

Virtual Academy for Corrections Analysts

Building data literacy and analytic capabilities of departments of corrections nationwide

What is the Virtual Academy for Corrections Analysts?

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center's Virtual Academy for Corrections Analysts (VACA) program will build data literacy and analytic capabilities of departments of corrections (DOCs) nationwide to further data-informed planning and decision-making. Corrections agencies will be able to access the program's self-paced learning materials, communities of practice, peer-to-peer networks, and technical assistance at no cost.

The CSG Justice Center's work and partnership on VACA is funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). BJA is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.

Who is this program for?

VACA is for DOC analysts and leaders seeking the necessary tools and guidance to enhance their ability to analyze their own data.

What are the goals and objectives?

The goal of the program is to develop core competency standards (such as a toolkit for recruitment and hiring for corrections analysts, methodological standards, and more), train DOCs on the use of those standards, and provide resources to enhance the skills, capabilities, and impact for corrections analysts.

Through this program, DOCs nationally will receive access to core competency standards developed by the CSG Justice Center. These standards will be created with input by DOCs and with the VACA Correctional Research Leaders Advisory Council, which is a group composed of five leaders in the field of corrections to help guide project activities. Interested DOC analysts and leaders will also be able to access training on core competencies for corrections data analysis, such as key statistical methods, analysis of corrections operations (staffing levels and trends, prison populations, admissions and releases, etc.), and others. Finally, participating DOCs will learn from one another and subject matter experts through communities of practice.



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What are the benefits of the program?

VACA will provide DOC leaders and analysts with the opportunity to:

- Access resources on methodological standards (such as assessing data quality, handling missing data, and conducting statistical analysis), substantive standards (such as calculation of population projections, length of stay analysis, and housing classification), and existing model reports developed by DOCs to facilitate learning.
- Engage with customized tools that can help address common data challenges corrections analysts face.
- Receive training through online, self-guided modules designed to expand analytical capabilities.
- Join a community of practitioners through analyst forums, seminar series, peer-to-peer mentoring, and online office hours.
- Work with subject matter experts to receive targeted technical assistance and learn how to better communicate research results to policymakers and correctional leaders.



How can I get involved?

Please reach out to vaca@csg.org if you have any questions about the program or to find out how it may benefit your state's DOC. To provide feedback on the types of curriculum and materials that the CSG Justice Center should develop, please reach out for a chance to complete our engagement questionnaire.



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