
INNOVATIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE STRATEGIES

A final quarterly newsletter brought to you by the CJCC Strategic Planning Committee

FOURTH QUARTER 2021

Ending Prison Gerrymandering

Where: Colorado

Program: Colorado Common Cause

<https://coloradonewline.com/2021/08/13/colorado-redistricting-panel-votes-to-end-prison-gerrymandering-in-new-legislative-maps/>

Prison inmates have historically be counted by the U.S. Census Bureau as residents of the county were they are incarcerated, which skews an area's population and prevents allocation of funds to communities where these individuals are ultimately likely to return when released. Colorado's Independent Legislative Redistricting Commission recently adopted changes to the state's congressional and legislative maps to end prison gerrymandering. Now more than 14,000 incarcerated people will be counted using their last known address, not the location of the prison. This change has the potential to shift political power and federal funding. The status quo prior to the vote to change has benefited less diverse, rural districts where prisons are commonly located, and has been especially detrimental to primarily minority communities. Disproportionate representation of minorities in the criminal justice system, and policies that prevent those communities from counting and receiving funds for their own citizens who are incarcerated, reduces those communities' ability to provide necessary services to address criminal justice concerns, perpetuating a cycle of incarceration. The new maps, which are due to the Supreme Court in mid-October, will ultimately determine how communities are represented in the state legislature and in Congress, as well as how federal funds are allocated.

September is National Recovery Month

Where: Michigan

Program: Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month

<https://stateofreform.com/featured/2021/09/michigan-behavioral-health-issues/>

In Michigan, Governor Gretchen Whitmer declared September as Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. Experts across the state are working on reducing barriers to care, slowing down rising rates of overdoses, and continuing to invest in prevention and integrated care. Governor Whitmer's announcement aimed to raise awareness of systems in place where Michiganders can receive treatment for any substance use disorder. Several issues prevent efficient means to handle the overall matter. Issues such as staff shortages, anxiety and depression from COVID-19 leading to a sharp increase in deaths, and an overall decrease in the quality of care regarding minorities, all prevent the motion from helping everyone. However, the attention garnered from the declaration of a month dedicated to recovery has resulted Michigan lowering overdose rates compared to the surrounding area in the Midwest. Because of this, Michigan aims to continue funding and expanding investments into prevention, treatment services, and behavioral health whenever possible.

Supervision Reform

Where: Across the United States

Program: More Community, Less Confinement

<https://csgjusticecenter.org/2021/09/01/new-state-by-state-analysis-explores-how-supervision-violations-impacted-prison-populations-during-the-pandemic/>

According to a report by The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, state prison populations shrank by 14 percent in 2020. This population drop was not only due to incarcerated people being let out early, but also due to a decrease in overall admissions. Despite the decline, supervision violations still accounted for 42 percent of prison admissions in 2020. That said, the large share of prison admissions from probation and parole continues to increase corrections costs and jeopardize progress for people who have been involved in the criminal justice system. The CSG concluded that if states sustain an overall reduction of 57,000 fewer people incarcerated for supervision violations each year, they could save an estimated \$2.7 billion annually. These savings can be reinvested into mental health and substance use treatment services, community-based supports, and workforce development initiatives—all evidence-based services proven to reduce recidivism and positively impact the lives of people on supervision.
