



Californians United for a Responsible Budget

Oakland Office:
1322 Webster St # 210 Oakland, CA 94612
510-435-1176 (c)
510-839-7615 (f)

Los Angeles Office:
1137 E. Redondo Blvd. Inglewood, CA 90302
213-864-8931(c)
www.curbprisonspending.org

What California Could Do With \$500 Million, Instead of Build New Jails

California has spent over \$1.7 billion subsidizing unnecessary jail expansion since 2011 and now proposes to waste another \$500-\$1,200 million on even more jails. Such funds should be spent providing services and facilities that would increase the quality of life for all Californians. The state's non-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) agrees with CURB that the additional jail construction funding that sheriffs are pushing for should not move forward in this year's budget. The LAO recommends the proposal be put on hold until the state conducts an analysis of what space is needed and whether counties have "maximized alternatives to creating jail space".ⁱ

What might those alternatives to creating jail space look like? Some, such as bail reform, don't involve spending any money, but would significantly reduce the current jail population. Other alternatives would strengthen county infrastructure that deals with problems like homelessness and mental illness as social problems to be managed in humane and productive ways rather than current default policies that lead to the warehousing of the poor, homeless and mentally ill in jails and prisons.

As it turns out, the more humane alternatives are also less expensive. Here are five key investments California could make, each extrapolated to \$100 Million. Are these really lower priorities than more jails?

Build Supportive Housing for Women and their Children:

Rather than continue funding the creation of cages and prisons, spend money on women struggling to provide for themselves and their children.

- **Construction Costs:** \$100 million would provide housing for 583 single-parent families on the model of Phoenix Square, a facility used by Time for Change Foundation in San Bernardino, where \$1.2 million recently built 7 housing units. Or \$268 millionⁱⁱ could construct the planned San Diego Women's Detention Facility in Santee with 1,270 beds.
- **Operational Costs:** \$6,396 per year to house a mother with two children at the Phoenix Square, Time for Change Foundation vs. Cost to \$41,610ⁱⁱⁱ to incarcerate a person in a county jail.

Build Housing for Individuals Transitioning out of Homelessness:

Homelessness is a key predictor of future jail time, but it doesn't need to be if early interventions are provided, saving money and improving public safety.

- **Construction Costs:** \$100 million would build 448 units similar to San Francisco's recently completed Richardson Apartments (a 120-unit building built for \$26.8 million)^{iv} vs. a planned \$34 million to expand the Madera County Jail with 144 beds.^v
- **Operational Costs:** \$20,000 to house an individual in one of the Richardson-style apartments^{vi} vs. \$47,421 a year to house someone in state prison.^{vii}

Build Youth Centers:

Provide safe opportunities for youth development instead of funneling youth into the prison system.

- **Construction Costs:** \$100 million could build 70 youth centers that would serve over 25,000 California kids,^x or we could spend \$73.7 million to construct an additional 376-bed jail in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara County.^{xi}
- **Operational Costs:** \$10 Million would fund 2,500 Youth Jobs, staff 5 Youth Centers, and employ 50 full-time Community Intervention/Peacebuilders for one year^{xii} vs. \$17.3 million to operate the proposed Santa Maria Jail.^{xiii}

Build Re-Entry Programs:

Provide for re-entry programs, ensuring those leaving the prison system remain free of it.

- **Construction Costs:** \$100 million could build 15 vocational centers to provide re-entry services to over 5,000 Californians leaving prison every year,^{xiv} or San Francisco could spend \$190 million for a 384-bed jail, even though the county's jails are over 1/3 empty.^{xvi}
- **Operational Costs savings:** \$4,500 a year per participant to participate in a re-entry Program like Ready4Work vs. \$41,610^{xvii} to incarcerate a person in a County Jail.

Build Transitional Programs for the Mentally Ill:

Provide help and sanctuary for those afflicted with mental illness rather than funneling them into the prison system. Community care for mental illness is less expensive, more dignified, and treats problems before they escalate.

- **Construction Costs:** \$100 million could build 60 assisted living facilities serving over 5,400 patients,^{xviii} or San Bernardino County could build the \$121 million 1,368-bed Adelanto Detention Center expansion project.^{xix}
- **Operational Costs:** \$34,360 per year for a person at Project Link in New York^{xx} vs. \$41,610^{xxi} to incarcerate a person in a County Jail.

** Land costs are not a part of this estimate, only construction costs.*

More detailed information about proposed reforms is available by contacting CURB at 213-864-8931 or at info@curbprisonspending.org.

ⁱ <http://lao.ca.gov/reports/2014/budget/criminal-justice/criminal-justice-021914.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/FPCM/docs/AB-900-Construction-Update-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_show.asp?i=1061

^{iv} http://www.chpc.net/dnld/RichardsonApts_GREEN_021012_final.pdf

^v <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/FPCM/docs/AB-900-Construction-Update-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

^{vi} http://www.chpc.net/dnld/RichardsonApts_GREEN_021012_final.pdf

^{vii} http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/Price_of_Prison_updated_version_072512.pdf

^x <http://www.reedconstructiondata.com/rsmeans/models/community-center/>

^{xi} <http://www.missionandstate.org/features/140-million-north-county-jail-question/print/>

^{xii} <http://www.youth4justice.org/take-action/la-for-youth-1-campaign>

^{xiii} <http://www.missionandstate.org/features/140-million-north-county-jail-question/print/>

^{xiv} <http://www.reedconstructiondata.com/building-types/vocational-training/all/>

^{xvi} <http://www.sfgate.com/politics/article/S-F-supervisors-analyst-recommends-smaller-5167447.php>

^{xvii} http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_show.asp?i=1061

^{xviii} <http://www.reedconstructiondata.com/building-types/assisted-living/all/>

^{xix} http://www.bscc.ca.gov/download.php?f=/AB_900_Project_Status_Update_for_BSCC_web_062013.pdf

^{xx} http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=About_the_Issue&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=114145

^{xxi} http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_show.asp?i=1061