

Prison Incentive Funding

Those who have received prison sentences deserve the best chances to rehabilitate and rejoin society as positive and productive citizens. **But prisons are not working**, and the cycle of incarceration is hurting families and communities.



Eight in 10 released prisoners commit additional crimes within six years.



About **27 percent** of previously incarcerated individuals are unemployed.



One-third of all corrections department officer positions are vacant.



Twenty percent of homeless individuals have served a prison sentence within the past three years.

Currently, prisons face little accountability for outcomes and no incentive to motivate change. Our justice system must do better in preparing those who have served a prison sentence to reenter society successfully.

THE SOLUTION

Increasing accountability and aligning incentives with outcome-based funding will...



...reduce
recidivism



...increase
officer retention



...increase
post-release
housing



...increase
post-release
employment

WHY IT MATTERS

Top-down, one-size-fits-all policies will not fix America's prisons. We need policies that empower those working in prisons to create innovative approaches to rehabilitation. Giving staff ownership over their success leads to better outcomes in reducing turnover and places the focus on rehabilitation.

Prison Incentive Options



Reduce Recidivism:

Departments of corrections should track the improvements of a facility's return-to-prison rate. If the facility can improve against that facility's baseline rate, it will receive incentive funding. The baseline is a fixed average of three years' worth of released offenders who return to prison within 48 months of their release.



Increase Officer Retention:

Departments of corrections should track the 12- and 24-month retention rate of new officers and reward a facility for improvements. Instead of an individualized retention bonus that only rewards a single officer, tracking facility-wide retention rates holds all staff accountable for the success of new recruits and incentivizes a network of support and guidance lacking in correctional culture today.



Increase Post-Release Housing Rates:

Facilities should be incentivized to develop smooth reentry protocols for all prisoners, especially with regards to housing. The formerly incarcerated are **10 times** as likely to be homeless as members of the general public, and **half of all people in shelters** have been to prison. Facilities that can increase stable housing placements will be rewarded.



Increase Post-Release Employment Rates:

Employment is the factor **most correlated** with a person's desistance from crime. Tracking post-release employment incentivizes facilities to offer job training programs that align with in-demand jobs outside prison walls. Facilities that improve this metric will receive incentive funding.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Outcome-based funding models improve outcomes for those who serve have served out their sentences and holds prisons accountable by tying financial incentives to improved outcomes.