



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2011
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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND STATES ADDRESS PRISONER RECIDIVISM

National Forum Examines Strategies for Improving, Reducing Cost of Prisoner Reentry

WASHINGTON – The Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) today sponsored a forum of policymakers from all 50 states to focus on improving success rates for people released from prison. This event positioned states to set goals, or in some cases expand on existing goals, for reducing recidivism through cost-effective strategies in their communities.

“In this time of economic challenges, we must continue to use every tool and strategy at our disposal to protect the American people while reducing costs to taxpayers,” said Attorney General Eric Holder. “Today’s national forum demonstrates the Justice Department’s firm commitment to working with its partners in the states and non-governmental organizations to improve public safety by supporting efforts to assist formerly incarcerated people as they return to their communities to become productive members of our society.”

In partnership with the Council of State Governments, the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the Public Welfare Foundation and the Pew Center on the States, OJP’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) is working with all 50 states to identify and pursue cost-effective strategies on their investments in public safety. Following today’s forum, participants will begin setting measurable goals for reducing recidivism; creating plans to achieve these goals by drawing on the latest research and experiences from the field; and identifying benchmarks state and federal policymakers can use to track progress.

“Evidence-based strategies integrated with federal support provide states with the opportunity to increase public safety while saving money,” said OJP Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson. “Today’s forum allows corrections directors and policymakers to come together to brainstorm ideas and set measurable goals for significant reductions in recidivism.”

A Pew Center on the States report presented today demonstrated that reducing states’ recidivism rates by just 10 percent could collectively save states more than \$635 million a year in averted prison costs. Experts pointed to research showing how certain strategies can

help reduce recidivism, including concentrating supervision and treatment resources on those most likely to reoffend.

“The Bureau of Justice Assistance has directed considerable energy and resources to supporting local programs and state-level policy changes that make better use of limited public dollars,” said BJA Director Denise E. O’Donnell. “It’s now our hope that government agencies and community-based organizations will adopt evidenced-based strategies to reduce recidivism.”

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson, provides federal leadership in developing the nation’s capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has six bureaus and offices: the BJA; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART). More information about OJP and its components can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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