

# FACT SHEET



New York Initiative for  
**Children of Incarcerated Parents**  
*A special project of Osborne's Policy Center*

## SUPPORT PROXIMITY

**Proximity matters.** Distance and the burdensome cost of visiting remote prisons make it difficult for children to consistently visit their incarcerated parents, if at all.<sup>i</sup> Visiting is associated with improved well-being for children and incarcerated parents, lower recidivism rates, and successful reentry and family reunification. Yet, the majority of incarcerated individuals in New York prisons are over 100 miles away from their families in facilities that are inaccessible by public transportation.<sup>ii</sup> **Incorporating proximity into the prison assignment determination is a win for children, parents, correctional environments, and public safety.**

### Visiting Can Support Children's Wellbeing

On any given day, more than 105,000 children in New York have an incarcerated parent, which is recognized as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) that increases children's risk for developing negative long-term health and mental health outcomes. Without support, children with incarcerated parents are more likely to experience poverty, instability, homelessness, learning disabilities, and some may engage in behaviors that lead to justice-involvement. Visiting can mitigate many of these risks and supports children in the following ways:

- Decreases emotional distress and problem behaviors.
- Allows for important conversations that can reduce a child's feelings of guilt, responsibility, and concern for their parents, and provides a forum for children to process the trauma surrounding the separation.
- Improves relations between parents and children upon a parent's return home.

### Visiting Lowers Recidivism and Supports Rehabilitation

Visiting supports the rehabilitation of parents who are incarcerated and promotes positive behavior during a period of incarceration.<sup>iii</sup> Increasing success upon reentry benefits the communities to which parents return and supports their children's wellbeing and future outcomes. Visiting is associated with the following post-release outcomes:

- *Lower recidivism rates.* In one study, incarcerated persons who received visits were 13% less likely to commit a felony and 25% less likely to return to prison due to a parole violation.<sup>iv</sup>
- *Supports successful re-entry.* Fathers who received visits are more likely to obtain employment and have stronger attachments to their children upon release.<sup>v</sup>

### Proximity Bills for Parents in New York State Prisons

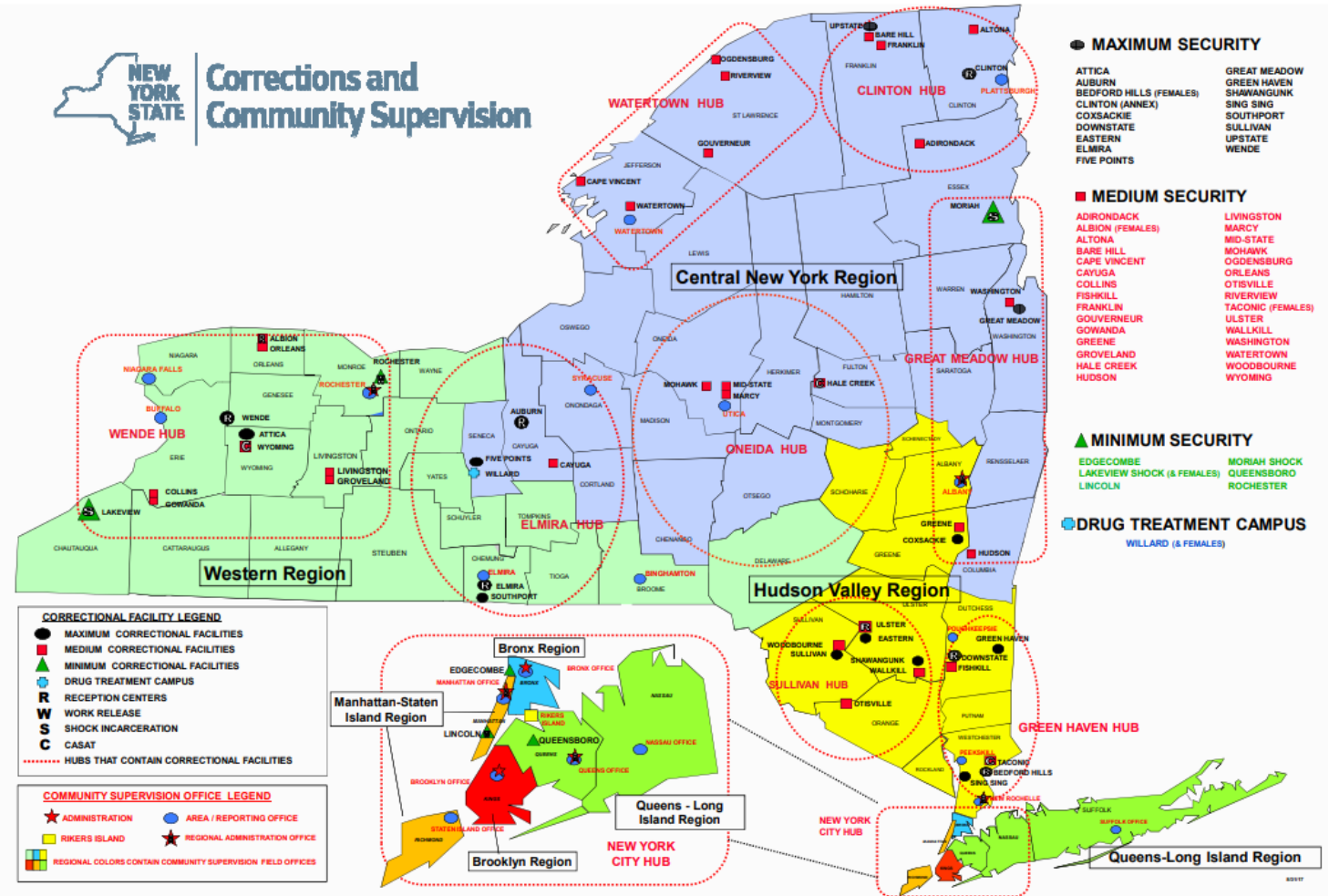
- **S3727/A1272** (Montgomery/Rozic) Requires DOCCS to place incarcerated parents at facilities of their designated security level that are closest to their children.
- **S7757A/A10204** (Rivera/Weprip) Three-year Proximity Pilot placing 100 incarcerated parents at the facility of their designated security level that is closest to their children.
- **S5701A/A7527** (Hamilton/Crespo) Three-year Proximity Pilot for 100-200 incarcerated mothers.



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Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights #5  
*"I have the right to speak with, see, and touch my parent."*

# There are 54 prisons in New York State



New York has three women’s prisons and two of these are medium security facilities: Albion Correctional is in the Western Region in Orleans County near Rochester and Taconic Correctional is in the Hudson Valley Region in Westchester County near NYC. New York has 51 prisons for men.

<sup>i</sup> New Jersey, Florida, California, and Hawaii have laws or regulations that require Corrections to consider proximity to family.

<sup>ii</sup> 58% of incarcerated individuals from the NYC metropolitan area are placed in prisons over 200 miles from their homes and 70% of incarcerated individuals from rural areas are placed in prisons over 100 miles from their homes. DiZerega, M., Asif Uddin, F, & Tobias, L. (2012). *New York State prison visiting bus: A public safety resource that benefits children and families*. New York, New York: Vera Institute of Justice.

<sup>iii</sup> Mohr, G. C. *An Overview of Research Findings in the Visitation, Offender Behavior Connection*. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, 2012.

<sup>iv</sup> Duwe, G. & Clark, V. (2013). *Blessed Be the Social Tie That Binds: The Effects of Prison Visitation on Offender Recidivism*. Criminal Justice Policy Review.

<sup>v</sup> Visher et al. (2004). *Prisoners' Experiences Returning Home*. Washington DC: Urban Institute; LaVigne et al. (2005). *Examining the effect of incarceration and in-prison family contact on prisoners' family relationships*. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 21. 314 – 35.