Vulnerable Population: Incarcerated Youth

The purpose of this document is to provide background information on Incarcerated Youth.

Defining Incarcerated

The **incarcerated population** is the population of inmates confined in a prison or a jail. This may also include halfway-houses, boot camps, weekend programs, and other facilities in which individuals are locked up overnight.[1]

The **juvenile justice system's** goal is to divert youth offenders from the punishments of criminal courts and encourage rehabilitation based on the individual juvenile's needs. This system differs from adult court as it focuses on the youth as a person in need of assistance.[2]

Juvenile delinquency is the violation of a law of the United States committed by a person prior to his eighteenth birthday which would have been a crime if committed by an adult. A person over eighteen but under twenty-one years of age is also accorded juvenile treatment if the act of juvenile delinquency occurred prior to his eighteenth birthday.[3]

Fast Facts on Incarcerated Youth

During a year's time span it can be estimated that 2.1 youth under the age of 18 are arrested in the US. Despite the declining rates, there are still approximately 1.7 million delinquency cases in juvenile courts annually.[4]

In 2014, 42% of petitioned status offense cases resulted in adjudication. In 56% of adjudicated status offense cases, formal probation was the most restrictive sanction ordered by the court.[5]

Youth who are detained or incarcerated may be subject to overcrowding, physical and sexual violence, trauma, risk of suicide, and death.[6]

Federal Laws Regarding Incarcerated Youth

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act

References

[1] Terms and Definitions
[2] The Juvenile Justice System
[3] Definition of Juvenile

[4] Youth Involved with the Juvenile Justice System

[5] Juvenile Court Statistics

[6] Juvenile Offenders and Victims Report