

MASS INCARCERATION DEFINED

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

October 13

10:15am-12:15pm | Borgwardt Hall

Session I in the three-part series on **Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System** will begin with an overview of incarceration in the U.S. - especially in Wisconsin - as the basis for understanding how we arrived at the criminal justice system we live with now and the consequences to our communities and to our social fabric. It will draw on Dr. Reece's professional experience and keen insights on the growth in the number of prisons, prison population and the widening racial disparity throughout the criminal justice system.



Much of the general public is uninformed about either the current system or the history that drives it. The U.S. prison population has quintupled since 1980, now with the highest incarceration rates in the world, costing taxpayers \$1.3 billion dollars annually. In Wisconsin, black people comprise 40% of the prison population although only 7% of the state population overall. Statistics like these have developed over time from multiple policies and practices. The tough on crime perspective and the war on drugs are two major causative factors for the broad racial disparities across the country.



Karen Reece, PhD, is VP of Research and Education at Nehemiah Community Development Corporation. Dr. Reece does strategic planning and manages a continuous evaluation program for Nehemiah Center. She brings to this position analytical skills developed in product development in a previous career as well as an expansive range of skills, activities and interests spanning science, arts, and community building organizations. Reece does considerable public education on the criminal justice system, frequently with workshops like this one.



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