Wisconsin’s Mass Incarceration of African American Males: Workforce Challenges for 2013

The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world.

Incarceration rates per 100,000 population

Wisconsin has the highest rate of African American men in state prison and local jails (1 in 8).

2010 Census estimates

Wisconsin’s incarceration rate for white men (1 in 81) is near the national average.
Over half of African American men in their 30s and half of men in their early 40s from Milwaukee County have been in state prison.

2/3 of the county’s incarcerated African American men came from 6 zip codes in the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee.

Half of the released prisoners are still in their 20s and 30s.

From 1990 to 2011 Wisconsin incarcerated 26,222 African American men from Milwaukee County in state correctional facilities.
The prison population in Wisconsin has more than tripled since 1990, fueled by:

- increased government funding for drug enforcement (rather than treatment) and prison construction
- three-strikes rules
- mandatory minimum sentence laws
- truth-in-sentencing replacing judicial discretion in setting punishments
- concentrated policing in minority communities
- state incarceration for minor probation and supervision violations

For more discussion, see www.eti.uwm.edu
Yearly prison admissions with drug-related offenses
(Some men have admissions in multiple years.)

- Whites
- Hispanics
- African Americans

40% of the black men are incarcerated with drug offenses.

1/3 of the black men have only non-violent offenses.

- Violent (not drug offender) 51%
- Violent (drug offender) 18%
- Non-violent only (drug offender) 22%
- Non-violent only (not drug offender) 9%
1. Mass incarceration of black males must stop. Alternatives from religious groups, Milwaukee County DA, and The Sentencing Project deserve serious consideration.

2. Diversion of technical violators of supervision rules.

3. Transitional jobs programs for released inmates and for offenders diverted from incarceration.


5. Driver’s license support and recovery.
27,800 African American men (non-offenders) in Milwaukee County have driver’s license problems.

6. Black male youth should be a top priority for employment training, job placement, and driver’s license programs.

7. State aids for free driver’s ed for Milwaukee teens.

More info at [www.eti.uwm.edu](http://www.eti.uwm.edu)

Lois Quinn, June 25, 2013