Prison Research and Innovation Network

Jesse Jannetta, Lauren Farrell, Aristotle Jones, Rudy Perez
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

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