



AMERICAN JAIL ASSOCIATION  
1135 Professional Court  
Hagerstown, MD 21740-5853  
301-790-3930  
Fax 301-790-2941  
*aja.org*

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WORKING IN OUR NATION'S JAILS

## American Jail Association Resolution Justice Involved Women

- WHEREAS,** “The Overlooked: Women and Jails in an Era of Reform” report issued by Vera Institute of Justice (Aug 2016), showed that women in jail are the fastest growing correctional population in the country increasing 14-fold — from under 8,000 to nearly 110,000 — between 1970 and 2014, and now account for approximately half of all women behind bars in the United States, and
- WHEREAS,** justice involved women differ from their male counterparts in their personal histories and pathways to crime, and the vast majority (82 percent) of women are in jail for nonviolent offenses — mostly property and drug-related — and tend to have less extensive criminal histories than their male counterparts, and
- WHEREAS,** justice involved women have likely experienced physical and sexual abuse at a higher rate than males and more frequently experience physical and mental health issues that interfere with efforts in addressing risk of recidivism, and
- WHEREAS,** justice involved women bear greater responsibility for families and are often primary caregivers to their young children — nearly 80 percent of women in jails are mothers — and most are single parents, and
- WHEREAS,** gender inequalities persist and affects women of all ages, ethnicities, socioeconomic status and educational levels, and
- WHEREAS,** gender inequalities stagnate social progress and, when coupled with incarceration, can deepen the societal disadvantages women face and can follow them all of their lives, and
- WHEREAS,** a growing body of research suggests that the most effective way to intervene with women and girls in the criminal justice system is through gender responsive and trauma-informed approaches, and
- WHEREAS,** keeping women connected to their families and communities is a key aspect of providing services to incarcerated women, and consideration must therefore be given to the impact on the lives of their children when implementing effective in policy, program and action, and
- WHEREAS,** providing justice involved women with opportunities to improve their socioeconomic conditions maximizes the likelihood of success upon release. This being critical to all areas of a healthy society and is essential in promoting social development from reducing poverty, to promoting health, education, protection, and well-being, thereby creating better outcomes and safer communities.

**THEREFORE BE  
IT RESOLVED  
THAT**

The American Jail Association supports the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and

affirms commitment to pursue non-discrimination and gender equality in all and through all its endeavors.

The American Jail Association affirms that gender equality is a fundamental human right that fortifies the endeavor for sustainable social justice for all and is a necessary foundation for a prosperous and peaceful society.

There is a need for policy makers and correctional officials to recognize and respond to the specific and unique risks and needs of justice involved women and girls and must take into account the physical, behavioral, social, and cultural differences between males and females and adopt gender-responsive policies, programs, and practices.

The American Jail Association shall promote and disseminate good practices on gender equality and include gender perspective in all policy, program, and activities and develop guidelines and practical tools to implement gender mainstreaming.

The American Jail Association understands that collective responsibility and action are necessary to bring about significant change towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, and that the actions of member organizations largely determine what AJA can achieve.

Therefore, AJA will seek to build and maintain partnerships, alliances and coalitions that address public policy issues, working with relevant organizations and non-governmental organizations, sharing knowledge through women's networks and undertaking a study to identify gains and gaps.

The American Jail Association seeks to ensure full representation and participation of all members and will therefore, engage both men and women in its endeavors, with the understanding that men play a critical role in closing the gap.