

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/bridging-the-divide-parole-outcomes-native-americans-south-dakota>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

The tribal parole program in South Dakota is aimed at solving a problem common to many jurisdictions: providing effective supervision to Native Americans who leave prison and return to live on tribal lands. This brief describes the issues that tribal communities face and how they are working together with the state government to provide effective services for Native American people on parole. It is the first brief in a series of three that focuses on the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) an initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), in partnership with the Pew Charitable Trusts. JRI is a data-driven approach to improve public safety, examine corrections and related criminal justice spending, manage and allocate criminal justice populations in a more cost-effective manner, and reinvest savings in strategies that can hold system-involved people accountable, decrease crime, and strengthen neighborhoods. At least 30 states have engaged in this process.

An effective way to bridge differences between state and tribal governments is to create collaborative policies that holistically consider the needs of the person on parole.

The reasons for high failure rates among Native American parolees and their parole agents include challenging residential conditions, limited access to services in tribal areas, and agents inability to hold parolees accountable.

The South Dakota Department of Corrections partnered with the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate (SWO) of the Lake Traverse Reservation, who were granted the authority and responsibility to supervise parolees who returned to SWO tribal lands.

The Wellness Team, a unique and effective component of the program, has helped tribal parole agents deliver effective supervision, and promoted the involvement of parolees family members and other loved ones from the community.

PUBLICATION

NEWS

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

Vera Institute of Justice. All rights reserved.