

# Vera Institute of Justice

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/welcome-to-a-new-era-for-vera>

### Public Facing Advocacy Writing

At the 1963 March on Washington, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of the fierce urgency of now. And as a friend of Vera, you know that we are in a moment of painful and potentially perilous urgency. Many Americans including the public and policymakers from both aisles are joining us to recognize criminal justice reform as one of the most pressing civil rights issues of our day. And yet, the horrifying deadly shootings by police, and of police, that we witnessed last week remind us of the long and unpredictable road ahead. While we may momentarily despair like many other honorable and good people, we know we must be undaunted and unapologetically focused on solutions.

At Vera, we know that this fierce urgency is something we need to reflect in the way we talk about and portray ourselves as well as in what we do. So, today, I'm pleased to welcome you to [a new era at Vera](#), visibly apparent with our retooled brand and virtual front door. We've emphatically restated [our vision and mission](#) to reflect our purpose to drive change. Our justice system must respect the dignity of every person and safeguard justice for everyone.

Our website now tells the story of our work and the people we work with and who that work affects. You'll see that reflected in the short narrative essays describing our commitments [Securing Equal Justice](#), [Ending Mass Incarceration](#), [Strengthening Families and Communities](#), and the [associated action areas](#) we work on and the bold images that accompany them.

It also surfaces the *new* ways we are working.

What are those? For 55 years, Vera has been an innovator. Our founder, Herb Sturz, was a *social entrepreneur* before the term was in vogue and over-used, studying the problems that impede justice, piloting transformative and achievable solutions, and using what we learn to inform public debate and drive effective policy and practice. We run in a special, inside lane in order to help public sector leaders change the systems they control; visionary correctional leaders who seek to bring post-secondary education to students who are locked up; judges seeking ways to have people return to court without money as the determining factor; and, of course, police chiefs deeply committed to demonstrating and owning a respectful relationship with the communities they serve.

Today, there is massively increased attention to our issues and new tools and technology at our disposal and in true Vera fashion, we're leveraging that and finding innovative ways to drive impact. Here's how:

All this is wrapped up in new technologies that make it easier for people like you who are passionate about justice reform to search for and connect with our research and policy analysis, find our experts, share our content.

Our new logo and mobile-responsive website (yes, you can read it on your phone or tablet without pinching and sizing!) reflect the urgency we must bring to our work at this critical time. The concept: reframing justice. The color: red. Confident and courageous red. Even the font: GT Sectra, created to pair the sharpness of a scalpel with the gravitas of a nib pen.

While we've worked long and hard to create this new home, the same technology that makes it possible means that we can adjust and modify as we learn new strategies or take on new work. So we invite your feedback and suggestion; email us at [veraweb@vera.org](mailto:veraweb@vera.org) and I encourage you to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates on our work, and to share yours.

We have a lot of hard work to do together. Never before has that been more apparent.

Thank you.

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

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