

Justice Reinvestment

Issue Description:

In the past 20 years, state spending on corrections has grown at a rate faster than nearly any other state budget item. Despite increasing corrections expenditures, recidivism rates remain high with half of all persons released from prison or jail returning within three years. Further, in every state, there are a handful of “high-stakes” communities to which most people released from prison return. These are also the communities where taxpayer-funded programs are disproportionately focused. The goals of justice reinvestment are increasing public safety, reducing spending on corrections and improving conditions in the neighborhoods to which most people released from prison return.

Recommended Tactics/Strategies for Addressing the Issue:

In order to address this, BJA is working with the Council of State Government’s Justice Center (CSG/JC) to advance the Justice Reinvestment Initiative at the state-level and the Urban Institute to address like issues at the local (jail) level. These BJA partners work with BJA staff, expert consultants, and state/local policymakers to facilitate collaborative efforts within the Justice Reinvestment Initiative.

To assist state and local policymakers, justice reinvestment partners are providing technical assistance to a limited number of jurisdictions that demonstrate a bipartisan interest in the strategy:

- Step 1: Analyze the prison population and spending in the communities to which people in prison often return;
- Step 2: Provide policymakers with options to generate savings and increase public safety;
- Step 3: Quantify savings and reinvest in select high-stakes communities;
- Step 4: Measure the impact and enhance accountability.

Available Resources:

More information can be obtained from visiting the website for the Council of State Governments Justice Center (www.justicecenter.csg.org) and the Urban Institute (www.urban.org).

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