Corrections Research at NIJ: Providing Guidance in a Time of Change

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Presentation Overview

• NIJ Overview
• Crime Solutions
• Corrections Research Highlights
• Research on Promising Reentry Initiatives
• Corrections Strategic Research Plan
• NIJ’s role in Implementing the First Step Act
NIJ Overview

• Research, Development and Evaluation arm of the Department of Justice

• NIJ has two main research offices:
  • Office of Research Evaluation and Technology
  • Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences

• NIJ Director serves as the Chief Evaluation Officer for DOJ

• NIJ hosts Crime Solutions repository of evaluation evidence
Crime Solutions

• Repository of Evaluation Evidence on Programs and Practices

• Evaluations of over 500 programs listed
  • 136 programs in Corrections and Reentry
  • Programs are rated as:
    • Effective
    • Promising
    • No Effects
Corrections Related Research at NIJ

• Supports research on Institutional and Community Corrections, and Offender Reentry

• Reoccurring calls for Corrections and Reentry Evaluation Research

• Other Relevant Research also Comes From:
  • Graduate Research Fellowship
  • Safety, Health and Wellness
  • Artificial Intelligence
Research and You

• Do you use research to inform practice?

• Where do you go to get research?

• How big a priority are research results to your work?
NIJ Investment in Corrections and Reentry Research

- Initiated 22 Corrections Research Projects in the last Two Years
  - ~ $20 million investment

- Projects include topics on:
  - Development of AI algorithms to assist Community Supervision
  - Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction
  - Risk-Needs-Responsivity Program Evaluations
  - Alternative Young Adult Housing Programs
  - Evaluation of Body-Worn Cameras in Jails
  - Correction Officer Occupational Prestige
Notable Ongoing Projects

- Correctional Officer Suicide in Massachusetts
- Restrictive Housing:
  - Inmate and Officer Well-Being
  - Offender Misconduct
  - Step-Down Programs
- Contraband and Mitigation Techniques
- Impact of Parental Incarceration on Children
Recent Findings

- Kiosk Supervision effective for Low-risk Offenders
- Home Visits can Reduce Recidivism
- Implementing New Initiatives can be Difficult
- Training alone is Inadequate to Implement New Programs
- Jails can Systematically Address Inmate Self-Harm
- Managed Access Systems Reduce Value of Contraband Cell Phones
Enhance Rigor of Evaluations of Reentry Initiatives

• Provided over $11 million in Funding on Evaluations of Reentry Programs since 2018

• Ensured Evaluations had the Highest Standard of Rigor
  • Many Evaluations use Quasi-Experimental Designs
  • May Show Greater Impact when Compared to an RCT
Charting a Path Forward: NIJ’s Corrections Strategic Research Plan

• Describes Three Broad Priorities:
  • Optimize Workforce Development
  • Enhance Correction Practices
  • Individuals Involved with the Corrections System

• Priorities are supported by Nine Research Objectives
What Do You Need to Know?

• What are the Most Pressing Issues in the Field?

• Is NIJ Research Addressing These?
First Step Act

- Federal Prison System Reform and Recidivism Reduction

- NIJ is mandated to:
  - Assess BOP’s Current Risk Assessment System
  - Develop and Evaluate a New Risk Assessment System
  - Develop Recommendations on Reentry Programming
  - Continue Second Chance Act Research

- NIJ established an Independent Review Committee (IRC) to Facilitate these Tasks
Introducing PATTERN

• Predicts the likelihood of General and Violent Recidivism over a 3-year period

• Includes Static and Dynamic Factors

• Gender-specific Prediction Models
Questions
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• www.nij.ojp.gov

• www.nij.ojp.gov/corrections

• www.crimesolutions.gov