

Looking Back. Leaping Forward.





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WHO WE ARE

The Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) is a diverse group of local justice, municipal, and community leaders who focus on increasing public safety and improving the justice process in East Baton Rouge Parish. CJCC membership is intentionally designed to include those who work within and are affected by the justice system.

WHAT WE DO

CJCC fosters and promotes collaboration, inclusion, and equity among justice, municipal, and community leaders in EBR Parish. Using data and community input, CJCC guides conversations on how to best develop effective ways to improve public safety and create a more efficient and equitable justice system.

WHYWE'RE HERE

Established as a 501(c)(3), the CJCC was created to address and transform the systemic issues in our criminal justice system. Through research, advocacy, and innovative initiatives, we fight every day to not only increase public safety and improve the criminal justice process, but also to enhance public trust in the criminal justice system as a whole.





About 6

"What we do together will always be greater than what we do alone."

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

2024 marks five years since the CJCC was established. We will be spending much of this report reflecting on our accomplishments over the last five years as well as highlighting some of our goals for the next five years.

Since its creation, the driving principle of the CJCC has been to foster cross-system dialogue and collaboration among law enforcement, justice, municipal, and community leaders. As a collective of individuals devoted to enhancing public safety, reducing crime, and ensuring that justice is impartial and effective for all residents, the CJCC continues to prioritize using data and evidence-based solutions to galvanize our collaborative foundation and guide our efforts.

As I reflect, I take pride in knowing that the CJCC has quickly established itself as the foremost facilitator on criminal justice-related issues and solutions in East Baton Rouge Parish. Through intentional and meaningful engagement with

justice system stakeholders, the CJCC has improved the justice system both for those working within it and those going through it.

I am also proud of the fact that since the CJCC was created, the daily jail population has been safely reduced by 40%; hundreds of incarcerated individuals have been connected to resources and treatment; defendants are receiving representation sooner; cases are being processed and resolved faster; and pretrial bond setting procedures are being redesigned in a more fair and just manner, all while increasing public safety.

Looking forward, the CJCC will continue to build upon the foundational pillars that have served our stakeholders and community these last five years. Additionally, we will work to expand our scope to include state-wide justice improvements and collaborative initiatives while also ensuring our sustainability by fostering new

and innovative relationships. These collective efforts will serve to provide a safer, more fair justice system and a thriving community.

What we do together will always be greater than what we do alone.

Sincerely,

Christopher Csonka, Executive Director of the CJCC



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Board Members & Partners

CJCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Judge Yvette M. Alexander, Board Chair Baton Rouge City Court

Jennifer Carwile, Vice Chair Community Member, Together Baton Rouge

Michael A. Mitchell, Board Secretary Trial Level Compliance Officer, Louisiana Public Defender Board

John Spain, Board Treasurer CEO & Founder of John Spain Consulting, LLC

Brandi Lawrence, Board At-Large Baton Rouge City Prosecutor

Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome

Mayor-President, City of Baton Rouge: East Baton Rouge Parish

Sheriff Sid Gautreaux

East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff

Judge Gail Grover

East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court

Chief Judge Donald R. Johnson

19th Judicial District Court

Hillar Moore

District Attorney, East Baton Rouge Parish

Warden Cathy Fontenot

East Baton Rouge Parish Prison

Chris Meyer

President & CEO of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation

Dianna Payton

CEO, YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge

Chief Thomas Morse

Baton Rouge Police Department

Kyla Romanach

Chief Public Defender, East Baton Rouge Parish Public Defender's Office

PARTNERS

City of Baton Rouge/Parish of East Baton Rouge

East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office

Baton Rouge Police Department

19th Judicial District Court

East Baton Rouge Parish Juvenile Court

East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney's Office

Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections

Office of the Public Defender for East Baton Rouge Parish

Baton Rouge City Court

Baton Rouge City Prosecutor's Office

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

YWCA of Greater Baton Rouge

Huey & Angelina Wilson Foundation

The Just Trust

CJCC STAFF

Christopher Csonka, Executive Director

Niles Haymer, Deputy Director

Stacci Tobin, Reentry Coordinator

Brianna Jeansonne, Project Assistant

THE DAVID O'QUIN PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION & RECOVERY PROGRAM

Lisa Burns, LCSW, Case Manager

Debbie Norwood, Resource Coordinator

Terika McGowan, Case Navigator

Shannon Powell, Case Navigator



"Our next chapter won't just be about sustaining our momentum, but instead focused on taking everything a step further."

LEARNING FROM THE PAST. LEAPING INTO THE FUTURE.

As we prepare to define the next era of our work as an organization, it's helpful to take a moment and reflect on where we've been, what we've accomplished, and how we got here. There's been a monumental shift taking place in Baton Rouge over the course of the last five years, and our organization's endeavors go hand-in-hand with that shift.

In the sections that follow, we'll highlight the achievements and examine the changes we've made since our inception. Using this foundation of experience and insight, we'll take a look at what we've learned and approach the next five years with a renewed sense of purpose and determination.

Our next chapter won't just be about sustaining our momentum, but instead focused on taking everything a step further. We're setting ambitious goals and putting strategies in place that will help us create truly meaningful impact in our fellow citizens' lives.

Together, we'll reflect on what's happened in order to redefine what's possible.



Learning From The Past

WHERE WE'VE BEEN

The CJCC was established in January 2019 through a collaborative endeavor with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the John D. & Catherine T. Macarthur Foundation, and the City-Parish Government. Since then, the CJCC has grown from one to eight full-time employees.

The CJCC Board of Directors was formalized and held its first board meeting in January 2020. Since then, the CJCC has worked to ensure all justice stakeholders are working collaboratively to share information and formulate ideas on how to best improve the justice system and increase public safety.

THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

In its first five years, the CJCC has implemented many new justice improvement initiatives, including:

The David O'Quin Pre-Trial Diversion & Recovery Program: Established in 2017, this program is a structured, rehabilitative alternative to incarceration for individuals with behavioral health challenges. The program has safely reduced incarceration rates and increased successful outcomes, highlighting the effectiveness of community support in addressing behavioral health challenges.

The Case Navigator Program: Through in-person evaluations, Case Navigators connect newly arrested individuals with social and behavioral health resources and create post-release plans. After release, Case Navigators ensure smooth transitions and provide ongoing support to individuals, reducing the likelihood of rearrest.

Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) Network:

This national network of communities and subject matter experts aims to safely reduce local inmate population and address racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system. East Baton Rouge Parish has been a member of the network since 2017.

The Rapid Case Assessment Team (RCAT):

RCAT provides a more meaningful and efficient process for those in the justice process by having both a prosecutor and public defender present for the defendant's first appearance in front of a judge. Results include quicker case processing and resolution, more opportunities for resource connection, and decreased jail population.

Lights On!: An initiative allowing law enforcement to issue vouchers for free repair in lieu of tickets for faulty auto lights. This innovative policing approach transforms routine traffic stops



into opportunities for positive interactions, promoting community engagement and increasing public safety.

CJCC Engage: Engage is a group of community and justice leaders committed to addressing local issues, improving community well-being, and advocating for racially ethical policies that increase public safety and justice.

Annual Community Safety and Justice Surveys:

These surveys help gauge the community's perspective on safety, comprehension of the justice process, and ideas for justice system improvements. Survey responses inform and drive the CJCC's ongoing refinement of annual and long-term strategic goals, ensuring alignment with community needs and concerns.

Specialty & Treatment Courts: The CJCC, in partnership with the 19th JDC, designed and implemented Veterans Treatment, Retail Theft, and Domestic Violence Intervention Courts to better serve individuals and address the underlying causes of their involvement in the justice system.

The Average Daily Population (ADP) at the Parish Prison has reduced by approximately 35% since 2017.

310

Lights On! Vehicle Repair Vouchers issued in lieu of citations

The CJCC has secured over \$4 million that have been directed toward improving public safety and the justice system.

Louisiana Public Safety Summit: The Summit serves as a statewide platform for policymakers, legal officials, law enforcement, and community stakeholders to hear from national and state subject matter experts regarding criminal justice trends and best practices. Attendees also engage in facilitated dialogues to inform decision—

Newly incarcerated individuals accepted resource connection through the Case Navigator Program

making, enhance public safety, and reduce crime in Louisiana.

Funding: Since 2018, The CJCC has secured over \$4 million that have been directed toward improving public safety and the justice system.

Leaping Into The Future

WHERE WE'RE GOING

Over the next five years, the CJCC is committed to advanced growth in several key areas, starting with the development of comprehensive statewide justice improvement initiatives. In close collaboration with our key stakeholders, government agencies, law enforcement, judiciary and various community partners, we aim to create even more systematic improvements under the banner of fairness, efficiency, and accountability across all sectors of the criminal justice system.

In addition to building and expanding upon these initiatives, the CJCC will focus on cultivating and nurturing meaningful partnerships with corporate and philanthropic entities. By leveraging combined resources, expertise, and networks, we are optimistic about our collective ability to amplify our impact and reach.

Through these initiatives and partnerships, the CJCC will be able to build a more robust and sustainable framework for driving positive change within the criminal justice landscape.

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Here are our primary focus areas and goals moving into the next five years:

Louisiana Public Safety Summit: Host annual summits to inform lawmakers, law enforcement, legal officials, and community members about the current state of public safety in Louisiana, presented by state and national subject matter experts.

Centralized Justice Database: Establish a database using collected information from every





criminal justice agency in East Baton Rouge Parish in order to illustrate the inner workings of the criminal justice system.

Statewide network of CJCCs: Create a statewide collaborative network with other CJCCs and similar organizations to promote peer discussion and coordinated justice improvement efforts.

Capitol Area Prisoner Reentry Initiative (CAPRI):

Lead the reentry efforts for the Capitol Area by creating a unified and comprehensive network of community-based organizations with the goal of providing an efficient and supportive pathway for individuals returning to society from incarceration.

New Adult and Juvenile Correctional Facilities:

Collaborate with justice, municipal, and community stakeholders to ensure new adult and juvenile correctional facilities are built by 2029.

Pretrial Risk Assessment (PRA) tool & Pretrial Services Department: Implement a validated PRA tool and fully functional Pretrial Services Department at the 19th JDC to provide comprehensive supervision and support for pretrial defendants.

Sustain Operations: Secure funding in order to sustain general operations and new endeavors.





Goals

Our strategic goals serve as the guiding force behind everything we do, helping our organization stay true to its mission and keeping us focused as we face the multi-faceted challenges of improving the criminal justice system. In their purest form, these goals are what guide the work of the CJCC Board of Directors and staff throughout the year.

Everything we do as an organization revolves around authenticity and transparency, from collecting reliable data and conducting community research to objective analysis and working with subject matter experts. Input comes from our board of directors and our staff — with sessions at our annual CJCC Board Retreat dedicated to identifying strategic goals — as well as results from our annual *Community Safety & Justice Survey*.



INCREASE PUBLIC SAFETY



PROCESS IMPROVEMENT



DATA COLLECTION



Continually looking for programs and partnerships that will reduce crime and increase public safety

Work with stakeholders to create a more efficient process for those going through the criminal justice system Work with individual justice stakeholders to create a comprehensive justice database that will be used to inform stakeholders and the public

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

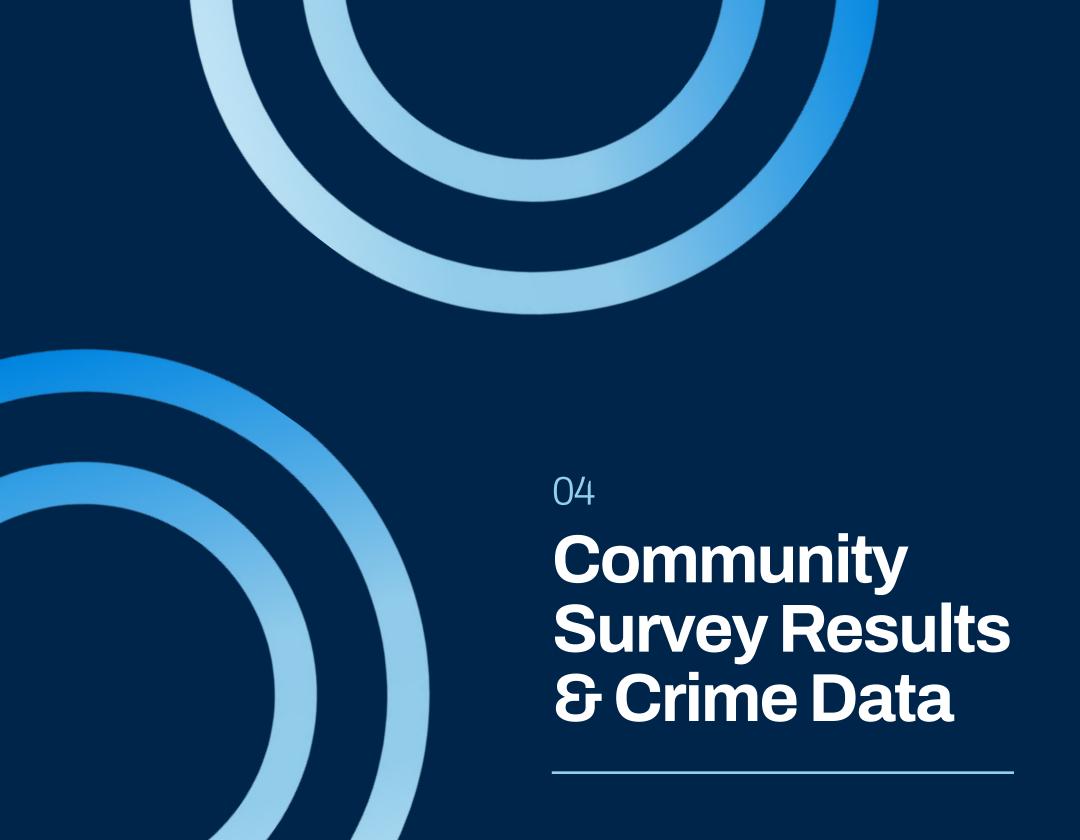


SUSTAINABILITY



To ensure we are being as inclusive as possible, we will continue outreach and education to community groups to gather their input and ideas of how to improve the justice system. This will also improve transparency and strengthen the trust between the community and justice leaders

Work to create and foster relationships with philanthropic, corporate, and government agencies to ensure the CJCC is able to grow, while continuing to implement new and innovative ideas that create a safer, fairer, more efficient justice system



"Building trust in policing and criminal justice requires transparency through data collection and public reporting by each justice agency."

LOOKING AT THE NUMBERS

Building trust in policing and criminal justice requires transparency through data collection and public reporting by each justice agency.

Collecting information like demographic data, number of arrests and incarceration, pretrial and bail information and release data is critical for improving transparency in the justice system.

The better data we have, the more informed decisions we can make about policy, which strengthens trust within the community.



Community Survey Results

This year's survey was conducted in East Baton Rouge Parish over a five-day period from late November to early December 2023.

Our team gathered data from 500 adults via landline and cell phone interviews across three areas of the parish — North/Northeast, the city center and South/Southeast — with 26% of the respondents representing underserved ZIP Codes.

Findings from the sample group are subject to a sampling error of ±4.9%, while subgroups have a sampling error of ±10%.

2023 SURVEY KEY TAKEAWAYS

As we reviewed the responses coming out of this year's survey, quite a few significant trends emerged. Here are some of the key takeaways we identified across various topics.

- Far fewer respondents consider their neighborhood safe compared to 2022 and 2020.
 As time living in Baton Rouge increases, so does the percentage of respondents who say their neighborhood is moving in the wrong direction.
- Men of Color and age 18–49 years olds are the most likely to have interacted with the police in the past 12 months.
- Positive ratings toward the Sheriff's Office and Police Department have dropped, but there has not been a corresponding increase in negative ratings. Rather, more voters are neutral or unable/unwilling to weigh in this year.
- 50% of respondents support keeping people charged with nonviolent crime in jail before trial, however only 16% believe a low-income person's inability to pay bail is a valid reason to remain in jail before trial.

- Support for tax initiatives for new correctional facilities is low and strong opposition, particularly for an adult facility, has increased.
- There is universal agreement that the justice system should be designed to meet the needs of all.
- Many respondents struggle to weigh in on other statements about the justice system in Baton Rouge and a plurality say they do not understand how the justice system works.
- The top priorities for CJCC are holding people accountable for crimes, building a meaningful partnership between justice agencies and community members, improving the way law enforcement engages with the community, and reducing racial disparities in the justice system.
- Specific programs and funding increases are rated as the lowest priorities for CJCC.

GENERAL OUTLOOK

Respondents rated the direction of their neighborhood consistently with 2022, which represented a notable drop in positive outlook from 2020. Overall, 24% of respondents say things in their neighborhood are going in the right direction, 33% say the wrong direction, and 42% volunteer that things are mixed.

The most pessimistic respondents are in the North/Northeast region, are Black, aged 50–64, upper/upper middle class, working/lower class, say their neighborhood is not safe, and are from crime victim households.

On the other hand, Other People of Color, middle class, living in a safe neighborhood, and no crime victim households are the most upbeat about the trajectory of their neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

Overall, 43% of respondents report their neighborhood is safe and 31% say it is unsafe, with 27% saying something else or choosing not to answer. Breaking those numbers down further, we see that 8% say their neighborhood is very safe, 35% say safe, 24% say unsafe, and 7% say very unsafe.

The drop from both 2020 and 2022 is striking — in 2020, 80% felt their neighborhood was safe, as did 79% last year. A notable portion of

this group moved to unsafe and a significant portion also moved to a mixed assessment or an unwillingness to weigh in.

City respondents feel the least safe and 50% of respondents in the South/Southeast say they feel safe. Respondents of color — particularly men — consider their neighborhoods far less safe than white respondents, particularly white women. Only 25% of working/lower class respondents say their neighborhood feels safe.

Time plays a factor here, too. The longer respondents have been in Baton Rouge, the less safe they believe their neighborhood to be.

When we look at police interaction, only 27% who have interacted with the police in the past year say their neighborhood is safe, compared to 47% who have not had police interaction.

61% of respondents from a household without a crime victim report that their neighborhood is safe, while 50% of respondents from a crime victim household say their neighborhood is not safe.

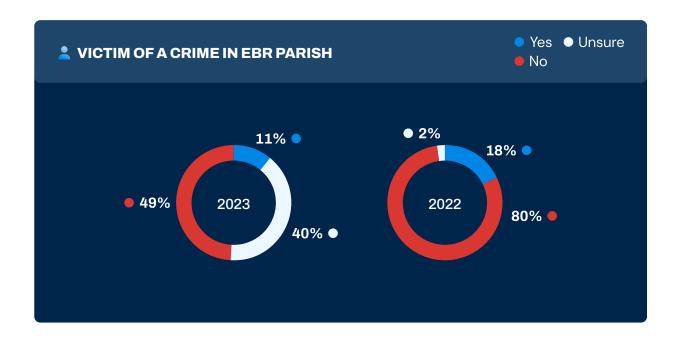


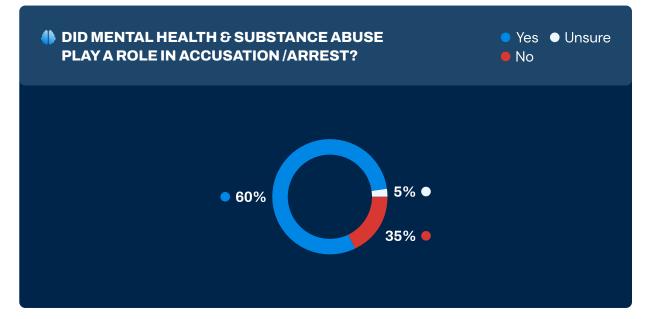
JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT

In 2023, fewer people claimed to be a victim of crime when compared to 2022. Only 5% of respondents say they or anyone in their immediate household have ever been accused of or arrested for a crime in East Baton Rouge Parish. 69% say they have not and 26% did not weigh in.

Crime victim households are more likely than average to be working/lower class and to have had police interaction in the past year. Looking at the difference in classes, 0% of upper/upper middle class respondents reported being from crime victim households, as opposed to 9% of working/lower class respondents. 43% of crime victim households are also accused/arrested households.

60% of the small number of respondents who are in a household where someone was accused of or arrested for a crime note that mental health or substance abuse issues played a role in the accusation or arrest. Only 33% said the same last year.



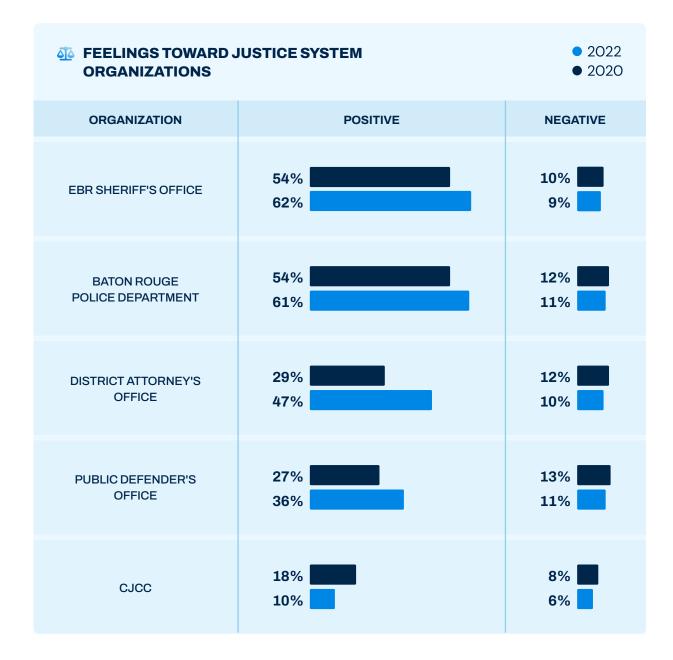


FEELINGS TOWARDS THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

While positive ratings toward the Sheriff's and Police Departments have dropped precipitously since last year, there has not been a corresponding increase in negative ratings. Instead, more respondents note that they know the name of the organization, but cannot offer a rating.

As has been the case in past years, the Sheriff's Department and Police Department received very similar ratings. This year, the Sheriff's Department garners a 33% positive – 9% negative assessment, and the Police Department gets a 33% – 11% score. Ratings for both the D.A.'s office and Public Defender's office are nearly identical to last year and to each other at 29% – 10% for the D.A. and 27% – 13% for the Public Defender.

CJCC continues to move up incrementally in its rating, just slightly outperforming last year at 20% positive – 7% negative. Recognition is relatively consistent with last year, after increasing between 2020 and 2022.



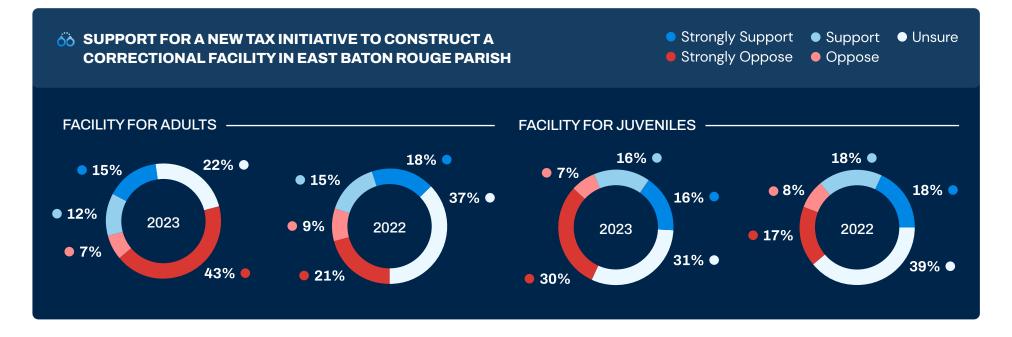
CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

The East Baton Rouge Parish Prison was built in 1965 and has not had significant renovations since 1985. Originally certified to house nearly 1,600 detainees, the Parish Prison is now capable of only housing just over 1,000 detainees due to deteriorating infrastructure and the inability to fill vacant staffing positions. Currently, the City-Parish pays to house 300–400 detainees at detention facilities outside of EBR.

Support for new tax initiatives to fund new correctional facilities dropped since last year, while strong opposition has increased significantly. Currently, 27% support a tax for an adult facility (15% strongly), 50% oppose it (43% strongly), and 22% are undecided. Last year, the vote was 33% for to 30% against, with 37% undecided.

The East Baton Rouge Juvenile Correctional Facility was built in 1948 and certified to house 52 juvenile detainees. Today, the facility can only house 33 juvenile detainees. With this limited space, Juvenile Judges are often forced to decide which accused juvenile offenders must be released from custody in order to house another who poses a greater risk to public safety.

Although both currently face an uphill battle, a new tax for a juvenile facility currently has a better chance of passing than one for an adult facility. 32% of respondents support the juvenile facility (16% strongly), 37% oppose it (30% strongly), and 31% are undecided. Last year, support was 36%, opposition was 25%, and 39% were undecided.



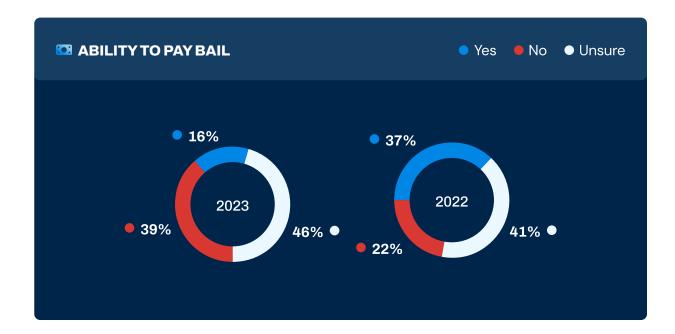
BAIL FINDINGS

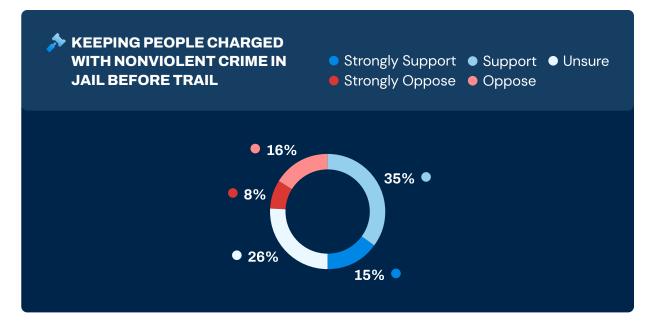
Half of all respondents in this year's survey support keeping people charged with nonviolent crime in jail before trial, while 24% oppose this practice, and 26% don't know. If we look more closely, we see that 15% support it strongly, 35% support it not strongly, 16% oppose it not strongly, and 8% oppose it strongly.

On the other hand, only 16% of respondents believe a low-income person's inability to pay is a valid reason to remain in jail before trial, compared to 37% who felt this way last year. This year, 39% say it is not a valid reason and 46% don't know.

Groups most likely to believe a low-income person's inability to pay is a valid reason to remain in jail are South/Southeast, white people, other people of color, people ages 65+, and those who live in a safe neighborhood.

Conversely, black people, ages 18–49, and responded "neighborhood not safe" are the least likely to believe this.





STATEMENTS ABOUT THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

As has been the case in the last two surveys, there is universal agreement that the justice system should be designed to meet the needs of all people. While few continue to disagree, there is more uncertainty this year as to whether or not it is more difficult for people in poverty to navigate the justice system. 51% agree, 12% disagree, and 37% are not sure. The groups most likely to agree are those in the South/ Southeast, white women, middle class, living in safe neighborhoods. Nearly 50% of working/ lower class respondents and those in unsafe neighborhoods are unsure.

A slim plurality of 42% of respondents agree there are too many incarcerated people in Louisiana, with 17% disagreeing and 41% responding that they don't know. Only white women and respondents in safe neighborhoods agree at notably higher levels.

Voters are more split now than in the past on believing the EBR justice system treats people fairly. 38% agree, 33% disagree, and 29% don't know. Groups who are most likely to agree the system is fair are in the South/Southeast, white men, ages 65+, middle class, living in safe neighborhoods and in a no crime victim household. On the other hand, men of color, upper/upper middle class, and those in crime victim households are the most likely to disagree.

On a similar question, 36% agree the EBR justice system treats people like them fairly and 38% disagree. In this case, there is strong disagreement from women of color, working/lower class, living in unsafe neighborhoods, experiencing police interaction, and who are from crime victim households.

Only 34% of respondents agree that they understand how the EBR justice system works. 43% disagree. 23% don't know. This represents a shift from last year, when 54%

agreed, 29% disagreed, and 17% didn't know. Only white women living in safe neighborhoods, and those who answer the crime victim question are more likely to say they understand how the justice system works.

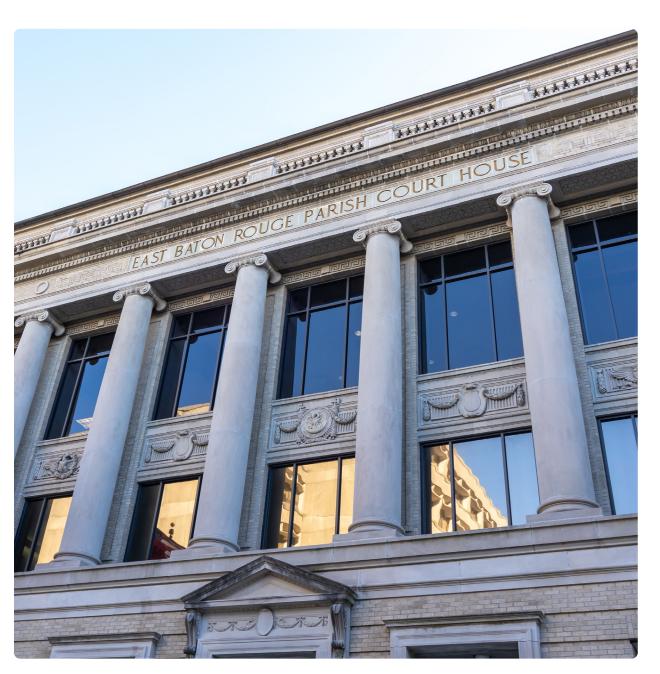
There was a drop of 25 points in agreement that better paid police will help reduce crime, with 31% agreeing, 34% disagreeing, and 35% saying they don't know. Only among safe neighborhood respondents and crime victim households do a majority agree.

51%

51% of respondents agree that it is more difficult for people in poverty to navigate the justice system.

34%

Only 34% of respondents agree that they understand how the EBR justice system works.



TOP PRIORITIES FOR THE CJCC

On a scale from 1 to 10, respondents were asked to rank priorities for the CJCC. Below are the priorities listed in descending order.

9.56

Holding people accountable for crimes

9.27

Building meaningful partnership between justice agencies and community members

9.14

Improving law enforcement engagement

8.80

Reducing racial disparities in the justice system

2023 Crime Data

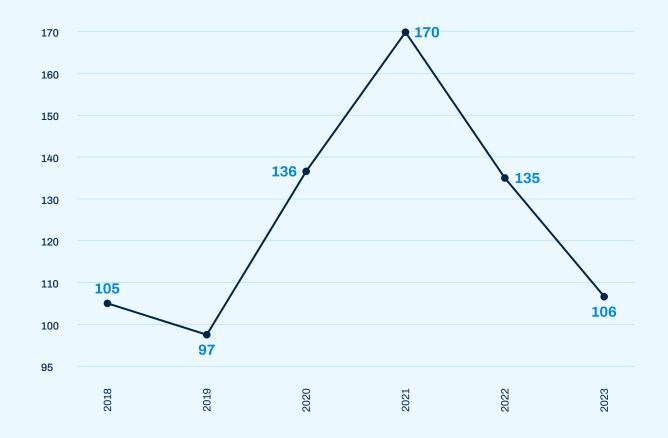
Despite claims that crime is at an all-time high, the graph on the following page shows that the current Total Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) rate for the U.S. is still significantly lower than it was in the 1980s.

HOMICIDES

Below are the number of homicides in East Baton Rouge Parish since 2018.

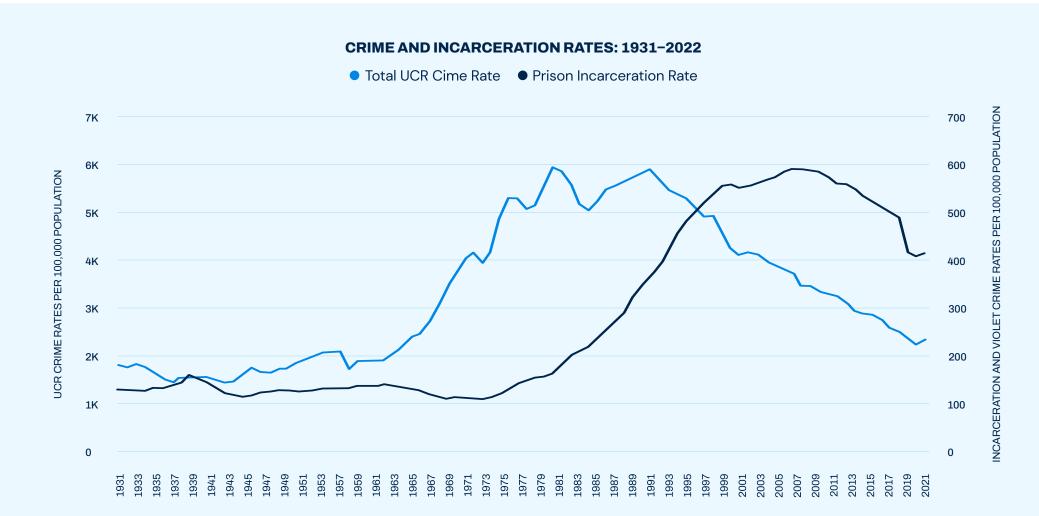
Source: www.ebrcoroner.com

HOMICIDES BY YEAR IN EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH



VIOLENT CRIME

Violent crime rates spiked across the U.S. in 2021 due to COVID. However, we can see here that violent crimes have steadily declined nationally and locally since 2021.





"Your support is instrumental in fostering and galvanizing collaboration, inclusion, and equity within the criminal justice system."

HOW YOU CAN HELP CJCC ACHIEVE ITS GOALS

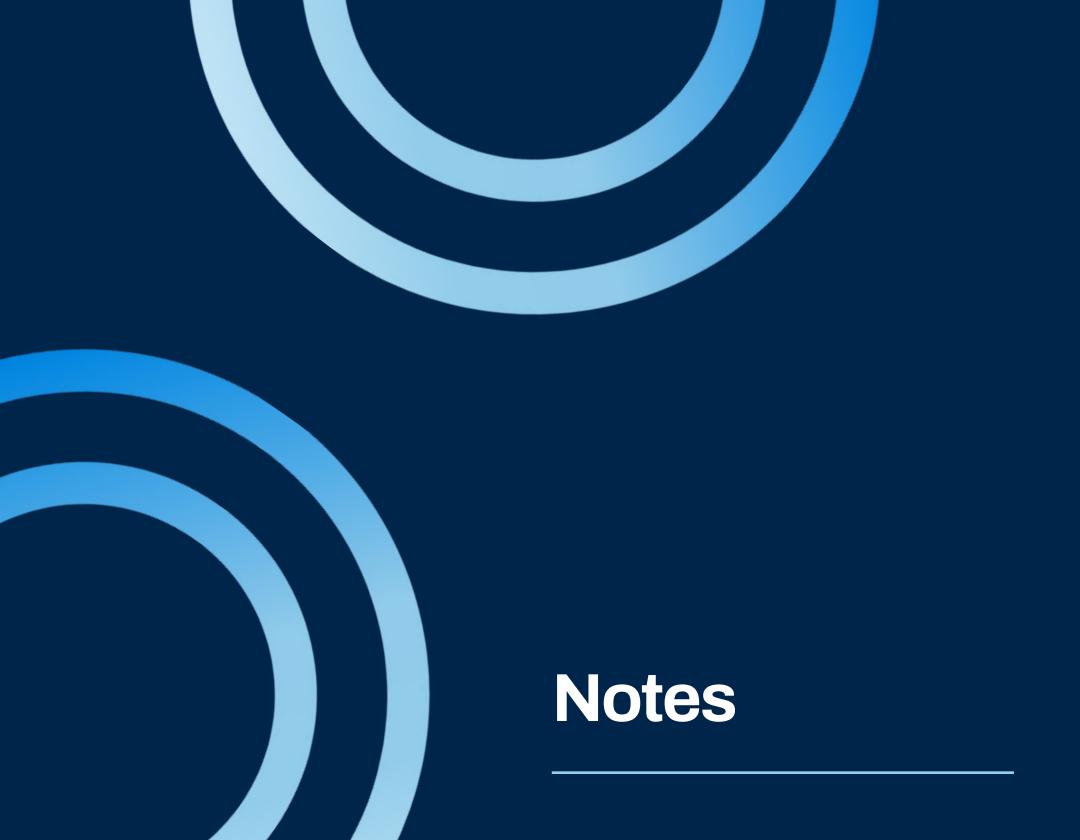
The CJCC's vision and initiatives for the next five years are ambitious, requiring sustained financial support to drive positive change in the criminal justice landscape. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the CJCC relies on funding to implement and sustain initiatives, as well as sustain general operations. Contributions from individuals as well as philanthropic, corporate, and government agencies are vital to the success of our mission.

Your support is instrumental in fostering and galvanizing collaboration, inclusion, and equity within the criminal justice system, ultimately leading to increased public safety and a justice system that is fair and equitable.

Visit our webpage, ebrcjcc.org, to learn more about the CJCC and how you can help us achieve our goals. You can also follow our social media accounts for local insights, news, and updates on our progress.







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