

## Responding to the Social Determinants Birthing Social Dysfunction Among Juveniles in Arkansas

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### Presentation Summary

According to [PrisonPolicy.Org](https://www.prisonpolicy.org), Arkansas incarcerates inmates at a rate of 912 per 100k; however, the national average in the United States is 614 per 100k.

The United States has been the leader in responding to the negative social determinants responsible for birthing violent behavior among juveniles and adults. However, by only reacting to the symptoms and not attempting to measurably address the foundational issues manifesting the dysfunction, America has seen its prison population swell from less than 300k in the early 1980s to over 2 million in the 21st Century.

Over two years of anecdotal research conducted by [1stand45.com](https://1stand45.com) have examined the life experiences of the students ordered to the Arkansas Juvenile Detention Facilities who were placed in the custody of the Department of Youth Service (DYS). The in-person surveys suggest a consistent track leading to the Pipeline for Prison for Juveniles in Arkansas.

Arkansas should be commended for its efforts in attempting to disrupt the Pipeline to Prison with intervention and diversion strategies such as Youth Advocacy Program (YAP) and Multi-systemic Therapy (MST). These support services attempt to address the specific needs of each child; however, meeting the often complex needs of youth and teenagers can be very challenging. The programs are often empowered when coordinated among several community organizations to promote prevention, intervention, and diversion methods and strategies. The teams often consist of schools, service providers, social services and law enforcement agencies.

Nevertheless, to address the social determinants responsible for Arkansas' Pipeline to Prison population among Juveniles, it is imperative **not** only attempt to extract students from the drowning rivers of life responsible for placing the offenders in state custody, but those charged with the responsibility of rehabilitating teenagers, it's essential to **also** attempt to identify the core social causes resulting in the Juveniles being thrown into the turbulent rivers of life.

The old adage, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure is evidenced in working with life challenges facing youth in the 21st century.