



# THE STATE OF BLACK GIRLS IN NEW YORK STATE

## ISSUE BRIEF II: ENDING GIRLS' IMPRISONMENT

A February 2021 Data Brief of Girls for Gender Equity

In 1877 the House of Refuge for Women opened in Hudson as New York’s first prison for women and one of the country’s [first](#) “gender-specific” penal institutions for women. In 1904, by [an act](#) of the legislature, the reformatory was replaced by the New York State Training School for Girls. [Documentation](#) over the following decades indicated [abuse](#) and [isolation practices](#), racial [segregation](#) and [discrimination](#) in placement, and [reform call](#) after [reform call](#). At the time of its closure in 1975, the state was spending [\\$20,000](#) per year per girl imprisoned there – what would amount to \$97,000 today.

In November 2020, [The Imprint](#) published “Sticker Shock,” detailing that New York’s youth prisons as operated by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) were the costliest in the nation. In 2019, there were 47 girls admitted to OCFS’ limited secure, non-secure, and secure facilities – Harriet Tubman, Taberg, Brentwood, and Columbia – with 50 girls reported incarcerated on December 31, 2019. Using rates reported by The Imprint, we calculated that [this cost of incarcerating girls in New York State reached almost \\$45 million in 2019:](#)

	Limited Secure	Non-Secure	Secure
<a href="#">Admissions in 2019</a>	33	11	3
<a href="#">In Custody 12/31/19</a>	30	12	8
<a href="#">Cost Per Day</a>	\$2,444	\$2,699	\$2,049
Total 2019 Cost	\$26.8 M	\$11.8 M	\$6.0 M
	\$44,574,266		



The Governor’s new 2022 [budget briefing book](#) notes that four youth prisons are “chronically underfilled,” proposing they be closed and young people be transferred to other youth prisons as a cost-saving measure. The Governor’s [Article VII legislation](#) stipulates [OCFS “is authorized to close” Brentwood, Red Hook, Columbia, and Goshen](#), and “shall be authorized to conduct any and all preparatory actions.” In a [statement](#), OCFS noted that youth placed at the facilities slated for closure would be “transferred to another OCFS facility or residential program as close to their home as possible.” This avoidance of specifically addressing the number of youth under state supervision comes as organizers across the country are demanding systems free young people, especially during the pandemic.

As part of GGE’s [2021 State of Black Girls](#), we are demanding the state divest from youth criminalization and control and invest in growing local community supports for youth and families that do not come with coercion or surveillance.