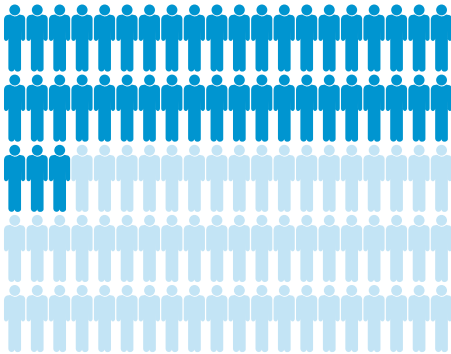


CENTER ON SENTENCING AND CORRECTIONS



43%

of incarcerated adults
return to prison
after release.

Source: Pew Center on the States, 2012.

THE PRICE OF PRISONS

Actual Cost: \$39.0 billion

Budgeted: \$33.6 billion

Difference: \$5.4 billion

Among 40 states that participated in a survey by Vera, the total cost of operating prisons was \$39 billion in 2010, \$5.4 billion more than what these state corrections budgets reflected.

Source: *The Price of Prisons: What Incarceration Costs Taxpayers* (Vera Institute of Justice, 2012)

Across the country today roughly one out of every 100 adults is in jail or prison, at an annual cost to taxpayers of more than \$52 billion. After release from prison, more than 40% will be reincarcerated within three years, either for a new offense or for violating conditions of release. State spending on incarceration, probation, and parole has nearly quadrupled over the past two decades. Aside from Medicaid, corrections is the fastest-growing budget item for states. These concerning trends and poor outcomes are not inevitable. The Center on Sentencing and Corrections (CSC) at the Vera Institute of Justice helps policymakers and government partners make wise decisions about public safety and the allocation of costly correctional resources in the following ways:

ADVANCING CUTTING-EDGE STRATEGIES

Justice Reinvestment. The Justice Reinvestment Initiative is a data-driven approach to corrections policy that seeks to cut spending and reinvest savings in practices that can improve public safety and strengthen neighborhoods. CSC provides technical assistance to states to help them identify the drivers of their corrections populations, formulate responsive policies, and implement new practices and programs. In Delaware and Louisiana, for example, CSC supported the passage of significant new laws that aimed to achieve better outcomes and reduce corrections spending.

Cost-Benefit Analysis. In collaboration with Vera's Cost Benefit Analysis Unit, CSC developed a methodology to account for the true cost of prisons, beyond the amounts stated in corrections budgets. CSC's report on the topic describes the taxpayer cost of incarcerating a sentenced adult offender to state prison and presents recommendations for policy makers to safely rein in these costs.

Performance Incentive Funding. CSC brought together policymakers and practitioners to discuss state funding programs that reward localities for sending fewer people to prison. Such financial incentives are used by states and counties to strengthen and expand community corrections programs.

PROVIDING SUBSTANTIVE EXPERTISE

Pretrial Detention. In New Orleans, CSC works with a broad array of stakeholders to create a pretrial detention decision-making system designed to release defendants who pose little risk to public safety and are likely to return to court.

> For More Information

The Center on Sentencing and Corrections works with government leaders to advance criminal justice policies that promote fairness, protect public safety, and ensure that resources are used efficiently. The center draws on the skills and expertise of its staff as well as the practical knowledge of working criminal justice professionals who face similar justice challenges. This briefing sheet provides an overview of the Center's work today. For more information, contact Peggy McGarry at (212) 376-3131 or pmcgarry@vera.org.

The Vera Institute of Justice is an independent nonprofit organization that combines research, demonstration projects, and technical assistance to help leaders in government and civil society improve the systems people rely on for justice and safety.

Rehabilitation and Reentry. The Pathways Project is a five-year, CSC-led initiative that provides selected states with incentive funding and technical assistance to expand access to higher education for people in prison and those recently released. The project seeks to demonstrate that access to postsecondary education, combined with supportive reentry services, can increase educational credentials, reduce recidivism, and increase employability and earnings.

Segregation. CSC's Segregation Reduction Project works with states to reduce their reliance on solitary confinement. CSC assists states while they plan and implement change around their use of segregation. CSC also informed the first-ever U.S. Congressional hearing on this subject.

Sexual Assault Prevention. In collaboration with the National PREA [Prison Rape Elimination Act] Resource Center, CSC provides tools and information to the corrections field on how to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual assault in confinement settings. CSC is also developing a sexual assault response team for the adult residential and juvenile detention facilities of the Johnson County Department of Corrections in Kansas.

USING APPLIED RESEARCH TO GUIDE POLICY AND PRACTICE

Data Analysis. CSC analyzes data and helps government officials diagnose problems and evaluate policies and programs. For Los Angeles County, CSC analyzed the county's jail data, examined policies and processes that affect the jail's population size, and recommended steps to alleviate overcrowding.

Original Research. CSC conducts quantitative and qualitative research to advance knowledge in the field. Some recent examples: CSC is examining the impact of video visitation on the nature and frequency of prisoners' contact with their families, prisoners' compliance with custodial rules, and prisoner outcomes after release. In Multnomah County, Oregon, CSC explored both the implementation and effectiveness of the county's supervision model.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- > **Justice Reinvestment in Action: The Delaware Model**
(www.vera.org/pubs/justice-reinvestment-delaware-model)
- > **Performance Incentive Funding: Aligning Fiscal and Operational Responsibility to Produce More Safety at Less Cost**
(www.vera.org/pubs/performance-incentive-funding-aligning-fiscal-and-operational-responsibility-produce-more)
- > **Realigning Justice Resources: A Review of Population and Spending Shifts in Prison and Community Corrections**
(<http://www.vera.org/pubs/realigning-justice-resources-review-population-and-spending-shifts-prison-and-community>)
- > **The Price of Prisons: What Incarceration Costs Taxpayers**
(<http://www.vera.org/pubs/price-prisons-what-incarceration-costs-taxpayers>)

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