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Columbia Justice Lab is Encouraged by President Biden’s Budget Proposal Request for \$100 Million to Fund Community Alternatives to Incarcerating Youth

NEW YORK, N.Y. — In the budget proposal that the White House released last Friday, President Joe Biden requested \$796 million for juvenile justice programs and initiatives for fiscal year 2022, with \$100 million to incentivize states to implement community-based alternatives to youth incarceration. [Vidhya Ananthakrishnan](#), **director of the Youth Justice Initiatives at the Columbia Justice Lab**, issued the following statement in response to President Biden’s proposed budget:

“President Biden’s \$100 million budget request to invest in alternatives to youth incarceration recognizes the growing movement to close youth prisons and end the draconian and ineffective practice of incarcerating young people.”

“The research is clear: putting young people in handcuffs and locking them up creates [severe racial disparities](#) and trauma [without increasing public safety](#). In fact, incarcerating youth inflicts an enormous social and fiscal cost to all of us: with the government spending [\\$100,000 or more](#) per young person incarcerated in 2020 to be exact.”

“In state after state, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous youth are incarcerated at disproportionate rates, as high as 5 to 22 times the rate of white youth, exposing them to increased risk of sexual abuse, injury, and death, as well as increasing their chances of returning to the system as adults.”

“President Biden’s funding request for alternatives to youth incarceration marks an important step towards promoting humane solutions that support a young person’s growth into a productive member of society and keep us all safer. Congress should execute the [will of U.S. voters](#) by approving the White House’s request to incentivize more states and localities to pursue community initiatives to end youth incarceration.”

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[The Justice Lab at Columbia University](#) seeks to foundationally reconceive justice policy through actionable research, community-centered policy development, and the sustained engagement of diverse constituencies. We envision a community-centered future for justice in which healing and resiliency, rather than punishment and surveillance, are used to solve social problems often rooted in racial and economic inequity. Follow us on Twitter [@CUJusticeLab](#)