

Justice Reinvestment in Ohio

Reducing Spending on Corrections and Reinvesting in Strategies to Increase Public Safety

Background

IN 2008, GOVERNOR TED STRICKLAND, Senate President Bill Harris, then-House Speaker Jon Husted, and Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas Moyer requested technical assistance from the Council of State Governments Justice Center (“Justice Center”) to help develop a statewide policy framework to reduce spending on corrections and reinvest in strategies to increase public safety.

The Justice Center is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works with state policymakers to analyze data and develop fiscally sound strategies to increase public safety. Assistance is made possible through funding support provided by the Public Safety Performance Project of the Pew Center on the States; the Bureau of Justice Assistance, a component

of the U.S. Department of Justice; and the State of Ohio.

To guide the Justice Center’s analyses of the state’s criminal justice system and development of policy options, the state has established a justice reinvestment work group, co-chaired by Senator Bill Seitz (R-Green Township) and Representative Mike Moran (D-Hudson). Members represent both parties and all three branches of state government, including the two chambers of the General Assembly. The work group will review data analyses from the Justice Center and identify policy options to address the projected growth in Ohio’s prison population, generate savings and reinvest in strategies to increase public safety.

Snapshot of Corrections and Criminal Justice Trends in Ohio

The Ohio prison population is growing, which is driving significant increases in spending on corrections.

- Although the Ohio prison population declined from 1998 to 2004, in the next three years the population increased 16 percent, from 44,270 in 2005 to a new all-time high of 51,273 in 2008.¹
- The number of people admitted to prison annually in Ohio has increased by 41 percent between 2000 and 2008, from 19,418 to 27,315.²
- Ohio's prison population exceeds the corrections system's rated capacity of 38,665 by 30 percent.³
- Between FY 2000 and FY 2008, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) budget grew 18 percent, an increase of approximately \$239 million.⁴
- One in four state employees in Ohio works for the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

Ohio's property crime rate exceeds the regional and national average.

- Between 2000 and 2008, Ohio's violent crime rate increased a modest 4 percent.⁵

- Despite recent declines, Ohio's property crime rate in 2008 (3,412 crimes per 100,000 persons) was still higher than the average rate for the Midwest (3,067) and the nation (3,213).⁶
- Between 2000 and 2008, burglaries increased 14 percent and robberies increased 18 percent in Ohio, adjusting for population trends.⁷

If existing policies remain unchanged, the prison population will grow, which will require the state to build additional prisons and spend more on corrections.

- Between 2008 and 2018, the prison population is projected to climb 9 percent, from 51,273 to 55,734.⁸
- To house the growing prison population and ease crowding the state will need to spend \$925 million in additional cumulative spending by 2018 to increase the capacity of the prison system by 5,330 beds. These estimates include \$424 million in construction costs and \$501 million in annual operating costs.⁹

1. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, personal communication to the Council of State Governments Justice Center. (June 25, 2009); Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Pieces of the Puzzle: 2008 Annual Report, <http://www.drc.ohio.gov/web/Reports/Annual/Annual%20Report%202008.pdf>, 24..

2. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. "Fiscal Year Intake and Population on July 1, 1971-2008." (October 2008), [http://www.drc.state.oh.us/web/Reports/intake/Fiscal%20Year%20Intake%20and%20Population%20on%20July%201%20\(1971%20-%202008\).pdf](http://www.drc.state.oh.us/web/Reports/intake/Fiscal%20Year%20Intake%20and%20Population%20on%20July%201%20(1971%20-%202008).pdf) (accessed September 16, 2009).

3. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Pieces of the Puzzle: 2008 Annual Report, <http://www.drc.ohio.gov/web/Reports/Annual/Annual%20Report%202008.pdf>, p. 24. The ODRC official rated capacity is 38,665. See <http://www.drc.ohio.gov/web/Reports/Fact-Sheet/September%202009.pdf>.

4. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, personal communication to the Council of State Governments Justice Center. (October 15, 2009). ODRC budget numbers consist of General Revenue Funds (GRF) in order to represent the state share of spending on corrections.

5,6. U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Crime in the United States, 2008 (September 2009), http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/offenses/standard_links/state.html. The Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Report (UCR) groups Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin in the Midwest. See http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007/about/area_definitions.html.

7. U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Crime in the United States, 2000 (September 2001), <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/00cius.htm> (accessed September 16, 2009); U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Crime in the United States, 2008 (September 2009), http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2008/offenses/standard_links/state.html.

8. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, Brian Martin. "Ohio Prison Population Projections and Intake Estimates, July 2009," p. 3.

9. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, Kevin Stockdale and Douglas Forbes. "Capital and Operating Costs of Two 2,000 Bed Prisons." Personal communication to Council of State Governments Justice Center (November 6, 2009).

The Justice Center's Three Phases of Assistance

Justice Center experts will provide technical assistance to Ohio policymakers in three phases.

PHASE 1

Analysis and Policy Development

The Justice Center will comprehensively analyze Ohio's crime, arrest, court disposition, probation and post-release control, jail, prison, and recidivism data. This system-wide analysis will examine the effectiveness of various components of the criminal justice system and identify key drivers of the prison population and opportunities to improve the system's ability to increase public safety.

To incorporate perspectives and recommendations from across the criminal justice system, the Justice Center will engage stakeholders through focus groups, site visits, and personal interviews. Examples of stakeholders include judges, prosecuting attorneys, public defenders, law enforcement, advocates and service providers for victims and survivors, county officials, probation officials, community corrections agency representatives, and others.

In collaboration with the work group, which will review these analyses, the Justice Center will develop consensus-based policy options that increase public safety and address the key factors behind Ohio's escalating prison population and corrections expenditures.

A team of experts in health systems and services policy will analyze programs and services for people with behavioral health treatment needs who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

PHASE 2

Policy Implementation

To ensure that policies are implemented effectively, the Justice Center will provide technical assistance to state agencies and perform regular assessments of implementation progress. Policymakers will therefore be able to identify necessary adjustments to policies and strategies to ensure intended goals are achieved.

In addition, the Justice Center will develop a dashboard tracking mechanism to measure the impact of newly enacted policies on crime, court dispositions, jail populations, the prison population, and recidivism rates.

PHASE 3

Accountability Strategies

Policymakers, with the assistance of regular presentations from the Justice Center, will create accountability measures for the multiple agencies responsible for policy implementation. Continual monitoring of the dashboard and other accountability measures will help Ohio ensure that achievements are sustained and savings generated are reinvested to foster safer and stronger communities.

To learn more about the justice reinvestment strategy
in Ohio and other states, please visit:
www.justicereinvestment.org

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



This project was supported by Grant No. 2008-DD-BX-0685 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the United State Department of Justice.

To learn more about the Bureau of Justice Assistance, please visit: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/>.



Research and analysis described in this report also have been funded by the Public Safety Performance Project of The Pew Charitable Trusts' Center on the States. Launched in 2006 as a project of the Pew Center on the States, the Public Safety Performance Project seeks to help states advance fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing and corrections that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and control corrections costs.

To learn more about the Public Safety Performance Project, please visit: <http://www.pewpublicsafety.org/>.

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Suggested citation: Council of State Governments Justice Center, *Justice Reinvestment in Ohio: Reducing Spending on Corrections and Reinvesting in Strategies to Increase Public Safety* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2009).

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