



Jails, Prisons, and Reentry Practice Area

The Jails, Prisons, and Reentry (JPR) Practice Area specializes in understanding and improving the lives of those in the correctional system. Research, policy guidance, and technical assistance in this practice area address the living conditions in jails and prisons, correctional workforce issues, and the experiences of those currently and formerly incarcerated, including people receiving community supervision. The unifying goal of this practice area is to reduce the scope, and thus harm, of correctional systems. Our team employs a variety of research techniques and conducts policy studies, training sessions, community-engaged methods, and hands-on support to ensure the implementation of strategies that are **trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and gender-specific**. Our work promotes the humane treatment of incarcerated people and addresses the challenges facing correctional staff.

The JPR Practice Area is part of the Urban Institute's *Justice & Safety Division*, which works to inform solutions to crime and safety challenges. By conducting rigorous research and policy analysis, we can provide the best data, insights, training, and technical assistance to our partners, who share a mission to promote functional and fair justice systems.

Key Areas of Research and Technical Assistance in Our Practice Area

Members of the JPR Practice Area bring diverse experiences and areas of focus, allowing our practice area to approach a broad range of issues related to jails, prisons, and reentry with the tailored experience that such work demands. Examples of topics of focus and expertise include:

Conditions and Climate of Carceral Settings: Prisons and jails in America incarcerate more than 1.8 million people, employ more than 200,000 corrections officers, and consume a significant share of state and local budgets. Yet despite their scale and impact, they are among the least transparent and most understudied public institutions in the country. Projects within JPR that seek to shine a light on what is happening behind bars include:

- [Prison Research and Innovation Initiative](#)
- [Second Chance Act Corrections and Community Engagement Training and Technical Assistance](#)

Decarceration and Diversion Efforts: Due to the staggeringly high number of people incarcerated in jail or prison in the United States, members of JPR are working to identify the drivers of over-incarceration and support approaches to diverting people from incarceration altogether. Relevant projects include:

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- [Safety and Justice Challenge](#)
- [Justice Reinvestment Initiative](#)
- [Evaluations of the Misdemeanor Diversion Program in Durham County, North Carolina](#)

Trauma and Victimization for People in Prisons and Jails: Without intentionally changing custodial practices to consider histories of victimization and reduce further trauma, prisons and jails will continue to trigger, retraumatize, and harm

the people in their custody. Our research and technical assistance demonstrate how departments of corrections can adapt operational philosophies and custodial practices to reduce trauma and victimization. Relevant projects include:

- [Planning of National Service Line for Incarcerated Survivors of Sexual Abuse](#)
- [Adapting Custodial Practices to Reduce Trauma for Incarcerated Women](#)

Health in Correctional Settings: When compared to the general population, men and women with a history of incarceration are in worse physical and behavioral health, yet for many, services and responses are critically lacking. Our research and technical assistance help to address gaps in knowledge and support improved services for people with health needs who are incarcerated. Projects include:

- [Co-Occurring Disorder Prevalence Determination in Juvenile Justice Correction Facilities](#)
- [Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program \(COSSUP\) Training and Technical Assistance to pretrial, prosecution, defense Counsel, and courts grantees.](#)
- [Evaluation of Policies to Increase Access and Quality of Reproductive Health Care in Las Colinas Detention and Reentry Facility](#)

Families of People Who Are Incarcerated: Across the U.S., an estimated 6.5 million family members are affected by incarceration, disrupting bonds between parents and children and causing emotional harm far beyond physical separation. About half of the people in state or federal prisons are parents of young children. Our research and technical assistance support model practices for incarcerated parents and their children. Projects include:

- [Model Practices for Parents in Prisons and Jails](#)
- [Support of Indiana Department of Correction's Family-Focused Activities](#)

Community Supervision and Reentry from Incarceration: Over ten million people are released from prisons and jails each year, and studies show that an individualized approach to reentry that addresses a person's unique needs is key to increasing their chances of success. This requires collaboration and coordination between community reentry providers, departments of corrections, and community corrections agencies. Projects on this topic include:

- [Transition from Jail to Community Initiative](#)
- [Evaluation of the Ready to Work Program in Boulder and Aurora, CO](#)
- [Evaluation of Philadelphia's Innovation in Reentry Initiative](#)
- [Transitional Housing Support for People on Probation in Pima County, Arizona](#)

Our Team

The Jails, Prisons, and Reentry Practice Area is led by [Will Engelhardt](#), Senior Training and Technical Assistance Manager. Additional members of the JPR Practice Area are:

- [David Pitts](#), Vice President of Justice Policy
- [Evelyn McCoy](#), Senior Manager
- [Azhar Gulaid](#), Policy Program Associate
- [Paige Remington](#), Policy Program Associate
- [Ammar Khalid](#), Policy Associate
- [Alice Galley](#), Policy Analyst
- [Sam Tecotzky](#), Research Assistant
- [Mary Hayford](#), Policy Assistant

