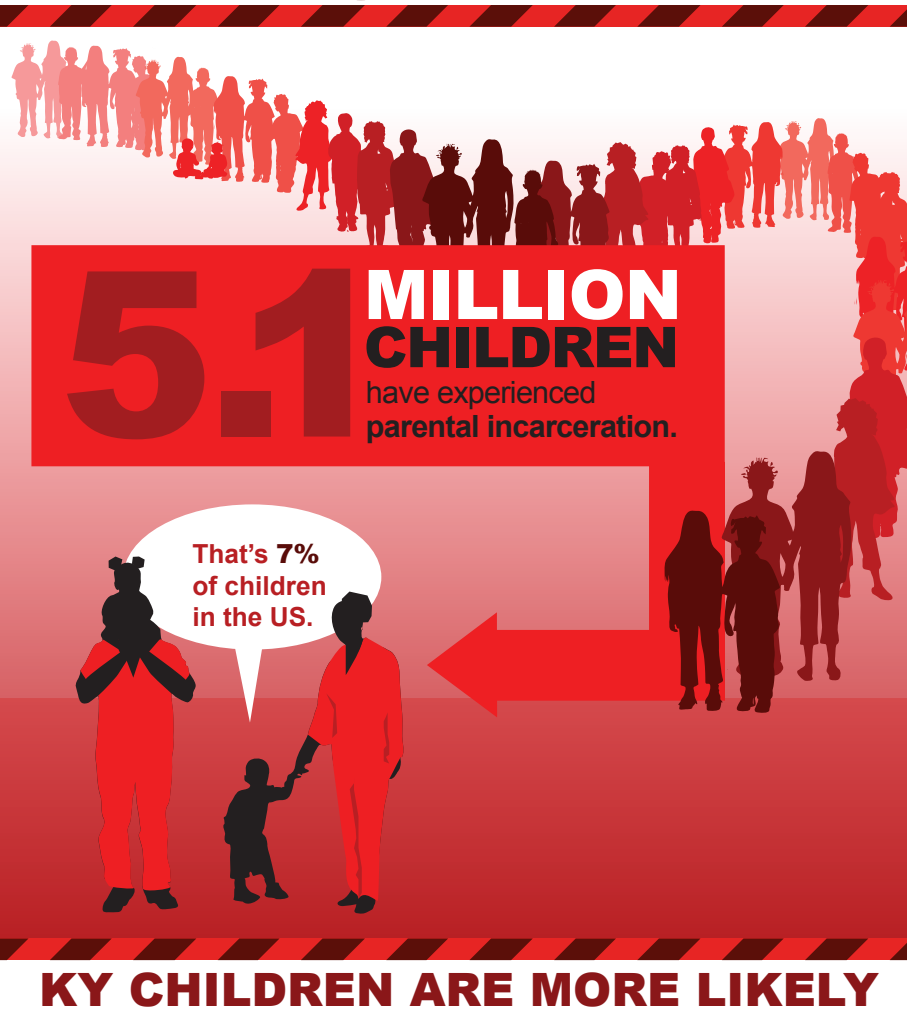
KENTUCKY'S YOUNGEST CASUALTIES

HOW RAMPANT PRISON GROWTH AFFECTS OUR CHILDREN

THE PROBLEM



5.1 MILLION CHILDREN have experienced parental incarceration.

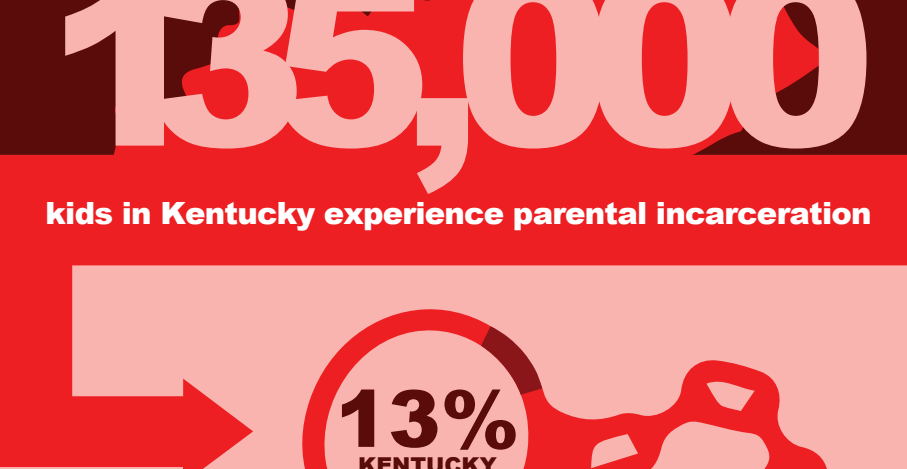
That's **7%** of children in the US.

KY CHILDREN ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A PARENT IN LOCKUP

How many of us are there?

135,000

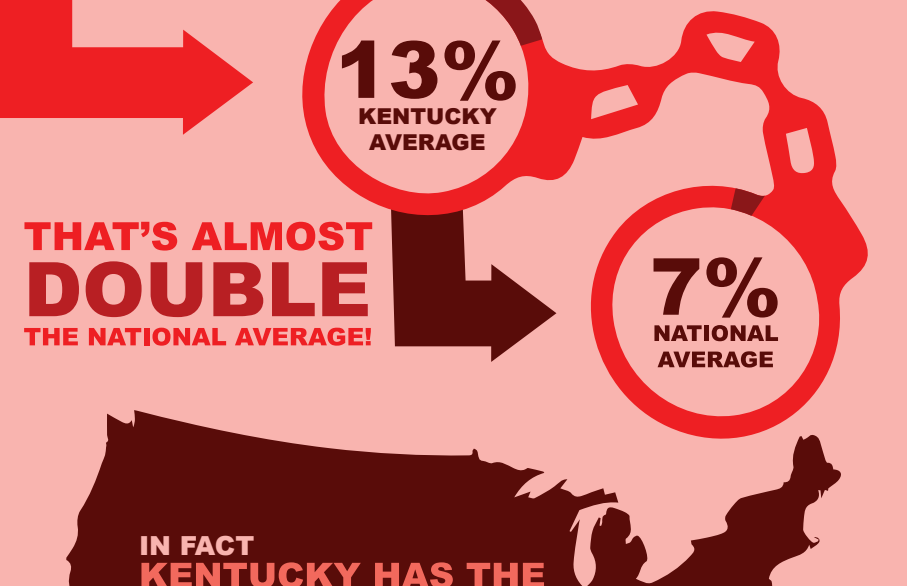
kids in Kentucky experience parental incarceration



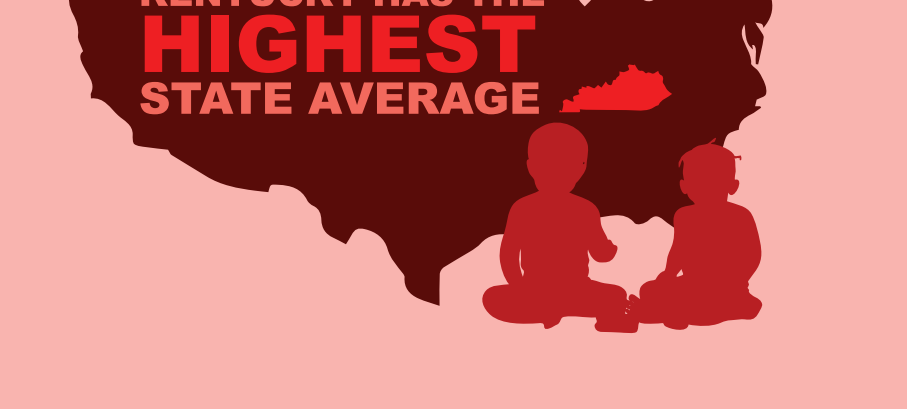
13% KENTUCKY AVERAGE

THAT'S ALMOST DOUBLE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE!

7% NATIONAL AVERAGE



IN FACT KENTUCKY HAS THE HIGHEST STATE AVERAGE



IN 2010, KENTUCKY was at the **EPICENTER** of the **NATIONAL CRISIS** of prison growth.

PRISON GROWTH WAS 4X FASTER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

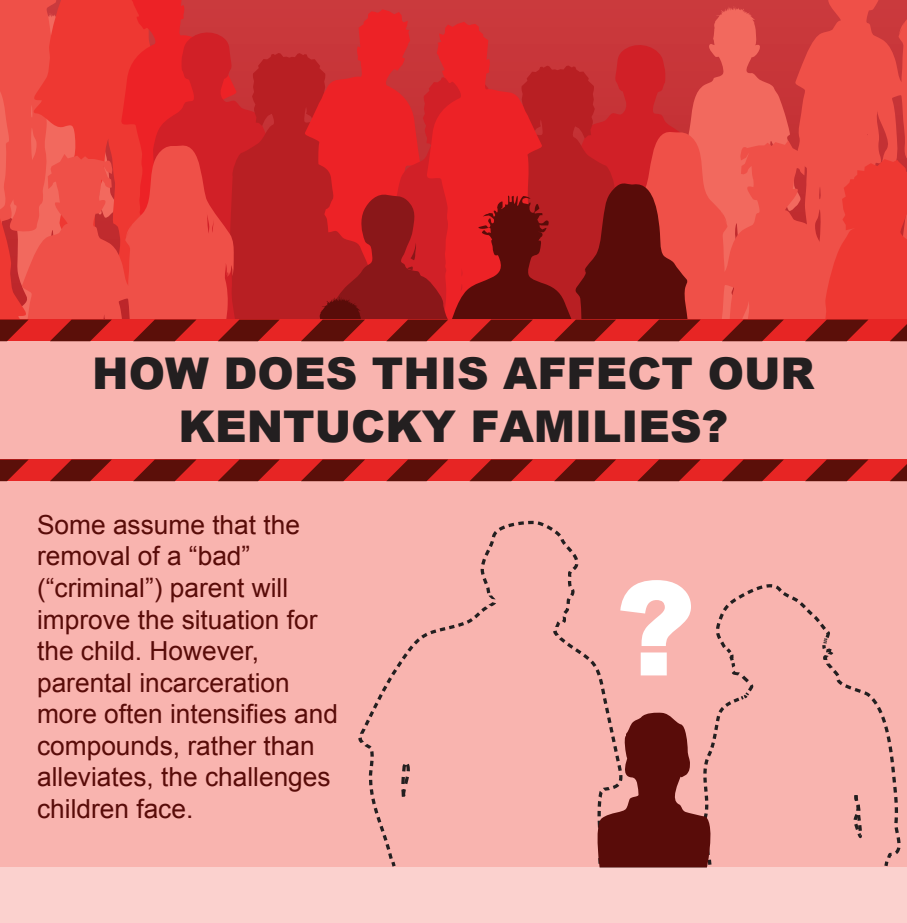
IN 2014, KENTUCKY'S prison incarceration rate was 21% higher than the national average,

despite having a crime rate *15% below* the *national average.*

IN LOUISVILLE, 1 in 6 residents of the Beecher Terrace housing complex are likely to spend time in jail or prison.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT OUR KENTUCKY FAMILIES?

Some assume that the removal of a "bad" ("criminal") parent will improve the situation for the child. However, parental incarceration more often intensifies and compounds, rather than alleviates, the challenges children face.

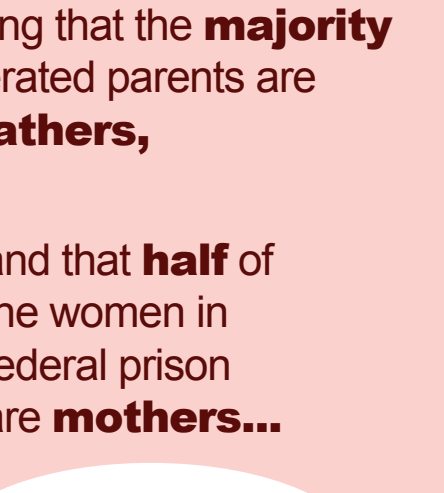


Considering that the **majority** of incarcerated parents are **young fathers,**

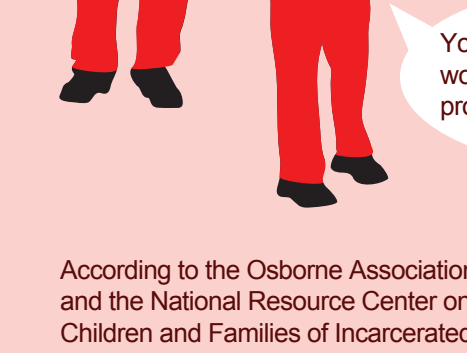
and that **half** of the women in federal prison are **mothers...**

You might assume that visitation would be a fair and accessible process. Well, it's not.

According to the Osborne Association and the National Resource Center on Children and Families of Incarcerated (NRCCFI) at Rutgers University, Camden...



Visits with parents (in most cases) help to heal the pain of the loss and are critical to children's well-being. However, **visiting opportunities can be few and far between** due to the distant location of prisons and the costs associated with visits.



Most prisons are **not accessible by any form of public transportation, restricting child-parent visits.** In some cases this means children will never visit their parents.

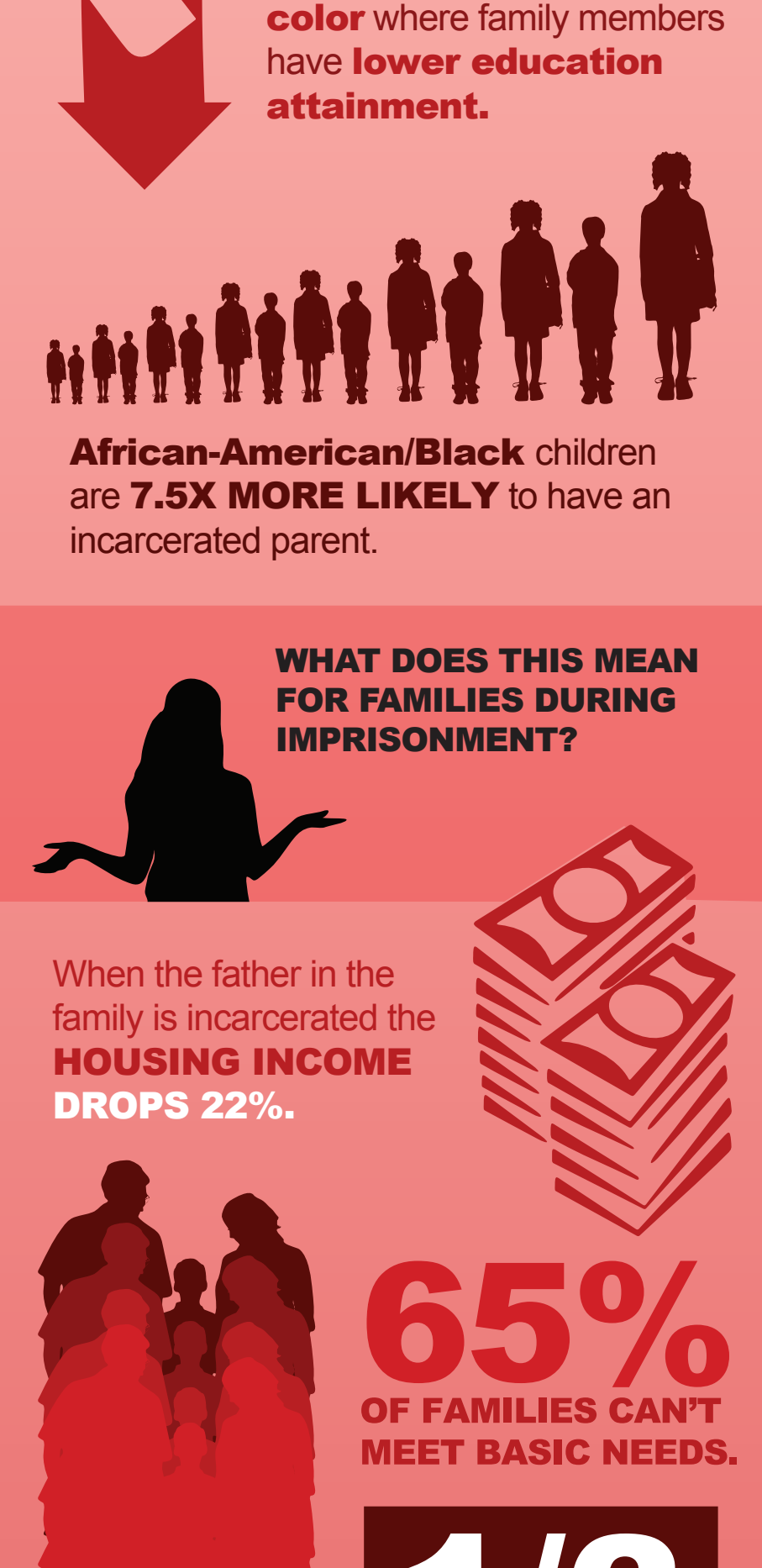
Collect phone calls from prisoners are subject to **excessive surcharges,** an economic burden most caregivers cannot manage.

On top of that, because the system disproportionately incarcerates vulnerable populations....

Families **most affected** by incarceration tend to be **low-income families of color** where family members have **lower education attainment.**

African-American/Black children are **7.5X MORE LIKELY** to have an incarcerated parent.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FAMILIES DURING IMPRISONMENT?



When the father in the family is incarcerated the **HOUSING INCOME DROPS 22%.**

65% OF FAMILIES CAN'T MEET BASIC NEEDS.

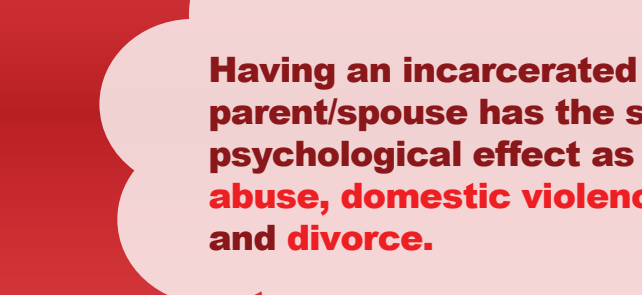
1/3 OF FAMILIES FALL INTO DEBT.

"When a parent is in jail or prison, it creates an unstable environment for kids that can have lasting effects like poverty, changes in living situations, and mental and emotional health issues... Policy debates about incarceration rarely focus on the impact on children."

- Terry Brooks, *Executive Director of Kentucky Youth Advocates*

Having an incarcerated parent/spouse has the same psychological effect as abuse, domestic violence, and divorce.

Family bonds are weakened, which **increases depression, anxiety,** and can **hamper academic development.**



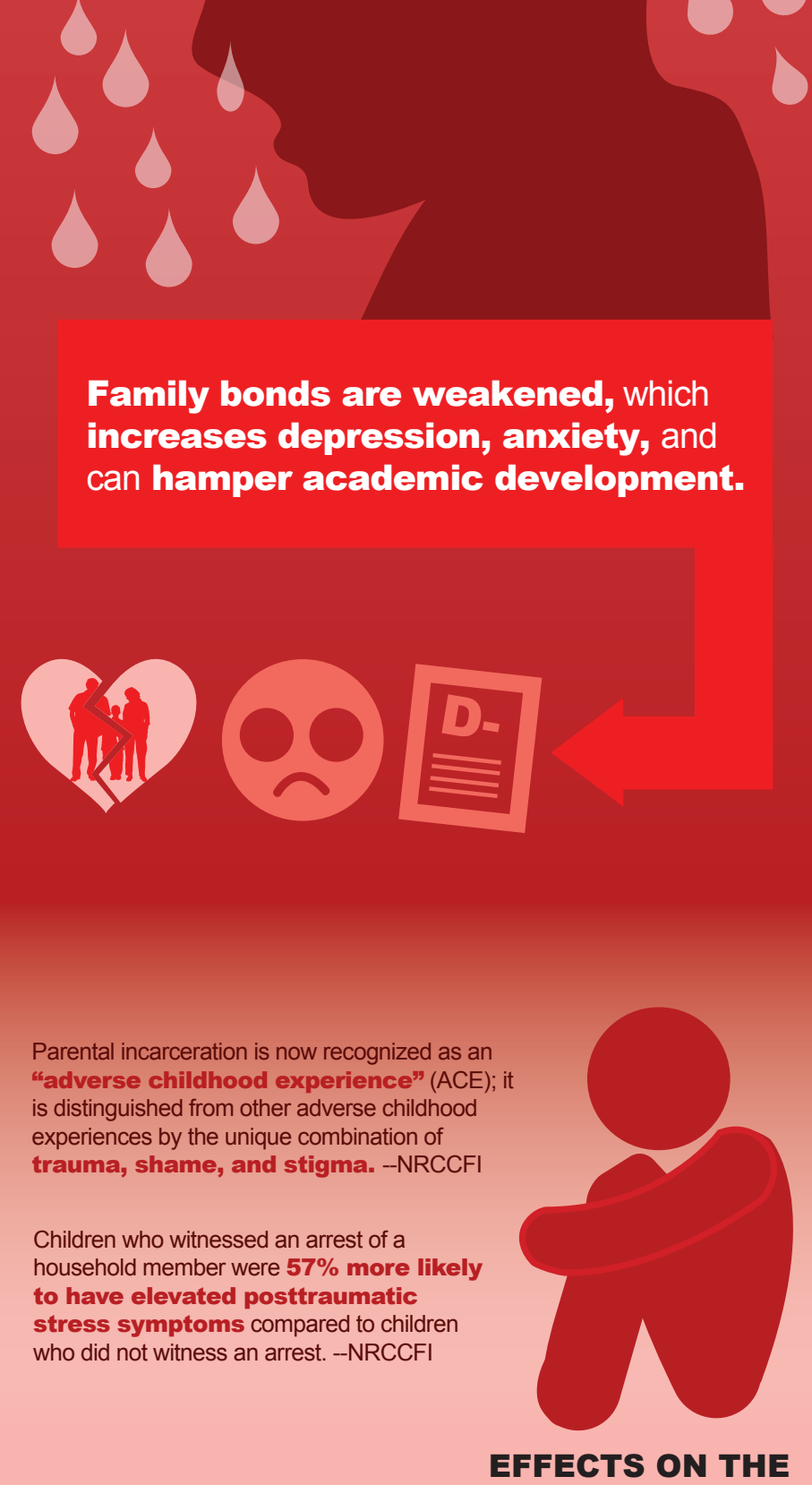
Parental incarceration is now recognized as an **"adverse childhood experience"** (ACE); it is distinguished from other adverse childhood experiences by the unique combination of **trauma, shame, and stigma.** --NRCCFI

Children who witnessed an arrest of a household member were **57% more likely to have elevated posttraumatic stress symptoms** compared to children who did not witness an arrest. --NRCCFI

EFFECTS ON THE REMAINING PARENT

Parents that have to take care of the household alone--without their incarcerated spouse--tend to have **issues involving child care, work conflicts, housing stability.**

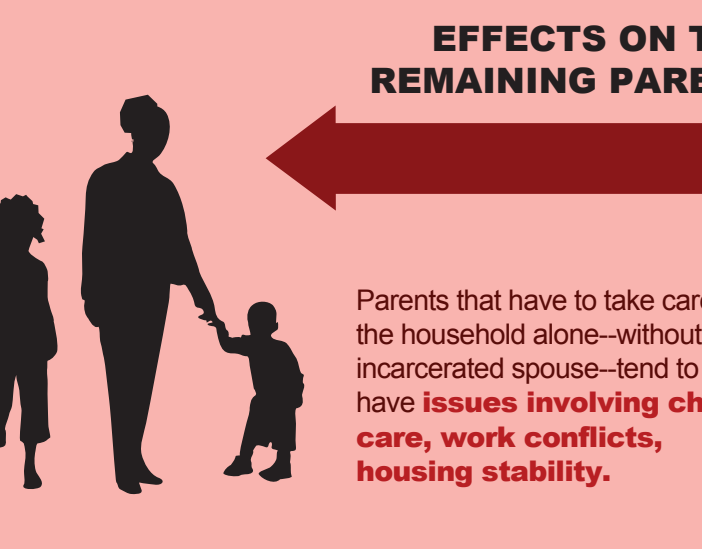
During this time the risk of **homelessness significantly increases.**



Single parents are forced to deal with the stigma of having an incarcerated spouse, **social isolation, and loneliness**

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FAMILIES ONCE THE PARENT IS RELEASED OR PAROLED?

Even when the parent is home from incarceration the family **continues to suffer from strained family relations.**



EFFECTS ON THE FORMERLY INCARCERATED PARENT:

It's harder to get accepted into academic programs and obtain support services for school.

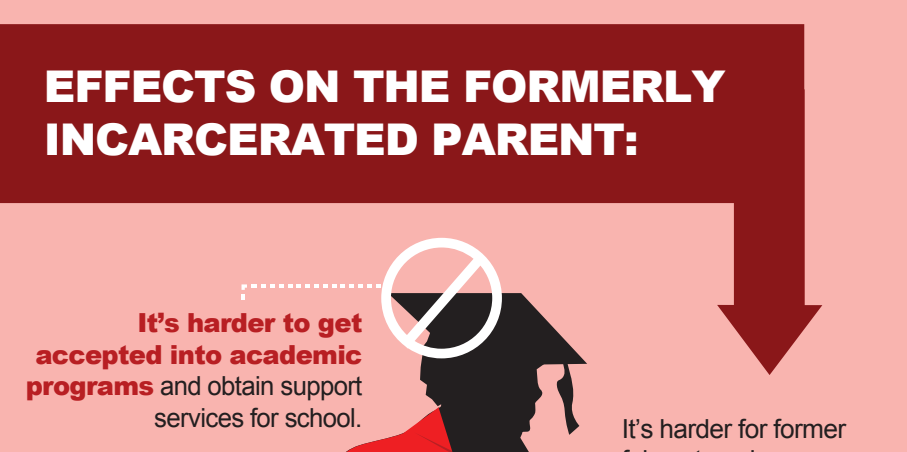
It's harder for former felons to gain **access to housing** due to background checks as well as Federal and State laws that **prohibit former felons from living in public housing.**

It's **harder for them to find work** due to their criminal record, which makes it **extremely challenging to provide for their families.**

Generally they are without a car, which can **affect their ability** to get and **maintain a job as well as meet their family's transportation needs.**

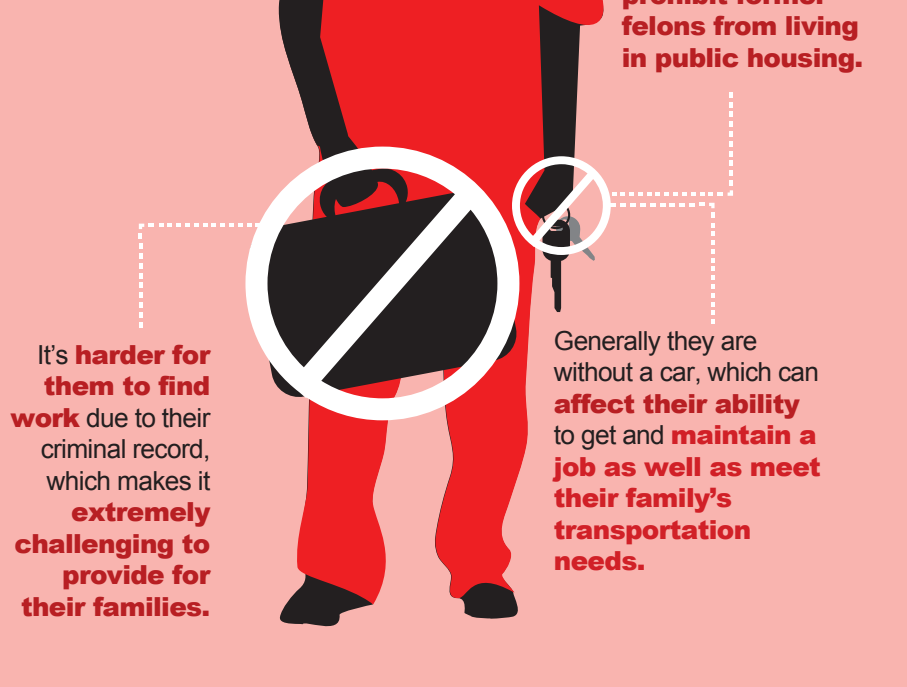
⚠ Other possible barriers to employment and adjustment: **substance abuse, mental illness, low education attainment, poor employment history, etc.**

IN KY FORMER FELONS HAVE NO VOTING RIGHTS.



In most states, after people serve their time, they get their voting rights back automatically. **In Kentucky, even a class D felony is enough to lose someone their voting rights FOREVER unless they can get a pardon straight from the governor.**

An estimated **300,000 Kentuckians** (including about 181,000 who have completed their sentences) can't vote because of this barrier – **disproportionately from low-income communities.**



300,000

THIS TAKES AWAY TREMENDOUS VOTING POWER FROM THESE COMMUNITIES.

We believe that a lack of voting rights in vulnerable communities affects the futures and livelihood of children in Kentucky. There is a strong need for better support systems in these communities, many of which require legislation, budget appropriation, policy changes, and more. The needs of our children go underrepresented in the legislative process because their parents and communities are disproportionately disenfranchised.

Together we can fix this problem!

WHAT YOU CAN DO

✓ RESTORE THE VOTE

Kentuckians can vote "Yes" on the Voting Rights Bill

A change is needed in Section 145 of the Kentucky Constitution. HB 70 would allow Kentucky voters to decide whether to grant automatic restoration of voting rights to most former felons once they have paid their debt to society.

Currently, the only ways a former felon can regain their voting rights in KY is by applying for a record expungement that can cost up to $540 in eligibility and application fees, or by being pardoned by the Governor. As it stands, Governor Bevins has issued zero pardons since he started his term in 2016.

Reach out to your local Kentuckians For The Commonwealth chapter (www.kftc.org) or the ACLU of Kentucky (www.aclu-ky.org) to find local or state-wide ways to advocate for the restoration of voting rights for former felons.

LEAD

Join/Volunteer/Organize at **JustLeadershipUSA**

Help redefine justice in America. Make decarceration a reality. Our members are people that view our broken justice system as a threat to our democracy including people who are currently or formerly incarcerated, organizations and engaged citizens like you from all across America.

Contact: Raquel Virgo at raquel@justleadershipusa.org

Volunteer at **Y-Now Children of Prisoners Program**
YMCA Safe Place

Volunteers are needed to support every area of the Y-NOW Program, however, we have a heightened need for volunteers to serve as MENTORS who will listen and provide encouragement, support, and stability.

Contact: Sadie at 502.855.5143, or saschbacher@ymcalouisville.org

Share your story at **ACLU of Kentucky**

Impacted families and people can share their stories with legislators, write letters for publication, and more to help make change in Kentucky. The ACLU-KY encourages people that have had experiences with the criminal justice system to share their story at legislative meetings.

Contact: George Eklund by email at george@aclu-ky.org

DONATE

Y-Now Children of Prisoners Program
YMCA Safe Place in Louisville, KY

The Y-NOW Children of Prisoners Program needs YOUR help!

Contact: Sadie at 502.855.5143, or saschbacher@ymcalouisville.org

The Special Project
Louisville, KY

The Special Project originated in 2007 when a mother visiting her son at the Metro Louisville jail saw the need for family strengthening art activities. The mother made an anonymous contribution to the Kentucky Foundation for Women to create a Special Project to develop artmaking activities for children in the jail's visitors lobby. Every Sunday evening trained leaders from the Special Project engage children, and caregivers, in art making, at the Metro Louisville Jail Visitor's Lobby.

Contact: Judi Jennings at judithjennings1947@gmail.com

JustLeadershipUSA

JustLeadershipUSA is dedicated to cutting the US correctional population in half by 2030. JLUSA empowers people most affected by incarceration to drive policy reform.

Contact: Raquel Virgo at raquel@justleadershipusa.org

WMMT Hot 88.7's "Calls from Home" segment
Whitesburg, KY

WMMT Hot 88.7's "Calls from Home" segment-- Following Hot 88.7's Hip Hop from the Hill Top show is WMMT's Calls from Home. The show broadcasts messages from the friends and family members of those incarcerated in our region's prison system. WMMT's local radio signal reaches several prisons, regional jails, and detention centers.

Contact Email: wmmtfm@appalshop.org

Kentucky Youth Advocates

Kentucky Youth Advocates (KYA) believes all children deserve to be safe, healthy, and secure. As THE independent voice for Kentucky children, we work hard to ensure decision makers create policies and make investments that are good for kids.

Contact: Amy Smith at 502-895-8167 ext. 132, asmith@kyyouth.org

Interested in visual storytelling?

If you's like us to make an information graphic for you please email us at info@gridsconnect.me or find us online at grids connect.me.

Thank you for you time!

Design and Research by
GRIDS: The Grassroots Information Design Studio

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION DESIGN STUDIO GRIDS

GRIDS would like to send a huge THANK YOU to all of the amazing review partners that helped us craft this infographic. We sincerely appreciate the time you've shared in this process!

Thank you so much!

REFERENCES

Annie E. Casey Foundation. A Shared Sentence: The Devastating Toll of Parental Incarceration on Kids, Families and Communities. April 18 2016.

Courier Journal. "Report: 135K Ky kids have had parent in jail." April 25 2016. http://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/2016/04/25/report-135k-ky-kids-have-had-parent-jail/83338402/

Hairston, C.R., 2007, Focus on Children of Incarcerated Parents, An Overview of the Research Literature, A Report for the Annie E. Casey Foundation

Kentuckians For The Commonwealth, Kentucky Voting Rights Amendment (HB70), https://www.kftc.org/campaigns/voting-rights-amendment

Lexington Herald Leader. "Ky. children have highest percent of jailed parents in the U.S." April 25th 2016. http://www.kentucky.com/news/state/article73730827.html

Margolies, J.K., Kraft-Stolar, T, Feb. 2006, When "Free" Means Losing Your Mother, A Report of the Women in Prison Project of Correctional Association of New York

Phillips, S.D., & Zhao, J. 2010. The relationship between witnessing arrests and elevated symptoms of posttraumatic stress: Findings from a national study of children involved in the child welfare system. Children and Youth Services Review, 32, 1246 – 1254.

RTI International. Herman-Stahl, Mindy Ph.D., Kan, Marni L. Ph.D., and Mckay, Tasseli M.P.H. Incarceration and the Family: A review of Research and Promising Approaches for Serving Fathers and Families. September 2008.

WDRB. Prison's youngest victims struggle to make their own way. November 17 2014. http://www.wdrb.com/story/27408909/prisons-youngest-victims-struggle-to-make-their-own-way

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights at www.osborneny.org

© Copyrighted by GRIDS: The Grassroots Information Design Studio, Jan 2017