



2015

BETTER GOVERNMENT COMPETITION

# Fixing Our Troubled Justice System



PIONEER INSTITUTE  
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH





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## Foreword

**T**he Better Government Competition has a strong history of impact. Since its inception in 1991, the Competition has saved Massachusetts taxpayers \$750 million and increased the quality of numerous public services. By crowdsourcing great ideas and successful programs, Pioneer gains the ability to advance constructive change based on evidence from hundreds of people from around the country.

The 2015 Competition focuses on criminal justice—a matter of critical importance that goes beyond consideration of efficiencies and savings.

Our country is many things, but at its bedrock it is a society defined by the rule of law. The Founders crafted legal institutions to maintain order and ensure that citizens of this new nation had the freedom to pursue happiness. If Congress and state legislatures make laws, courts adjudicate those laws, and institutions like prisons and parole programs mete out punishments and, one hopes, facilitate rehabilitation.

Where is criminal justice today in the United States and in Massachusetts—and what can the Better Government Competition add to the public debate?

A look back to the recent past can help us answer that question. As a result of a spike in crime and violence,

in 1965 then-President Lyndon B. Johnson established a federal Commission on Justice. Its report, released two years later, redefined policing and corrections. Its 200-plus recommendations advocated improved coordination and integrations of services among police, courts and corrections, and up and down the ladder of local, state and federal institutions. It underscored the rampant mistrust between the police and minority groups, and urged better officer training, diversity in officer recruitment, systems to control corruption, forensic and communications technology, scientific police administration, and state-level police standards.

It took time, but things changed significantly. Police work moved from a focus on deterrence to, decades later, community policing, and evidence-based approaches such as Compstat programs, and broken-windows and hot-spot policing. Some of this has worked well, some less so. Pioneer was a lively participant in the public conversations and policy work to drive reform.

Our 1995 Competition winner was then-Lowell (and later Boston) Police Commissioner Edward Davis for his cutting edge work in community policing. In 1996, we recognized 10 ideas that spanned crime prevention and neighborhood revitalization, job training for those

completing their sentences, and actions to suppress gang violence.

Two decades later, racial tensions with the police remain, recidivism rates are unacceptably high, and the prison population is both massive and carries disproportional racial impacts—all ugly reminders of the need for reform. Today our corrections system manages a population of more than 7.3 million: 1 in every 31 U.S. adults is now either in prison, on probation or parole; a quarter century ago, the rate was just 1 in 77. High rates of recidivism and incarceration undermine our Founders' goal of maintaining order and threaten society's pursuit of happiness.

Without meaningful rehabilitation, the system is at best a revolving prison door and at worst a modern quarantining system. As a result, policymakers and researchers are questioning social norms, educational and employment opportunities, and programs that are aimed at re-integrating offenders into society as productive, law-abiding citizens.

Our 2015 winner, runners-up and special recognition award winners reflect this sentiment, with innovative approaches that both reduce the exploding costs of this system and make our communities safer.

Our winner this year is the Five Keys Charter School: a unique and proven corrections education model offering adult inmates vocational training, and college dual-enrollment programs, which help to reverse the school-to-prison pipeline. Independently designed and operated by the San Francisco Sheriff's Department, Five Keys embodies the promising movement towards restorative justice we've seen over the last decade in criminal justice.

Importantly, the impact of this program illustrates the effectiveness of education models as an alternative to mass incarceration and a channel to improve economic mobility and reduce recidivism. We recognize their

**Today our corrections system manages a population of more than 7.3 million: 1 in every 31 U.S. adults is now either in prison, on probation or parole; a quarter century ago, the rate was just 1 in 77.**

important work as an innovative new direction for our justice system—a system that has for decades overlooked the complexities of re-entry with the ethos that locking up offenders and isolating them from communities is the only means to improved public safety.

My thanks to Shawni Littlehale who has built the Competition into a truly national effort and to Matthew Blackburn for bringing this initiative into the social media age. They have been ably aided in their efforts by interns Alaina Dahlquist, Elise Wilson and Or Ashkenazi. These five individuals left no stone unturned in their pursuit of high-quality and innovative programs. My thanks also go to Greg Sullivan, Mary Connaughton, Micaela Dawson, Kat McCarron and Brian Patterson for their help in painstakingly vetting the over 150 entries we received this year.

As in the past, Pioneer has strongly benefited from a truly outstanding panel of judges, who determined the winning entries. They include James L. Bush, Principal, Bush & Co.; Daniel F. Conley, Suffolk County District Attorney; Rev. Dr. Ray Hammond, Pastor, Bethel AME Church and Chairman & Co-Founder of the Ten Point Coalition; Jeff Jacoby, Op-Ed columnist, *The Boston Globe*, and syndicated columnist; John Kingston, III,

Chairman and CEO, Sword & Spoon Group; Tracy Palandjian, CEO of Social Finance US; and Dr. Peter N. Ubertaccio, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Programs and Director, Martin Institute for Law & Society, Stonehill College.

Finally, I would like to thank the state legislators and media outlets that played such an important role in urging constituents, readers and audiences to participate. This is the strength of our democracy—the open pursuit, through policy discussions and debates, of solutions to social problems. In keeping with past practice, we will energetically engage the public and policymakers to leverage the powerful ideas contained in this compendium.

None of this good work is possible without the generosity of Pioneer’s supporters—and especially those that contribute directly to this program. The Institute and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are greatly in your debt.



Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Stergios', written in a cursive style.

James Stergios, *Executive Director*





2015  
BETTER GOVERNMENT COMPETITION

**Winner**

## Reducing Recidivism Through Education

**Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi & Steve Good, Executive Director**  
*The San Francisco Sheriff's Department,  
Five Keys Charter Schools*

## The Problem

In 2003, then San Francisco Sheriff Michael Hennessey set about to interrupt the cycle of crime and incarceration by launching the nation's first charter school operated by a sheriff's department. Hennessey knew that incarceration was often linked to lack of education.<sup>1</sup> Graduating from high school reduces the likelihood that a person will end up in jail. This is no less true for those who have already been incarcerated. The chances of returning to jail decrease significantly after participation in education programs. Moreover, raising a parent's reading level increases their children's academic success, reducing intergenerational incarceration.

**The school's mission was simple, but not easy: to decrease recidivism through education by inspiring inmates, most of whom had previously been unsuccessful in school, to become students, and deputies to foster learning.**

With a charter from the San Francisco Unified School District, Hennessey launched the San Francisco Sheriff's Department (SFSD) Five Keys Charter School (FKCS) and began running a high school for adult inmates inside the county's jails. The school's mission was simple, but not easy: to decrease recidivism through education by inspiring inmates, most of whom had previously been unsuccessful in school, to become students, and deputies to foster learning.

FKCS tackles one of the most pressing issues in America today: the high emotional and financial cost of crime and incarceration. The United States has the largest prison population in the world. Close to seven million adults were under correctional supervision (probation, parole, jail, or prison) in 2011.<sup>2</sup> This statistic represents seven million families and countless communities disproportionately affected by crime and the criminal justice system. There are now more black Americans behind bars or under correctional supervision than were enslaved in 1850.<sup>3</sup>

Imprisonment disrupts families and imposes dire financial consequences on them, often shifting the burden onto overwhelmed government services, such as foster care. Most parents (71%) in prison were employed in the month preceding their arrest,

according to the National Center for Children & Families, 2011.<sup>4</sup> The loss of this income forces families onto welfare and further into poverty.

The impact of incarceration is equaled by the impact of crime. People living in high-crime neighborhoods often witness or are the victims of violent crime, profoundly shaping their world outlook and level of ambition. A growing number of studies are finding that exposure to crime heightens children's stress and diminishes school performance.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, crime acts as a tax on the entire economy, draining government funds, diminishing property values, discouraging investment, and reallocating scarce resources.

Today FKCS serves 8,000 students annually across California. In contrast to jails where inmates are locked in cells most of the day, and are segregated by gang affiliation and race, Five Keys students spend the day in integrated classes studying for their high school diplomas and discussing the consequences of crime. The model has been proved to reduce inmate violence and decrease recidivism. More than a decade after Sheriff Hennessey set out to launch a school for prisoners, FKCS remains unique: no other sheriff's department operates its own charter school.

## The Solution

**F**KCS is not an adaptation or replication of another program, but rather a highly innovative solution to a national issue. Education programs existed in the San Francisco county jails before; however, they were designed and operated by third-party providers. The jail-run school is different, and FKCS has dramatically improved upon previous education programs.

Prior to the launch of FKCS, a series of schools tried and failed to transplant their community structure into the jail. The challenges included: finding qualified





staff willing to work in the setting; conflicting school and jail infrastructure; a challenging set of student needs (including learning and mental health disabilities); a lack of engaging, relevant curriculum; and crippling funding restrictions.

Contracted programs were paid for with jail and adult education budgets, which were notoriously minimal and subject to cuts. As a result, inmate education services were routinely part-time and restricted to a small number of students. Essential components (such as special education and access to technology) were missing, and pre-designed curricula were generically

imported from community settings. Staff turnover was high and budgets limited opportunities to cross train in how to teach and reach incarcerated students. Outcomes were unsurprisingly poor.

Free of third-party, externally supplanted program designs, FKCS is able to design structure and content that meet the complex learning needs of incarcerated students. Charter schools are public. Like district public schools, they are funded based on enrollment, receiving funding from the state according to the number of students attending. This secure, scalable funding source has allowed for full-time, relevant schooling, with highly qualified staff, and the ability to expand programs in response to student demand, and to create and change the model and content to meet the specific needs of the population.

With the first charter in 2003, the school focused on establishing its flagship campus in the largest men's jail. During the first years of operation, 200 hundred students were served daily, attending five hours a day of classes.

By 2005, the program was ready to expand. Women housed in a separate facility and other potential students in segregated units lacked access to classes. Two barriers to expansion existed, however. First, the original charter did not authorize expansion beyond

the existing facilities. Second, the school had to adhere to education legislation requiring students to attend full time, like any other high school. The schedule was incompatible for inmates already mandated to attend other programs (such as violence prevention or substance recovery) or locked in isolated cells.

Moreover, a fundamental shift in approach was needed. The Department had originally envisioned a school where inmates could quickly complete the classes needed to graduate before being released; however, in reality, the majority of students needed remedial reading, writing and math intervention, and a large number lacked any significant high school credits to begin with. Graduation, while immediately attainable for a few, would require long-term intervention for most.

Addressing these challenges would not be easy. What had been initially conceived of as a high school would need to be transformed into a comprehensive K-12 school, encompassing a full range of skills and skill levels, from basic literacy and ESL instruction on up through high school algebra. Complicating all of it, the average stay in jail was less than two months. Campuses were needed outside the jail, where students could continue their education post-release. In 2008, the SFSD appointed a new executive director,

Steve Good, and applied for two additional charters: one to serve the downtown facility (which included the women), and one to operate an ‘independent study’ division of the school (allowing students to meet with a teacher once or twice a week and work independently). The school district authorized both charters, and FKCS expanded to all facilities in the county system. From 2008 to 2010, the school focused on hiring leadership and faculty to implement remedial education components, build infrastructure, and add community sites. By 2011, there were more than ten community learning centers throughout the Bay Area, including a learning center for chronically truant youth sponsored by the District Attorney’s office.

In 2012, the Los Angeles Sherriff’s Department (LASD) visited FKCS in San Francisco in the hope of finding solutions for their county’s high recidivism and low inmate education rates. The department’s previous education provider, the Hacienda

**Graduation, while immediately attainable for a few, would require long-term intervention for most.**



La Puente School District, had withdrawn from educating incarcerated students. Drawn to the model of sustainable, internally run, and highly relevant education, LASD sought to replicate FKCS. In August of 2012, FKCS LA was launched.

In an unprecedented cooperative effort, FKCS LA is operated by SFSD's program, yet embedded in the LASD jail system. The LASD built and outfitted classrooms and assigned leadership for implementation. LASD oversees student selection and facilitates the complex daily movement and supervision of inmates. FKCS, under SFSD, employs the teachers, oversees content, and provides administrative oversight — allowing for an economy of scale and extension of existing education expertise that benefits both counties.

Within one year, FKCS LA had enrolled 833 students. The California High School Exit Exam pass rates reached a record high of 86%. The program has since expanded to four other jail facilities and ten LA workforce community sites.

Today, FKCS serves 8,000 students annually (2,000 daily) throughout the state and acts as a mentor school for jail and community based projects across the nation. FKCS is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is a charter

school management non-profit corporation. A credentialed faculty of more than 200 staff and teachers serve a diverse student body in all of the San Francisco and Los Angeles County jails, and more than thirty community campuses. Classes range from adult literacy and English as a second language to high school physics, community college dual-enrollment programs and vocational training. Additionally, all FKCS students complete a course in restorative justice that trains them in practices that enhance accountability for crimes and in conflict resolution methods to avoid future violence.

FKCS's most important achievement is reversing the 'school to prison pipeline', which the ACLU describes as "a disturbing national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the criminal justice systems. Many of these children have learning disabilities or histories of poverty, abuse or neglect." Zero-tolerance policies that criminalize infractions of school rules fuel the pipeline, with police contact, suspension and expulsion being used to respond to behavior that the school is not equipped to address.

FKCS reverses the pipeline by reimagining the learning environment and implementing alternative discipline methods. FKCS has no rent or facilities costs, as these are covered in the county jail budgets. The savings are

redirected to technology, lower student-teacher ratios, internal curriculum development and enrichment programs. The result is a school that defies statistics, with academic gains that far exceed the state average. A recent FKCS graduate, Herman Turincio, eloquently expressed what it is like to have the trajectory of his life changed: “I feel like I’ve been rescued, not arrested.”

The three most important measures used to evaluate success are: recidivism rates, academic gains, and student evaluations. FKCS students have a recidivism rate of 28%, compared to the state rate of 68%. In the 2013–2014 academic year, 58% of FKCS students improved their reading ability by an average of two grade levels. In the same year, 59% of FKCS students improved their math skills again by an average of two grade levels. Ninety-three percent of FKCS students report an overall satisfaction rate, with 90% reporting that they enjoy school.

In addition to the above measures, schooling has had an unforeseen side effect: classes decrease violence. While the rate of inmate-on-inmate violence is 12% annually in the general population, it’s just 2% among those in educational programs, jail officials in LA say. Not long ago the only interaction between officers and inmates was when the former would bark orders at the



latter as they filed out of cells for meals. Now, officers counsel inmates on course work and career choices.

Five Keys students and staff are doggedly focused on a finish line: high school graduation. But getting there is not easy for students with short jail sentences and significant skill gaps.

Charlene (an intelligent, optimistic mother serving a four-month sentence in San Francisco) is 50 units away from graduating. “Do you know why they call it ‘commencement’?” she asks her teacher. “It means we get to start again. A new beginning. I want that.” But Charlene is worried she won’t make it. In four

days she will be released and return to a remote part of California with no adult education services. “There’s nothing up there,” Charlene shrugs. “But my mom and kids are there. I’m homeless otherwise.”

Charlene’s classmate, Susan, will live locally, but faces different obstacles. “Just finish next time you’re locked up,” she advises. “That’s what I’m going to do.” Susan views her return to jail as inevitable. Arrested for prostitution, Susan explains that she too will be homeless after release unless she returns to work with her long-time pimp. “He’ll make sure I’m taken care of,” she explains. “He won’t let me go to

**The FKCS budget is spared numerous typical school expenses... As a program of the sheriff’s department, these expenses are absorbed by the standard jail budget (or by community partners). The result is a highly cost effective and replicable solution to a costly public concern.**

school, but maybe next time I’m inside [jail], I can graduate and do something different.”

Charlene and Susan shed light on FKCS’ troublingly low student retention rates after incarceration. Plans to increase continued enrollment post-release include adding on-line classes and incorporating mobile classroom sites on refurbished MUNI buses, in a program called School on Wheels. FKCS remains confident that these approaches will improve post-incarceration retention rates.

FKCS has consulted with many organizations seeking to educate inmates or those on parole. Its model has been used as a template for organizations across the country. In 2012, FKCS’s Executive Director, Steve Good, was invited to serve on an expert panel that helped develop a reentry education model for the US Department of Education entitled “Supporting Education and Career Advancement for Low-Skill Individuals In Corrections.” FKCS was also tapped to be part of the California Attorney General’s “Back on Track” correctional education model in Los Angeles. Based on these successes, as well as the success of our expansion into Los Angeles, FKCS firmly believes in its potential for replication outside of California, including Massachusetts.



One reason that the FKCS model has drawn the attention of national education leaders is the cost-effectiveness of its approach. The FKCS budget is spared numerous typical school expenses such as rent, facilities, building maintenance, school lunches, student transportation, and school medical and security staff. As a program of the sheriff's department, these expenses are absorbed by the standard jail budget (or by community partners). The result is a highly cost effective and replicable solution to a costly public concern.

#### Footnotes

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2. Glaze, Lauren E. "Correctional Populations in the United States, 2010" *U.S. Department of Justice* (2011): <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus10.pdf>.
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13 Oct. 2011 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/12/michelle-alexander-more-black-men-in-prison-slaves-1850\\_n\\_1007368.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/12/michelle-alexander-more-black-men-in-prison-slaves-1850_n_1007368.html).

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5. Anderson, David A., "The Aggregate Burden of Crime" (January 1999). <http://ssrn.com/abstract=147911>.

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## Los Angeles Police Academy Magnet Programs

**Alise Cayen, Coordinator, M. Ed.**

*Reseda High School, Law & Public Service Magnet/ Police Academy Magnet*

***Runner Up***

## The Problem

**A**fter the 1992 Rodney King riots, the relationship between residents of color and Los Angeles police officers was marked by distrust and hostility. Following the widely publicized police brutality, the officers involved were acquitted at the state level, which sparked the largest riots in the United States since the 1960's. 53 people were killed and over 2,000 injured. Media coverage was full of images of teenagers partaking in the mayhem. Despite city efforts, including the selection of a new, minority police chief, the formation of community relations boards, and the hiring of more minority officers, incidents between police officers and youth of color continued to rise.

The tension between teenagers and the police, often racial in nature, was exacerbated by a lack of personal interaction between the two groups. To complicate matters, youth of color who lacked guidance and structure at a young age were committing crimes, acquiring records that often prevented them from pursuing many professional opportunities as adults.

**...tension between teenagers and the police...was exacerbated by a lack of... interaction between the two...**

## The Solution

**I**n 1995, a former school board member equally troubled by the ongoing tension between the city's youth and law enforcement brought the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles Unified School District together to collaborate on ways to foster police/youth relationships in an officer-led academic environment. Together, the police department and school district crafted the idea of a specialized law enforcement school. The result was the Los Angeles Police Academy Magnet School Program. In 1996 two police academy magnet high school programs were opened and, in 1998, three more were added.

The Los Angeles Police Academy Magnet Programs (often called PAMS) offer a rigorous, high school career pathway curriculum developed for young men and women who express an interest in a law enforcement career. The program provides a better understanding of law enforcement for students no matter what career path they eventually follow, and gives the Los Angeles Police Department a recruiting source for future officers, particularly officers of color. The idea of having officers and teachers work together to provide specialized instruction to at-risk teenagers was a novel form of collaboration that, at the time of its development, had never been done before.

The Police Academy Magnet School Program

curriculum goes beyond the basic high school course requirements, providing students with specialized coursework, training, mentoring, work and volunteer opportunities. The program includes instruction in:

- communication skills, with emphasis on listening, reading, speaking, writing and thinking as it relates to law enforcement;
- basic concepts of criminal law, principles of law enforcement, constitutional law, the criminal justice system and other, law-related topics;
- health training, including mental and physical health;
- physical training in accordance with LAPD standards;
- computer science, particularly programs which relate to law enforcement, such as Compstat and E Crimes; and
  - community service, to develop good citizenship and ongoing community involvement.

Another important aspect of the Los Angeles Police Academy Magnet Programs is that they simulate the LAPD's academy in many of the behavioral expectations they set for participants. Students have to stand at attention when an adult enters the room, address adults as "Ma'am" or "Sir," wear a uniform once a week for inspection, and adhere to specific grooming standards. There are also student leadership, color guard, and drilling opportunities.

Each Police Academy Magnet School has a full time LAPD officer assigned to the program. He or she teaches the physical training class, and works with the program's other teachers to incorporate criminal justice lectures, guest speakers, and basic drilling into the curriculum. To further expose these students to the many facets of police work, the students go on field trips to LAPD's Bomb Squad, Mounted Unit, LAPD Historical Museum, LAPD Crime Lab, and various training facilities. Bonds are formed because many students start seeing their officer as someone who is tangible and caring. In many cases, the officer becomes the parental figure absent in many of these teen's lives.

Reseda High School was chosen to house one of the five Los Angeles Police Academy Magnet Programs and opened its school in 1998. With "Preparing to Serve" as its motto, Reseda High School's Police Academy Magnet Program mission is to prepare interested



students for law enforcement careers, establish a bond between juveniles and their police, and to produce productive, law-abiding citizens who will graduate from high school and go on to thrive in their communities. The police academy coordinator and staff worked collectively to continuously improve the program, in time adding the following components:

- a state-of-the-art forensic science lab so that all students could learn about crime scene trace evidence and analysis;
- an annual CSI Event hosted by the forensics students;
- a Juvenile Law class all entering students must take;
- a “Linked Learning” approach that incorporated law enforcement into all classes; and
- an annual senior trip to Washington D.C. to participate in “National Police Week.”

In 2005, Reseda’s Police Academy Magnet Program began producing remarkable results. The school’s attendance rate has been 96% since 2005, its graduation rate has not been lower than 98% since 2005, and 100% of its graduates go on to college or the military. The graduates value what they have learned in their police academy and many are now serving their communities as police officers, state troopers, military police, forensic scientists, or 911 dispatch operators. Reseda High’s Police Academy transformed

PAMS’s already successful educational platform into a thriving, college preparatory law enforcement program.

Successful Police Academy Magnet Programs are the solution to building community bonds with police and guiding teenagers through the early challenges and choices of adult life. The graduates do not all pursue law enforcement careers, but they do graduate with respect and appreciation for the men and women who keep their city safe. For all of these reasons, PAMS is a win for the community, the schools, the police department, and, most importantly, the students.

Police Academy Magnet Programs are worth replicating. With recent tensions between police and community growing across the country, there is no better time than the present to invest in these programs.

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## The Returning Home Ohio Pilot Project

Terri Power, Senior Program Manager  
*CSH*

*Runner Up*

## Problem Statement

**A**s in many states, Ohio’s prisons are overcrowded. Moreover, mental illness is overrepresented in the prison population. To confront these issues, Ohio is adopting best practices in community corrections in an effort to reduce the overall number of people who are becoming incarcerated, as well as the number of former prisoners who, upon release, are recidivating and thus being locked up again.

Research suggests that “people with mental illnesses are overrepresented in probation and parole populations at estimated rates ranging from two to four times the general population” (Prins and Draper, 2009). In a 2006 Special Report, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) estimated that 705,600 mentally ill adults were incarcerated in state prisons, 78,800 in federal prisons and 479,900 in local jails; together they represented approximately 20% of the incarcerated individuals in this country at that time.

Growing numbers of mentally ill offenders have strained correctional systems. In a September 26, 2013 article in the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Asylums: Jails Swell with Mentally Ill*, it was reported that the three biggest jail systems in the country – Cook County/Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York – have 11,000 inmates under treatment on any given day compared

to the combined 4,000 beds of the largest state-run hospitals in each of the three states where those systems are located.

More recently, The Council of State Governments found 22% of the jail population in Franklin County/Columbus, Ohio has a mental illness. Though the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction reports that, as of January 2015, the number of incarcerated individuals with a mental illness in the state only represents 9% of the total prison population, that is still a rate three times higher than Ohio’s general population, about 3% of whose adults live with mental illness, according to the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

What is the impact on incarcerated individuals of having a mental illness? First, their jail stays are longer than those of other prisoners. In its study of

**“people with mental illnesses are overrepresented in probation and parole populations at estimated rates ranging from two to four times the general population” (Prins and Draper, 2009)**

the jail population in Franklin County/Columbus, the Council of State Governments found that the length of stay for individuals with a mental illness was 32 days as opposed to 17 for other prisoners. Additionally, having a mental illness puts an individual at higher risk of recidivism. Again looking at the Council of State Government findings in Franklin County, 60% of those with a mental illness were rebooked within 3 years, compared to 46% of other prisoners.

In general, individuals with a mental illness need more support and use more resources than those in the general prison population. Formerly incarcerated individuals with a mental illness need more intensive services and supports to reintegrate into the community, but the currently available levels of support and intervention don't match what is needed.

The basic needs of former prisoners are difficult to meet whether a mental illness is in evidence or not. For example, housing options are limited for formerly incarcerated individuals because public housing requires a criminal background check. As a result, in Franklin County, 23% of those entering the shelter system were recently released from jail, according to the homeless management information system. It is the belief of the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) that no one can make progress on his or her goals without a stable place to live, and that is even truer for those with a mental illness.

## The Solution

**R**eturning Home Ohio is a permanent supportive housing program administered by CSH with funds provided by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). Supportive housing is a proven, innovative, and cost effective method for combatting homelessness. It combines affordable, permanent housing with a range of support services that help people with complex challenges live with stability, autonomy and dignity. Supportive housing is most successful with vulnerable populations such as those who are chronically homeless, those who cycle through institutional and emergency systems and are at risk of long term homelessness, and those persons with serious mental illness and dual disorders for whom housing and assistance are critical to long-term recovery and stable living. Supportive housing allows individuals to access and make effective use of treatment and support services to help break cycles of homelessness, institutional placement, and, ultimately, reincarceration.

The housing is provided through a rental subsidy so that tenants pay no more than 30% of their income on rent and utilities. Housing must meet Housing Quality Standards (HQS) set forth by HUD to ensure that the condition of units is “decent, safe and sanitary.”



Supportive housing is neither time-limited nor transitional. The tenant holds a lease with all the associated rights and responsibilities. But housing is only the first step. Coordinated support services are essential. Though services are voluntary, case managers engage tenants to help them realize the benefits of participating. Services are designed to be flexible so as to respond to individual needs and are not a condition of tenancy. The ultimate goals for tenants are housing stability and retention in support programs identified by case managers as necessary for successful, long-term reintegration. Case managers coordinate services with a variety of providers, since it is unlikely that any single provider will offer all the services a tenant may need. Mental health or substance abuse treatment, recovery groups, physical/medical care, financial/money management services, vocational services, and job readiness/job placement are examples of services supportive housing tenants can access.

### **Returning Home Ohio History and Evaluation**

In 2007 CSH and ODRC collaborated to pilot a supportive housing model with the criminal justice population in an effort to reduce recidivism. ODRC felt that there was a gap in community corrections

that halfway houses or transitional housing didn't meet, especially for offenders leaving without post release supervision. ODRC agreed to partner with CSH to pilot a permanent supportive housing solution to fill this gap. It was the first (and only) supportive housing program funded through ODRC and the first (and only) program that didn't require offenders to be on supervision upon release from state prison. ODRC contracted with CSH to run the program, awarding funds to CSH for the execution of grants to providers across the state. CSH and ODRC decided together the agencies that would serve as the initial grantees for the program. CSH then developed and executed contracts with those agencies, provided technical assistance, oversight and monitoring of occupancy, and assistance with prison



outreach, and partnered on evaluation.

The pilot lasted for five years. The pilot's target population consisted of exiting offenders with disabilities who were homeless at the time of arrest, homeless or at risk of homelessness upon exit, and/or became homeless within 120 days after release from prison. During the pilot, disability was broadly defined to include those with serious mental health disorders, developmental disability, severe addiction disorders, and/or co-occurring disorders.

Developing an efficient referral process was vital for the program's early success, and this could only be achieved through engagement with prison staff. During the pilot, referrals from the prisons were received and assessed by the Bureau of Community Sanctions at ODRC. If eligibility was determined, the referrals were forwarded on to one of the contracted providers.

As part of the pilot, ODRC required an evaluation to determine the program's effectiveness. The study was conducted by a team of researchers at the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center in Washington DC.<sup>1</sup> The five-year evaluation measured both process and impact. The original intent was to develop treatment and comparison groups during the first three years of the program, and then follow the groups over the last two years of the pilot, but gathering a sufficient number of people to serve in the comparison group

took longer than anticipated. As a result, the follow up lasted only one year.

The treatment group of 121 Returning Home Ohio (RHO) participants was compared to a group of 118 individuals with similar characteristics who did not receive RHO services. Using propensity weights, the evaluation demonstrated that during the one year follow up period RHO participants were 60% less likely to be reincarcerated and 40% less likely to be rearrested for any crime than the comparison group. In addition, RHO participants received more mental health and substance abuse services and received them sooner than the comparison group. The pilot program concluded on June 30, 2012, and on July 1, 2012 RHO became an ongoing program at ODRC, and a part of its policies governing placement options.

## **Returning Home Ohio Current Program and Process**

When the pilot ended, a workgroup was formed to narrow the target population and eligibility criteria. The disability criterion was changed to include only those offenders with a serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI) or those with HIV. The other criterion, around homelessness and 120 days of release, remained the same. CSH's administrative role in Returning Home Ohio continues as it did during the pilot, but with more responsibility for referrals and expansion. An increase in the number of RHO

units has occurred each of the last 3 years, as will be discussed later.

The referral process changed after the pilot ended, also as a result of a workgroup. Referrals to Returning Home Ohio occur via email directly to the RHO providers from either a prison or a community organization working with homeless/returning offenders. The Bureau of Community Sanctions/ODRC was taken out of the middle of the process. Each provider is responsible to assess and approve or reject a referral. Once a referral is received, assuming there is availability, the provider validates eligibility criteria and fit for their program.

Although CSH does not prescribe a specific method of intervention or a specific housing model, each provider must follow supportive housing guidelines and the revised criteria as described above. Working within the general rubric of supportive housing, providers develop their own specific program criteria and eligibility (on top of the RHO program criteria), housing model, and approach to services.

CSH allows each provider to work within their own areas of expertise and scope of practice. For example, some providers accept ex-offenders with a sex offense and some do not; some have gender specific programs; most use scattered site housing, but some have site-specific housing, etc. Agencies use their agency-

owned housing, private landlords, or a combination of both.

Each program participant is required to have an individualized service plan (ISP). The ISP outlines challenges or issues participants face, with realistic and measureable goals and objectives unique to that individual's needs and strengths. The ISP is completed jointly with the participant and is updated every three months, measuring progress on established goals and, when appropriate, creating new goals. Support services are delivered individually and/or in groups, in the home and the office, and focus on housing stability and not returning to prison. Many of the services concentrate on the mental health, physical health, behavior, criminal thinking and attitudes, and community reintegration of the participant. It is also expected that providers will connect participants to all the government benefits they may be eligible for, and assist with social security when needed.

**...RHO participants were 60% less likely to be reincarcerated and 40% less likely to be rearrested for any crime than the comparison group.**

RHO providers are also responsible for completing monthly occupancy reports, quarterly qualitative outcome reports, and quarterly financial expense reports. In addition, there are expectations related to the maintenance of client charts and training for case managers. Training focuses on areas related to permanent supportive housing and working with a criminal justice population. CSH provides much of this training through on-site technical assistance and RHO meetings held periodically in Columbus.

### **Returning Home Ohio – Moving on**

In 2012, a moving-on program was established as part of RHO in order to keep the length of stay in RHO reasonable and acceptable to ODRC, as well as provide an opportunity for discussion about next steps with RHO tenants. The moving-on program helps RHO tenants reach their full potential and increase their independence whenever possible. The program is managed through a tool called the Tenant Status Evaluation (TSE). The TSE assesses the status of a tenant in terms of growth and stability, identifying any continued barriers so as to determine if the tenant is able to move on or needs to continue in RHO. The tool is completed jointly with each participant nine months after admission into RHO and updated every three months after that. The TSE measures information in several domains: housing, finances/income, education and employment, substance abuse

and mental health, physical health, criminal activity, living skills, and supportive services. Each domain is scored based on responses. The score serves as the foundation for recommending whether an individual moves on or continues in RHO.

At the same time that the RHO moving-on program was implemented, a new housing subsidy was established called Home for Good. Home for Good was established specifically as a safety net for those RHO tenants who lack other housing options, but would not be eligible for housing subsidies for what could be a long period of time due to their criminal backgrounds. Home for Good provides another moving-on option for those individuals.

ODRC funds Returning Home Ohio at 100% and has done so since the inception of the program. Funds cover costs associated with staff who administer the program as well as grants to the contracted agencies. ODRC investment started with 100 units at a cost of \$1 million and will be, as of FY2016, 170 units at a cost of \$2,058,021.

Since the end of the evaluation period, CSH has continued to monitor several qualitative outcomes associated with housing stability. These outcomes were developed as part of a workgroup and implemented in program year 2012. They include housing stability (length of stay), utilization of voluntary services, receipt of income, rate of

employment, increase in public benefits, and successful housing outcomes, which could include moving to other subsidized or unsubsidized housing, moving in with family or friends, or moving to another more appropriate level of care, such as a nursing home. Overall, the program saw increases in most of the target goals over a three-year period; however two measures came in consistently under the target: receipt of income and successful housing outcomes.

As a result, next year CSH will focus more heavily on employment strategies. CSH is looking into pursuing partnerships with community organizations with expertise in employing ex-offenders. The goal is to increase the rate of both obtaining and retaining employment for RHO clients. CSH understands how integral employment is to someone's self-esteem and successful community reintegration.

ODRC has increased funding for RHO over the course of its existence. The first two phases of expansion served to increase the number of housing units in the four urban areas in which RHO was already present (Columbus, Cleveland, Dayton, and Cincinnati). In program year 2013/2014, we expanded to the next largest urban area (Akron). This year, in program year 2014/2015, expansion is occurring in two rural areas (Licking County, adjacent to Columbus/Franklin County, and Butler County, adjacent to Cincinnati/Hamilton County). With the addition of these two new areas, the number of RHO units increased to 160.

The next phase of RHO is to pilot a diversion initiative. The plan is to start out very small in Cincinnati/Hamilton County with ten units. The target population will be participants in felony mental health court. All other RHO eligibility criteria will apply. Individuals in mental health court are at risk of going to prison and the goal is to prevent incarceration rather than decrease reincarceration. With the addition of these ten units, RHO will have a total of 170 units in Ohio.

#### Footnotes

1. Fontaine, Jocelyn; Gilchrist-Scott, Douglas; Roman, John; Taxy, Samuel; Roman, Caterina. "Supportive Housing for Returning Prisoners: Outcomes and Impacts of the Returning Home-Ohio Pilot Project," *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center*, 2012.

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## Intelligence-Driven Prosecution

Cyrus Vance, Jr.  
District Attorney of New York County

*Runner Up*

## The Problem

**T**he traditional roles of police and prosecutors are best described in the opening narration of the television show *Law and Order*: “In the criminal justice system, the people are represented by two separate yet equally important groups: the police, who investigate crime, and the district attorneys, who prosecute the offenders.”

When Cyrus R. Vance Jr. was inaugurated as New York County District Attorney in January 2010, innovations in policing were already gaining widespread attention, altering the traditional role of police in the process. Yet prosecutors still maintained business as usual—reacting to individual cases referred by the police. They were one of the most under-utilized crime-fighting resources in the criminal justice system.

Prosecutors have wide discretion in how they go about pursuing a case, determining whether to bring charges, which charges to bring, whether to request bail, and what sentence to recommend. These decisions can dramatically change the outcome of a case, as well as the wider impact a case can have on crime in the community.

A prosecutor’s office also has enormous capacity to collect valuable criminal intelligence. While the police, when they make an arrest, have a case for only 24 hours prior to arraignment, a prosecutor may have

that same case for more than a year, and in that time interview dozens of witnesses and develop multiple informants. Each case represents an opportunity to collect information on broader crime conditions in the city’s neighborhood and trends in the types of crime being committed. Most of the time, however, opportunities to share and use this intelligence were never realized.

Despite the crime patterns that may have emerged and the potential links among criminals that might have been discovered, investigative information and other

**Each case represents an opportunity to collect information on broader crime conditions in the city’s neighborhood and trends in the types of crime being committed. Most of the time, however, opportunities to share and use this intelligence were never realized.**

data were maintained in silos, written on thousands of legal pads scattered across the desks of hundreds of prosecutors. This information was relied upon for the prosecution of an individual case and then filed away, never to be looked at again.

For example, two shootings committed in the same neighborhood might be prosecuted by two different assistant district attorneys, in two different units, located in two different buildings. Those very capable prosecutors might even try the cases in two adjacent courtrooms and never realize the defendants belong to the same gang. If another gang member was arrested for a retaliatory shooting committed months later, that case would be assigned to a third attorney, who would likely not even know about the first two cases, much less make the connections between them.

Intelligence-driven prosecution was developed to break down those silos and make previously unknown connections among cases by gathering, organizing, and sharing actionable intelligence.

## The Solution

**I**ntelligence-driven prosecution represents a fundamental change in the traditional role of a prosecutor. Rather than merely responding to police arrests and prosecuting the offenders, the New York County District Attorney's Office ("DANY") now proactively reduces crime through innovative enforcement and prevention strategies.

The intelligence-driven prosecution model reimagines the role of a prosecutor from a reactive case-processor to a proactive partner in the effort to reduce crime. In May 2010, DA Vance created the Crime Strategies Unit ("CSU") to develop and implement the intelligence-driven prosecution model. Inspired by community prosecution's focus on local partnerships, intelligence-driven prosecution begins with a clear understanding of criminal activity in the city's communities formed through timely sharing of information and close coordination with law enforcement and community partners.

CSU divides Manhattan into five geographic areas and assigns a senior prosecutor to focus on and understand criminal activity in each area, rather than have them maintain a traditional caseload. CSU prosecutors identify entrenched crime hotspots and individuals committing or causing significant crime, then



work with prosecutors throughout DANY to design proactive investigative and prosecutorial strategies to address them. Analysis and dissemination of available information is vital to effectively prosecuting individuals driving crime in each community.

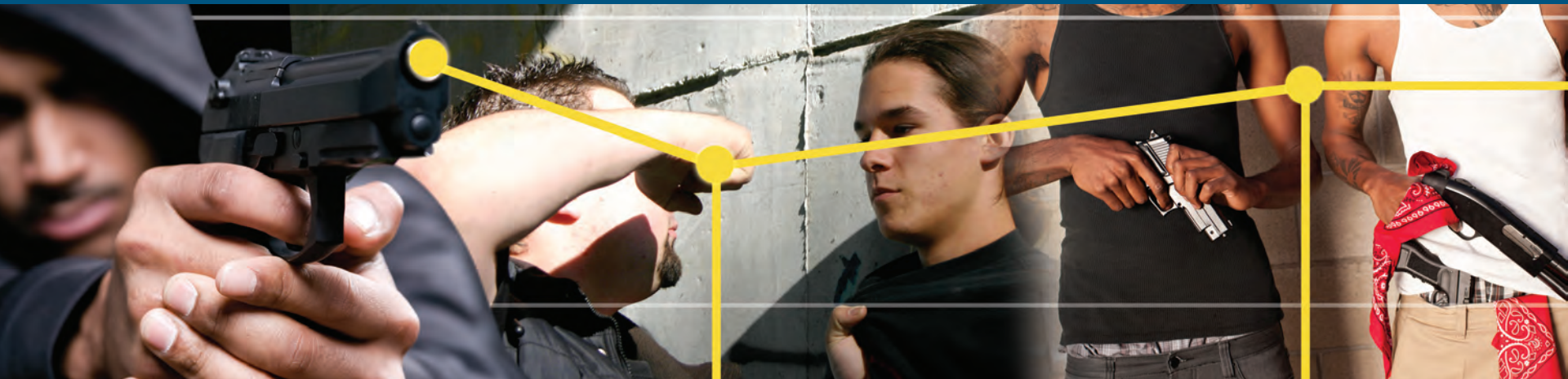
One of the key innovations of intelligence-driven prosecution is the ability to make effective use of the vast amounts of information gleaned from thousands of cases DANY prosecutes each year, information that previously went unexamined and unused. For example, CSU developed an arrest alert system and entered all of its priority targets into it.<sup>1</sup> The system automatically notifies prosecutors and law enforcement partners within hours of a priority target's arrest, ensuring that those individuals won't slip through the cracks of the criminal justice system. CSU also created DANY 311, a system by which prosecutors can ask CSU for assistance with intelligence questions to enhance their cases.

Now if a shooting is committed by a gang member, CSU prosecutors will be notified by the arrest alert system and reach out to the attorney assigned the case, sharing all of the intelligence they have gathered on the defendant and providing context to the crime.

They can also connect the prosecutor with their police contacts, who may have even more information to share. When another gang member is arrested for a shooting in the same neighborhood, CSU will again be notified by the arrest alert system, and will connect the prosecutors assigned to each case so they can coordinate their investigative efforts and prosecutions. If a retaliatory shooting is committed months later, CSU will be notified and ensure that all three cases are prosecuted collaboratively.

CSU's focus on information gathering and dissemination allows prosecutors throughout the office — not just those in CSU — to discover links between crimes and crime patterns that historically went unnoticed, in the process taking data-driven crime prevention to the next level and transforming all 500 of the office's attorneys into de facto community prosecutors focused on the same goal of not just prosecuting crime, but reducing it.

One of the benefits of intelligence-driven prosecution is its low cost. As it represents fundamentally just rethinking the role of the prosecutor, the model does not require significant additional resources beyond those already appropriated. At DANY, implementation



was achieved by repurposing existing resources and personnel. Out of an office of approximately 500 attorneys, six were reassigned to CSU and no longer maintained a traditional caseload. Six intelligence analysts and a unit secretary were also assigned, bringing the current staffing budget for CSU to approximately \$1 million per year, slightly less than 1% of DANY's annual operating budget.

Additionally, some of the tools that CSU has developed to further intelligence-driven prosecution, such as the arrest alert system, have required internal IT resources. We estimate that approximately \$100,000 of internal IT resources are devoted to CSU projects each year, though these products are used throughout the office and not exclusively by CSU.

The intelligence-driven prosecution model was implemented by repurposing existing resources,

with personnel funded through DANY's standard operating budget. Additionally, in partnership with the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys and the Center for Court Innovation, the office was recently awarded one of five "Encouraging Innovation: Field-Initiated Programs" grants from the United States Department of Justice to evaluate intelligence-driven prosecution and develop toolkits to export the key tenets of the model to other jurisdictions. The study is ongoing and expected to be completed toward the end of 2015. DANY receives \$120,000 over two years from this grant, which partially funds the Chief of the Crime Strategies Unit and one analyst. In total, about 8% of CSU funding is derived from the grant.

### Outcomes

The most significant qualitative achievement of intelligence-driven prosecution is fundamentally

changing the role of the prosecutor. It has reduced information silos, improved communication, and harnessed the collective resources of prosecutors throughout DANY toward the common goal of crime reduction. It has also greatly strengthened the office's collaboration with other law enforcement agencies and community partners.

More concretely, intelligence-driven prosecution has contributed to a significant decline in crime, especially gun violence, as a result of multiple, targeted prosecutions of violent gang members. Over the past four years, DANY and the New York Police Department ("NYPD") have targeted multiple violent gangs with the goal of incapacitating the most violent gang members and reducing gun violence. In East Harlem, formerly home to 14 violent gangs and the location of three major gang prosecutions, shooting incidents have fallen by 37% since the adoption of intelligence-driven prosecution in 2010. Shooting incidents Manhattan-wide have fallen by 46%, over double the citywide drop of 21%. Homicides in Manhattan have fallen by almost half, from 70 in 2010 to 37 in 2014.

In June 2014, with information gathered and disseminated using intelligence-driven prosecution, and working closely with the NYPD, the office executed the largest gang indictment in New York City history, charging 103 defendants from three gangs with multiple shootings, beatings, and other mayhem

in and around two public housing complexes in West Harlem. Gang members were responsible for killing two people, shooting and injuring another nineteen, and exchanging gunfire dozens of other times. The crime declines in these neighborhoods following the indictments have been stark. They represent intelligence-driven prosecution's most significant achievement to date.

Of course, DANY recognizes there are a number of factors that influence crime rates, particularly the crime-fighting efforts of the NYPD. In our view, however, the unprecedented crime declines in the targeted neighborhoods where intelligence-driven prosecution has been applied demonstrate the significant impact this model can have.

It should also be noted that DANY actively builds partnerships in the communities where it employs

**In East Harlem, formerly home to 14 violent gangs ... shooting incidents have fallen by 37% since the adoption of intelligence-driven prosecution...**

intelligence-driven prosecution. CSU began a West Harlem Stakeholders Group to ensure the community's concerns are heard by law enforcement, and gives gang awareness lectures to youth in the area. The Community Partnerships Unit opened a new site for DANY's Saturday Night Lights program, which provides youth sports training on weekends. These efforts, while not within the traditional purview of a prosecutor's office, are part of the wider crime-prevention efforts of intelligence-driven prosecution.

At a time when there are questions regarding equity in the criminal justice system and the tactics used by law enforcement to reduce and prevent crime, intelligence-driven prosecution helps ensure that the impact of large-scale law enforcement actions, such as gang interdictions, are focused where they are truly needed and target only the most violent offenders. As we engage the community and explain, with data, why law enforcement is engaged in certain areas as opposed to others, intelligence-driven prosecution helps reinforce the legitimacy of the criminal justice system — for police and prosecutors alike — in the communities they serve.

For example, a large investigation targeting two gangs was stopped when, through the intelligence-gathering work of CSU and the NYPD, it was determined that the feud had been ended by the gang

members themselves. As a result, those enforcement resources were redirected towards a separate, active gang feud involving multiple shootings and three murders. In April 2013, this investigation resulted in an indictment of 62 members of three rival gangs that were terrorizing a small area of East Harlem, shooting and killing each other, and injuring local residents caught in the crossfire. Although more than 180 gang members were identified, because of intelligence-driven prosecution, we were able to focus our prosecution on the most violent. By helping differentiate between gang members who are essential law enforcement targets and those who are “hangers-on” and can safely be excluded from prosecution, intelligence-driven prosecution maximizes the impact of law enforcement actions on community safety while

**By helping differentiate between gang members who are essential law enforcement ... intelligence-driven prosecution maximizes the impact of law enforcement actions on community safety...**

limiting adverse collateral consequences, reinforcing the legitimacy and efficacy of the criminal justice system.

## Scope

Intelligence-driven prosecution has grown significantly since its inception in 2010, but the fundamental goal has remained the same: to harness the collective resources of a prosecutor's office to reduce crime. CSU's first task was to develop a comprehensive understanding of crime throughout the jurisdiction and collect criminal intelligence, but, as it gained experience, it developed a number of new projects that built on the original vision, including developing the arrest alert system discussed above.

As other prosecutors became aware of CSU, its intelligence expertise, and its relationships with police precincts, they began proactively reaching out to CSU for help gathering and analyzing intelligence on their own cases. In order to formalize and streamline the process, CSU developed DANY 311, a centralized way for prosecutors to ask intelligence questions of CSU. The project was not part of CSU's initial scope, but it naturally grew out of the expertise they developed in intelligence collection and certainly fell within the unit's mission to improve information sharing and, thus, prosecutions throughout the office. It is now an essential part of CSU's work, with more than

2,000 requests submitted to DANY 311 in the past two years, including more than 600 from external law enforcement partners.

Intelligence-driven prosecution has also led to a number of other initiatives as part of DANY's wider crime-prevention mission. Again, as mentioned above, DANY launched the Saturday Night Lights program in Harlem in 2011, opening gyms with exceptional sports programming for kids in the community. The program has since expanded to ten program sites, serving approximately 500 youth every weekend. DANY has also begun to hold Offender Notification Forums, based on the intervention designed by Yale Law professor Tracey Meares, at which law enforcement, service providers, and ex-offenders meet each month with violent felony offenders leaving prison to inform them of the severe consequences of re-offending as well as the resources available to them in the community.

Thus far, the intelligence-driven prosecution model has been largely focused on combatting gang violence in Manhattan. Gang violence is a priority, but there are other important issues to which the model can be applied — such as domestic violence, identity theft, grand larceny, and cybercrime — and the office is working to bring intelligence-driven prosecution to our efforts in tackling these crimes.

Beyond our efforts to expand the model within our

office, DANY has been working to export intelligence-driven prosecution to jurisdictions across the country. Although the New York County District Attorney's office is one of the largest in the nation, intelligence-driven prosecution need not be limited to large jurisdictions. The tools required to implement the model's core principles do not require a significant investment of resources or copying the exact model developed here. In fact, a number of jurisdictions, large and small, have visited DANY to learn about intelligence-driven prosecution and implement it themselves, including the District Attorneys of Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the Bronx, the Delaware State Attorney General's Office, the Philadelphia DA's Office, the Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore, the Jackson County Prosecutor's Office (Kansas City, MO), the San Francisco DA's Office, the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office, and the Hudson County DA's Office (NJ).

As a result of the widespread interest, DANY recently convened a national symposium for prosecutors and other criminal justice practitioners to learn the key principles of intelligence-driven prosecution. A second symposium will be offered to approximately 100 national and regional law enforcement partners this summer. Additionally, through the Encouraging Innovation grant from the Department of Justice mentioned above, DANY is developing a formal

curriculum of best practices to go with toolkits for offices that want to implement intelligence-driven prosecution in their jurisdictions.

#### Footnote

1. Priority targets are identified based on their prior involvement in violent crime. The factors that lead to that determination vary – e.g. prior arrests/rap sheet, known gang-member, known to be involved in violence (but not necessarily convicted), victim of violence but uncooperative, social media instigating, etc. – but the focus is on the most violent. Many gangs have upwards of 50 members, but there are about 10 or so in most gangs who will actually pick up a gun and shoot someone. It is those who DANY identifies based on intelligence gathering and make our primary targets.

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BETTER GOVERNMENT COMPETITION

*Runner Up*

## **Paying for Success in Community Corrections**

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## The Problem

**R**ecidivism rates have not changed over the last several decades, even as the prison population has quadrupled, meaning the total number of recidivating former prisoners has skyrocketed, contributing significantly to the explosion of the prison population and burdening states with substantial costs without much return on public safety. In 2014 the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that two-thirds of prisoners are rearrested and half return to prison within 3 years of release.<sup>1</sup>

Nearly 80% of prisoners are released to some form of community supervision. Thus, effective post-prison community corrections that reduce recidivism are key to safely reducing the prison population.

Annually, the PA Department of Corrections (PA DOC) spends more than \$100 million on its residential halfway house (community corrections) system, consisting of 14 state-run Community Corrections Centers (CCCs), and roughly 40 privately run Community Contract Facilities (CCFs) with which PA DOC contracts.

Despite the large investment, an independent study conducted in 2009 by the University of Cincinnati found that parolees who went directly home after prison actually had lower recidivism rates than

**In 2014 the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that two-thirds of prisoners are rearrested and half return to prison within 3 years of release.<sup>1</sup>**

parolees who went through a CCC or CCF.<sup>2</sup> A second study (the PA DOC 2013 Recidivism Report) confirmed the results.<sup>3</sup> It was evident the system was failing.

The problem is not unique to Pennsylvania. Nationwide research on the effectiveness of community corrections is generally mixed.

Disappointing outcomes are not uncommon. Another study by the University of Cincinnati, this time of the Ohio community corrections system, found similarly disappointing recidivism results, especially when the wrong types of offenders were placed in community corrections centers.<sup>4</sup> A series of New York Times articles spotlighted poor outcomes in the privately operated community corrections system in New Jersey.<sup>5</sup>



## The Solution

**A**s a result of the poor outcomes it was achieving, in early 2013 the PA DOC completely re-bid all of its contracts for the operation of CCF centers. As part of the re-bidding process, a new and innovative idea was pursued. The idea was to lay out the primary goal of recidivism reduction directly in these new contracts. The belief was that contractors should be held accountable for their role in reducing recidivism, and that they will respond to this goal if it is made explicit, contractual, and, most importantly, it is incentivized.

### Performance-Based Contracts

New contracts for the operation of all CCF centers became effective in July 2013. They are 3-year contracts, with possible 2-year extensions. Under them, CCF providers are now required to maintain a baseline recidivism rate as defined by the data on re-arrest and re-incarceration for CCFs in the period immediately before the new contracts began.

Recidivism rates are measured in 6-month follow-up increments throughout the life of the contracts (with the exception of the first period, which is a 3-month recidivism follow-up period). To make a fair assessment, the criminal risk composition of each center is taken into account when determining the appropriate baseline recidivism rate. In other words, centers with higher risk offenders should not be held to the same recidivism rate as centers with lower risk offenders.



Also considered in the contract is the discharge rate of each individual CCF. The optimal solution is to maximize successful discharges from the CCFs while minimizing post-discharge recidivism rates. Without requiring a baseline discharge rate for each CCF, individual centers might be able to manipulate their post-release recidivism rate by dropping their discharge rate and only allowing the “best of the best” candidates to be released from their center, in this way likely reducing their recidivism rate and qualifying for the incentive in their contract.

If a CCF’s recidivism rate falls below the baseline in a given 6-month period, the center receives a 1% increase in its daily per client reimbursement during the following 6-month contract period. Conversely, if a CCF’s recidivism rate is above the baseline range in a given 6-month period, the contractor is issued a warning. If the recidivism rate stays above the baseline range for two consecutive 6-month periods, the contract with that CCF is canceled.

This “performance incentive funding” contract model was developed in partnership with the University of Maryland. In 2011, Dr. Kiminori Nakamura (Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland) received a U.S. Department of Justice

grant to fund a “researcher-practitioner partnership” with the PA DOC. Dr. Nakamura spent a considerable amount of time working onsite at the PA DOC as an “embedded criminologist.” Dr. Nakamura worked in consultation with PA DOC research staff to craft the mechanics for measuring recidivism, and the specific contractual language used.

### First Marking Period Results

During the first “marking period” for the new contracts, 11 CCFs saw their recidivism rates fall below the baseline, and thus became eligible to receive the 1% incentive. Only 1 CCF saw its recidivism rate rise above the baseline. Overall, the recidivism rate for the entire CCF system went down 16.4% during the first marking period. That represents 58 fewer former prisoners who had committed a crime during the first three-months of the contract as compared with the period immediately prior to the contract period. That represents 58 people who were not the victim of crimes that might otherwise have been committed.

Further, the 16.4% reduction in recidivism achieved by the privately run CCFs was nearly four times the reduction achieved by the state operated CCCs during the same time period. These early results provide

preliminary confirmation that the strategy is working, that contractors respond to incentives, and that recidivism rates can be reduced as a result.

To date, the only cost associated with implementing the approach is the cost of paying the CCFs a higher reimbursement rate based on their demonstrated ability to reduce recidivism during the first marking period. The increased cost for the 11 CCFs who improved their performance is, however, more than offset by savings achieved by having fewer parolees return to prison.

One potential obstacle to the implementation of this model is resistance by contractors to the idea of being held accountable for offenders' behavior after their discharge from a Center. Correctional systems have traditionally paid more attention to offenders' behavior in custody rather than to their post-release outcomes. The performance incentive approach is so groundbreaking precisely because it incentivizes community corrections providers to put more effort into changing offender behavior in the long-term, holding providers responsible for public safety outcomes in the process.

PA DOC worked through contractor resistance by reinforcing to them the need for accountability for

public safety outcomes, and by educating them on strategies (e.g., treatment programs, approaches to supervision, etc.) that they could adopt to have a real impact on recidivism and to meet their contractual performance target.

While PA DOC has not yet systematically documented the implementation of the strategies in which it educated CCF contractors (they are in the process of doing so), feedback has been positive and there is, at this point, little remaining resistance from contractors. Even if there were, the results of the



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58 PEOPLE  
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**The increased cost for the 11 CCFs who improved their performance is... more than offset by savings achieved by having fewer parolees return to prison.**

first marking period of the new contracts clearly demonstrated that reducing recidivism is indeed possible.

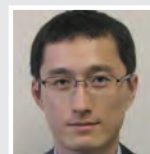
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# **A Multi-Agency Approach to Promote Reentry Solutions, Reduce Recidivism and Control Costs**

**Daniel Bennett**

*Massachusetts Secretary of Public Safety and Security*

***Special  
Recognition***

## The Problem

**L**ike many states, Massachusetts struggles with high recidivism rates and the cost of sustaining its criminal justice system. Over half of adult offenders released from the Department of Correction (DOC), Houses of Correction (HOCs), or under the supervision of Parole or Probation, are convicted of new offenses.<sup>1</sup>

Massachusetts has taken steps to reduce recidivism in recent years. The Commonwealth implemented a more accurate inmate security classification system at the DOC to safely transfer inmates to more appropriate, lower levels of security. Revamping the classification system to better reflect an inmate's risk profile has both reduced prison costs and lowered recidivism by 18–21%<sup>2</sup>, as more inmates are given the chance to participate in reentry programming through Minimum Security facilities. Through the collaboration of county Sheriffs and the DOC, inmates classified as Minimum Security now “step down” to county HOCs in closer proximity to their reentry community prior to release. Despite these reforms, Massachusetts's recidivism rates remain high and the costs tied to incarceration and inmate health care continue to drain state coffers, forcing policymakers to pursue cost-effective

alternatives to incarceration that will effectively reduce the prison population without posing an increased risk to the general public.<sup>3</sup>

Compounding the problem, Parole lacks the capacity to house inmates in Long-Term Residential Programming (LTRP), which has created a backlog of 400 parole-eligible inmates required to participate in an LTRP as a condition of release (as of March 16, 2015).<sup>4</sup> Instead, these inmates are completing their sentences in prison (at a significantly higher cost) without the post-release supervision and LTRP services that set the stage for successful reentry.

**Over half of adult offenders released from the Department of Correction (DOC), Houses of Correction (HOCs), or under the supervision of Parole or Probation, are convicted of new offenses.<sup>1</sup>**

## The Solution

**P**rior sentencing reforms, recent policy changes relative to inmate classification, and improved reentry programming have helped reduce the Massachusetts prison population by nearly 1,000 inmates over the past two years.<sup>5</sup> The decrease in population led to the closure of several inmate housing units across multiple facilities within the DOC. Consequently, there are facilities being underutilized that have the capacity to handle additional inmates. Given the current shortfall of Parole beds for LTRP, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security Secretary Daniel Bennett proposes repurposing an underutilized DOC facility into a long-term residential treatment center for parolees. Repurposing a DOC facility would vastly increase Parole's capacity and help facilitate the release of additional parolees who have received, and will receive, a positive parole vote conditioned upon long-term residential treatment.

Converting an underutilized facility at one agency into new programming space that will help alleviate an existing burden at another, the creation of an LTRP facility for parolees will ensure the safe transition from incarceration to the community of hundreds of parolees annually.<sup>6</sup> This multi-agency approach will serve to further reduce the

Massachusetts prison population and associated costs, while cutting recidivism rates across the state.<sup>7</sup>

The start-up costs for repurposing an existing DOC prison into a dedicated Parole LTRP facility would consist largely of new staffing needs unique to residential programming. The project will not require new construction, and facility operating costs (outside



of security) would remain largely unchanged since the building currently serves as a Minimum Security prison. Secretary Bennett currently estimates new start-up costs at \$1,025,000; however, he anticipates that all costs will be more than offset by the savings DOC achieves.<sup>8</sup>

Funding for the proposed Parole LTRP facility will come from the cost savings generated by realigning DOC staff and resources to more efficiently serve its inmate population. It will be funded by both the DOC and Parole operating budget line items that fall under EOPSS. Implementing the proposal will not require any new taxes or fees.

Immediate cost savings will come through the maximization of DOC facility and staff resources to more efficiently serve the inmate population and make up for staffing shortfalls. More specifically, DOC

**The project will not require new construction, and facility operating costs (outside of security) would remain largely unchanged since the building currently serves as a Minimum Security prison.**

will reallocate inmates and correction staff to take advantage of empty prison units and reduce overtime for correction officers in prisons with the greatest staffing needs. Realigning inmates from the proposed LTRP facility is projected to save \$1 million annually in prison operating and overtime costs.<sup>9</sup>

After the realignment of DOC inmates and staff, Secretary Bennett will be able to repurpose an existing Minimum Security facility into an LTRP facility for use by Parole. Currently, Parole has zero dedicated beds; however, the Secretary estimates that Parole would be able to serve 400 parolees per year with the 200-bed facility under consideration.<sup>10</sup> The expanded capacity would clear the backlog of 400 parolees, whose release is conditioned upon LTRP placement, and allow for a significant increase in the overall number of parolees who can receive treatment and supervision.

Moving eligible parolees to an LTRP facility will generate additional budget savings equal to the cost difference in security and supervision for parolees as compared to inmates in a Minimum Security prison.<sup>11</sup> The operating costs for a parole facility are significantly less than those of a prison, due to the lower level of security, supervision, and care required for parolees compared to prisoners. Furthermore, the increased use of long-term residential programming through Parole will directly contribute to reductions in current recidivism rates.<sup>12</sup>



Recommended by the Commission to Study the Criminal Justice System, the Pew-MacArthur Results First Initiative worked with the Commonwealth to implement a cost-benefit model<sup>13</sup> to help policymakers implement programs that have proven to be effective and produce a higher marginal return for every additional tax dollar spent. The model measures the cost of recidivism, which includes the marginal costs associated with each program and the indirect impact on victims and other taxpayer costs. Results First projects that reentry housing programs, like the proposed Parole LTRP, can effectively reduce recidivism by 6-11.3%.

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2. Findings for the Massachusetts Results first Model Analysis of Select Recidivism-Reduction Programs and Practices (2014)
3. Department of Correction inmate cost per capita for 2014
4. MA Parole LTRP wait list as of March 16, 2015
5. MA Department of Correction inmate census 2010-2014
6. Estimates based on 200-bed capacity at proposed facility

7. Findings for the Massachusetts Results first Model Analysis of Select Recidivism-Reduction Programs and Practices (2014)
8. Executive Office of Public Safety Cost Projections
9. Executive Office of Public Safety savings projections from Department of Corrections operating budget
10. Estimates based on 200 beds used for two six-month programs per year
11. Comparison of Department of Correction costs vs. MA Parole
12. Findings for the Massachusetts Results first Model Analysis of Select Recidivism-Reduction Programs and Practices (2014)
13. Findings for the Massachusetts Results first Model Analysis of Select Recidivism-Reduction Programs and Practices (2014)

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## *Special Recognition*

# **The Ex-Offender Workforce Entrepreneur Project**

**Dave McMahon, Co-Executive Director**  
*Dismas House of Massachusetts, Inc.*

## The Problem

According to a 2002 Urban Institute study,<sup>1</sup> Worcester County is the second biggest destination for those released from prison in Massachusetts. Offenders reentering the greater Worcester community after incarceration face a bewildering set of issues. They often meet with poor continuity between drug treatment plans, a lack of housing or significant barriers to the housing that is available, and, most significantly, a lack of access to jobs.

Prisoners themselves understand that work is the key to their future success. Urban Institute research shows that over 80 percent of prisoners interviewed one month before release say that a job trumps all other ways of staying out of prison.<sup>2</sup>

But getting a job is only half the battle. According to a Council of State Governments report, a thorough assessment of skills and job aptitude, an individual job plan, job training or skill development, and a job coach for up to a year are all needed to ensure that a former prisoner lands and keeps a job. Moreover, programs to give prisoners real work experience before they are released can jumpstart the journey from prisoner to successful wage-earner and community member. The simple fiscal reality is that finding work for ex-cons can prevent crime and save states

money. Employment integrates former prisoners into mainstream society, provides personal and family stability, boosts self-worth, and, most important from a fiscal perspective, reduces spending and adds to state revenues.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of this, government policy has increasingly focused on addressing the obstacles that ex-offenders face in accessing employment opportunities. However, it is clear that many barriers remain. Ex-offenders have disproportionately low skill-levels and formal qualifications, poor employment histories, and high levels of unemployment. And 75% of prisoners are released from custody without having secured work (Home Office, 2004:15). Similarly, they are confronted with the often negative attitudes of employers who are reluctant, or simply unwilling, to employ individuals with a criminal record (Brown et al, 2006; CIPD, 2007).<sup>4</sup>

**“...over 80 percent of prisoners interviewed one month before release say that a job trumps all other ways of staying out of prison.”<sup>2</sup>**

## The Solution

In 2011, Dismas, a private organization that has been integrating former offenders into the community for 25 years with a recidivism rate over the last five years of roughly half the state average (see Figure 1), launched a new initiative – a 35-acre farm, located in Oakham, Massachusetts, run by the residents. The farm’s revenue is used to help sustain



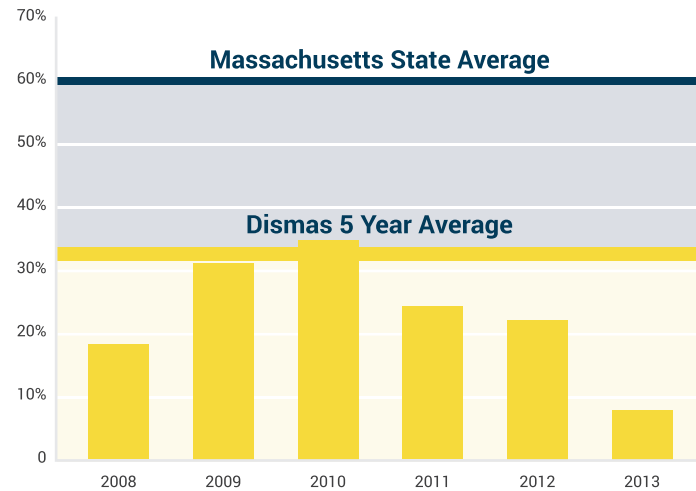
its operations. While the project launched as a residential program, the business aspect of the project has been growing at a 10% rate since inception. The goal is a fully self-sustaining operation.

The Dismas Family Farm staff teach the residents marketable farm skills and engage them in maintaining the current animal and vegetable operations. In addition, there are reentry activities geared to maximize the potential of each former

prisoner that include group and individual therapy, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, healthcare access, anger management, parenting and other classes.

Residents manage every aspect of the farm, from animal husbandry to crop rotation, haying operations to marketing. Residents also manage all aspects of a thirty-five vendor metrowest farmers market, including permitting, marketing, vendor recruitment and management, transportation, sales, even weights and measures requirements. Residents also operate

Figure 1 - Dismas House Recidivism Rates



a farm subscription service through which farm customers, instead of making a charitable donation, subscribe to a seasonal bag of farm products including vegetables, meat, and eggs. There are currently 50 members.

In a fully stocked woodshop, residents learn to build all manner of wood products from cutting boards to Adirondack chairs, from Christmas toys to birdhouses. Once they have graduated from an “apprentice” phase, residents can use the woodshop to produce and sell their own products, the revenue from which is deposited in savings accounts for the residents’ successful transition to society.

Or residents can raise their own pigs for slaughter and sell the proceeds. A partnership with area farms also allows residents, once they have achieved certain benchmarks, to use their newfound skills on area farms that are in desperate need of labor.

Currently, the Farm is slated to produce \$45,000 in revenue in 2015 from three restaurant partnerships (Armsby Abbey, Isador’s Deli, Picasso’s), our ownership and management of the Westborough Farmers Market ([www.eatfresh01581.com](http://www.eatfresh01581.com)), the farm subscription service, and the sale of additional wood products and candles. The goal is to continue to build the enterprise, bring more offenders into the project,

and create a mail-delivery service and web presence, all with the goal of continuing to help offenders transition from prison to employment.

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## The Employment Bridge Project

Michelle Jones

*Indiana Women's Prison*

***Special  
Recognition***

**T**he proposed Employment Bridge Project (EBP) is an education and re-entry program wherein high-performing prisoners serving mid-to-long term sentences would have the opportunity to gain work experience as a state employee. It is a method by which they would be able, through their employment, to repay the state for educating them.

Persons eligible for EBP would be those who have earned a 4-year degree while incarcerated and who meet the requirements of the current clemency policy in their state. Such policies typically mandate outstanding prison conduct and achievements, and a sentence of more than 20 years. Eligible participants would need to be emotionally stable, have completed significant rehabilitative programming, and thereby be considered an asset to the correctional facility in which they reside.



The goals of EBP would be as follows:

- To channel money currently used to warehouse prisoners into a program wherein former prisoners contribute to and repay their state for educating and paroling them.
- To provide a path for high-performing men and women who have earned their college degrees in prison to re-enter the workforce.
- To reduce the recidivism rate by investing in high-performing prisoners to break the cycle of incarceration.
- To create a stable population of persons exiting prison.

### **How would EBP work?**

Once a person becomes eligible for clemency (in Indiana, after having served 2/3 of his/her sentence), he or she would be able to request a EBP hearing. EBP hearings would operate in much the same way as clemency hearings, but with less emphasis on past history and more on the present conduct and future potential of the candidate. In effect, the EBP hearing would be more like an intensive job interview.

In addition to the candidate, testimony would be permitted from a DOC facility representative, such as a Unit Counselor who would present a progress report listing the candidate's education, employment history, Department of Labor apprenticeships, rehabilitative, cognitive and/or behavioral programming, and

disciplinary sanctions. In Indiana, family members and DOC-facility volunteers are currently authorized to give testimony at clemency hearings and that should continue in EBP hearings. In addition, DOC custody officers, staff members, or college instructors should be added to the list of persons authorized to give testimony.

If the board determines that a candidate has met the requirements for EBP, he/she would be granted clemency and all of the current rules and regulations covering release on parole would apply. In Indiana and presumably other states, clemency and parole mechanisms are currently in place and would require no additional personnel to manage.

**Many of these prisoners are rehabilitated and considered an asset to the prison... have few conduct reports, and are not viewed as a threat to the population, but they will cost the state millions of dollars during the remainder of their sentences, when they could be paying the state back...**

The reality is that a subset of any prison population consists of those who have spent 15 years or more incarcerated. Many of these prisoners are rehabilitated and considered an asset to the prison. They are typically 35 or older, have few conduct reports, and are not viewed as a threat to the population, but they will cost the state millions of dollars during the remainder of their sentences, when they could be paying the state back for the opportunity of education, employment, and early parole.

Even within this subset, however, there would still need to be a focus on determining the likelihood a candidate would reoffend. A review of prison disciplinary records over his or her period of incarceration; a progress report; testimony from staff that have direct contact with the inmate; testimony from family, volunteers, instructors, or friends; any participation in victim restoration; a review of the candidate's mental health record; rehabilitative programming; noteworthy achievements; and a thorough interview should, however, give one a clear picture of the candidate. Those with the power to grant release will have the evidence to render an informed decision.

Once EBP participants have been released, they would report to their Independent Living Home (ILH), a state-owned facility similar to group homes for teenagers aging out of the foster care or child welfare system. In Indiana, teenagers living in an ILH work



their way through a program that allows them to earn gradual independence for obeying ILH rules. A similar procedure could work for adults newly released from prison. Two homes, one for men and one for women, could be organized, housing at most 10 persons each. The EBP participant would still report to his/her parole officer and children of EBP participants would be able to visit the ILH, but remain in whatever housing arrangements they are in, as would be the case if the participant were still in prison.

EBP participants would work in administrative entry-level positions in state government or related agencies. EBP participants would sign a contract committing them to work for the state for 2 years, the length of the average parole obligation. EBP participants would receive a meal card that would allow them to eat breakfast and lunch in a government center cafeteria or other eatery that serves state employees. Monthly bus passes would be issued.

Participants would not earn a full paycheck. If the participant was working a job that typically paid \$12.00 an hour, the State would pay the participant \$8.00 – \$9.00, the remainder going to EBP administrative costs and reimbursement to the state for education, employment and early parole. Further, procedures similar to ILH could be instituted wherein 60 – 70% of participants' pay is automatically placed in a savings account for them with restrictions on how the money

can be withdrawn. At the end of the two-year period, EBP participants would leave the ILH, end their parole obligations, and begin looking for permanent employment. Any of the government agencies employing a EBP participant could offer to continue employing him or her, if performance merited it and a permanent position were available.

It costs \$53 a day to care for and house inmates in Indiana. Over a four-year period that is more than \$75,000—for one person. EBP participants would cost a fraction of that amount. Participants would leave the program with real work experience that could help secure permanent employment, and would have had 2 years to save money to help them transition to permanent housing.

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***Special  
Recognition***

## **Cross-lab Redundancy in Forensic Science**

**Roger Koppl**

*Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University*

## The Problem

It is believed forensic error contributes to more than 20,000 false felony convictions in the United States every year.<sup>1</sup> In Massachusetts, Annie Dookhan of the Hinton State Laboratory Institute pled guilty to obstruction of justice, perjury, and tampering with evidence, after being charged with falsifying forensic evidence for years. The scandal created chaos in the Massachusetts criminal-justice system and has put thousands of prior convictions at risk.

Evidence is typically examined by one crime lab only. In this sense, the crime lab receiving the evidence has a monopoly on the examination of it. Moreover, that same lab will normally be the only one to offer an interpretation of the results of its examination. No other forensic experts will be asked to judge what the evidence means. It is common in civil cases that each side will call its own expert witnesses. The same is not true of criminal trials. This two-fold monopoly makes it hard to know when a given crime lab is doing shoddy work or skirting the law. Both honest errors and outright fraud may go undetected for years, as in the Dookhan case. Even when doubts arise about a lab's past casework, it may not be possible to detect errors if evidence has been destroyed or records lost.

## The Solution

Cross-lab redundancy would eliminate the two-fold monopoly in forensic science. Cross-lab redundancy is the requirement that a randomly chosen fraction of forensic analyses be independently performed by multiple laboratories. No lab would know which other labs are also analyzing the same evidence. Indeed, since only a randomly chosen fraction of cases would be subject to multiple analyses, no lab would know *whether* other labs were examining the same evidence, only that redundant testing might occur and sometimes does.

Forensic evidence in the current system is submitted to one crime lab. That lab examines the evidence and interprets the results of its tests and analyses. The lab reports its findings to third parties who are not scientists. These may be police investigators, attorneys, judges or juries. The third parties then make judgments about the evidence and, typically, what the evidence implies for the guilt or innocence of suspects.

Under cross-lab redundancy, evidence would randomly be submitted to three crime labs. These labs would examine and interpret the evidence independently. They would report their findings to police investigators, attorneys, judges, and juries, who would then make judgments about the evidence and,

typically, what the evidence implies for the guilt or innocence of suspects.

Vital differences exist between cross-lab redundancy and the verifications normally required by lab protocols today. The standard ACE-V method of fingerprint examination, for example, includes verification. Usually, however, the person conducting the verification is in the same lab as the person doing the initial analysis, and the verifier knows who did the original analysis and what conclusion was reached.

Under cross-lab redundancy, each examination would be conducted in a different lab, and no forensic examiner would know the results of other exams or who performed them. Intra-lab verifications may improve the performance of each *individual lab* in the system. Cross-lab redundancy improves the

performance of the entire networked *system of labs*. Cross-lab redundancy and intra-lab verifications are thus complements, not substitutes.

Laboratory experiments suggest<sup>2</sup> that when redundant tests are performed, three labs should conduct independent examinations of the evidence. If the three labs do not produce consistent conclusions, the relevant decision maker (such as a jury in a criminal trial) may choose whether to accept the majority view as correct or, instead, to view the evidence as non-probative.

To be maximally effective in detecting and reducing forensic-science errors, cross-lab redundancy should include statistical review, sequential unmasking, and task separation. **Statistical review** would compare outcomes across labs on everything from turnaround times to average cost per test to conviction rates. Comparisons would flag both possible problems and potential cases of best practices to be emulated by other labs.

**Sequential unmasking** prevents examiners from learning potentially biasing information until after they have made the decisions that might be biased by that information. For example, a fingerprint examiner should decide whether two prints match (whether to declare an “individualization”) without the potentially biasing information that the suspect has been convicted of similar crimes in the past.



**A study of cross-lab redundancy in fingerprint examinations found that the reduction in the costs of incarceration would swamp the increase in the costs of fingerprint examinations.**

Sometimes there is a difference between conducting a forensic test and interpreting the results of the test, in which case it is possible to have **task separation**, in which examination and interpretation are performed by different persons. For example, one forensic scientist might produce the DNA test (“electrophoresis”) that extracts genetic information from a biological sample. A second scientist might interpret that information, deciding whether the suspect DNA and crime scene DNA likely came from the same person.

Cross-lab redundancy is mostly a matter of reorganizing work already being done. There would be an increase in the number of tests performed, raising the cost of forensic science, but random redundant evidence testing would also reduce the number of false convictions, which are costly to rectify. A study of cross-lab redundancy in fingerprint examinations found that the reduction in the costs of incarceration

would swamp the increase in the costs of fingerprint examinations.<sup>3</sup> In all forensic disciplines, cross-lab redundancy would reduce the number of false convictions and, therefore, the costs of incarcerating the wrongfully convicted.

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Pioneer Institute's Better Government Competition, founded in 1991, is an annual citizens' idea contest that seeks out and rewards the most innovative public policy proposals. The Competition grand prize winner receives \$10,000; four runners-up receive \$1,000 each, and other proposals receive special recognition. Recent winners have included proposals on pension reform, virtual schooling, job training, housing, and many other pressing topics.

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