



American
Friends
Service
Committee

Our North Star

A vision for community safety
beyond prisons and policing

We all want to live in safe, healthy communities.
But prisons and policing do not keep us safe.

The U.S. annually spends about \$80 billion to imprison people—and another \$123 billion on policing. Yet we still have high rates of gun violence and sexual assault. Today over 1.8 million people are locked away, more per capita than any other country. And those arrested and incarcerated are disproportionately people of color and the poor. But what if we embraced community-based systems of accountability and supported local reentry programs instead?

It's time to end our reliance on criminalization and retribution in the U.S.—and adopt transformative alternatives rooted in healing and human dignity.

Art: Molly Costello



AFSC has identified **seven guideposts** on the path toward abolition.

Together, they light the way forward, serving as our “North Star.”

1 EMBRACE HEALING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Our system of justice should be community-driven, grounded in dignity and restoration.

2 INVEST IN PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY NEEDS.

Everyone should have access to health care, mental health services, food, housing, and all they need to thrive.

3 SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED REENTRY.

People returning from incarceration should be welcomed and set up to succeed.

4 DECARCERATE.

We need to reduce the number of people behind bars or under other forms of state control. That includes parole and probation.

5 END CRIMINALIZATION AND SURVEILLANCE.

Local, state, and federal policing policies should never target people based on age, race, religion, or origin.

6 END PRISON PROFITEERING.

No one should profit from human suffering. It’s time to divest from—and abolish—the private prison industry.

7 REPLACE POLICING WITH COMMUNITY-CENTERED SAFETY.

Communities are innovating to end their reliance on police—and succeeding. Let’s move money out of police budgets to fund new approaches to public safety.

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