

NO NEW JAILS



INFORMATION PACKET FOR STOPPING LA COUNTY'S \$3.7 BILLION JAIL CONSTRUCTION PLAN

CRITICAL RESISTANCE LOS ANGELES
A MEMBER ORGANIZATION OF THE JUSTICE LA COALITION

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What is the construction plan

Understanding the basics

LA County is currently advancing plans to build two new jails that would result in an approximately 4000 bed increase. The two jails are known by the County as Mira Loma and the Consolidated Correctional Treatment Facility. You will see these jails referred to respectively in this document as the Women’s Jail (Mira Loma) and the Mental Health Jail (CCTF).

The Women’s Jail at Mira Loma will cage 1,604 people categorized by the County as female. This includes cis women, gender nonconforming people, and transgender people. The County plans to build this jail in Lancaster, in an area known for Valley Fever – a dangerous infection that imprisoned people and others with compromised immune systems are particularly vulnerable to. Positioning the jail in Lancaster, up to 2 hours from downtown Los Angeles, will mean that loved ones, relatives, lawyers, and social workers will have extremely limited access to imprisoned people. Additionally, there is inadequate water supply and other resources in this area, requiring much of these operational resources to be imported.

The Mental Health Jail known as the Consolidated Correctional Treatment Facility will be constructed to replace Men’s Central Jail in downtown Los Angeles. This jail will cage 3,885 people, primarily those classified as male by the Sheriff with a lower number of people from the women’s jail. The jail will be comprised of beds to cage people as well as treatment facilities for mental health care system-wide. Across the LA County jail system, over 30% of people have mental health needs, however Justice LA, users of mental health services, and mental health providers continue to advocate that the isolation and violence of imprisonment deteriorates rather than supports a person’s mental health.

These jails would add to a County system that already includes Twin Towers Correctional Facility, a reopening of the Pitchess Detention Center East Facility in Castaic (closed since 2015) for caging prisoners during the construction of the Mental Health Jail and potentially in perpetuity after, and the conversion of the Century Regional Detention Center (current women’s jail in Lynwood) back to a men’s jail.

- Pitchess Detention Center East Facility – maximum capacity 1,830
- Century Regional Detention Center – maximum capacity 2,100
- Twin Towers Correctional Facility – maximum capacity 9,500
- Mental Health Jail at CCTF – maximum capacity 3,885
- Women’s Jail at Mira Loma – maximum capacity 1,604
- Probation
- Electronic Monitoring
- Other limited release

In L.A. County, 40 percent of female inmates are Latino while 32 percent are Black. The men’s facilities’ population is currently 50% Latino and 30% Black – over 80% people of color. While Black people make up less than 9% of L.A. County’s population, they are almost a third of the county jail population. The most impacted districts in L.A. County are Districts 1 & 2 represented in 2018 by Supervisors Hilda Solis and Mark Ridley-Thomas and encompassing the larger areas of East L.A. and South L.A.—neighborhoods that are predominantly low-income/working class, migrant, Black and Latino. More than half of those imprisoned have not been convicted of a crime and cannot afford bail.

Opposing Jail Construction

This proposal is being driven forward by the LA County Sheriff and the Board of Supervisors and continues to be opposed by a broad based resistance including formerly and currently imprisoned people and their loved ones, community based organizations, unions, faith based groups, and health advocates.

For the last 5 years LA County residents have mounted a solid resistance to this jail construction plan under the knowledge that caging people is fundamentally violent and inhumane. While the LA County jail system is well known for being notoriously over-capacity and having horrific conditions for imprisoned people, these coalitions argue for other solutions to these problems. Coalitions such as LA No More Jails and Justice LA have argued that instead of jail construction, LA County must invest in life-sustaining resources needed by Los Angelenos such as housing, education, and healthcare. The County must also implement alternatives to imprisonment such as transformative justice practices or pre-arrest diversion and access to resources and care that is voluntary not mandated. Lastly, in order to reduce imprisonment, the County must reduce policing and the criminalization of Black and brown communities.

Proposed timeline for construction

Date	What Happened:	What it means:
January 2012	Original application for Women’s Jail to the Board of State and Community Corrections	LA County applies for financing from the state of California for jail construction
October 2013	Board authorized the transfer of the site for a proposed women’s jail, being funded under Assembly Bill (AB) 900 grant, from the Pitchess Detention Center to the Mira Loma Detention Center	This effectively increases the jail capacity of the overall system because Pitchess as well as Mira Loma site can now be used for jailing in the LA county jail system.
May 6, 2014	County Board of Supervisors approved a two billion dollar jail plan.	The proposal includes a new facility to replace the current Men’s Central Jail, in downtown Los Angeles with over 3000 beds for individuals diagnosed with mental illness and a new women’s jail, with 1640 beds, in Lancaster, CA the site of the old Mira Loma Detention Center, 70 miles from the center of Los Angeles.
August 2015	State Public Works Board (SPWB) officially granted Establishment of the Mira Loma Project milestone to the County under the AB 900 Grant Program	County passes another phase of approval for use of the lease revenue bonds (financing) for construction
September 2015	Approved capacity of 3,885 beds for the replacement to Mens Central with the majority of the beds dedicated for mental health treatment and substance abuse detoxification needs	LA County moves forward with legitimizing jail construction and greater bed capacity through “carceral humanism” arguments
October 2016	EIR on Mira Loma women’s jail approved	The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Mira Loma site is approved, despite the fact that there are serious concerns with Valley Fever, soil toxicity, water, transport, and other environmental issues. This is a

		major hurdle for the county to get through for project approval and sets the wheels in motion for construction.
October 2017	Draft EIR for Mental Health Jail released	The EIR for Mental Health Jail (CCTF) in downtown Los Angeles is released in draft format for commentary. As this is being built on existing jail site land, there are few environmental issues that cannot be easily mitigated.
Second Quarter 2018	Design-Build companies pre-certified for Mental Health Jail and Women’s Jail (includes Layton and AECOM plus 2 others)	While EIR approval is pending, the LA Department of Public Works and CEO’s office move forward with pre-approving companies that will be certified to apply and access contracts for designing and constructing the jails.
July 2018	EIR on Mental Health Jail approved	Community advocates submitted hundreds of comments against the jail construction on environmental and human rights grounds. A letter signed by 30 organizations was also submitted to the county demanding they reject the EIR. County moves forward despite this.
PRESENT – October 2018		
January 2019	Anticipated voting on contracts with design-build companies. May be both jails or could just include Women’s Jail site	Board of Supervisors will receive “design-build” proposals from preapproved construction companies and within two weeks of receiving will vote on their approval. The proposals will give us a more clear idea of the structure of the jails, security and surveillance mechanisms, isolation aspects, lack of freedom of movement, etc. This is a final stage before actually breaking ground on the project
First Quarter 2019	Targeted construction of Women’s Jail	
Fourth Quarter 2019	Targeted construction of Mental Health Jail	
Fourth Quarter 2019	Possible transfer of people to Pitchess from Men’s Central	LA County plans to use 600 beds at the Pitchess/Castaic jail as temporary holding for some of the people in Men’s Central during construction
2022	Target completion of Mira Loma and transfer of imprisoned people	If the Women’s Jail at Mira Loma is completed, then LA County plans to retransition the current women’s jail in Lynwood back to use for the designated male population. Imprisoned people from Men’s Central will then be transferred there in order to facilitate further construction on the Mental Health Jail.
2025	Mental Health Jail cages/beds construction completed, Inmate Reception Center Completed	The first phase of planned construction for the Mental Health Jail is the cages/jail beds and the booking area (inmate reception

		center). This would enable the transfer of prisoners and the demolition of the jail bed areas at Men’s Central.
2025	Men’s Central Jail demolished and construction begins on the “program space” for Mental Health Jail	Once Men’s Central is demolished, this land will be used for further completion of the Mental Health Jail, specifically the areas that will be used for medical and mental health as well as other programming.
2028	CCTF Mental Health Jail program space completed and jail fully operational	At this point, the Mental Health Jail will be operating at full capacity with the areas for medical and mental health also open to people designated as female within the jail system
2028 onward	Use of jails	At this point, LA County would continue to operate the jail at Pitchess/Castaic which was reopened for use during construction, the Lynwood/Lancaster site for a men’s jail, the mental health jail/CCTF which will be for designated male and a smaller amount of designated female populations, the Women’s Jail at Mira Loma, and Twin Towers which is adjacent to the new mental health jail site.
We must stop this jail plan!		

Where’s the funding coming from? Realignment and state funding sources

In the late 90’s early 2000’s powerful statewide coalitions were formed to fight prison expansion and Prop 21 which would have expanded the prison population in by bringing more youth into the adult imprisonment system. While Prop 21 passed, and Delano II was constructed, movements were built that changed the political landscape in California in regards to prison construction as a whole and reliance on incarceration for the control of the underage youth populations.

The Plata and Coleman lawsuits against the state of California were waged to take on the issues of overcrowding and health conditions in the prison system. After winning these suits, the subsequent 2009 federal court ruling forced a population reduction plan in the state prison system in California. Between the growing successful movement against prison expansion and the Plata/Coleman resolution, the state pivoted away from prison growth and shifted emphasis of imprisonment onto local countiesⁱⁱ.

In response, California passed the Public Safety and Realignment Act (AB 109) in 2011. This bill shifted many people charged with low-level, non-violent crimes out of state and federal prisons and into county jurisdiction instead. The intent was to reduce the prison population and shift resources towards alternatives to imprisonment. However, this has primarily meant an increase to county jail funds and other local supervision programs run by the Sheriff’s departments and Probation departments.

AB 109 also provides a “dedicated and permanent” stream of funding to counties by two pathways. First, Vehicle Licensing fees establish a Local Revenue Fund 2011 to allocate revenues and necessary funds for the Public Safety and Realignment Act to counties. Additionally, a portion of state sales tax is allocated to counties for local public safety programs. Counties were given the authority to determine how exactly this funding should be distributed in order to achieve the goal of reducing prison populations and decreasing recidivism.

In 2012, the Board of State and Community Corrections was formed as an extension of the state prison Board of Corrections in order to include county imprisonment over its purview. The BSCC now oversees funding for county jails which has included five separate construction-based funding streamsⁱⁱⁱ.

What does this all mean? Over the last 10 years, the state of California has dumped \$10 billion into county jail construction which includes 53 out of 56 counties in the state either renovating, expanding, or building new jails.

Staffing, sheriffs, and operations cost:

In addition to LA County incurring decades of debt for the construction of these new jails, our organizations are severely concerned over the ongoing cost of operation of these jails, and that this will mean a redirection of County funds that could be used for life sustaining resources.

Despite community pressure and questioning of the Sheriff’s Department, there have been no clear plans or even approximations of the operational costs of the new jails. At community meetings, when asked about this question, Sheriff’s representatives have claimed that there will not be increased operational costs to the County of LA saying that staffing will remain at the same number. However, given that this represents approximately a 4000 bed expansion, given that there will be transportation of imprisoned people to and from Mira Loma, given that food and possibly water will have to be trucked in to Mira Loma at great cost, given that the plans for social workers in the mental health jail, we question whether that assertion is in any way realistic.

We need answers to the question of operational cost. The Board of Supervisors must publicly present a report on anticipated operational costs and vote on this report prior to final approval of jail construction.

Impact of imprisonment on LA county

For every dollar allocated to the combined Sheriff’s Department and Probation Department budgets, the Affordable Housing Program, which provides funding for the development and preservation of affordable housing, receives less than one cent.

The Department of Mental Health receives 52 cents for every dollar allocated to the combined Sheriff’s Department and Probation Department budgets, the Homeless and Housing Program receives one cent and the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services receives three cents.^{iv}

Liberals have positioned jail construction as a positive reform to try to create more humane or healing carceral conditions. LA County Board of Supervisors continue to push this narrative through arguing for a new mental health jail

and a new gender responsive jail. Community organizations opposed to the jail plan oppose the presumption, asserting that all jails are fundamentally harmful for people - and especially harmful for people with mental health needs - and serve to punish, repress, and enact violence against cisgendered and trans women and gender non-conforming people.

Specific impact on communities of color and working class/poor people

The presence of jails and the imprisonment of people are inherently harmful and detrimental to the health of those who are incarcerated – as well as their loved ones outside the jails. LA County currently operates as the largest jail system in the United States and for the past seven years has actively worked towards the construction of two new jails: the women’s jail at Mira Loma, and the mental health jail known as the Consolidated Correctional Treatment Facility. These new mental health jails will disproportionately affect communities of color and poor people, and will only serve to exacerbate mental health issues in communities that are most vulnerable to targeting and imprisonment.

In 2017, the average daily population of incarcerated people was 17,024, a 9% increase from the previous year.

Demographics and Statistics of the 2017 jail population

- 50% Latinx
- 30% African American
- 16% White
- Note: Other racial demographics and multiracial demographics unknown

42% of the jail population was of people who are awaiting trial. These are people who have not been convicted of anything, and many times, are held without bail. By the end of 2017, 37% of the jail population that was pre-trial was people who were being held without bail.

By the end of 2017, the total number of incarcerated people within the jail population who identified themselves as being homeless was 8,956 people. Of these people, 3,657 were Hispanic, 2,964 were African American, and 2,068 were White (the rest were identified as ‘other’).

Of the 7 jail across LA County, 6 of them are over 120% or more over capacity. The entire jail population in LA County is 142% over capacity as recommended by The Board of State and Community Corrections.^v

According to a report done by Dignity and Power Now in 2014, race continues to be a leading assessment and determinant if who is provided care and who is not, and what groups of people are being incarcerated. “Despite an alarming lack of data on mental health conditions of people from racial minorities held in LA County jails, increasing numbers of testimonies reveal that the provision of mental health services – where available – is impacted by the race of the prisoner, while lack of access to mental health services lead to incarceration.”^{vi}

The LA County jail system is notorious for its poor treatment and extreme abuse of incarcerated people. With the proposal of a women’s jail, it is imperative to notice the ways that women of color with mental health conditions are exceptionally vulnerable to medical neglect and violent abuse. “The neglect and abuse must be understood as emblematic of a national pandemic of abuse of incarcerated populations with mental health conditions in the US.”^{vii} These statistics illustrate the lack of mental health services, and how it is intersectional with the disproportionate mistreatment of communities of color and poor people.

Towards the Abolition of Imprisonment: Dismantling Jails

By Critical Resistance, 2018

Jails are inherently violent and destructive

Jails are an integral part of the prison industrial complex. Out of the 2.3 million people imprisoned in the US, nearly one-third are held in jails.

The prison industrial complex – together the systems of policing, imprisonment, courts, surveillance, and all state control – serves to repress and marginalize communities for the functioning of racial capitalism. The tools of the prison industrial complex may shift over time, however the functions of mass social, political, and economic control remain constant. It is for this reason that communities of color, poor people, homeless people, people with mental health needs, youth, and those prone to disrupt state order will be most targeted by policing, imprisonment, and surveillance. As long as jails continue to exist, their beds will continue to be filled. Cosmetic improvements to jails will not undo the function or target of jailing.

On what basis is the state pushing for jail expansion?

When we examine the history of jail and prison construction, dating back to its very beginning, we see how imprisonment can be framed as a reform. In fact, the first modern western prisons were a reform to systems of capital punishment in the 1800's. Up to present day - from the \$3.5 billion LA County jail plan, to replacing the seismically doomed SF Jail, to closing Rikers - bids to build new jails are often framed as reformist improvements to existing systems. In reality, these jail proposals waste valuable resources to build more cages that will by definition be unsafe, unhealthy, and unjust.

Conditions and Overcrowding – Prisoner advocates and imprisoned organizers have led important legal and organizing struggles to fight against the conditions of caging. Critical life-sustaining victories that have been won. Our movements must continue to ensure the daily survival of community members locked in jails and prisons, however replacing older cages with newer cages simply perpetuates the lifespan of the prison system. Each victory must be used as an opportunity to lower numbers of imprisoned people, reduce the power of the jail system, or build the capacity for resistance. A powerful movement to close the jails at Rikers continues to build momentum, however grassroots pressure is currently being met by proposed liberal reforms to reopen, expand, or build new borough based jails. In another example, in California, despite important gains made by fighting overcrowding of the prison system, over the last 10 years the State has succeeded in hijacking court orders to reduce the prison population by pumping \$10 billion into bolstering county jails for increased localized imprisonment. Currently 53 of 58 California counties are renovating, expanding, or building new jails.

Service Based and Accommodative Jails – Another major trend in jail construction and expansion has been governmental justification through claiming the need for improved mental health and health services or specialized jails for women, trans people, or youth. Liberal law makers have abandoned tough-on-crime punishment based rhetoric and pivoted towards improved rehabilitation and care. However, studies have shown that the isolation and forced control inherent to jailing only serves to worsen mental health conditions. Similarly *carceral feminism*, whereby lawmakers use protection and gendered needs as rationale for building women's jails, distracts from addressing the impacts of male supremacy in communities, including those that lead towards the imprisonment of women, trans, and gender nonconforming people.

What would it take to abolish jails?

Stop jail construction – Key to abolishing jails and prisons is the rejection of expenditures – both public or private – for jail construction, renovation, expansion, or re-opening which will only serve to prolong the lifespan of jails. Historically, new jail construction for replacement purposes has not resulted in old jails being put out of use but rather new construction serves to increase overall jailing capacity.

Create and invest in alternative means of addressing harm and accountability – When someone causes harm, injury, abuse, or mistreatment, that person or people must be responsible for their actions and work to make amends for their actions' impact. Accountability is often used as a driving force behind popular support for jailing, however accountability cannot be arbitrated by a punitive state force. Accountability is not about punishment, but requires that responsibilities between people or groups are addressed and the needs of all involved parties are met within a broader structure or system that may also need to change or adjust.

Stop criminalizing communities, reduce the power of policing and prosecution – Without a critical examination of the ways policing, prosecution, and the courts serve to imprison people, reforms to jails will never result in their abolition.

Build infrastructures for community care – Community care must not be connected to policing, courts, and imprisonment. Substantial investments must be made in social welfare, including substance use facilities, user-led and voluntary mental health care, housing, and other services necessary for the wellbeing of communities.

Why we have to look beyond just the jails

Abolishing jails means that we cannot replace them with other repressive tools. As grassroots pressure mounts for jail reform and the need to address mass incarceration, political reforms to control people by other means are growing. We must resist:

Increased use of electronic monitoring – Also known as GPS surveillance, use of these tools is climbing across the country. This surveillance increases the reach of imprisonment and policing by bringing it further into communities. People on electronic monitors are restricted in their movements, often have to pay fees for the monitor, and are used to mine data on their neighborhoods and communities. What's more, use of electronic monitoring is not being increased as contingent on jail closure, thus we end up with more people in physical cages and more people on community control.

Locked mental health institutions, substance use facilities, and jails disguised as housing – Any construction of housing and mental health care should be open facilities where people are free to leave and are treated with dignity — not criminalized, surveilled or isolated. People must be treated with dignity and respect as patients or residents. These must also be user-led and self-determined services that are trauma-informed and emphasize harm reduction and determining accountability through joint processes.

Restrictive, mandatory and punitive/court ordered programs – Municipalities must not operate service programs and facilities under the Sheriff's Department, courts, or other supervision. Policing agencies should not be positioned as gate-keepers to services. Instead, programs and facilities should be operated by community-based or public agencies that provide care in other contexts. People who receive care should have access without fearing criminalization. Staff should not be able to charge people with in-custody crimes.

WHAT ARE “GENDER RESPONSIVE” JAILS AND WHY ARE WE AGAINST THEM?

The term “gender responsive” is used by the jail and prison systems to describe different approaches to dealing with women as opposed to men. It is based on the belief that men and women have different life circumstances, experiences, and behaviors, and so women prisoners must be dealt with according to these differences.

Prison and jail officials have been working hard to try and portray themselves as being respectful to women’s needs by building new “gender responsive” jails and prisons. By using the language of feminism, they are trying to include more services in jails for women and make jails “nicer” and “friendlier.” Yet we know that this is just another excuse for them to expand their systems of control. *We know that there is nothing nice, friendly, or feminist about locking people up in cages.*

If the state actually cared about women as it claims, it would not be throwing them in cages and breaking up their families. Instead, it would be investing in community based clinics for domestic abuse, trauma recovery services, and access to resources that strengthen families and communities like housing, quality food, and healthcare.

We do not want cages that are “nicer” for women.

We do not want “better” prisons or jails.

We want healthy communities.

We want strong families.

We want freedom.



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Mental health jailing

Constructing a mental health jail is an oxymoron. Mental health jails do not serve the purpose of providing people with mental health services, treatment, and attention. Mental health jails serve the purpose of monitoring people, isolating people, harming people, and producing more traumas. People struggling with mental illness issues are disproportionately criminalized, come into police contact, experience traumatic violence and confinement, and cycle through a punitive system. These conditions exacerbate already critical health challenges and addiction issues that people face.

Jails are harmful to all people, and are no place to address health issues. The presence of police is inherently harmful to people, and should not be responders to mental health emergency situations. Imprisonment cannot be seen or executed as a response or solution to mental health needs. We must invest in quality, voluntary and accessible mental health services that can help people heal, rather than having police and jails continue to target, surveil, and harm our communities. There needs to be more integration of alternatives to incarceration and community oriented solutions.

What are the issues with trying to provide mental health care in a carceral setting?

By the end of 2017, the number of incarcerated people in LA County who required mental health treatment and services increased, however reportedly only 27% of the population was receiving some form of mental health treatment. Given that statistics show more than 70% of the jail population as having serious mental health or medical needs, LA County far from adequately addressing the mental health of imprisoned people.^{viii} Jailing and imprisonment will never succeed in addressing the health and mental health needs of imprisoned people because imprisonment itself reproducing, exacerbates, and expands those needs. The only way to begin to address community health and mental health needs is to work towards decarceration, decriminalization, and investments in care in community.

The increased need for “High Observation Housing” resulted in less beds being available, which also worsened the issue of overcrowding in the jails. This is another example of how jails are not the appropriate response or solution for treating people who have mental health issues. Jails and carceral settings were not designed or created to provide adequate health care service and treatment for incarcerated people. The typical amount of time as person spends in jail is 60 days, and these days are crucial when it comes to assessing and addressing the health needs of people inside the jails. Some people may have illnesses that need to be constantly monitored – a level of care that is highly improbable within a carceral setting. The health needs of incarcerated people are dependent on the number of days that people spend in the jail. The conditions of jails were not designed to provide care – they were designed to dehumanize and isolate people, leading to increasing mental health issues that primarily affect communities of color and poor people the most.

What kind of “care” is provided in the jails in LA County?

The treatment industrial complex is the movement of the for-profit prison industry into correctional medical care, medical health treatment, and ‘community corrections’. These community corrections result in the creation of ‘alternatives to incarceration’ such as electronic monitoring, parole programs, and reentry services. The treatment industrial complex allows companies to profit from the housing of people with mental illnesses inside prisons, the implementation of surveilling tactics that are rooted in disproportionately targeting communities of color and poor people the most.^{ix}

The treatment industrial complex has given the incentive for prisons to operate as medical facilities, rather than diverting the people with serious medical conditions to actually go to hospitals and treatment centers where health

professionals can be attentive to their needs. Inside the jails, incarcerated people are not provided with the same level of care that they would receive at a hospital or professional treatment center. Incarcerated people are often handcuffed while being examined, remain in their cells, and when imprisoned people are able to finally receive appointments, it is highly unlikely that they would physically be there due to transferring logistics. In addition, there are not nearly enough health care providers inside the jail who would be able to treat the incarcerated people on sight.^x

Earlier this year in 2018, LA County officials launched a program within the LA County Correctional Health Services, which would help recruit doctors and physicians for the jails, with an incentive that would cover \$120,000 worth of medical school debt for new hires.^{xi} This is an attempt by LA County to provide medical services within jails, when these facilities were not created with the intention of providing professional medical care. The launch of the program only reinforces LA County Jail being known as the largest mental health facility in the nation.

Lawsuits against LA County Jails

Earlier this year in 2018, LA County had to pay a \$5.9 Million settlement for an incarcerated man who was injured in his cell, and ultimately suffered brain damage.^{xii} This is one of the many cases that are often hidden from the public, about the medical neglect that is present within L.A. County's jail system, and carceral settings in general. Jail and health cannot co-exist in the same environment, place, or idea. The conditions of jailing and imprisoning people are directly detrimental to the health of a population. Carceral settings make it impossible to assess medical needs, address medical issues and emergencies, and provide adequate levels of care, attention and examinations that are necessary for people experiencing health illnesses.

What are the alternatives?

Currently, the Office of Diversion and Reentry have established programs and services that are intended to be alternatives to imprisonment. These services include: Misdemeanor Incompetent to Stand Trial-Community Base Restoration (MIST CBR), Office of Diversion and Reentry Housing program, Olive View Medical Center Inpatient Psychiatric unit-Diversion from Custody to Hospital Care, Sobering Centers, LA Jail Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution, and Clinical and Reentry Support Services.^{xiii} **While this effort represents an active start to addressing alternatives to imprisonment, much more must be done and these services must be provided in community, be voluntary services, and be user-led and self-determined.**

How we can fight

Coalitions fighting jails in Los Angeles

LA No More Jails: 2004-2018

The Los Angeles No More Jails Coalition was made up of a diverse group of organizations and community members working to stop jail expansion in L.A. County. The coalition was started in 2004 when the city of LA and the County were trying to secure more funding for increased policing and renovation of the Men's Central jail.

Mission

We believe a safer and stronger Los Angeles is possible when resources wasted on caging people are freed up to build the things that help communities thrive: education, supportive housing, mental and health care services, youth centers and more. We demand that Los Angeles County invest in community-based programs that help keep people out of prisons and jails and that minimize barriers to employment, education, and basic services that individuals need when they come home.

#NOMOREJAILS Ongoing Demands:

- No jail construction in LA County
- Reduce the number of people locked up in jails
- Redirect funding to community solutions

LA No More Jails was made up of the following organizations at different points of work: A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project, ACLU LA CHAPTER, Brown Berets Los Angeles, Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB), Community + County Health Empowerment (C+CHE), Critical Resistance Los Angeles, Dignity & Power Now, ENLACE, Fair Chance Project, Familia TQ:LM, Global Women's Strike, ICE Out of LA, Immigrant Youth Coalition, Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN), Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD), Los Angeles Queer Resistance (LAQR), National Lawyers Guild LA, Sojourner Truth Radio, Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, and Youth Justice Coalition.

Justice LA: 2018-Present

Mission

JusticeLA, in partnership with other organizations working with directly impacted communities, was formed to reclaim, reimagine and reinvest what L.A. County could do with the \$3.5 billion allocated to building two new jails.

The JusticeLA Coalition is standing together with one voice to issue our own call to action to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors that reimagines our collective future and launches the JusticeLA campaign, with our own flavor.

We're calling for a moratorium on jail construction and expansion in order to fully realize the promise of diversion and re-entry through a justice reinvestment strategy for Los Angeles. The Executive Committee of Justice LA includes: Californians United for Responsible Budget (CURB), Community Coalition, Critical Resistance

Los Angeles, Dignity and Power Now, JustLeadershipUSA, Revolve Impact, TransLatina Coalition, and Youth Justice Coalition.

In addition to these two coalitions and the organizations that are a part of them, many other organizations continue to fight imprisonment and policing in LA County. As such, the prison industrial complex is attacked from a variety of angles, such as ICE Out of LA which focuses on policing and imprisonment of migrant community members or Stop LAPD Spying which works to reduce LAPD surveillance and criminalization of poor and people of color communities.

Join Us in Fighting Jail Expansion in LA County

Since 2011, organizations and grassroots activists have been fighting the current LA County jail construction plans. Due in part to growing community pressure, LA County Board of Supervisors was not able to approve this jail plan until 2014.^{xiv}

The Board of Supervisors also committed in 2015 to the creation of an Office of Diversion and Reentry to divert about 1,000 people diagnosed with a mental illness from incarceration. There are also plans to create more housing options for people coming home from jail and prison. LA County must ensure that these programs actually contribute to direct reductions in the amount of people jailed in LA County.

One thing that could be setting the LA County Sheriff's Department up for their continued push towards building jails is the increased amount of money going towards hiring more deputies. In the 2016 budget alone there was \$99.2 million added to the Sheriff's Budget to address mental health needs in County jails, curb use of force in jails, continue the creation of diversion through in-custody treatment program, and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance in County jails. While this sounds good, most of the funding is going towards additional deputy positions resulting in hundreds of new positions for a total of 19,507 to be funded from the County General Fund. This is in the midst of people fighting for the minimum wage, lack of health care professionals, continued cases of police brutality, and our rising homeless population.

Fortunately, there is still time to stop the jails and we must not give up fighting against this construction. We must continue to build awareness and agitation about the jail construction plans in order to gain momentum in this fight. LA No More Jails has achieved some victories through community organizing, advocacy, and mobilizing over the last 10 years. Justice LA, with many of the same organizations participating, has continued to build on this work.

Fighting construction

The Justice LA coalition is building momentum against jail construction. In the next few months we will be working to move two key secondary targets in order to influence the Board of Supervisors against construction. We are currently organizing unions to take a stand against the proposed jail construction on the basis that the jail expansion and the waste of funding will impact union members as workers and working class people targeted for jailing. Examples of this include how home care workers may be impacted when people in their care (who need health and mental health support) are imprisoned rather than cared for in the community, or how construction workers will be forced to work in dangerously toxic conditions while constructing and renovating the Women's Jail site in Lancaster.

Additionally, Justice LA is building relationships with mental health and social workers in order to grow opposition to the idea of a Mental Health Jail. As we inform people from the mental health field about this aspect of LA's jail expansion plan, we're providing them with opportunities to plug into the jail fight. We're also in communication with social workers and therapists who are helping us articulate our opposition to the mental health jail on the grounds of professional ethics within the mental health field. The goal of this work is to build a base of mental health providers and users of mental health services who can influence the Supervisors against jail construction and delegitimize the notion of mental health care in a jail. Ultimately we will work to move these providers to refuse to provide care in jails and demand that ethical, voluntary, and user-led care be in community instead.

Bail reform and Pretrial Detention

Los Angeles has the opportunity to not only set the tone for what bail reform can look like in California, it has the opportunity to drastically reduce its jail population through comprehensive reform of its pre-trial system. Angelinos know that public safety means keeping families together, protecting the rights of the accused and giving them an opportunity at due process. What Los Angeles needs is a transformation of our pre-trial system that focuses on meeting the needs of our community -- investing in community-based alternatives to incarceration and divesting from a bloated and ever-expanding jail system. Not one more dollar should be wasted on jail expansion until Los Angeles ends the unfair practice of money bail and implements comprehensive pretrial reform.

Justice LA and other organizations are working to move LA County in a more just direction when it comes to pretrial detention by instituting reforms to the bail system that include the below.

- Protect the assumption of innocence and the right to freedom.
- End the use of money bail.
- Exclude the use of algorithm based risk assessment instruments. They exacerbate the structural bias that perpetuates mass incarceration.
- Prioritize supportive and needs driven interventions such as text message court date reminders, transportation, community based services etc.
- Use the least restrictive conditions possible that do not include surveillance.
- Support community-based pretrial services.
- Reallocate savings from pretrial incarceration to community based services.
- Implement pre-arrest, community-based diversion programs.
- Properly fund public defense offices.
- Stop all jail construction and develop a long-term decarceration plan.

Alternatives to imprisonment

In the last several years, California, Los Angeles voters and public officials have set forth a number of groundbreaking measures to provide resources to address homelessness, improve access to mental health and drug treatment, expand diversion and invest in diversion and re-entry. These efforts have included, but not been limited to: Direction by the LA County Board of Supervisors to study jail overcrowding, conditions and community needs through the creation of several commissions and studies – including but not limited to the Austin and Vera Institute Reports, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Jail Violence, and the creation of a Civilian Oversight Commission to oversee the Sheriffs Department and its jail operations, Probation Oversight and Youth Diversion. In addition, voter-approved measures, such as Proposition 47; Proposition 57; Proposition HHH and Measure H, provide the much-needed resources and services to

stop the cycle of incarceration and provide a roadmap for how Los Angeles can create safer and healthier neighborhoods without relying on incarceration. These developments mark an unprecedented opportunity to fund, implement, and optimize reforms that can, directly and indirectly, reduce jail bed usage. Additionally, these approved developments did not exist at the time in which the original jail plan was approved and call into a question the underlying assumptions of the plan: the assumption that the jail population will inevitably grow over time. Justice LA is currently working to get a motion passed by the Board of Supervisors that would halt the construction plan until a plan is created to optimize the decarcerating impact of these reforms.

Organizing against Environmental Impacts

LA No More Jails and Critical Resistance LA organized against the two jail construction plans on the grounds of their environmental impact. This has been shown to be a powerful organizing strategy for attempting to stall or defeat construction plans. From 2014-2016 we were able to win a couple of delays in this process and also drew much public attention to the issues of Valley Fever and toxicity of the jail, the fallacy of “gender responsive” jails, and the inhumanity of jail expansion. Despite mass organizing against both Environmental Impact Reports (EIR) for the jail construction which included hundreds of letters to the Board of Supervisors, expert testimonies against construction^{xv}, a report of testimonies from imprisoned people on the threat and impacts of Valley Fever^{xvi}, and a letter signed by over 30 community based organizations^{xvii}, LA County moved forward with approval of each EIR. Nevertheless, we continue to use the information gathered and community momentum against jail construction, especially by highlighting the threat of Valley Fever at the proposed Women’s Jail site at Mira Loma.

Join the fight against LA County Jail Construction

We know that the Sheriff’s Department will continue to push for the \$3.7 billion jail plan. And we also know with continued pressure, a changing criminal justice landscape, and the fact that these two jails would not be built and completed until 2025 years from now, there is still time. It is time to push county leaders to move further towards investing money to expand community-based mental health services, re-entry support, adult education and substance use rehabilitation programs, instead of more jails.

There are many ways to fight and there is a role for everyone. Join us and get involved. We will have actions coming up in the next couple months and we need all of LA County to oppose this construction.

Contact Critical Resistance: crla@criticalresistance.org, 510-444-0484 (national office)

- www.criticalresistance.org/no-jails-crla
- [facebook.com/CriticalResistanceLosAngeles](https://www.facebook.com/CriticalResistanceLosAngeles)
- twitter @crlosangeles
- [instagram.com/crlosangeles](https://www.instagram.com/crlosangeles)

Contact Justice LA: justicelanow@gmail.com

- [www. http://justicelanow.org](http://www.justicelanow.org)
- [facebook.com/JusticeLANow](https://www.facebook.com/JusticeLANow)
- twitter @JusticeLANow
- [instagram.com/JusticeLANow](https://www.instagram.com/JusticeLANow)

ⁱ <http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/108640.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2015/07/02/california-s-jail-building-boom>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.bscc.ca.gov/m_construction.php

^{iv} <http://justicelanow.org/publications/reclaim-reimagine-and-reinvest/>

^v Custody Division Year End Review 2017

http://www.la-sheriff.org/s2/static_content/info/documents/PMB_YER2017.pdf

^{vi} Impact of Disproportionate Incarceration of and Violence Against Black People with Mental Health Conditions In the World's Largest Jail System

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/USA/INT_CERD_NGO_USA_17740_E.pdf

^{vii} Breaking the Silence: Civil and Human Rights Violations Resulting From Medical Neglect and Abuse of Women of Color in Los Angeles County Jail

http://curbprisonspending.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/breaking_silence_report_2015.pdf

^{viii} Los Angeles Times 2018. "To Build or not to build, a new L.A. County jail"

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-jail-project-20180616-story.html>

^{ix} Treatment Industrial Complex: How For-Profit Corporations are Undermining Efforts to Treat and Rehabilitate Prisoners for Corporate Gain

https://www.afsc.org/sites/default/files/documents/TIC_report_online.pdf

^x Health Care Revamp At The L.A. County Jails

<https://californiahealthline.org/news/health-care-revamp-at-the-l-a-county-jails/>

^{xi} Los Angeles County Correctional Health Services – Mission Possible

<https://missionpossible.lacounty.gov/#homepage>

^{xii} L.A. County to pay \$5.9 million to man who was injured while in jail cell

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-garza-settlement-20180306-story.html>

^{xiii} Los Angeles County Health Services – Office of Diversion and Reentry

<http://dhs.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dhs/odr/>

^{xiv} <https://salsa3.salsalabs.com/o/51040/images/Why%20We%20Keep%20Fighting.pdf>

^{xv} <https://lanomorejails.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/deir-public-comment-letter.pdf>

^{xvi} <http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/VFtestimonies.pdf>

^{xvii} <http://criticalresistance.org/los-angeles-32-organizations-submit-letter-against-jail-construction/>