

Here are some frequently asked questions about the Public Safety Performance Project, and states' eligibility to participate.

### ***What is the Public Safety Performance Project?***

The Public Safety Performance Project seeks to help states develop fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing and corrections that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable and control corrections costs. It was launched in 2006 by The Pew Center on the States.

### ***What does the project do?***

The project works with selected states to improve their sentencing and corrections systems. We diagnose the factors driving prison growth and provide policy audits with options for reform -- drawing on extensive research and promising approaches and best practices in other states. We also help state officials, practitioners and others share this state-of-the-art knowledge and ideas through policy forums, public opinion surveys, multi-state meetings, national, regional and state-level conferences, and online information about what works.

Our three main objectives:

1. To help states collect and analyze data on who is admitted to their prisons, how long they stay, who returns, and the resulting implications for public safety and state budgets;
2. To compare existing sentencing, release and community supervision policies and practices to those of other states; and
3. To encourage states to use this information for policy solutions that increase public safety yet deliver a solid return for taxpayers.

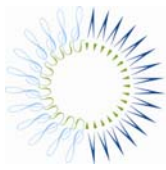
### ***Why does Pew care about this issue?***

Pew studies and promotes nonpartisan policy solutions for pressing and emerging problems affecting the American public and the global community. Our experts partner with leading authorities to conduct research and advance fact-based solutions to compelling problems. In the state policy arena, our initiatives seek to ensure that states are intelligent stewards of the public's tax dollars and encourage investments that sow the seeds for the future by improving the lives of our citizens, strengthening communities and building America's economic competitiveness.

Today, the U.S. spends more than \$60 billion each year on corrections, but gains in public safety have not kept pace. Of the 650,000 people released annually from American prisons, more than half are back behind bars within three years. Many state policy makers are now asking whether their corrections budgets are delivering what taxpayers want: decreased crime; the return of ex-offenders as productive, law-abiding members of society; and wiser use of public dollars. Pew's project is tackling these questions and working with states to develop pragmatic, effective and consensus-driven solutions.

### ***What does it mean for a state to participate in the Public Safety Performance Project?***

The project invests intensive resources in those select states with a demonstrated commitment to reform. Our staff, working with well-respected experts, will provide nonpartisan research, analysis and assistance to officials in participating states to explore sentencing and corrections reforms that are both economical and safe. Rather than one-size-fits all solutions, we work with leaders to pinpoint a state's unique challenges, draw on the best research and lessons learned from other states, and tailor cost-effective, data-driven policy options.



### ***What does that assistance look like?***

Our tailored assistance includes:

- Expert diagnosis of the state's corrections system, including data and analysis to identify key factors that are driving prison growth and to ensure that policy debates are grounded in fact.
- Audits to assess how current sentencing and corrections policies have influenced prison population growth and to identify cost-effective policy options.
- Nonpartisan research and analysis—both by tapping into existing studies that speak to the state's special challenges and by conducting original research to help it answer key questions.
- Policy forums that bring lawmakers together with other officials and influential stakeholders to share information and ideas.
- Public opinion surveys.
- Public education and media outreach.
- Partnerships with highly respected academic, nonprofit and private-sector organizations in the state.
- Partnerships with credible national organizations whose constituencies play a key role in these issues and that can offer valuable expertise.
- Multi-state conferences, in which officials from a participating state meet peers in other states to discuss shared challenges and learn what's worked and what hasn't.

We do not provide major financial support directly to a participating state. However, Pew will explore partnerships with other funders interested in working in the state, and assess on a case-by-case basis how best to provide the resources needed to help that state move forward.

### ***Who provides the assistance to a state?***

The project works with a variety of partners to make the most valuable and credible expertise available. In each state, the project's work is spearheaded by either the Council of State Governments (CSG) or the Vera Institute of Justice, two key partners. Both nonprofit organizations have long records of providing nonpartisan research, analysis, and expertise to states on sentencing and corrections policy. Pew's project staff, also with extensive experience in these issues, works closely with CSG, Vera, and other project partners—including the National Center for State Courts, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors Association—to provide additional help. Both the project staff and partners also seek to engage players at the state level. In all instances the project seeks to leverage the research capabilities, networks and expertise of the Pew Center on the States.

### ***What is the Pew Center on the States?***

An operating division of Pew, the Pew Center on the States (PCS) examines effective policies for critical issues facing states. PCS conducts highly credible research, brings together diverse perspectives, analyzes states' experiences to determine what works and what doesn't, and collaborates with other funders and organizations to highlight nonpartisan, pragmatic solutions. More information about PCS can be found at [www.pewcenteronthestates.org](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org).

### ***Who pays for the project's assistance, and how long does it last?***

By engaging CSG, Vera and other experts to support states' efforts, the project is paying for a significant amount of the assistance. But collaboration is critical. States are urged to invest some of their own resources, and to work with Pew to partner with other funders, including private foundations and the federal government.

The length of the project's involvement will depend on progress. We know that in the complex world of sentencing and corrections, meaningful policy change takes time. But we also have to ensure that our limited resources are invested in those states whose leaders are committed to addressing today's pressing challenges.

***How can my state participate in the project?***

State government officials or their designees who want to explore their states' potential participation should contact the project directly through the information provided at the bottom of this FAQ. Working with our partners, we will conduct a feasibility assessment to determine whether the state is a good fit for the project.

***What can my state do to increase its chances of being selected?***

Several factors increase the likelihood that a state can qualify. The most important are:

- Strong recognition and cooperation among leaders of all three branches of government about the need to explore meaningful policy change.
- Dedication to collecting and analyzing criminal justice system data as a basis for new policy and to ensuring that reforms are fact-driven.
- Willingness to explore policy reforms in a nonpartisan manner.

***If I am not a state official or designee, but I think my state could benefit from being involved in this project, what should I do?***

Local government leaders, business leaders, researchers, attorneys, advocates and citizens interested in better, more cost-effective outcomes from their states' sentencing and corrections systems are encouraged to educate their state leaders about the project. As described above, to commit intensive resources to a state, we need to see evidence that leaders of all three branches of government—the governor, state legislators and the judicial system—are committed to working together to explore fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable and control corrections costs.

***What if my state doesn't qualify?***

Contact us anyway. While the project is providing intensive assistance to select states, it also seeks to make resources available to all 50 states, particularly by partnering with other knowledgeable, highly credible organizations.

***When is the deadline to seek assistance?***

There is no set deadline. The project will continue to scout the country and conduct feasibility assessments to determine the most promising opportunities for change.



Public Safety Performance Project  
*Frequently Asked Questions*

***How do I learn more?***

- Write to the project:  
Public Safety Performance Project  
The Pew Charitable Trusts  
2005 Market Street, 17th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19103
- Contact James Stewart at [info@pewpublicsafety.org](mailto:info@pewpublicsafety.org) or (215) 575-4744