August 21st, 2020

URBAN INSTITUTE · ELEVATE · THE · DEBATE
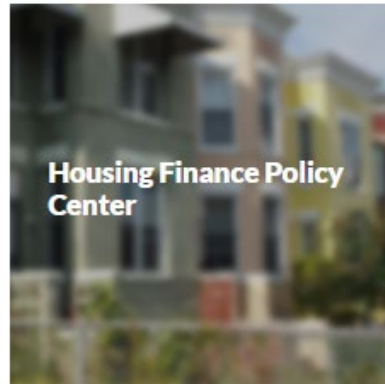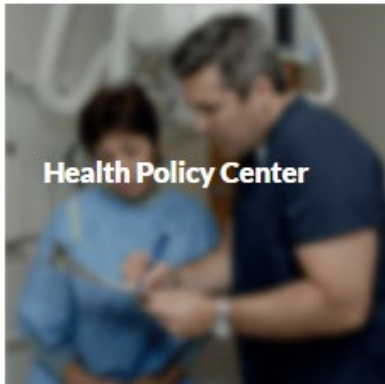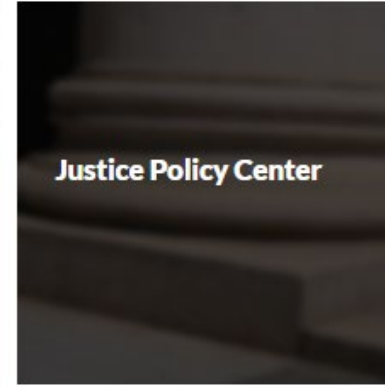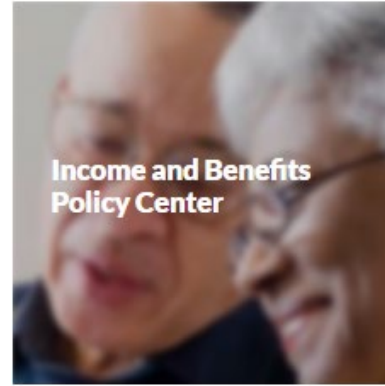
Prison Research and Innovation Network

Jesse Jannetta, Lauren Farrell, Aristotle Jones, Rudy Perez

About the Urban Institute

The Urban Institute's **Justice Policy Center** conducts objective, rigorous, interdisciplinary research, evaluation, and policy analysis and delivers data-driven recommendations, training, and technical assistance. In carrying out our research, we seek to center the voices, experiences, and perspectives of the people, practitioners, and communities most affected by crime and the criminal justice system.

Prison Research and Innovation Network

Why the focus on state prisons?

- State prisons affect millions of lives
  - They house over 1.3 million people and employ over 200,000 correction officers
- They consume a meaningful share of state budgets

Yet despite the scale, cost, and impact of prisons in the United States, they are among the most understudied public institutions in our county

Purpose of the Prison Research and Innovation Network (PRIN)

The purpose of the Prison Research and Innovation Network is to *support states interested in researching and improving prison culture, operations, and design* to make correctional environments more humane and rehabilitative

Expected Outcomes

- Invite people who are incarcerated and those who work in prison to contribute to change in their facility

- Enhance capacity to collect and analyze data on life behind bars

- Develop, implement, and evaluate innovations to improve prison environments

- Identify and pursue opportunities for state-level policy change

Prison Research and Innovation Network Sites

Colorado DOC

- University of Denver
  - Sterling Correctional Facility

Delaware DOC

- University of Delaware
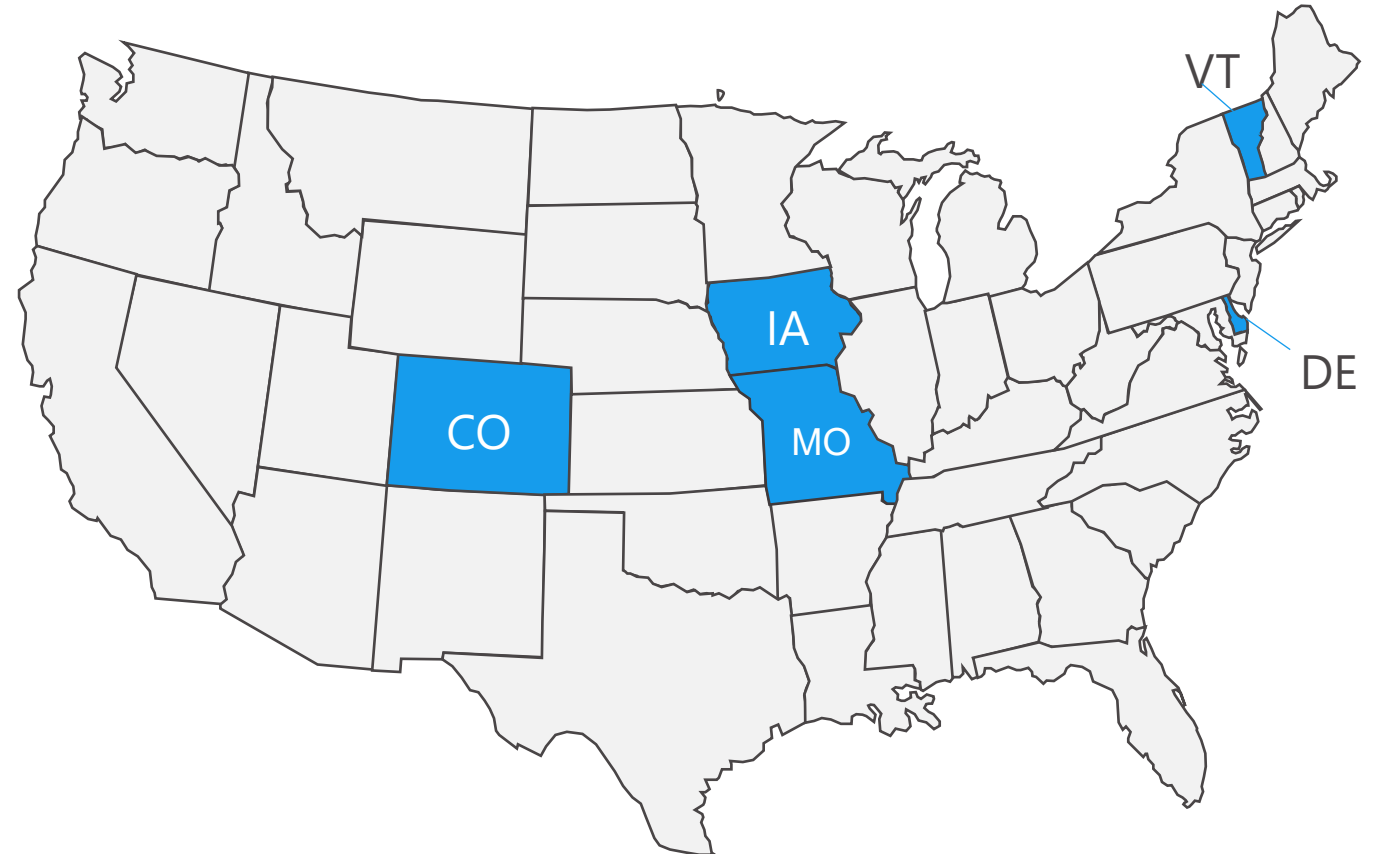 - Howard R. Young Correctional Institution

Iowa DOC

- Iowa Department of Human Rights Division of Criminal and Juvenile Planning
  - Iowa Correctional Center for Women

Missouri DOC

- University of Missouri
  - Moberly Correctional Center

Vermont DOC

- University of Vermont
  - Southern State Correctional Facility

Examples of data, analyses, policy impacts, and outcomes

Data type	Analytic inquiry	Prison reform	Policy reform	Outcomes
Corrections officer use of overtime and sick days	• Assess and address officer physical health and mental well-being	• Launch officer wellness campaign • Develop protocols to identify officers at risk of burnout, connect with services/treatment	• Restrict excessive use of overtime • Appropriate resources for officer wellness programs	• Reduced rates of sick leave • Reduced attrition or longer retention of officers • High levels of officer job satisfaction
Visitation and phone calls from friends and family	• Assess existence and extent of support networks and opportunities to harness, complement, or supplement them	• Increase visitation hours or opportunities • Complement visitation with video conferencing • Create child-friendly visitation rooms • Allow for conjugal visits	• Appropriate resources for video conferencing • Mandate cap on collect phone call fees • Appropriate resources for mother-child housing units • Mandate housing prisoners within x miles of home	• Increased frequency of family contact • Lower rates of disciplinary infractions • Lower rates of recidivism

Additional Goals of the Network

- Develop a better understanding of prison environments
- Enhance the capacity for collecting data on prison environments and measuring impact of improvements
- Generate transformative thinking and new thought leaders
- Nurture a community of practice
- Incubate innovation
- Contribute to a national narrative change campaign

Timeline (As Originally Planned)

- **Phase 1:** January 13, 2020 – December 31, 2020
  - Better understand the prison environment via data collection activities

- **Phase 2:** January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024
  - Design, implement, and evaluate new evidence-based programmatic and operational changes and innovations to improve prison conditions.

Urban's Role:

Design core survey metrics	Support administrative data collection	Promote peer learning
Conduct process evaluation	Provide TA as needed	Share lessons learned

Thank you!

For More Info Email: TransformPrison@urban.org