the crisis, often the crisis is prompted by some sort of social service running out or there’s no food, or someone’s prescription drugs can’t be afforded or picked up, or, you know, some other issues, and instead of investing money into making sure that we’re provide that ongoing support, we just let people go from crisis back to whatever they were facing...back to crisis, back to whatever they were facing. And we just don’t put the money into that ongoing, sort of, support, making sure that people are staying healthy, and not going from crisis to crisis...” [Monroe].

INVEST IN EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Employment and vocational training, as well as job readiness programs, were raised as areas of community need in the vast majority of the discussions. Participants focused on investing in job readiness and vocational training programs for both youth and adults. In this context, one attendee stated, “I would like to see money invested into jobs where there aren’t as many barriers or more supports to make sure that young people who don’t have the supports that other young people might have... who don’t have safety nets... have an opportunity to really be employed in a way that is meaningful so that they can contribute to support their families and themselves” [Monroe].

Town hall attendees noted that there is a need for employment and vocational training opportunities to be focused on developing career pathways that are sustainable in the long term. For example, one participant reflected this need as, “...so maybe some type of programs could be set up that create careers as opposed to just jobs that are minimum wage ... positions...” [Harlem]. Throughout the discussions, participants emphasized that employment and vocational training opportunities should be meaningful and provide skills and financial compensation to allow people to support their families in their communities.

OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION

One example of legislation that would create employment and vocational training opportunities, among other investments is:

Invest In Our NY is a package of legislation that would use tax-generated revenue to invest in a variety of initiatives, including employment and vocational training.

INVEST IN RESOURCES FOR REENTRY

Town hall discussions noted that the importance of housing, behavioral healthcare, employment and vocational training, as well as other resources, such as transportation, is amplified during the reentry process. There was recognition that these resources are both more needed and often more challenging to access when people are transitioning from prison to the community. Town hall discussions highlighted the need to invest in reentry preparation and planning supports for people who are incarcerated to support them as they leave prison, including basic life skills, technology, vocational training, and employment. As one participant stated, “... if we were more intentional about how we prepare people for reentry by providing the basic things that are needed around supportive housing, around workforce connections, around peer workforce development, ways we could really naturally engage, I think we would have a way different outcome for people who are released” [Harlem].

Reentry supports were often discussed in reference to available, accessible, and high-quality wrap-around care. One attendee stated, “People need preparation to come back home and this means job opportunities, wraparound resources. I also firmly believe that community resources like hotlines and support services need to be 24/7, because people have nobody to call at night or [in] the evening, which can lead people to fall off the wagon” [Long Island].

In addition, town hall discussions recognized that limited resources during reentry add to the stress of transitioning from prison to the community. The combination of a lack of affordable and safe housing, restricted employment opportunities, and limited access to transportation is especially challenging to navigate during the transition from prison to the community (Davis et al. 2022). As one attendee noted, “for guys who are coming home and they’re getting jobs, most of us don’t have transportation to get to these jobs. Like, I’m in that problem right now, I got a job paying \$18.75 but I had to pass it up because I... couldn’t get out there. So it’s ... hard cause you qualify for these jobs and parole know these things and there’s really not much they can do...” [Monroe]. Town hall participants recognized that the stress of the reentry process is easily amplified when resources are not directed toward ensuring that people transitioning from prison to the community have access to multiple resources to support their needs.

INVEST IN LOCAL COMMUNITY SPACES

In addition to the need for resources that meet the basic needs of people and families in their communities and for people coming home from incarceration, town hall discussions referenced community spaces as an area for investment. Many communities have experienced divestments in local spaces or centers that could act as a hub for services and resources as well as activities across the life span. For example, an attendee noted [speaking about Patchogue], “There isn’t really ... a youth center where children can go. There isn’t no facility unless they open up... the junior high school... There’s not really a lot of things for us to do pertaining to ...this area for the youth and I don’t... know I couldn’t personally tell you ‘well you can go here and you can get ESL classes or you can go here and get a GED.’ Not in this area. There’s so many resources that are lacking in this community” [Long Island].

Town hall attendees want to see investments in community-led initiatives, and often discussed these investments in the form of diversion or prevention. For example, one attendee stated, “I think these organizations can do a lot better or do a lot more in...in utilizing this money to ... enhance the lives of the people in the community rather than you know giving them a

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

In addition to the Housing Access Voucher Program (discussed above, p. 9), this legislation targets support for people amidst the reentry process:

Unemployment Bridge Program (S.3192/A.4821) – This bill would provide payments to people transitioning from prison to the community as a type of unemployment insurance in recognition of the labor they provided to the state while incarcerated.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Funding for community spaces is often provided through federal grants or monies that are directed to local counties and municipalities.

One strategy to access these funds is to submit applications through NY State representatives as shown [here](#).

New York residents can also submit input into the [People's](#)

[Caucus Budget](#) that is developed by the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislative Caucus.

Counties also receive unrestricted funds through the Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) program as provided in the [Executive Budget](#) (p. 46). Local governments could use these funds for local projects like community spaces.

record, giving them some jail time and you know creating some type of a barrier for them to succeed in the community” [Monroe]. Town hall attendees mentioned that community spaces could be used in ways to build deeper local supports, for example by serving as a physical hub for support groups for formerly incarcerated people, or for an ‘each one, teach one’ program, in which people share their knowledge and skills to support others in the community.

INVEST IN EDUCATION AND YOUTH

Town hall attendees also wanted to see specific investments in education and youth-focused activities in their communities. They often framed the need for these investments as a chance to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline, as “... if we’re not providing the education to our children now, then this is where we go to that prison pipeline” [Long Island]. Another attendee noted, “I feel like we definitely need more programs that kids can be creative in or just explore and try different new things like ... always showing the kids and community that they have more than, ... they have options, there’s different things out there and getting them introduced to things now so that when they get older, it’s not new and ...they kind of have that focus. I feel like we need money in education...” [Long Island]. Town hall attendees recognized that governments have not consistently directed funds toward education or other preventative efforts, which limits opportunities and resources for youth as they transition to adulthood. Employment and financial literacy were also discussed as areas of investment for youth programming. One attendee stated, “...there’s not a space for youth to go to understand taxes, understand how money works, how capitalism works, what it means to buy a house, what does a mortgage mean, what does a loan mean, what does credit, how can credit affect your history. There isn’t a place for the youth to really go to get that type of understanding, and I feel like that’s definitely something that our community does need because programs like that will lead to people not being incarcerated” [Harlem].

Research has shown that investment in a wide variety of preventative interventions supports individuals, families, and communities while improving public safety (e.g. Kubrin and Wo 2015). A recent literature review of social investments that have an effect on decarceration found that early childhood interventions with parent engagement, such as preschool programming with wrap-around services, as well as the nurse-family-partnership program (NFP), which provides home visiting services to families, decreased arrests for more than 20 years after program involvement (Hawks, Lopoo, Puglisi and Wang 2021). Further, research suggests that students who attend public schools that are better resourced are 15 percent less likely to be arrested through the age of 30 (Baron et al. 2022).

OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION

[Invest In Our NY](#), mentioned above (p.10) relative to employment and vocational training, also includes legislation directing investments of tax-generated revenue toward public education and childcare, among other priorities.

INVEST IN BASIC INCOME PROGRAMS AND ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE

In addition to the resources described above, participants in the town hall discussions raised the need to provide access to money through universal or guaranteed income programs to people and families across New York State. Attendees recognized that providing money, for example, through monthly payments with no strings attached, has the potential to alleviate financial stressors that families experience, which could increase engagement in other areas of life. For example, one participant stated, *“if the point is that we know that some of the biggest deterrents to ... making some of the choices that lead to incarceration is the lack of food, the lack of housing, and a lack of living wages, and that puts a lot of stress on folks, health care, ... there’s tons of them. If we took some of our lowest income families and put them on a universal basic income and relieved some of that stress, I think we would see, particularly some... more engagement in children’s education, parents would have more time, there would be less stress about what is going to happen every day”* [Monroe]. Town hall participants also advocated for money to be available to the families of those who are incarcerated so that they can financially care for children and other family members while their loved one is incarcerated.

Town hall discussions also raised the importance of access to medical care, including reproductive and sexual health, as areas for community investment. For example, one participant noted, *“Like you said health care, like we need more programs teaching us about our bodies and wellness... the healthier the community, the healthier the public will be...”* [Long Island]. Medical care, including pharmacies, medication, and dental care, were discussed as critical services that are not consistently accessible across the state. Attendees also discussed that people transitioning from prison to the community should be provided with Medicaid and connections to healthcare before they begin the reentry process, or while they are still incarcerated, so that they can access medical care in the community.

THE ‘HOW’: EQUITY, REENTRY, AND BUILDING ON LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Community members in the town hall discussions named many resources that are needed across New York State. At the same time, participants emphasized that there are ‘pre’-conditions to investing in these resources – these ‘pre’-conditions reflect the structural barriers that exist in policy and practice, which exclude groups of people from needed resources. The following section presents the nuanced themes that demonstrate ‘how’ town hall attendees would like to see investments in their communities.

USE EQUITY AS A FRAMEWORK TO PRIORITIZE INVESTMENTS

Town hall discussions emphasized that structural barriers limit the resources and opportunities that are available to people, families, and communities across New York City and State. Structural barriers are the policies, practices,

OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION

Examples of providing financial supports to people and families who need it can be realized through universal basic income programs. Example legislation and programs are listed below:

[Establishing and funding the universal basic income pilot program \(S7591/A.7920\)](#) – This bill would create a pilot program for universal basic income across the state.

Separately, several pilot programs that provide guaranteed income (\$450-1,000 monthly for a specific time period) with no strings attached for a limited amount of time are being implemented across the state. These include [HudsonUP](#), [Ithaca Guaranteed Income](#), [City of Rochester Guaranteed Basic Income \(GBI\) Pilot Program](#), [Project Resilience](#) in Ulster County and [The Bridge Project](#) in NYC.

One opportunity for funding toward medical care would be to expand state Medicaid spending as provided in the [Executive Budget](#) (p. 14).

and conditions that create obstacles that perpetuate or maintain disparities in outcomes for the communities and groups that society marginalizes (Simms et al. 2015). The town hall discussions acknowledged that Black, Brown, and poor communities have been besieged by divestment, the consequences of which are experienced to this day. These issues were raised in reference to all areas in New York State, as attendees noted that the communities with the fewest resources have a history of divestment that perpetuates barriers for people and the communities in which they live – in rural areas of upstate New York as well as in specific neighborhoods in larger cities. One participant described this experience, “... I’ve lived in my neighborhood for years, and it’s looked the same, but everybody’s still getting shuffled to Rikers. So that doesn’t make sense to me. ... there’s money, but it’s just not in the neighborhoods” [Harlem]. Policies that govern eligibility criteria, regional differences in access to resources and opportunities, and the prioritization of investments will need to be changed in order to address these structural barriers.

Resource deprivation is a consequence of the structural barriers that are historically rooted in policies and practices that restrict upward mobility for people who are racially and economically marginalized in society (e.g. Mears and Bhati 2006). Attendees discussed the resource deprivation experienced in communities as both interconnected and multi-directional. For example, a lack of affordable and accessible housing impacts meaningful employment opportunities and access to transportation – and limited transportation also restricts opportunities for employment and access to housing and other resources. Town hall participants noted that transportation challenges become more pronounced depending on where one lives. One participant shared, “... providing more transportation... access to people... one thing that I realized when members come home, ...when you live out the further east you go the harder it is to travel. Right? ...I know ... in the boroughs, the bus comes every 15-20 minutes. Out here, you’re looking at every hour or two hours” [Long Island].

At the same time, attendees identified that even when there are programs that provide assistance, structural barriers manifest through bureaucracy, red tape, eligibility criteria that may exclude people from services, and waiting lists that are long (“the waitlist for ...affordable housing is like 3-5 years long” [Onondaga]), and not accessible to the people who may need it the most.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Examples of policies that would address structural barriers and increase equity, including for people impacted by the criminal legal system, relevant to the areas of investment identified by town hall attendees:

Good Cause Eviction (S.305/A.4454) – This bill requires landlords to justify rent hikes greater than 3% (or 150% of the Consumer Price Index) and gives tenants the power to challenge evictions that are arbitrary, retaliatory, or discriminatory. This bill would apply to 1.6 million New York households in every corner of the state, nearly half of the state’s renters as a whole.

Fair Chance for Housing NYC 2047-2020 – This bill prohibits housing discrimination based on arrest/conviction, making it unlawful for housing providers to deny someone housing because of a conviction record.

Clean Slate NY (S7551A/A1029C) – Automatically seals a person’s criminal record after a waiting period. This bill passed the legislature and, at the time of this writing, is currently awaiting the governor’s signature.

Solutions Not Suspensions (S.1040/A.5691) This bill would end reliance on suspensions as the default way to discipline students and establish a framework to use proven restorative approaches to inappropriate behavior and discipline.

Youth Justice and Opportunity Act (S.3426/A.4238) This bill would create a young adult status for those 19-25 and provide other protections to invest in young people and divert them away from the criminal legal system.

Jury of Our Peers Act (S.206A/A.1432) – This bill removes the lifetime ban on jury service for those with felony convictions so that people can participate in civic life.

Raise Up NY/Raise the Wage (S.1978/A.2204) – This bill calls for raising the minimum wage for all New Yorkers from \$15 to \$21.25 per hour across the state by 2027.

One Fair Wage (S.5567/A.1710) – This bill proposes to raise wages for tipped workers, who are often excluded from increases in the minimum wage.

REMOVE BARRIERS FOR PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

While structural barriers affect all New Yorkers and have disproportionate consequences for people of color and those who are economically disadvantaged, another theme that emerged from the data is that discriminatory policies and practices make life even more difficult for people, families, and communities who are impacted by the criminal legal system. Town hall discussions referenced the need to remove policies that exclude people who have criminal records from participating in civic life – specifically for housing and employment opportunities. In this context, participants emphasized decriminalization, as well as preventative strategies to divert people away from the criminal legal system.

Town hall discussions recognized that the structural barriers that limit the resources and services that are available in the community perpetuate the cycle of incarceration. For example, one attendee stated, “... they can’t get a fair wage ... and they’re going back into the streets, they’re going back in there [someone interjects ‘yeah, goin’ back to what we know’]” [Onondaga].

There was also acknowledgement in town hall discussions that our criminal legal and social service systems often overlap, and, when one system fails, another becomes involved to ‘pick up the pieces.’ This issue was raised in reference to the ways that organizational funding is often tied to specific programmatic activities and the systems that fund said activities. For example, an organization may be funded to provide resources during reentry, but when the person is ‘off paper’,⁹ they may no longer be eligible for services funded for reentry supports. They may be shuttled to another provider but cannot continue to receive supports through the initial provider with whom they have developed a relationship: “We have situations where we have guys who while they’re staying with us ... their 30 for 30¹⁰ is reaching and they’re ending up off of parole. ... we’re not able to support just someone out in the community which is what this person becomes once they’re no longer on parole. So there’s that gap of well yes now you have ... your freedom, but now this person is just someone else who is gonna enter into the homeless population because now they don’t have that support..., it’s just shifting them from incarceration right to the homeless system” [Monroe].

INVEST IN EXISTING LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Town hall discussions emphasized that it was important to invest in local organizations so that these organizations can sustain themselves while providing needed services to the community. It was noted that there are often existing groups and organizations in communities that should receive additional funding so that the services and relationships they provide can be expanded to meet the needs of the people they serve. One attendee provided an example of allocating funds to programs that are working in schools, “As far as like different programs that we need, I know here in Monroe County there’s a number of programs that we have that are working well – similar to our school district ... – we have a struggling city school district, but within that school district we have a number of jewels that are thriving programs, but ... when do we replicate or expand them so more can take advantage of that” [Monroe]. Another attendee, when speaking about a program providing employment services for people on parole supervision, noted, “If funding for bus passes, if that’s an option, or, there is some reentry programs that do help us but they don’t have like trucks or vans... to actually carpool these parolees that can, know, be transported around the city to places and meetings that they need to go to, or appointments they need to go to, if that can be, if some of the reentry programs that already exist –can they be funded to get drivers and do that kind of thing...” [Monroe]. Attendees noted that existing programs would benefit from being able to use grant funds in a discretionary manner to support their program participants, for example, one attendee indicated that the organization they worked for had a ride-share account so that their program could provide people with rides to appointments and other obligations as needed. Directing funds to bolster existing organizations would ‘fill-in-the-gaps’ for resources that program participants need that might not be provided as part of their funding requirements.

9 ‘Off paper’ refers to a person no longer being under the control of the criminal legal system through parole supervision

10 ‘30 for 30’ reflects early termination of parole supervision through earned time credits

Furthermore, town hall attendees emphasized that funds that are directed to communities should prioritize investments in organizations that are led by or have people with lived experience in the criminal legal system in leadership roles. One attendee noted, *“I think that the funding can go to organizations that we have out here already, that are run by ... people that are directly impacted [who] know ... how it is directly impacting them”* [Long Island]. Participants noted that investing in people with lived experience in the criminal legal system to lead and provide services and care for those who are going through the reentry process has the potential to strengthen community ties.

CONCLUSION

The findings from analysis of the town hall discussions emphasized two key areas for change across New York State. First, community members who participated in the town halls identified resources in need of investment – particularly housing, behavioral healthcare, employment and vocational training, and community spaces – across the state. Second, community members would like to see funds invested in their communities in ways that remove structural barriers and enhance equity so that all New Yorkers can thrive in their communities. There is wide recognition of the need to remove structural barriers to ensure that Black, Brown, and economically disadvantaged residents have equitable access to services, community spaces, quality education, healthcare, and affordable housing (Center for Government and Research 2021). Importantly, making progress toward these priorities is a collective effort – while the recommendations in this paper target policy makers and funders, advocates, service providers, and community members are stronger when working together to make these change efforts a reality.

Communities and organizations across New York State have already recognized the importance of community investment on residents’ well-being. Advocacy groups in New York have called for investments in a wide variety of resources, including free and/or affordable housing, access to quality behavioral and medical healthcare, employment and job training opportunities, education justice and local community centers – among other resources (e.g., Brooklyn Communities Collaborative 2021; Citizen Action of NY 2023; JLUSA #Build Communities 2020; Plan Onondaga 2023; Realmuto, Owusu and Libman 2016). Community members who participated in the town halls provided insights that echo the above efforts as they clearly articulated that there is a need to invest in resources, and to do so in a way that enhances equity to meet community needs. While the discussions often referred to resources that would benefit all New Yorkers, community members who participated in the town halls specifically focused on preventing and supporting people and families who have been impacted by the criminal legal system. As such, town hall attendees emphasized that providing resources and supports in a manner that enhances equity has the potential to prevent and disrupt pathways into, or back into, the criminal legal system.

As noted throughout this report, there are many pending pieces of legislation that can both direct funds to the resources identified in the town hall discussions, such as housing and employment, and remove structural barriers that limit access to these resources. However, it is important to note that the strategies that would be used to fund such efforts do not necessarily direct funds to communities. Most of the pieces of legislation identified above will require at least some funding to be re-directed from one part of the system to another, instead of providing funds directly to community members to define challenges and develop solutions in their communities. These funding approaches are consistent with the limitations of traditional models of public safety investment, and could be addressed through employing community-driven models of public safety investment, instead. The findings from the town hall discussions suggest that impacted communities have deep and nuanced understanding of the resources that can build safety

in their local community, and future funding efforts should tap into these insights and continue to build pathways for community-directed investments.

As states and local jurisdictions enact policy reforms, such as Less Is More, there is an opportunity to drastically reduce spending in the criminal legal system. At the same time, there are community calls to action for any financial savings from such reforms to be diverted away from the criminal legal system and invested into communities. The findings from this project are in line with these calls to action – and provide additional insight on ways to direct funds equitably, to advance justice for all New Yorkers.

APPENDIX 1: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

RECRUITMENT

The Less Is More Coalition and local partner organizations shared information about the town hall meetings through their email listservs and social media outlets. The town hall meetings were open to all community members, with focused outreach to those directly impacted by parole and their loved ones. Interested attendees registered for each town hall meeting via a Zoom link. Each meeting was approximately 90 minutes long. There were approximately 231 participants across the town hall meetings based on metrics provided by Zoom. The meeting structure included an announcement at the start of each town hall that the Justice Lab would be observing and recording the meeting for this project, an overview of the key provisions of Less Is More, strengths and challenges in implementing the law, breakout rooms for discussion, and time for reporting back and answering questions at the end. The procedures for this observational study were approved by the Columbia University Institutional Review Board.

ANALYTIC PROCEDURE

The analysis team included three team members. At the first meeting, the team discussed how to use the questions that were asked in the breakout rooms and decided to analyze the discussions as a whole rather than by question, as there was often overlap among the responses. The team also reviewed the ways the results were expected to be used to make claims about what community members said; that is, the team focused on ensuring that the data were accurately analyzed to reflect what attendees said in the town hall meetings. The team also reviewed the assumptions that were brought to the analysis as members played an active role in identifying the themes/patterns in the data, selecting which were of interest, and reporting them to the reader.

There were 16 transcripts, 4 of which were detailed notes because the breakout rooms were not recorded due to technical difficulties. All 16 transcripts were double coded (i.e., coded by two team members), and 7 of the 12 transcripts were triple coded (i.e., coded by three team members). Triple coding has several advantages that allow for richer data analysis and descriptions, including improving inter-coder reliability and depth in the analysis (Church et al. 2019). Triple coding was prioritized for the transcripts from the breakout room discussions that had a recording available. During the analysis process, the team met to make decisions about how to code the data. Key decision points included coding facilitator responses when they contributed to the breakout room discussion. During the analysis meetings, the codes and areas of agreement/disagreement were reviewed to reach consensus on themes, as several codes had overlap – i.e., structural barriers and quality of life; prevention and school-to-prison pipeline (See Appendix 2 for the codebook). This overlap and how to address it were discussed in a collaborative process to identify the major themes and construct a narrative from the data.

STATEMENT OF REFLEXIVITY

As part of the analytic process, the three members of the analytic team talked about the biases and assumptions they brought to the reading and interpretation of the transcripts. The team discussed their positionality as researchers, people with lived experiences and loved ones of those with lived experience, and their awareness of the structural inequities in the criminal legal system, which shaped the ways in which the analysis was approached. Discussing potential biases up front also allowed the team to challenge themselves to accurately reflect what attendees said in the breakout rooms and to work through internal reactions to coding when they were not aligned with an analysis team member's personal views or values. This process allowed for a generation of rich descriptions from the data in a way that reflects the main takeaways from the breakout room discussions as a whole.

LIMITATIONS

This project had several limitations that should be highlighted. First, given the public town hall meetings and the structure of this observational study, demographic information, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and age for the town hall attendees was not asked for or collected. In addition, because the town hall discussions were virtual, attendees might have been from outside the targeted local area. This was addressed by having the facilitators ask people to introduce themselves and where they were located at the beginning of each breakout room, which provided some general information about participants. Facilitators sometimes participated in the conversations, in addition to moderating. The analysis team addressed this limitation by coding facilitator participation when their comments went beyond validating or repeating what other attendees had said. Another limitation is that there were only 5 town halls held across the state, which limited participation from other localities, including rural communities. That said, according to data presented in Appendix 3, the areas chosen had high rates of incarceration for parole violations prior to Less Is More. Additionally, according to data from 2020, four of the five target communities had state imprisonment rates above the average imprisonment rate for New York State (Widra and Encalada-Malinowski 2022).¹¹ In addition, community members who attended the town halls self-selected into participating and sharing their viewpoints on community investment, which may not represent the full scope of community perspectives.

Finally, it is important to note that four of the breakout room discussions were not recorded due to technological difficulties (3 from Brooklyn and 1 from Long Island). Consequently, those four discussions had extensive notes that were taken by a team member during the meetings, but no transcripts to provide the exact words that people said. The analysis team decided to code the notes along with the transcripts to ensure that the data were reflected in the analysis, but the direct quotes in the results section are people's exact words from the transcripts.

¹¹ These data reflect the state imprisonment rate and not the total imprisonment rate for each county where the town halls were held. The average state imprisonment rate for New York State as a whole is 193 per 100,000. Town halls were held in Brooklyn (Kings County), with a rate of 200 per 100,000; Monroe County, with a rate of 362 per 100,000; Onondaga County, with a rate of 342 per 100,000; Long Island (includes Kings, Queens, Nassau and Suffolk Counties) for an average rate of 130 per 100,000; and Harlem, with all zip codes having rates above 485 per 100,000.

APPENDIX 2

TABLE A1: CODEBOOK FOR THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Code Name	Description
behavioral health resources	Funds directed to mental health and/or substance use treatment
reentry resources	Funds directed to planning for reentry - pre-release planning, general support
housing	Funds directed to housing [in general; regardless of the type of housing]
vocational training	Funds directed to vocational training
employment	Funds directed to creating employment opportunities
life skills	Funds directed to basic life skills - financial literacy, navigating daily life, pre-requisites for reentry [IDs]
education	Funds directed to education
transportation	Funds directed to improving transportation options
technology	Funds directed to learning how to use and develop technology skills
mentorship	Funds directed to mentorship/providing guidance to navigate reentry by people who have lived through the process
money	Funds given directly to people who need it, funds provided during reentry, and/or to family members with incarcerated loved ones
community spaces	Funds directed to improving the community, green spaces, rec/community centers, trash and sanitation, food availability
prevention	Funds directed to youth programs, education, violence prevention, root causes
strategies to provide care	Ways that care should be provided, trauma informed care, harm reduction, comprehensive/wrap-around supports, emphasis on quality, incentivized, person-centered, sustainable
school-to-prison pipeline	Disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline
structural barriers	Barriers that interfere with resources - access to, discrimination against, affordability, transit, stigma
cycle of incarceration	Recognition that a lack of resources perpetuates the cycle of going in and out of jail and/or prison; recognition that needs overlap [food, shelter, etc.]
minimize red tape	Recognition that processes to access resources are bulky and difficult
raise awareness	Improve knowledge and understanding of rights, counter the fear-based narrative that perpetuates harm
system overlap	Recognition that systems work together - when a person is out of one they are often into another; or the failure of one system leads to involvement in another [i.e. mental health and legal system]
solutions	Suggestions for how to address/overcome challenges - innovative ideas [not just naming a resource but a clear 'how' barriers can be removed]
historical context	History of place or problem that is alluded to even if not explicit
human rights	Recognition that people should be treated with dignity and respect
build on community strengths	Recognition that community and organizational infrastructure can be expanded, built upon, and invested in with funding and incentives
quality of life	Recognition that people want to thrive, care for their families, and need meaningful opportunities and a living wage to do this
accountability	Recognition that there has to be a way to monitor changes that are made
outside NYC	Recognition that needs/barriers/services are different upstate vs in NYC
leadership	Recognition that people with lived experience should be listened to and invested in to provide services/resources

APPENDIX 3: DATA TABLES ON PAROLE SUPERVISION AND VIOLATIONS PRIOR TO LESS IS MORE IMPLEMENTATION

TABLE A2: AVERAGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE JAILED FOR PAROLE VIOLATIONS IN 2019, BY COUNTY

	Average daily number of people jailed for parole violations	Ranking, based on ADP
NYC (Kings, Queens, New York, Bronx, Richmond)	738	1
Monroe	156	2
Erie	88	3
Onondaga	77	4
Suffolk	56	5
Albany	44	6
Orange	37	7
Oneida	35	8
Nassau	34	9
Westchester	33	10
Rensselear	28	11
Schenectady	28	12
Oswego	19	13
Saratoga	19	14
Dutchess	18	15
Ontario	17	16
Ulster	17	17
Sullivan	16	18
Chautauqua	15	19
Clinton	15	20
Niagara	14	21
Broome	13	22
Jefferson	12	23
Washington	11	24
Chemung	10	25
Rockland	10	26
Steuben	10	27
Warren	10	28

Cattaraugus	9	29
Cayuga	8	30
Fulton	8	31
Livingston	8	32
Genesee	7	33
St. Lawrence	7	34
Wayne	7	35
Columbia	6	36
Franklin	6	37
Madison	6	38
Montgomery	6	39
Orleans	6	40
Tompkins	6	41
Lewis	5	42
Cortland	4	43
Otsego	4	44
Seneca	4	45
Chenango	3	46
Delaware	3	47
Tioga	3	48
Essex	2	49
Herkimer	2	50
Putnam	2	51
Schuyler	2	52
Wyoming	2	53
Yates	2	54
Allegany	1	55
Greene	0	56
Hamilton	0	57
Schoharie	0	58

TABLE A3: DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE ON PAROLE IN NEW YORK STATE ON DECEMBER 31, 2020, BY REGION

Region	Number	Percent	Counties
Queens/Long Island	5187	15%	Nassau, Queens, Suffolk
Brooklyn	3826	11%	Kings
Manhattan	3744	11%	New York, Richmond (Staten Island)
Bronx	4052	11%	Bronx
Hudson Valley	4381	12%	Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Fulton, Greene, Montgomery, Orange, Putnam, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester
Central NY	3917	11%	Cayuga, Chenango, Clinton, Cortland, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego, Rensselaer, Seneca, St. Lawrence, Warren, Washington
Western NY	5953	17%	Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Delaware, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne, Wyoming, Yates
Other	4328	12%	N/A – this includes people whose location is unknown (“absconders”), as well as people who are incarcerated in a parole violation unit
Total	35388	100%	

SOURCE: NYS DOCCS, 2021, TABLES 9A AND 9B [HTTPS://DOCCS.NY.GOV/SYSTEM/FILES/DOCUMENTS/2021/08/COMMUNITY-SUPERVISION-LEGISLATIVE-REPORT-2021-FINAL.PDF](https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/08/community-supervision-legislative-report-2021-final.pdf)

Note: Counties covered by DOCCS regions taken from <https://doccs.ny.gov/offices>; these figures do not include people classified by DOCCS as temporary release, community preparation or incarcerated parolees.

APPENDIX 4: DETAILED FREQUENCY COUNTS OF RESOURCE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE TOWN HALLS

Table A4 shows the number of town halls in which attendees mentioned specific resource needs. Housing, behavioral health, employment, vocational training, reentry supports, and community spaces were mentioned in the majority of the breakout room discussions. It is also important to note that some resources were discussed more in town hall meetings held in New York City compared to localities outside of New York City. This is particularly evident for transportation, vocational training, and life skills, among other topics.

TABLE A4: RESOURCE NEEDS IDENTIFIED FROM TOWN HALLS

	RESOURCE NEED	9 DISCUSSIONS	7 DISCUSSIONS	OVERALL
		OUTSIDE NYC	WITHIN NYC	
15	HOUSING	88.89%	100.00%	93.75%
14	BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE	88.89%	85.71%	87.50%
14	EMPLOYMENT	100.00%	71.43%	87.50%
13	VOCATIONAL TRAINING	66.67%	100.00%	81.25%
13	REENTRY SUPPORTS	77.78%	85.71%	81.25%
13	COMMUNITY SPACES	77.78%	85.71%	81.25%
11	EDUCATION	55.56%	85.71%	68.75%
10	MONEY	55.56%	71.43%	62.50%
9	LIFE SKILLS	33.33%	85.71%	56.25%
7	MEDICAL HEALTH	55.56%	28.57%	43.75%
5	TRANSPORTATION	44.44%	14.29%	31.25%
5	TECHNOLOGY	33.33%	28.57%	31.25%

NUMBER OF BREAKOUT ROOMS

APPENDIX 5: DETAILED METHODOLOGY FOR FIGURE 2, AVERAGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE JAILED FOR TECHNICAL PAROLE VIOLATIONS ACROSS KEY IMPLEMENTATION PERIODS

DATA

The data for this analysis were drawn from the Monthly Jail Population Trends as reported by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. Each county jail facility across the state reports their average daily census for each month, and the average daily counts are categorized by sentencing status, which, for example, includes sentenced, civil, federal, technical parole violators, and a few other categories. The average daily count of technical parole violators were recorded for each county from August of 2020 through June of 2023. Because data are reported for each facility in a given county, the counts of technical parole violators for different facilities were added together within the same county when necessary. This allowed for an estimate of the average daily count of people held in jail on technical parole violations each month for all counties across the state of New York and New York City (See Table A5).

ANALYSIS

One way to test whether a difference between numbers that are measured at different time points is truly significant is to apply a statistical test called a Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Running this test on these data compares the monthly averages of people detained for technical violations across counties for each implementation time point associated with Less Is More, and significant decreases over time means that the reduction in the number of people incarcerated are not the result of randomness or chance. The four implementation time points were chosen to be consistent with the timeline and provisions of the roll out of Less Is More.

This analysis was performed two times – the initial analysis included all counties and New York City, and a second analysis removed three localities (New York City, Monroe, and Erie Counties) given that the numbers of people detained for technical violations in those localities presented as outliers in the data. Removing the three localities strengthens the analysis as it excludes the influence of localities with the highest and largest drops in the number of people detained for technical violations of parole. Both analyses, however, generated similar findings, which are presented below.

RESULTS

For all counties and New York City a preliminary Repeated Measures ANOVA indicated that there is a significant difference in the average number of people detained for a technical violation of parole across the four time points, $F(3, 231) = 8.41, p = 0.00$, with a mean of 15.8 (SD = 36.06) for the average number of people detained for parole violations from 8/20-9/21, 8.39 (SD = 20.22) for the average number of people detained for parole violations from 10/21-2/22, 4.5 (SD = 9.09) for the average number of people detained for parole violations from 3/22-8/22, and 3.72 (SD = 5.78) for the average number of people detained for parole violations from 9/22-6/23. The post-hoc comparisons using a Bonferroni correction indicated that the means for pre-Less Is More to each implementation timepoint are significantly different from each other and decrease from pre-Less Is More at each time point [x1-x2, x1-x3, x1-x4]. While the average count of people detained for technical parole violations from pre-Less Is More to each time point differs, the subsequent time points, i.e. x2-x3, x3-x4) did not differ significantly from each other.

After removing the outliers (NYC, Erie and Monroe Counties) from the analysis, the findings from the Repeated Measures ANOVA indicated that there is a significant difference in the average number of people detained for a technical violation of parole across the four time points, $F(3, 231) = 44.14$, $p = 0.00$, with a mean of 8.96 (SD = 9.04) for the average count of people detained for parole violations from 8/20-9/21, 4.53 (SD = 4.43) for the average number of people detained for parole violations from 10/21-2/22, 2.55 (SD = 2.75) for the average number of people detained for parole violations from 3/22-8/22, and 2.56 (SD = 2.57) for the average number of people detained for parole violations from 9/22-6/23. The post-hoc comparisons using a Bonferroni correction indicated that the means for pre-Less Is More to each implementation timepoint are significantly different from each other and decrease at each time point [x1-x2, x1-x3, x1-x4]. This analysis shows significant decreases in the average number of people detained for technical parole violations at each time point except for x3-x4. That is, there were significantly less people detained for a technical parole violation in county jail from pre-Less Is More to the current date, and each implementation date [except for x3-x4] saw a significant decrease from the previous implementation time point.

Taken together, the results from these analyses suggest that there has been a significant decrease over time in the average number of people detained for technical violations of parole in county jail facilities across the state of New York.

*Notes: There are other factors that could have contributed to the decrease in the average number of people detained in jails for this time period, for example, the data points that were used in this analysis begin during COVID. It is also important to acknowledge that there are several strategies that could have been used to analyze these data – given the scope of the analysis and the implementation time points, the analytic strategy that was employed allowed for a sense of how Less is More may have impacted the average number of people detained in jails at discreet time points that were consistent with the implementation of Less is More, without causal inference.

TABLE A5: AVERAGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE JAILED FOR TECHNICAL PAROLE VIOLATIONS ACROSS KEY IMPLEMENTATION PERIODS DATA SET

County	Avg 8/20-9/21	Avg 10/21-2/22	Avg 3/22-8/22	Avg 9/22-6/23
NYC (Kings, Queens, New York, Bronx, Richmond)	254.50	144.60	50.00	18.57
Monroe	103.64	48.40	43.00	34.00
Erie	65.21	44.20	27.67	22.14
Onondaga	41.21	15.60	8.67	9.43
Albany	32.50	19.20	13.67	10.14
Orange	27.36	14.80	5.83	4.00
Weschester	26.36	8.60	4.50	5.71
Suffolk	24.86	9.60	7.33	8.71
Nassau	21.93	8.80	3.17	4.86
Oneida	21.21	13.00	7.00	6.86
Schenectady	20.14	9.40	5.67	7.57
Saratoga	18.14	8.80	6.67	3.86
Broome	17.21	8.40	7.00	5.43
Oswego	14.93	14.00	6.00	6.14
Rensselaer	14.86	8.80	4.83	1.43
Chautauqua	12.14	5.40	3.83	3.29

Ulster	12.00	2.60	0.33	0.14
Sullivan	11.57	6.00	3.00	4.57
Jefferson	10.29	3.40	3.67	3.00
Chemung	10.14	7.60	3.17	2.43
Niagra	9.43	4.60	3.00	4.71
Steuben	9.36	5.60	4.50	3.00
Warren	9.36	4.40	3.50	1.29
Cayuga	9.21	3.60	1.83	2.29
Fulton	8.57	2.60	0.50	1.14
St. Lawrence	8.50	3.80	1.67	1.29
Ontario	7.93	2.20	1.50	3.71
Dutchess	7.86	2.80	0.67	1.29
Clinton	7.14	4.80	1.67	1.57
Washington	7.00	6.00	3.50	1.71
Franklin	5.79	4.00	4.00	5.57
Rockland	5.07	1.40	0.50	0.14
Cattaraugus	5.00	4.80	1.50	3.86
Madison	4.64	2.20	1.50	0.00
Columbia	4.29	2.40	0.50	1.86
Tompkins	4.29	2.60	1.00	1.14
Wayne	4.14	3.00	2.33	2.00
Genesee	3.64	1.80	1.67	1.43
Montgomery	3.36	2.00	0.50	2.00
Chenago	3.21	0.80	1.00	0.43
Otsego	3.21	0.60	0.00	0.00
Cortland	3.14	3.20	1.00	1.29
Delaware	2.86	0.60	0.67	1.71
Lewis	2.14	2.60	0.67	1.00
Seneca	2.07	1.60	0.67	0.29
Herkimer	1.93	1.00	0.17	1.71
Tioga	1.93	1.20	1.00	0.29
Wyoming	1.93	0.20	0.83	2.57
Allegany	1.79	2.40	1.33	0.29
Orleans	1.64	0.80	0.33	0.43
Essex	1.50	0.60	0.50	0.71
Livingston	1.00	0.40	0.00	0.86
Schuyler	1.00	2.80	1.17	0.00
Yates	0.93	0.00	0.00	0.14
Putnam	0.86	0.20	0.00	0.00
Hamilton	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.00
Schoharie	0.14	0.40	0.17	0.14
Greene	0.00	1.20	0.50	1.57

SOURCE: AUTHOR ANALYSIS OF [NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES JAIL POPULATION BY MONTH REPORTS, 2020-2023](#)

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AUTHOR NOTE

Bronwyn A. Hunter is the Senior Site Work Manager for the Probation and Parole Project at the Columbia Justice Lab. **Kendra Bradner** is Director of the Probation and Parole Project at the Columbia Justice Lab. **Emily NaPier Singletary** is Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of Unchained. The authors thank Madison Bogard, and Denise Taveras for their excellent research assistance, and many colleagues for insightful comments on earlier versions of this report. Thank you to the Less Is More Coalition, and especially to the leadership of Unchained and the Katal Center for Equity, Health and Justice, for their ongoing collaboration and support in this work. We also thank all of the people across the state who participated in the town hall events. Any remaining errors are purely our own.

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