



Justice Reinvestment Phase II: Implementing Statewide Reforms

Passing criminal justice reform is just the beginning. Once the ink dries on the new legislation, the hard work of changing practices and systems begins. With support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Crime and Justice Institute at Community Resources for Justice (CJI) provides intensive, tailored assistance to support states implementing statewide criminal justice reforms.

Over the past decade, more than half of states across the country have significantly improved their criminal justice systems through the **Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI)**, a data-driven approach that reduces recidivism while cutting corrections spending and redirecting a portion of the savings to promising strategies to improve public safety. In Phase I, or the policy development phase, states examine system data, develop policies, and pass legislation. In Phase II of JRI, states implement the reforms and measure the results.

CJI works with four states – **Mississippi, Utah, Maryland and Alaska** – that are implementing JRI legislation. Although the specific reforms vary from state to state, CJI helps each one to:

1. Plan for implementation to ensure effective rollout of new policies and procedures by mobilizing agency leadership, staff and other stakeholders, facilitating planning processes, and providing education on legislative requirements.
2. Adopt, through internal policy development and training, programs and approaches that research shows can reduce recidivism.
3. Provide tools and skills to the people who work in the system.
4. Measure the impacts of the reforms.
5. Reinvest in strategies to sustain public safety gains.

Addressing Each State's Unique Challenges

The states' legislative reforms share the overarching goals of curbing the use of incarceration and reducing recidivism while improving community safety. CJI provides targeted implementation assistance to address the unique characteristics and challenges of each state. Examples include:

- **Alaska** is tasked with developing a new pretrial system that focuses bail release decisions on risk rather than ability to pay and protects public safety by supervising defendants in the community

before trial, when possible. CJJ is using Alaska data to develop a pretrial risk assessment and helping to create new policies and train staff on the use of the tool for decision making and supervision.

- **Maryland** is improving case management procedures, including utilizing a risk and needs assessment to drive programming and case plans for people on probation and parole and implementing a system for them to earn credits toward an earlier discharge from supervision for good behavior. CJJ is training Maryland staff on effective case management practices, helping the state develop its own internal training capacity, and creating user guides for staff to properly monitor and measure implementation of the new case management techniques.
- **Utah** is rolling out new case management tools, including a graduated responses matrix to provide appropriate, targeted sanctions and incentives. To ensure that staff have the skills needed to implement these reforms properly, CJJ developed a customized curriculum and trained select Utah staff to teach and coach their colleagues on the new skills.
- **Mississippi** had been using a risk assessment to inform community supervision, but the JRI legislation required extending use to institutions. CJJ conducted a validation study on the existing risk assessment and subsequently developed a new and more accurate assessment for both institutions and community corrections. CJJ trained Department of Corrections staff to use the assessment results to guide decision making and develop individualized case plans to target the factors that, when addressed, can reduce an individual's risk to reoffend.

Turning Policy into Practice

CJJ prides itself on partnering with states to build buy-in, develop strong collaborations amongst stakeholders, and increase in-state capacity so agencies can continue to effectively implement legislative reforms after the technical assistance period has ended.

CJJ's implementation assistance to states includes:

- Creation, implementation and validation of pretrial and post-disposition assessment tools to guide decision making;
- Development of agency policies and procedures to implement best practices, such as graduated response systems and improved case management approaches;
- Targeted training for practitioners to learn the skills needed to effectively supervise individuals and help change behavior;
- Quality assurance plans, policies and procedures to ensure sustainability of evidence-based programs and practices;
- Assistance with performance measures to monitor outcomes and fiscal impacts; and
- Engagement of stakeholders to identify and adjust policies that may not be working optimally and, most importantly, to share successes.

With the combination of demonstrated in-state commitment and CJJ's technical assistance, states can realize desired public safety gains and justice system savings.

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