

## **Help Us #CloseRikers**

*Join Trinity Church Wall Street and allies as we move to close the jails on Rikers Island. Below are talking points supporting this cause. Please share your testimony with friends, faith communities, social followers, and at the upcoming public hearings, using some of these points in your own words. Learn more at [trinitywallstreet.org/rikers](http://trinitywallstreet.org/rikers).*

- We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to close Rikers. Many who call for delay understand that it would squander the opportunity the city has to move towards closing Rikers. We must not delay. We must close Rikers, now.
- Rikers' isolation and distance from the rest of the city makes it difficult for families to visit and for nonprofits and service providers to provide rehabilitative services. It also creates a penal colony-like atmosphere where inhumane treatment, violence, and corruption have thrived.
- If a member of our church / synagogue / mosque was arrested, we would want to visit them in our own borough. Traveling to Rikers Island for a visitation often takes an entire day. Our loved ones and community members need access to family, friends, and services in order to live full and wholesome lives.
- The plans for borough-based jails are structured to focus on re-entry, rehabilitation, and safety, creating a safer, less violent environment for those who are held there and those who work there.
- Employment, education, healthcare, and other social service providers will have significantly more access to people in jail if they are located in the boroughs, which means smoother reintegration after release.
- This is a part of a plan to shrink the New York City jail system. Closing Rikers will reduce the number of jails from 12 to four. It will help reduce the number of people in jail from 8,000 to 4,000. It will cut the number of jail beds in New York City from 13,000 to 5,750. Together with our allies, we are advocating for additional criminal justice reforms that will reduce these numbers even further.
- Some people who live near the proposed facilities are concerned about the impact on their neighborhoods. These concerns, which include traffic, safety, and size, are understandable and must be thoroughly assessed, and that is what is happening in the land-use process that is now underway.
- Every day that Rikers is open is another day wasted and more lives damaged. Rikers harms the people who are incarcerated there, the staff who work there, and associated families and friends.
- There is no reasonable prospect for closing Rikers that does not include building smaller borough-based facilities. Rikers cannot be fixed because of its isolation. If Rikers remains open, it will be business as usual in this violent and inhumane facility.
- New York City should be a leader in modern criminal justice reform. If this vision of a local, smaller criminal justice system becomes a reality, New York City would become a national model for transformative justice reform.
- There is no perfect solution, and we will not wait until we have a perfect Mayor or perfect society to close Rikers. We are trying to aim for the best solution right now. We will continue our roles as organizers, people of faith, and advocates on the ground to see that New York City follows through on its commitments and continues to move towards decarceration, community investment, and racial justice.