Ensuring the correct implementation of risk and needs assessment tools, while often overlooked, is one of the most pressing issues facing state corrections agencies today.

**RISK AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOLS**, implemented properly and confirmed in their accuracy, allow corrections officials to understand the likelihood of a person under their supervision to commit a new crime. That assessment informs the programming and interventions a person receives to ultimately reduce recidivism and increase public safety in a cost-effective way.

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**WHEN RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS ARE NOT IMPLEMENTED WELL**

- The chances of people reoffending can increase. Research shows placing people with a low risk of reoffending in programming for high-risk people can increase their risk of recidivating.
- Racial and gender bias can occur. Poor implementation can lead the tool to over-predict for some groups and under-predict for others.

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**TO DO RISK ASSESSMENT RIGHT**

- Corrections agencies should initiate an independent review to determine how the assessments are facilitated, scored and utilized.
- Agencies should regularly train their staff to conduct and score risk and needs assessments consistently and in accordance with current best practices.
- An independent contractor should conduct a validation study that examines the results of the risk assessments every 3–5 years, and the agency should implement necessary improvements.

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**THE GOOD NEWS**

*Every state in the U.S.* uses a risk and needs assessment tool for people on supervision after prison.

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**THE BAD NEWS**

Since 2012, almost half of U.S. states have failed to validate or revalidate their tool for people on supervision after prison.

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To learn more about doing risk assessment right, visit [CSGJUSTICECENTER.ORG](http://CSGJUSTICECENTER.ORG).