

Advancing Equitable Policy: Centering Youth of Color



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Black History

Understanding the rich history and contributions of Black individuals and communities is essential if we are to advance equitable policy.

From the resilience shown during the Civil Rights Movement to the cultural impact of the Harlem Renaissance, Black history is filled with moments of triumph and profound influence that is imperative for our future.

(NMAAHC, 2024)



Equitable Policy

Equitable policy refers to the development and implementation of rules and regulations that aim to reduce disparities by addressing the specific needs and challenges of marginalized groups. It ensures that all individuals have fair access to opportunities, resources, and protections, regardless of their background or identity.



Appreciating Black Culture

The purpose of this presentation is to to discuss strategies and policies that prioritize the needs and voices of youth of color.

Understanding Black culture is important because it helps us appreciate the rich contributions Black people have made to society, fosters respect and empathy, promotes social justice by addressing historical and ongoing inequalities, and enriches our lives by broadening our perspectives and enhancing creativity for the future.

(All Things Diverse, 2024)



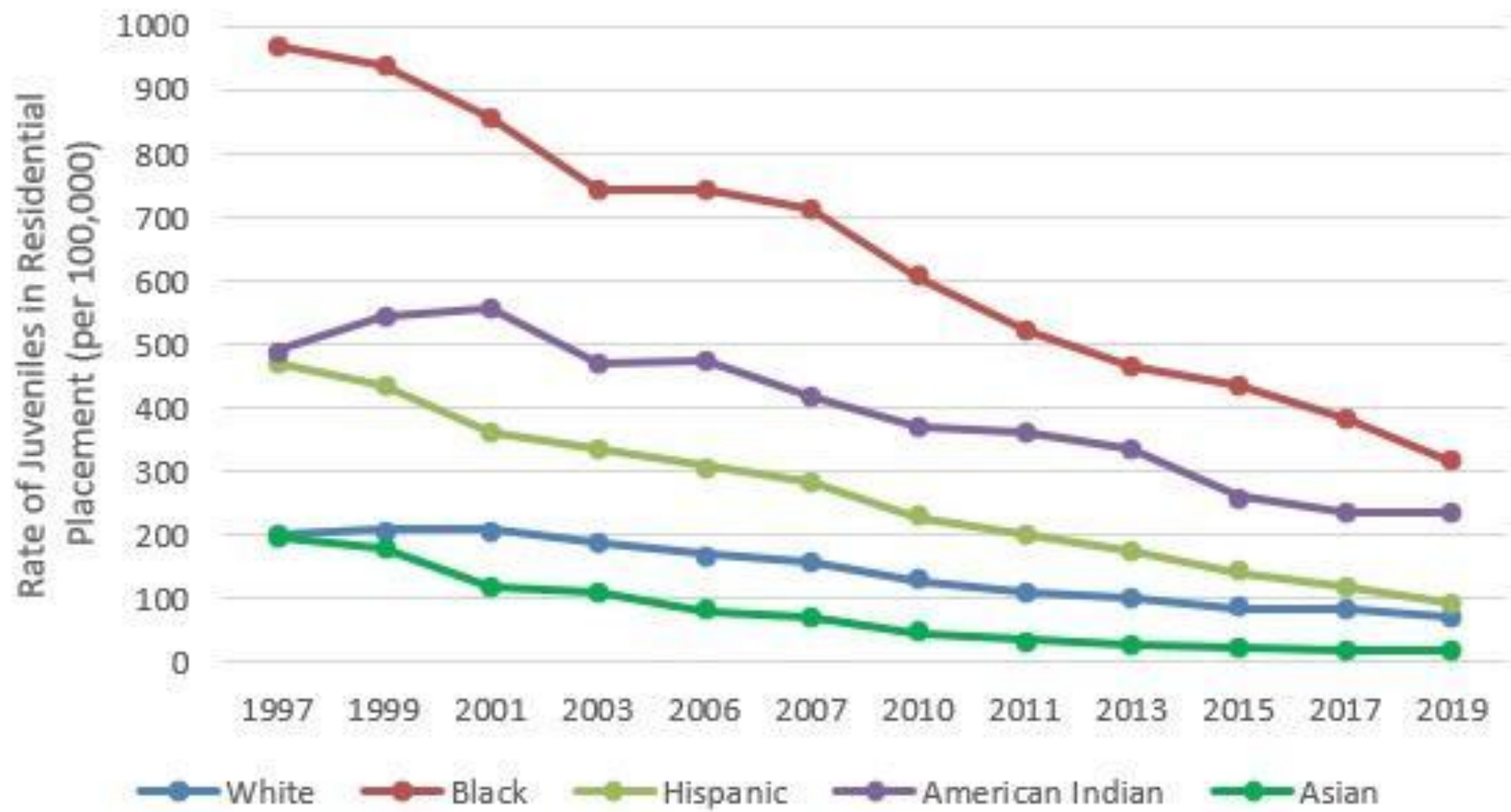
Why It Matters

"Black and Hispanic youth are more than twice as likely to live in poverty as their white peers, highlighting the urgent need for targeted policy interventions to address these deep-seated inequities."

— Children's Defense Fund, 2022

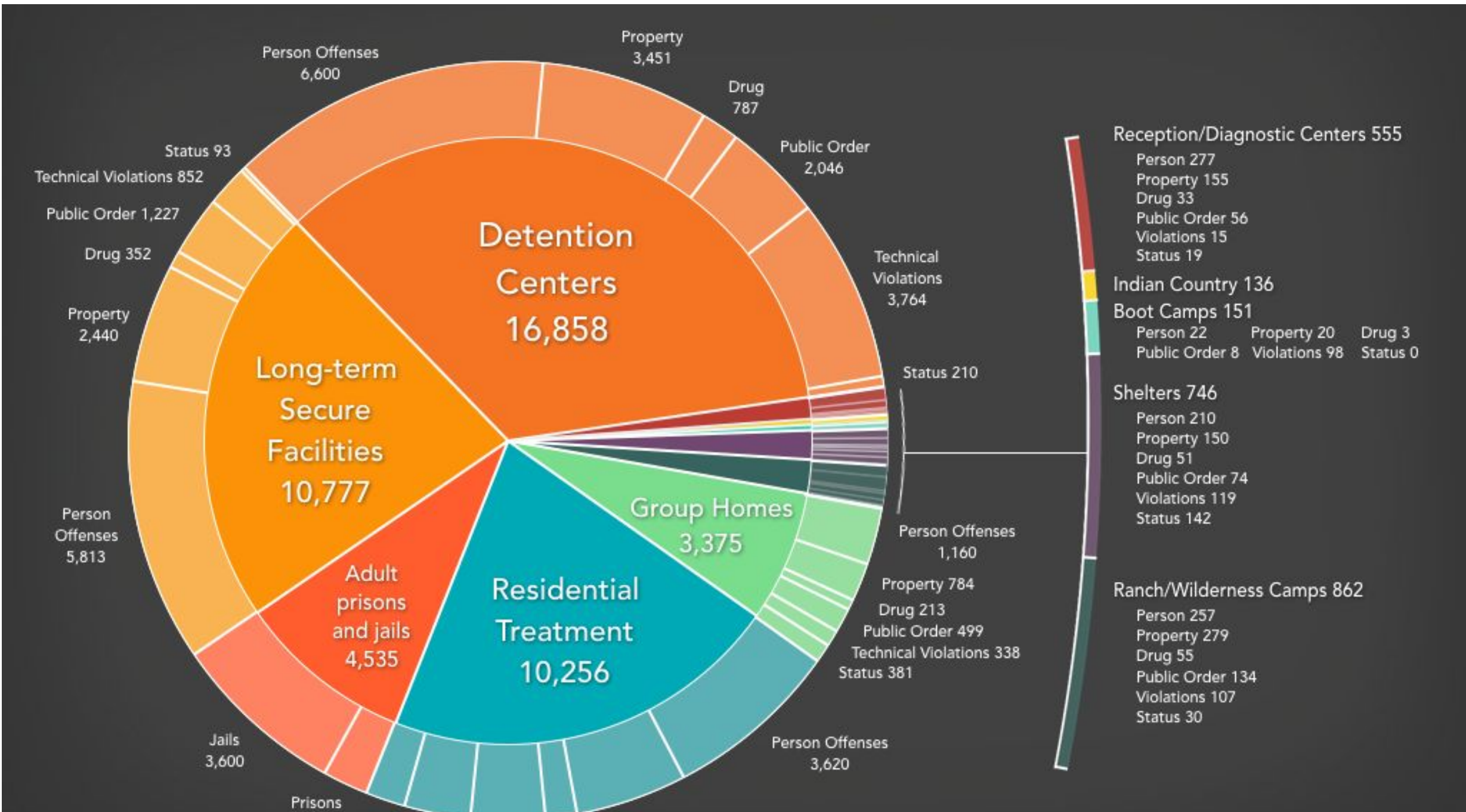
"By 2050, youth of color will make up the majority of the U.S. population under 18, underscoring the critical need to create policies that support their growth and success today."

— U.S. Census Bureau



Abuse to Prison Pipeline

- **84% of women who were incarcerated as girls have histories of child sexual abuse, 84% have histories of physical abuse, and 92% have histories of emotional abuse** (rights4girls.org)
- **80% of girls sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole have been physically abused and 77% of girls have been sexually abused (disproportionate rate of these women are people of color)**
- **Rates of sexual abuse are 4x higher for girls in the youth justice system than for boys, although all genders are affected by sexual violence on a regular and ongoing basis.**
- **“Dual system” or “crossover youth” are youth involved in both “injustice” and child welfare systems, which contribute to systemic inequities.**



Historical Marginalization



Key Challenges

Systemic Inequities:

Quality education, healthcare, safe housing, and equitable employment opportunities.



Barriers to Participation: Civic and political participation, including voter suppression, lack of representation, and social stigma.



Strategies for Policy Change

- **Speaking the Language of the Youth:** Encourages real relationships of trust, dignity, and respect.
- **Practice Inclusion of Youth / Community Engagement:** Involve youth of color and their communities in policy development.
- **Advocacy & Alliances:** Discuss the role of advocacy groups, partnerships, and coalitions in pushing for equitable policies.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Use data to identify needs and measure the impact of policies.

Recommendations

- SAFE HOUSING
- Support Funding Education for Marginalized Youth
- Reform Juvenile Justice System.
- Expand Physical & Mental Health Services for Youth.
- Strengthen Legal Protection & Law Enforcement Trainings
- Mandatory Trainings for healthcare & law enforcement
- Provide steps for how these policies can be effectively implemented and scaled.
- Public Awareness & Education Campaigns
- Promote Educational Programs in Schools
- Mentor and Accompany Youth
- Social Media Awareness
- Encourage Ongoing Community Trainings & Events



How to Amplify Youth & Black Culture?

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- Education
 - Participating in local events
 - Supporting Black & Brown Businesses
 - Visiting & Joining Cultural Groups
 - Celebrating Personal Heritages
 - Promoting Inclusivity & Respect
 - Staying Current and Informed with laws



Support

- Support initiatives that address structural inequities by pushing for better education, affordable housing, and accessible healthcare for at-risk youth.
- Advocate for programs that provide mentorship, job training, and mental health support with organizations.
- Work with local communities to create and sustain safe environments and resources for young people, reducing their harms.
- Participate in collaboration between government, non-profits, and communities tackling issues that affect our youth effectively.

Role of Stakeholders



Government: Discuss the role of local, state, and federal governments in creating and enforcing equitable policies.



Nonprofits & Community Organizations: Highlight how these groups can support policy change through advocacy, education, and direct services.



Youth Voices: Make deliberate and repeated efforts to include youth of color in policy discussions and leadership roles.



Conclusion

It is important to help our young people stay on track and provide them support they need to think broadly about their future. Build on what works – when it works, in those critical life-changing moments for the betterment of our societies and future.

- Adapted from Obama, 2014



Image credit: TerriasTreasure 2024

Thank you





Questions