



Bringing WashU students into conversations on criminal legal reform

IN FOCUS THIS MONTH:

CLOSE THE WORKHOUSE

The Close the Workhouse campaign calls for the immediate closure of St. Louis' Medium Security Institution (MSI), commonly referred to as the Workhouse. The City of St. Louis condemns hundreds of presumptively innocent people to suffer in inhumane conditions at the Workhouse. St. Louis City's MSI infamously inherited the name "the Workhouse" as detainees in earlier versions of the jail were sentenced to forced labor when they could not afford to pay their fines. The vast majority of people held at the Workhouse are awaiting trial and remain caged and criminalized because of their inability to pay bail due to poverty. These people face horrific conditions in the jail, including extreme heat and cold, abysmal medical care, rats and cockroach infestations, and mold.¹

intersectionality matters

In 2019, the number of black folks detained in the Workhouse was 8x that of white folks, despite only 47% of St. Louis' population identifying as black.

St. Louis allows only 4% of individuals to be released on a promise to appear, setting a median bond of \$25,000. The majority of individuals in the Workhouse remain there simply because they cannot afford bond.²



Join a monthly meeting to learn more about the Close the Workhouse movement. The next meeting is March 5, 6:00 p.m., Deaconess Foundation, 1000 N. Vandeventer Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63113

Learn more at facebook.com/ClosetheWorkhouse/ or www.closestheworkhouse.org

TAKE ACTION



Sign the student petition to show WashU's administration that you support closing the Workhouse: <https://www.change.org/p/washu-officials-close-the-workhouse-washu-community-support>

Email, call and send letters to your St. Louis alder-people to encourage them to pledge their support in not funding the Workhouse in next year's budget: <https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/aldermen/Wards-1-28.cfm>

Volunteer with the Close the Workhouse campaign: <https://www.closestheworkhouse.org/events-1>

GOOD NEWS

On a radio segment featuring some of the key activists who have been working tirelessly to close the Workhouse since 2017, Mayor Lyda Krewson committed to "eventually" closing the Workhouse, a position that she has previously avoided.

BAD NEWS

Krewson has no actual plan to close the Workhouse, and has not endorsed the Close the Workhouse campaign's proposal for closing the MSI in 2020 and re-structuring pre-trial detention more broadly in the St. Louis region. Krewson continues to support investing more money in the Workhouse, which further entangles the institution in the St. Louis City budget and priorities list.³

¹ "What is #ClosestheWorkhouse?" *Close the Workhouse*, January 2020, <https://www.closestheworkhouse.org/>

² "Close the Workhouse Report 2.0" *Close the Workhouse*, 14 January 2020, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ada6072372b96dbb234ee99/t/5b9a794f2b6a288509f95e2e/1536850265821/A+Plan+to+Close+the+Workhouse+-+Final+09122018.pdf>

³ Hamden, Lara. "As Campaign To Close The Workhouse Gains Support, Krewson Considers 'Repurposing' St. Louis Jail." *KBIA 91.3 FM*, 17 January 2020, <https://www.kbia.org/post/friday-close-workhouse-launches-new-campaign-attracts-surprising-allies#stream/0>