

# Prison Incentive Options

The United States has the highest violent crime rate in the developed world—and the highest incarceration rate. And their long-term successes as methods of rehabilitation have demonstrably failed.

## America had high ambitions for its prisons.

In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge's addressed the nation for his second state of the union address and shared his vision for prisons that would provide Americans "with special training in order to reestablish in them the power to pursue a law-abiding existence in the social and economic life of the Nation."

## 100 years later, America's prisons still fall far short of that vision.

Roughly **eight in 10** released prisoners **re-offend within six years**.

People often commit worse crimes after release: **22 percent** of drug offenders and **29 percent** of property offenders **committed a violent crime within five years** of release.

Of formerly incarcerated people, approximately **27 percent are unemployed**.

**Prisons are critically understaffed.** One in three correctional officer positions are vacant in many state departments of corrections, and some prisons are only at 50 percent staffing. Correctional officers are suffering physically. Their life expectancy is 63 years old; their suicide rate is three times that of police officers; and one in three suffers from depression and PTSD.

## We need new solutions.

Top-down, one-size-fits-all policies will not fix America's prisons. Instead, we need policies that empower the people working in prisons to create innovative approaches to rehabilitation and give them ownership of their success. Policy incentives should hold prisons accountable to outcome-based measurements and reward prisons when they find solutions that work.

### THE SOLUTIONS



Reduce recidivism by creating incentive structures that align with outcomes.



Increase officer retention and wellness by offering financial rewards and financial-based healthcare pricing.



## **Reduce recidivism by creating incentive structures that align with outcomes.**

States should adopt a funding and reward structure which gives prison administrators and correctional officers real incentives to deliver on specific, measurable outcomes.

Facilities which reduce the total number of recidivists within five years of release, or see returns on lesser charges, will receive tiered awards. Facilities will be rewarded in proportion to its ability to improve the average time between incidents of incarceration for all releasees compared to its historic baseline. Facilities will be rewarded for successfully preparing people for employment by achieving increased employment rates for parolees above the facilities' baseline measurements.



## **Increase officer retention and wellness by offering financial rewards and financial-based healthcare pricing.**

Correctional facilities which decrease their vacancy rates and increase employee retention rates should be rewarded financially. The additional funds could go towards an officer wellness fund that offers extra perks or direct bonuses to all officers or based on performance or need—this structure encourages improvements to workplace culture and gives current officers ownership over the successes of new recruits. Adopting a reference-based health care pricing design allows employees to directly benefit by choosing a lower-priced provider. If an employee chooses a provider that offers a lower price than the established reference price, they are given a cut of the savings through reduced deductibles or direct cash payment.

## **THE CICERO DIFFERENCE:**



Cicero will leverage its best-in-class multi-state government affairs program to educate state leaders across the country on state solutions to align prison administrators and stakeholders towards data-driven, accountable practices that will reduce recidivism, increase job satisfaction, and save money.