

Justice Reinvestment in Oklahoma: Strengthening Supervision and Reinvesting in Efforts to Reduce Violent Crime

In May 2012, state leaders from across the political spectrum in Oklahoma enacted legislation that will both produce savings in corrections spending and increase public safety. Using a data-driven “justice reinvestment” approach, the state received intensive technical assistance from the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, in partnership with the Pew Center on the States and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). With continued resources and support, Oklahoma leaders are now working to implement the legislation.

Oklahoma’s Justice Reinvestment Process

Seeking relief from overcrowding in Oklahoma’s corrections system, the Governor, Chief Justice, and legislative leaders requested intensive technical assistance from the CSG Justice Center. After a comprehensive analysis of Oklahoma’s criminal justice system, the CSG Justice Center presented to a bipartisan, inter-branch working group findings that showed that Oklahoma faced three significant challenges. First, Oklahoma’s violent crime rate was high and had remained relatively unchanged since 2000; during the same period, violent crime had declined significantly nationally and in most states. Second, 51 percent of felons exiting prison were released to no supervision, and without access to treatment and support services necessary to help them remain drug- and alcohol-free. Third, if current policies remained the same, the prison population would continue to grow, and the state would need to expand prison capacity at a significant cost to taxpayers.

Key Public Safety Provisions in HB 3052

- Establishes a new state-funded grant program to assist local law enforcement agencies in reducing violent crime
- Institutes a presentence risk and need screening to help guide sentencing decisions about treatment and supervision
- Mandates supervision for all adults released from prison
- Creates the ability to impose more cost-efficient and meaningful responses to supervision violations



Governor Mary Fallin signing Oklahoma’s justice reinvestment legislation

With help from the CSG Justice Center and input from stakeholders across the criminal justice system, the working group developed a set of policy options designed to address these three challenges. State legislators then translated those policies into House Bill (HB) 3052, which was sponsored by Speaker of the House Kris Steele (R-Shawnee) and Senate President Pro Tempore Brian Bingman (R-Sapulpa).

HB 3052 established a state-funded “Justice Reinvestment Grant Program” to provide local law enforcement agencies with funding for initiatives and innovative strategies to combat violent crime. It also instituted a presentence risk and need screening to help guide decisions regarding the most appropriate level of punishment, supervision, and treatment for each individual. HB 3052 additionally mandated supervision for all adults released from prison and ensured that supervision resources are sufficient to reduce recidivism. Finally, the bill created the ability to impose

more cost-efficient and meaningful responses to supervision violations.

HB 3052 passed with bipartisan support in both houses of the legislature. Governor Mary Fallin, joined by working group members and various criminal justice stakeholders, signed the bill into law on May 10, 2012.

Continued growth in the population and increasing operating costs will cause the corrections budget to continue to grow, but this legislative package will mitigate the amount of growth in the prison population by up to 1,759 and reduce the increase in funding required by up to \$120 million between 2012 and 2021. By taking steps to lessen some of the increase anticipated during this time period, the state was positioned to reinvest \$3.7 million in FY 2013 in additional supervision resources, grants for law enforcement to fight violent crime, and a presentence risk and needs screening. The reinvestment levels for future years is slated for \$8 million annually.

Looking Ahead

State officials in Oklahoma are now working to translate the legislation into practice, thereby ensuring that these investments achieve the projected outcomes. To enhance the state's capacity to implement the legislation, Oklahoma is receiving technical assistance from the CSG Justice Center and funding from BJA that will provide training, education, and upgrades to data systems.

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. The CSG Justice Center provides practical, nonpartisan advice and consensus-driven, evidence-based strategies, to increase public safety and strengthen communities.

The CSG Justice Center's Justice Reinvestment Initiative to address corrections spending and public safety is a partnership with the Public Safety Performance Project of the Pew Center on the States and the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. These efforts have provided data-driven analyses and policy options to state leaders in 16 states.

For additional information about Justice Reinvestment in Oklahoma, please visit www.justicereinvestment.org.



The Pew Center on the States is a division of The Pew Charitable Trusts that identifies and advances effective solutions to critical issues facing states. Pew is a nonprofit organization that applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public and stimulate civic life. Launched in 2006, The Public Safety Performance Project helps states advance fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing and corrections that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and control corrections costs. For more information, visit www.pewcenteronthestates.org.



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