

# STEP

# 4.

**Identify Targets:**  
Determining Who Has  
the Power to Give You  
What You Want

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TIME TO COMPLETE: 1-2 MONTHS



# Approaches

Once you’ve established what approach you will take and set goals you want to achieve, you will want to identify targets for your campaign. You can do this by determining who has the power to help you succeed. For example, revisiting the list of approaches from Step 3, we can identify numerous potential targets for each of the approaches:

## Closing youth correctional facilities.

- State legislation to close a youth prison: *Chair and membership of state House/Senate **judiciary** committee and their high-level staff.*
- State budget action to de-fund a current or planned prison: *Chair and membership of state House/Senate **finance, budget, or appropriations committee(s)** and their high-level staff.*
- Executive order to close a prison: *Governor and his/her high-level staff.*
- Juvenile justice agency decision to close a prison: *Agency director and staffers charged with facility management.*

## Stopping the flow of young people into facilities/Decarceration.

- State legislation to limit offense categories that can lead to incarceration: *Chair and membership of state House/Senate **judiciary** committee and their high-level staff.*
- Juvenile justice agency policy/regulation limiting offense categories that can lead to incarceration: *Agency director and agency policy lead.*
- Reduction in number of youth sent by courts to youth prison (through court rules/leadership on incarceration or decisions by individual judges): *Head of juvenile court; director of judicial education; all judges with juvenile jurisdiction.*
- Probation supervision changes (e.g., prohibiting incarceration as a result of technical violations which result in youth being locked up): *Agency director and probation/supervision lead.*

## Investing in and/or creating alternatives to incarceration.

- State investment in community-based alternatives: *Chair and membership of state House/Senate **finance, budget or appropriations committee** and/or **judiciary** committee and their high-level staff; juvenile justice agency director and key staff; leadership of legislative committees or state agencies relevant to proposed alternatives (e.g., mental health, education, child welfare)*
- County/city investment in and support of community-based alternatives: *Members and relevant staff of city/county council (particularly judiciary and/or finance committees); relevant local agency leadership (e.g., school superintendent, health agency director) and staff charged with contracting and oversight of service providers.*

Remember that legislators, agency heads, etc., often rely heavily on the judgment of their top staff (e.g., legislative director, deputy director), so those individuals need to be considered targets as well. Also consider which influencers can help you reach the targets above, such as the media or effective local grassroots organizers.

# Spheres of Influence

There are a number of different ways to achieve the same policy goals. In your initial discussions, all strategies should be considered, and then your campaign will decide on specific steps based on who has what authority or power in your jurisdiction, and what connections your campaign can leverage over those targets. Here are some examples of the types of influence held by several common campaign targets:

- **Legislators:** Can pass comprehensive juvenile justice reform legislation or laws that address youth prisons specifically, such as requiring the closure of a youth prison and a set date for closure (see *Essential Strategy: Legislative Advocacy*).
- **Executive branch (governor and juvenile justice agency leaders):** Make decisions regarding expansion or closure of youth prisons and investment in community-based alternatives (see *Essential Strategy: Executive Advocacy*).
- **Judges:** Judges have wide discretion to refuse to send youth to prisons.
- **Litigators/Legal community:** Lawyers can bring litigation regarding the conditions youth are subjected to in youth prisons.
- **Grassroots organizers/Community members:** Can bring public attention to these issues and put pressure on the individuals above to make changes.
- **Media outreach:** Can uncover information about current youth prisons, and other useful information for your campaign; can influence public opinion; can put pressure on legislators and others.