

# Blueprints for Change: Criminal Justice Policy Issues in Virginia

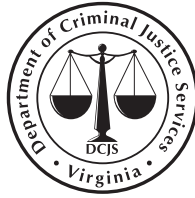


Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services  
[www.dcjs.virginia.gov](http://www.dcjs.virginia.gov)

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The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) is the state criminal justice planning agency in Virginia and is responsible for administering state and federal funds dedicated to improving state and local criminal justice practices, preventing crime and delinquency, and ensuring services to crime victims.

In its role as a planning agency, the Department convened six policy sessions over a two day period in May, 2007. The facilitated sessions explored six different leading edge criminal justice issues, chosen by the Department. Each three-hour session brought together a multidisciplinary group of executive-level participants who were selected because of their knowledge of the issue and their ability to advance the discussion of public policy related to the issue.

The discussions in these sessions, and the recommendations that emerged, are recorded in these policy papers.

In publishing these papers, DCJS hopes that they will stimulate further discussions by state and local decision makers and will provide useful guidance for making substantive statutory change where necessary, as well as for decisions on funding, and policy and program development.

**The 2007 Blueprints for Change: Criminal Justice Policy Issues in Virginia documents are:**

**Canine Training and Law Enforcement**

**Data Mining and Regional Networks as an Investigative Tool: Administrative and Policy Considerations**

**Evidence-Based Practices in Community Corrections**

**Sexual Assault Policies in Virginia Law Enforcement Agencies**

**Using Technology to Guard Against Bias in Policing**

**Virginia's Response to the JJDP Act's Sight & Sound Separation Requirement**

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# Evidence-Based Practices in Community Corrections



## EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

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From an initial “pilot” effort with four local CCCA Agencies, the evidenced-based practices (EBP) initiative in local Virginia corrections now involves ten local community corrections agencies (with others “chomping at the bit” to get started). From the same pilot effort with four state offices of Probation and Parole, the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC) has added Day Reporting Centers and even a maximum security facility to their efforts to implement improved practices aimed at improved outcomes and real behavioral change among offenders.

Of the ten currently involved local programs, most have pretrial (PSA) programming, several have direct relationships with local drug courts, one has a restorative justice component, and most have strong partnerships with mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence treatment service providers. As we continue to develop EBP expertise and appropriate protocols, this initiative will obviously spread into the other programming (both in-house and partners). Similarly, the VADOC EBP efforts support other criminal justice and social interventions and require the same community partners to help effect and sustain changed behavior among offenders.

Evidence-based case planning requires the use good of risk/needs assessment, which must drive the nature and intensity of the interventions (purpose-driven supervision). No one is likely to pose objections to improved assessment and case planning, *or intensified intervention* with high needs/high risk clients. However, research has shown that intervention and high frequency/high intensity supervision is counter-productive with low needs/low risk clients. *Reducing the level of supervision and intervention* is likely to seem counter-intuitive to some in the justice system, and even many treatment providers (Why wouldn’t we want to provide services and supervision to the “easy cases” and simply “fix them?”). Changing attitudes will take time and “proof.”

We must also realize that not just “attitudes” stand in the way. There are longstanding policies and practices, established forms and formats, presumed authorities and responsibilities, and most likely, regulations and statutes which will be in conflict with the system change inherent in a shift to EBP. Changing them will require consistent, determined efforts to show how EBP improves the effectiveness of our supervision and the impact of our interventions, and strengthens public safety.

In this *Blueprints* Workgroup, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) invited a policy discussion on the questions of what *Code*, regulations, established policy, established practices, existing forms, (etc., etc.) pose obstacles to continued development and implementation of an evidence-based system of corrections supervision and intervention. We also asked the panelists how best to educate those who need to be informed about such a system change (judges, prosecutors, public defenders, clerks of court, law enforcement, legislators, community partners, local government officials, citizens); how best to demonstrate through evaluation the impact of this change; and how to engage those most resistant to change in the process of adopting scientifically supported supervision and intervention strategies.



## POLICY/RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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1. Do any of us have, or have we heard of any significant doubts or questions about the idea of a system shift to evidence-based practices? Whether or not we agree with these concerns, we may recognize that they are understandable, arguable, or supportable. [Not for immediate resolution but for on-going consideration.]
2. Having heard the brief discussion of EBP and recognizing some of the changes likely to result, where in the process would you anticipate problems?
  - More supervision/intervention for some clients; less for others
  - Pretrial, probation, and parole conditions are often predicated on long-standing practices and do not actually relate to (and will sometimes interfere with) effective case management
  - Current training must change
  - Non-traditional partnerships must be developed and existing partnerships must be enhanced
  - Offenders need to be supervised and involved in programming that pays more attention to their criminogenic needs than to the specific crime and sentence (e.g., an offender may have been sentenced to three months on a “bad check” charge but risk/needs assessment shows him to be a high-needs, high-risk individual; he may receive significantly more attention and program involvement than another offender with a more serious offense but who assessment has shown to be a lower risk)
  - There may be a variety of practices that will not have the same effects. For example, plea bargains are often arrived at to achieve a conviction that, in effect, may reduce the impact on the offender (as when a felony is reduced to a misdemeanor charge); risk assessment will dictate that an offender be treated in accordance with measured risk, which will not have changed simply because the offender was convicted of a lesser crime).
3. What formal policy, practice, regulation or law will need to be modified to implement the change to evidence-based practices?
4. To whom do we need to explain EBP in order to get them “on board,” and how do we best do that? How do we reduce resistance and garner support?
5. What training, resources and research are needed?



## DISCUSSION

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The discussion began with a brief overview of evidence-based practices (EBP) in criminal justice, nationally and with specific information about the pilot sites in Virginia. Policy, programs, and services in private industry and public agencies are all moving toward EBP in their respective systems. After years of programs and practices based on “best judgment,” scientifically sound research is increasingly available and is increasingly used to define and direct the work of criminal justice programs and agencies in the design and implementation of treatment and service provision. Thirty years after the creation of a popular myth that “nothing works,” we have now a significant body of research on what works, for whom it works, and how to implement programs that can be shown to actually reduce criminal thinking and thus help to reduce recidivism.

An example of how research is shaping programs and interventions involves “offender boot camps.” The best judgment of correctional professionals supported the boot camp concept. Many saw boot camp as a life changing experience. However, research has shown that boot camps, generally and for a variety of reasons,

are not only not productive but are, in fact, counter-productive – they increase recidivism. Throughout the criminal justice system, we design programs and initiatives that seem rationally targeted at changing offender behaviors. Only through research and experimentation can we learn that some “logical ideas” work while others fail. EBP is a move toward doing those things that have been shown by research to work effectively.

Continuing research and a shift to evidence-based practices will generate a change throughout the entire criminal justice system. In criminal justice, we need to consider the concept of “alignment” (between all the players) which means interpreting research findings and implementing the results consistently so that we are all working toward the same goal – public safety. Correctional agencies cannot change their approach to supervision and intervention without the understanding and support of law enforcement, prosecution, the defense bar, and the courts. Because the legislature and the executive branch exercise so much influence on the criminal justice system through Code and appropriations, it is essential that they, too, “buy in” to evidence-based practices and programs.

The Evidence-Based Practices overview concluded with the following observations and suggestions for discussion:

There are four key elements in working with offenders to reduce the risk of continuing criminal behaviors

- Conduct a risk/need assessment which focuses on research-supported “criminogenic elements” – personal traits and personal practices which contribute to criminality
- Referral to programs that specifically address criminogenic needs
- Create an environment to help with recovery by assuring treatment quality and fidelity to the intervention design
- Ensure Procedural Justice – program expectations should be clear and build a commitment, by the offender, to change.

The threats to implementing EBP in the CJ system are:

1. Plea bargaining process – correctional interventions should be shaped by the measured risk/needs of the offender, not by the sentence type – an offender assessed as “high risk” should be treated as “high risk.”
2. Net widening – we are moving back toward indeterminate sentencing – some offenders convicted of misdemeanors will need more intensive interventions and longer periods of supervision based on assessment of the risk they pose, even though they may have previously received only minimal attention and required only limited resources.
3. Lack of necessary intervention capacity – some interventions are not available (e.g., pharmacological) due to fiscal constraints, legal and liability issues regarding “forced” medication, and health care financing.
4. Human resources – staff in existing service networks have not been trained in research-based, effective assessment and intervention techniques. Resources are needed to train and retain staff.
5. Sentencing practices – we need to re-think sentencing services of offenders. For example, effective “batterer intervention programs” may take longer than the period of supervision to which an offender is sentenced; conversely, a low risk/low need offender may be sentenced to a period of supervision longer than is necessary. Research has proven that too much supervision is counter-productive. Certainly, too much supervision is not cost-effective.

EBP legislation has been enacted in some areas of the country. Oregon and Washington are two states at the forefront, with two decades of “procedural justice” experience; and, according to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, these practices reduce recidivism (<http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/default.asp>). While legislation may be needed, over time, to permit some of the changes required by a shift to evidence-based practices, it is not needed to define and direct these efforts. In fact, overly-directive legislation passed in other states has sometimes limited the flexibility needed to identify and design solutions to eliminate system barriers to more effective treatment and supervision.

The discussion then moved on to a briefing about EBP development and implementation efforts in Virginia. Currently there are four “paired” pilot sites in the Department of Corrections and local Community Corrections; six additional sites have begun training for and implementing EBP in local Community Corrections. Over the past two years, there have been many activities and developments:

- Planning has been done at the local level working with the VADOC counterparts in the original four sites
- The local agencies identified separate issues from the VADOC (e.g., different offender populations; the need for a different risk/needs tool; pretrial populations)
- A lot of work was begun without a formal plan; but, with assistance from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), pilot site directors and DCJS created a strategic action plan for pretrial and local probation. A year later, we have moved toward our goals and have scheduled a “plan update” session.
- In addition, a thoughtful approach to pretrial services has been documented, termed legal EBP or LEBP. Because there has been no finding of guilt at this point in the process, pretrial defendants are entitled to particular protections, in the Constitution and in state and federal law.
- Different (state vs. local) assessment instruments were identified and adopted because of the differing offender populations (local agencies have more misdemeanants than felons, on supervision for a shorter time). The instruments selected will require validation with the Virginia offender populations. “Case planning” training, driven by the risk/needs assessment instruments, has begun.
- The Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument (VPRAI) is already in place and extensively used. It was researched and designed by the DCJS and is now being (re)validated in Virginia and implemented in other states. Over the next year, a VPRAI-based release recommendation guideline will be developed. However, there is still discussion and disagreement, statewide and nationally, on whether pretrial sanctions, services, and treatment jeopardize defendant rights. It is that discussion which has helped shape the LEBP approach.
- Case planning training has not been implemented in local probation yet – the offender treatment plan will be based on risk, not offense, and must await validation of risk/needs instruments for local probation.
- Pilot sites have encountered staff resistance. Organizational-change issues need to be addressed and the process needs to be slow and calculated/steady. Besides resistance to the perceived additional duties (Motivational Interviewing, assessments, case planning) there is a paradigm shift necessary to understand that the case plan (and supervision) is based on the risk level and not the offense.
- There is an expectation that changes within our local probation and state probation and parole agencies will require, encourage, and support changes to other systems and agencies that deal with offenders. There is evidence that the Charlottesville area CSB has changed how they deliver services and types of services...they have been involved with the EBP process locally and clinically. Drug courts, batterers programs, restorative justice programs, substance abuse treatment providers, and reentry programs



are carefully attending to the EBP initiative and have begun their own changes to respond to and to integrate, in their own programs, this new approach to addressing offenders.

Having heard from both national and state “experts” about evidence-based practices, the discussion then focused on barriers to EBP implementation in community corrections. The discussion by the Policy Workgroup was active and wide-ranging. The Policy Workgroup included community corrections practitioners and administrators, legislative staff, judges, representatives of the defense bar and prosecutors, academics, and others involved in the criminal justice system.

Among the barriers identified and issues discussed were:

- The criminal justice system is inadequately and inaccurately defined. Current definitions are not inclusive enough. Health, mental health, substance abuse services, and education systems are traditionally seen as separate from criminal justice, although collaborations do occur and are essential. The legislative and executive branches of government have broad responsibilities beyond criminal justice but, because of their funding and regulatory roles, are critical parts of the criminal justice system. Local governments in Virginia often think of criminal justice as a state function, based in state Code and, in great part, supported by state rather than local funding. All of these players need to understand and live up to their responsibilities with regard to system improvement and collaboration.
- Criminal justice goals are not well defined. Do we want rehabilitation and behavioral change or do we require retribution? Can both motives be effectively combined? It is doubtful that any two legislators, any two judges, or any two citizens would express the same values about the purposes of our system of criminal justice. How can we build consensus and get everyone on the “same page” or at least in the “same book?” Legislators, for example, may view the criminal justice system through the lens of reducing recidivism and improving rehabilitation, or as a continuing funding drain in need of cost-effective change, or as a political “hot potato.” Divergent legislative positions on criminal justice matters (e.g., establishing and expanding drug treatment courts; the intent of sentencing guidelines; the need for additional prison and jail construction) make it clear that the legislature is not of a single mind about criminal justice practices and purposes.
- We need mechanisms and opportunities to educate all of the system about the goals and practices inherent in evidence-based practices and programs. We also need to do a better job of documenting the impact of alternative programs. However, it is difficult, in a rapidly growing system, to point to reductions in the rate of growth, rather than a reversal of growth, when requesting an increased investment in programs instead of in facilities.
- There is a need to watch for and avoid “creeping cynicism” (“been there, done that, didn’t work”) among criminal justice professionals as we work to replace current ineffective practices with evidence-based practices. So often and for so long, we have heard of programs, practices, and technologies portrayed as panaceas and “magic bullets.” Boot camps, “Scared Straight” programs, electronic monitoring technologies, “intensive supervision” initiatives, and many other “good ideas” have been shown by research to be ineffective, even counter-productive, ideas after all - either because of an inherent misunderstanding of how they would actually affect offenders or because of how they were implemented.
- A system change to EBP should not cost unacceptable amounts of money. These are not new technologies needing expenditures to replace old technologies. Staffing should not change dramatically as some clients will require additional attention but others should receive less supervision and intervention. EBP will not require the institution of an entire new system with new staff, new offices and new resources. Rather, it will require changes to an existing system, already funded. However, resources will be needed for re-training current staff, better research, and continuing evaluation. But funding is

less of a barrier than is finding time for building skills and conducting necessary training. It is difficult to allow staff the opportunity to plan and train since that is time away from their caseloads. One clear purpose of the pilot programs is to identify the resource and time demands of the implementation process to help other programs implement this change as efficiently as possible.

- Some existing practices are not designed to support evidence-based programming. For example, sentencing guidelines were designed to reduce disparities in sentencing and to reduce and control the expensive and extensive growth of Virginia's prison and jail populations. There is a need for a "community-based" sentencing guideline that permits flexible sentencing targeted at changing behavior and reducing recidivism. The current guidelines are based on charge and conviction type, not on individually assessed risk.
- There will be a need to be clear on the purpose of evidence-based correctional programming. Good risk/needs assessment will identify a wide variety of offender needs, all very real but not all related to their criminal behaviors. Corrections cannot and should not end up in the business of meeting all social needs. Even some needs [e.g., employment; education; substance abuse; etc.] that do impact on continuing criminality should be left in the hands of other professionals [e.g., Virginia Employment Commission; DOE and local schools; DMHMRSAS and CSBs; etc.] and it is in such situations that agencies, beyond traditional criminal justice partners, need to understand their roles and responsibilities in public safety. With chronic offenders who have many needs, there must be institutional incentives for all service agencies – DSS, VEC, housing, etc.—to serve these clients.
- The judicial system is not in the business of "fixing" people – judges are tasked with a fair and equitable finding of fact and with making a decision about punishment, not about treatment. Judges tend to rely on probation officers to do the services and "fixes." Yet judges do set conditions of probation and there are legal barriers against probation officers imposing conditions of supervision. It could be beneficial for the judge to review the case assessment plan with the offender at the outset and at any violation hearing. However, this would create an impractical time demand and there are concerns that a two-step finding/sentencing in General District Courts would create instant and unacceptable backlogs. In these courts risk/needs assessment information would not be available at sentencing, as is the case in Circuit Courts. Instead, more authority for establishing conditions of probation must be given to probation officers if they are to effectively respond to offender behavior in evidence-based probation agencies.
- The need for improved information sharing may present some barriers to evidence-based program design. While it is only logical to involve other partners in the criminal justice system, there are restrictions on the dissemination of criminal history information and, probably more critically, there are serious restrictions on treatment information. HIPAA regulations can be a barrier – because of confidentiality issues, sharing information is not easy. Given a lack of clarity on what can be shared with whom, many professionals are simply reluctant to share any more information than is necessary.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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This Policy Workgroup was comprised of positive-minded professionals who are interested foremost in doing their jobs well. They readily accept the idea of implementing evidence-based practices in community corrections as a next logical step in the development of these programs. While this group felt that support should be easily generated for new practices that improve public safety and increase cost-effectiveness in our criminal justice system, they also acknowledged that such a paradigm shift will not happen overnight or simply by proclamation. While it is easy to agree to changes in other parts of the system, a lot more resistance is likely when changes are required to the practices and processes within our own offices and agencies.

The conversion to this new “business model” must be broadly introduced. Most system professionals are slow to accept change because, too often, prior changes have not lived up to the promises made for them by their advocates. Many system professionals will need to first learn much more about evidence-based practices before they will agree to change their own practices. They will need to understand that EBP is not offered as a magic bullet or a panacea for crime, recidivism, addiction, or mental health problems. Instead, evidence (research) can tell us what interventions work for whom. Research can tell us what interventions, logical as they may seem when designed, actually do more harm than good. And, research tells us that when we do the right supervision and intervention with the right people that we will change behaviors. This is an actuarial approach to correctional intervention - a methodical use of science and research to determine what works, for whom.

EPB will help the criminal justice system focus on long-term outcomes (change from criminal thinking; overcome addictions; reduced recidivism; etc.) not just short-term outcomes (i.e., success on probation; completed community service; paid fines, costs, restitution; etc.) The bottom line, after all, is public safety.

### Recommendations

- There is a need for a change in criminal justice philosophy, not just a change in correctional practice. We must look at the entire criminal justice system not just local community corrections and pretrial services. Conversations, like this Blueprints discussion, throughout the criminal justice system, will encourage all decision-makers to consider whether the purpose of the system is solely or primarily punishment and retribution or if the need for long-term behavioral change is a more appropriate and central goal for our justice system.
- There is a need to develop more collaborative efforts among all actors in the system (CJ and treatment providers). Over time, we have created an inefficient, “stove pipe” system. We must stop simply supervising offenders. We must target and help them change their criminal thinking.
- Before we can expect broader acceptance and adoption of evidence-based practices, there is a need to “fine-tune” the concept. Training and presentations must be developed. Evaluation of existing efforts must be underway and preliminary findings must be shared. We need to be able to clearly explain the issues being addressed and the process, not only to principals in the justice system, but also to related service providers and consumers (both localities and offenders). Also, the General Assembly (given that they represent the citizens of the Commonwealth) and the general public need to be educated on the principles and process of EBP. A public education program would be an appropriate mechanism to accomplish this goal. Clearly, Virginia’s Community Criminal Justice Boards can play a major role in testing our assumptions, challenging our “science,” and communicating our message.

- It was generally agreed that plea bargaining may introduce some complexity to the implementation of EBP. However, we should work with the National Public Defender's Association and related organizations in Virginia to outline an acceptable process that acknowledges the role of the defense bar as advocates and to help the defense bar understand that, in the interest of public safety, we must respond to offenders on the basis of measured risk, not solely on the basis of the charge or the sentence. Judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys need to know, up front, that a science-based, research-supported assessment is done and service placements are made based on needs and, especially, risk.
- While the body of sound correctional research is growing, we need still more options and alternatives supported by science. We need further exploration and experimentation with how to minimize recidivism, how to determine where to "place" offenders. There is a critical need for more evaluation and research, not just about community corrections programming. If we simply want retribution, we can punish without regard to long-term effect. If we want to improve public safety, we must also consider questions like: Does a seven year sentence result in less crime after release than a five year sentence? Does a short jail sentence reduce recidivism better than a short term of probation? Does placement on monetary bond produce better pretrial results than placement on third – party supervision without bond? Does a prison or jail sentence improve long-term outcomes and thus improve public safety (in effect, do prisons and jails "work" to accomplish what we think they are to accomplish)? Data collection and research findings can continue to inform system improvements.
- Most professionals simply want the system to work to protect public safety. Much of the perceived resistance will disappear with training that explains and documents the reason for change and the expectations of system improvement. For example, the idea that judges will resist having anyone other than themselves set probation conditions will probably not be borne out in practice. Once there is a clear understanding of how current "conditions" actually work against effective treatment and once they know that well-researched and behavior-related conditions are available, judges will probably be glad to get out of the business of setting (other than basic) conditions. Judges, prosecutors, and the defense bar, will need to understand that scientifically valid risk and needs assessment will allow probation agencies to set better-targeted conditions of supervision and achieve better average outcomes than the outcomes from the current application of "professional judgment."
- While the release of information is complicated and seems threatening, it is essential that information be shared in new ways and with new reason. Clarification of what information can and should be released should be spelled out more clearly. Professionals must be encouraged to obtain and use Release of Information protocols.
- Similar discussions (like this Blueprints discussion) should be common throughout the system and must be more inclusive. Clerks of Court, for example, feel that there are "time and workload" issues relating to many of the system changes of recent years. No clerk was in attendance at the Blueprints discussion but should have been. Resistance from this group alone can pose substantial barriers if not addressed.



Several “themes” were repeated throughout our discussion. We must continue to advance the “science” through research and evaluation. And we must present the “science.” We must offer training and information on the on-going change to evidence-based practices to all of the groups who work with offenders (criminal justice professionals, treatment professionals, and social service professionals). We must push for collaborations that assist in reducing crime and recidivism. Much of what we already do in working with offenders will continue. Research will help us better target our intervention and supervision strategies. Our impact in reducing criminality should improve and, as a direct result, public safety should improve. Research in localities and programs that have implemented these practices, with fidelity, have shown measurable, positive results. Virginia must move in this direction and must work to address and overcome the normal resistance to change.



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## REFERENCES

### **VERA Institute: State Sentencing & Corrections**

The Public Safety Performance Project, launched in 2006 as an operating project of the Trusts, supports in-depth research and public and policy-maker education to help states increase public safety, manage corrections spending and hold offenders accountable.

The project has three main objectives. First, it helps states collect and analyze data about who is admitted to their prisons, how long they stay, who returns, and the implications of those practices for public safety and state budgets. Second, the initiative aids states in understanding how their existing sentencing, release and community-supervision policies compare to those of other states.

Finally, the initiative encourages states to use all of this information and the best available research to explore policy changes that will increase public safety and deliver a solid return on taxpayers' investment.

The project and its partners use a range of activities at the state and national level to advance those objectives.

*Synthesizing research and highlighting states' efforts.* The project is developing a robust set of information to help state policy makers, corrections officials, key stakeholders and the public understand promising practices and lessons learned across the country. We seek to make the strongest research easily available and accessible, offer policy briefs and research reports on particular challenges and approaches, and track legislation, media coverage and key developments across states.

*Providing expertise to states that want it.* Select states interested in exploring change receive tailored, in-depth assistance and resources from highly respected, nonpartisan experts. Each participating state receives an objective, data-driven analysis of its sentencing and corrections system and a policy audit to identify a range of options, drawing on promising approaches and practices in other states.

*Encouraging cross-state learning and collaboration.* The initiative helps state officials, practitioners and others share knowledge and ideas through policy forums, multi-state conferences, and national, regional and state-level meetings.

*Raising awareness.* The project helps ensure that policy makers and the public understand the need and widespread support for change through media outreach and education, broad dissemination of information, public opinion assessments and efforts to highlight promising innovations.

The initiative, based in the Trusts' Washington, D.C., office, works closely with the Pew Center on the States. The project already has identified two external partners to provide expert, nonpartisan information and assistance to states: the Council of State Governments and the Vera Institute of Justice. We will identify and support additional national and state-level partners over time. A wide range of perspectives and interests is pivotal to developing smart, effective sentencing and corrections policy, and we will seek to collaborate with and learn from many different constituencies who share an interest in advancing positive change on these issues.

### **Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates**

Steve Aos, Marna Miller, Elizabeth Drake

Under current long-term forecasts, Washington State faces the need to construct several new prisons in the next two decades. Since new prisons are costly, the 2005 Washington Legislature directed the Washington

State Institute for Public Policy to project whether there are “evidence-based” options that can: a) reduce the future need for prison beds, b) save money for state and local taxpayers, and c) contribute to lower crime rates. This report describes our findings and discusses how we conducted the analysis. We review evidence-based adult corrections, juvenile corrections, and prevention options and analyze the effects of alternative portfolios of these investments. *Document ID: (06-10-1201)*

[www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=06-10-1201](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=06-10-1201)

### **Evidence-Based Adult Corrections Programs: What Works and What Does Not**

Steve Aos, Marna Miller, Elizabeth Drake

This report to the Washington State Legislature summarizes our latest review of evidence-based adult corrections programs. We previously published a *review on this topic in 2001*. In this study, we update and significantly extend our earlier effort.

We are publishing our current work in two installments. In this preliminary report, we provide a systematic review of the evidence on what works (and what does not) to reduce crime. In a subsequent final report, to be published in October 2006, this analysis will include a benefit-cost estimate for each option.

[www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=06-01-1201](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/pub.asp?docid=06-01-1201)

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