

Crime and Justice Institute: Request for General Support

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Introduction

For communities to flourish, they need to enjoy a basic level of safety. Citizens depend on the criminal justice system to respond effectively to crime, and to return offenders to the community as rehabilitated, productive citizens. This is a significant job, considering that 95% of the 2 million offenders currently incarcerated will return to their communities. Unfortunately, the haphazard, reactive criminal justice infrastructure found in many jurisdictions is incapable of fulfilling its public mandate without significant reform.

It is the responsibility of the criminal justice system to promote a sense of safety through effective responses to crime, and proactive prevention efforts. The Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) enhances public safety by improving criminal and juvenile justice policies and practices, with a focus on comprehensive system reform. CJI is seeking financial support to further its mission of advancing enlightened policies and innovative strategies in the criminal and juvenile justice arenas. CJI recognizes that complex, systemic problems require comprehensive solutions, and we seek partners in our work who are dedicated to a holistic approach to community safety.

Mission and Goals

CJI is committed to system reform. CJI's primary goal is to engage criminal justice systems in thoughtful, comprehensive, evidence-based reform, rather than implementing isolated policies and programs. While programs have the potential to impact a select few, the impact of system reform ripples throughout the community, increasing safety and productivity for offenders, their families, and their neighbors. CJI has played a role in implementing reforms that impact thousands of citizens, and they are sustained by a fundamental shift in how criminal justice agencies do business.

CJI is committed to evidence-based practice. CJI feels an ethical imperative to first and foremost do no harm, as well as to follow practice that is proven effective through research, and to add to the body of knowledge in the field. In many systems today, offenders leave the criminal justice system more likely to re-offend as a result of the supervision that they received. This does harm to the offenders as well as the communities to which they return. CJI is experienced in developing, implementing, and evaluating practices proven to reduce recidivism, as well as building organizational and community support for evidence-based practice.

CJI is committed to collaboration. Reform is impossible without the commitment of many stakeholders within the criminal justice system and the community. A diverse group of committed stakeholders can champion reform throughout the community, while those disillusioned with reform have the power to unravel it. CJI is dedicated to bringing stakeholders together and advocating for reform, and has done organizational development work with public and private agencies at the local, state, and national level. Unfortunately, this time-intensive but integral component of reform is often unfunded. CJI works to promote a justice system that is effectual, fair, humane and cost-effective.

Research and System Reform Priorities

CJI embraces a broad view of public safety and its role in positive community development. CJI supports this view by engaging in a diverse array of activities that include:

- Enhancing knowledge of evidence-based practices through issue papers and policy briefs;
- Promoting prevention, education and advocacy;
- Designing and testing new problem-solving models;
- Guiding public-private collaborations for change;
- Conducting research and program evaluation;
- Assisting agencies through organizational change and capacity-building.

CJI's activities have positively altered the context in which criminal justice policies and strategies are pursued. Our work on the national, state and local levels contributes to the revitalization and empowerment of communities; assists vulnerable populations; and engages policy makers in the application of evidenced-based principles. The confluence of evidence-based principles, extensive research supporting necessary change and the exhaustion of the "lock them up" approach to criminal justice have helped usher in a reconsideration of the objectives of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Recidivism reduction, a goal that CJI has been promoting for several years, is gaining a foothold in the correctional landscape. Our expertise in offender reentry and juvenile justice positions us to be an influential leader in implementing successful policies and practices for this new paradigm.

Organizational Profile

CJI is a division of Community Resources for Justice (CRJ), an agency blending policy and practice that resulted from a 1999 merger of Massachusetts Halfway Houses, Inc. and the Crime and Justice Foundation. This was an important union that helped to reduce duplicative administrative costs and bring together under one roof two related, parallel organizations working in direct service and policy.

CRJ is a multi-faceted organization that promotes sound and cost-effective social policy and provides effective, direct services to some of our most vulnerable and challenged citizens. CRJ, in existence for 127 years, currently operates 25 residential and day service programs serving over 2,000 adults and youth each year in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The partnership between CRJ and CJI provides the organization with access to the latest research, system change support and evaluation expertise while CJI has the opportunity to create, implement, test and evaluate policies and practices in the CRJ programs. CRJ also provides CJI with more than 127 years of organizational stability along with vital support in fiscal, human resources and advancement functions. The organization is guided by an esteemed Board of Directors who brings to the organization both a personal and a professional dedication to social justice.

CJI Staff

The Crime and Justice Institute employs six professional staff and a team of consultants to carry out its work in Massachusetts and across the country. CJI's work is supported by an energetic and highly competent staff from varied backgrounds in the criminal justice and social science fields. Applying both research skills and broad practical experience, CJI provides technical assistance in corrections, crime and violence prevention, community partnership-building, and other public safety arenas. The extensive experience and diversity of expertise of this team enhances CJI's capacity to respond to the complex and unique needs of the justice system and its clients.

Elyse Clawson, Executive Director of CJI, has over 30 years of experience and a substantial background in criminal and juvenile justice, substance abuse, mental health treatment, and education. She has worked extensively with elected officials and other policy makers as both a non-profit executive and public agency director. Prior to taking the lead at CJI, she was the Director of the Department of Community Justice in Multnomah County, Oregon, and oversaw both juvenile and adult community corrections for 6 years. Additionally, she served as the Assistant Director of the Oregon State Department of Corrections for Community Corrections. She was a member of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, Governors Commission on Corrections reform and is a current member of the Department of Corrections Advisory Council.

During her years at the Oregon Department of Corrections, she led major reform of the community corrections system, which included numerous statutory and organizational changes. She led an effort to implement the use of evidence-based practices and the development of statewide revocation guidelines. In 1995 she went to Multnomah County Oregon where she became the director of the Department of Community Justice. As Director of DCJ she led significant reform of the adult and juvenile system. Some of those initiatives include detention reform, development of a juvenile justice risk assessment, development of treatment and intermediate sanctions, the student attendance initiative, community justice projects in high risk neighborhoods, a Multi-Systemic Therapy program, Juvenile Treatment Court, Juvenile residential alcohol and drug unit and a specialized sex offender treatment program. In adult services she led a complete redesign of adult community corrections, implementation of evidence-based practices, the development of a transitions services unit, a continuum of alcohol and drug community services as well as a secure treatment program, mental health services and specialized supervision.

As Executive Director of CJI, her goals include system reform, collaboration and organizational development, empowerment of communities, policy, research, and impact analyses in the public safety and social service system on both a national and local level.

Lore Joplin, MPA, CJI's Deputy Director, coordinates the division's planning, budget, and operations. She is also the project manager for CJI's cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Corrections. Previously, Ms. Joplin worked as a senior policy and budget analyst for the Department of Community Justice in Multnomah County, Oregon. During her tenure at the County, she helped to coordinate major system reform efforts in juvenile justice and adult community corrections. Her work included policy and budget analysis regarding adult and juvenile programs, detention reform, and system enhancement efforts.

Cheryl Roberts, MPA, Director of Research and Policy at CJI, brings over 15 years of project management experience, including 5 years of experience managing national policy research and technical assistance projects at Abt Associates, Inc. She also brings extensive expertise in program evaluation, a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as implementation research. At CJI, Ms. Roberts' work has focused on prisoner reentry. She recently co-authored a report, *From Incarceration to Community: A Roadmap to Improving Prisoner Reentry and System Accountability in Massachusetts* that lays out evidence-based practices for the state of Massachusetts. Ms. Roberts is currently directing a statewide public opinion survey of criminal justice and reentry policies, including intermediate sanctions for parole violations.

Len Engel, JD, Criminal Justice Policy and Project Manager, came to CJI after spending 18 months in the Massachusetts Senate as legislative director for Senator David P. Magnani. Prior to going to the State House he spent 16 years with the Connecticut Correctional Ombudsman, Inc. providing ombudsman services to the Connecticut Department of Correction. Mr. Engel worked on various systemic problems in the correctional system and directed the Ombudsman's government relations activity and managed its relationship with non-governmental organizations. He focused on offender access to the courts, prison overcrowding, and, as an advisor to the Law Revision Commission, habeas corpus reform. He was an editor of the Connecticut Prisoner Rights Manual, a member of the Board of Advisors to the Yale Law School Prison Clinic and of the prison issues committee of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women.

Kate Florio, Assistant Project Manager, has been with CJI since 2000. She brings experience in working with law enforcement personnel and a deep understanding of criminal justice and reentry issues. As part of an initiative to increase public safety, Ms. Florio provided technical assistance to facilitate communication between law enforcement, medical providers, community members, and political leaders. Ms. Florio also coordinated a series of community forums focused on public safety issues that brought together a variety of stakeholders. Ms. Florio received a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology from Bridgewater State College, where her focus of study was criminology. She also successfully completed a Certificate program at Suffolk University in Health and Human Services Management in 2005.

Meghan Howe, MPH, Assistant Project Manager, joined CJI in mid-2005. Previously, she served as the Training and Psychological Education Coordinator for CRJ, where she provided staff training and coordinated life skills education in five youth programs. Ms. Howe was the Wellness Coordinator at Crittenton, Inc, where she managed community-based wellness initiatives. Ms. Howe received her Master of Public Health Degree in social and behavioral sciences at the Boston University School of Public Health, where she completed a fellowship in family and intimate partner violence prevention and is now an Instructor.

Conclusion

Many offenders, both kids and adults, return to their communities more likely to commit a new crime and re-victimize their families and communities. This is a system failure. CJI is proud to have been part of large-scale system reforms that have improved the effectiveness of the criminal justice system and reduced recidivism by bringing together stakeholders to implement science-based policies. The result is pride and confidence in systems that work and stronger, safer communities.

Community and political support is strong for reducing crime, reducing recidivism, and reducing the number of juvenile offenders who enter the adult prison system. Research and practical experience clearly demonstrate what steps can be taken to address these key social issues, but available governmental and programmatic support is often short-sighted and insufficient for bringing about true reform. Many jurisdictions have failed in their attempts to reduce recidivism by only addressing pieces of the problem.

CJI's efforts have been successful because we understand that effective strategies can only be achieved when the primary elements of change are present and are implemented system-wide. CJI recognizes that promoting sustainable reform requires a comprehensive approach, a long-term commitment, and a significant dedication of resources. CJI is looking for partners who share our vision for effective, lasting reforms in public safety: more children on playgrounds and fewer in court, more adults employed and fewer in prisons, more communities thriving and fewer succumbing to fear. We would appreciate your support in achieving this vision.

Appendix A: Crime & Justice Institute Projects

A. Current Work:

- With funding from the **Boston Foundation**, the Crime and Justice Institute (CJI) has conducted a public opinion survey to explore the thinking of the residents of Boston and of Massachusetts about criminal justice policy on such issues as sentencing, corrections, and prisoner reintegration. Findings from the study will be used to educate policymakers and legislators about what the people of Massachusetts believe should be done with regard to criminal justice system reform and prisoner reintegration.
- With funding from the **Annie E. Casey Foundation**, CJI provides technical assistance to Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative partnership to support the organizational change process necessary to implement juvenile detention reform in Illinois.
- Participation on the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Corrections Reform.
- With support from the Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation, CJI is working with policymakers and diverse stakeholders to assess the Massachusetts criminal justice system to develop recommendations for cost-effective strategies to reduce recidivism and improve the reintegration of prisoners in Massachusetts.
- With funding from **Cornerstones for Kids**, CJI is spearheading the Juvenile Justice Workforce project. This project is a component of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Human Service Workforce Initiative. In the first phase of the project, CJI is developing report on the current state of the juvenile justice workforce in the country. The second phase of the project, CJI will create a work plan for additional research needed to more fully understand the needs of this workforce and will develop a paper that analyzes the workforce implications of juvenile justice reform efforts and ongoing best practices.
- A collaboration with **National Institute of Corrections** to develop an integrated model for enhanced community-based offender supervision. This project is currently being piloted in Maine and Illinois.
- A contract with the **Massachusetts Parole Board** to facilitate a process for the development of sanction and revocation guidelines.
- With funding from **Massachusetts' Executive Office of Public Safety** (EOPS), CJI has recently begun developing a series of one-day roundtables on priority policy areas for the adult criminal justice system. The roundtables will bring together Massachusetts leaders and local and national experts to share information, deliberate, and advance consensus on how to implement system improvements and more effective programs. Victims' Roles and Perspectives in Prisoner Re-entry is the topic for the first roundtable.
- CJI is developing issue papers and training on evidence based practices and system change for judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and human services professionals which will be done cooperatively with national organizations
- CJI supports research and evaluation services for the human services operations of its parent organization, Community Resources for Justice, and its clients.

B. Past Work:

- A grant from the **Massachusetts Department of Correction** for CJI to provide technical assistance to help improve statewide collaboration around prisoner reentry and facilitate implementation of the U.S. Department of Justice's Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) grant.
- Community-Based Models for Increased Public Safety - with funding from the **Rockefeller Foundation**, the **Open Society Institute**, and the **Annie E. Casey Foundation**, CJI created Safety First, a model that uses police data to empower community members to develop and implement strategies to address specific public safety issues in their community.
- A collaboration with the **Boston Foundation** to examine the issues in the Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) system, which produced a report entitled *CORI: Balancing Individual Rights and Public Access* and a forum of policy makers and criminal justice practitioners reaching consensus on reform.
- Worked with the **Massachusetts Parole Board** to build decision-making guidelines for granting parole and helped the Board to obtain national accreditation for adult paroling authorities and for parole field services. The Massachusetts Parole Board was the first parole agency in the country to receive both of these accreditations.
- Worked with the Massachusetts Parole Board and Massachusetts correctional agencies to develop the first Day Reporting Centers in the U.S.
- Worked with the Massachusetts juvenile courts and juvenile probation to develop alternatives to **Department of Youth Services** custody, which resulted in juvenile Day Reporting.
- Conducted outcome evaluations of the Massachusetts Building Bridges to Employment program, which facilitated the transition of inmates from prison to the community.
- In 2003-2004, CJI conducted a series of community safety forums funded by **The Boston Foundation** and the **Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation**. This series engaged the community, law enforcement, public officials, and experts in dialogue about a range of public safety issues to inform and raise the level of public discourse and, motivate public officials for more effective social strategies.

C. Publications:

CJI informs state and national policy development through studies and policy briefs. CJI publications related to reentry include:

- *Returning Inmates: Closing the Public Safety Gap;*
- *The Role of Parole;*
- *No Place Like Home: Housing and the Ex-Prisoner;*
- *From Incarceration to Community: A Roadmap to Improving Prisoner Reentry and System Accountability in Massachusetts;*
- *CORI: Balancing Individual Rights and Public Access;*
- *Implementing Evidence-based Practices in Corrections;*
- *Using an Integrated Model to Implement Evidence-based Practices in Corrections.*

Appendix B: Agenda for 2006 and Beyond

CJI believes that by presenting evidence of what works in reducing recidivism and by building the capacity of organizations and agencies, justice systems across the country significantly improve. Toward this end, CJI seeks to:

- In Massachusetts, explore the issues and identify solutions to the problem of **minority overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system**;
- In Massachusetts, initiate a dialogue about **substance abuse and mental health care** as a public health issue and a public safety issue;
- In Massachusetts, examine the next steps necessary to advance **sentencing reform**;
- Develop and implement an **integrated model** for community-based offender supervision in Massachusetts and throughout the country;
- Increase the jurisdictions in which we are asked to help **develop partnerships for effective collaboration** to address the gaps in offender reentry programs;
- Expand the number of jurisdictions implementing **juvenile detention alternatives**;
- Expand research on the **role of communities** in successful offender reentry;
- Develop specific policy recommendations designed to increase the employability and **employment options of reentering offenders**;
- Examine the issues and identify solutions specific to **female offenders** in re-entry;
- Examine the dramatic increase in the application of technology in community corrections and identify the correctional principles that must be in place for the **application of technology to effectively reduce recidivism**;
- Continue to **convene stakeholders and experts** to deliberate on criminal justice policies and research in an effort to improve public policy and public safety;
- **Evaluate re-entry programs** in Massachusetts and throughout the country to determine whether they are successful and whether they can be more effective.