

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/performance-incentive-funding-focus-of-new-vera-report>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The idea that our tax dollars should be directed towards programs that deliver positive outcomes to the community is neither novel nor radical but there are some interesting and innovative pay for success strategies for achieving this. Social impact bonds, which are being piloted in the United Kingdom, New York City, and Massachusetts, are perhaps among the best known of these. In the field of criminal justice, performance incentive funding (PIF) is another promising approach being tried in the United States. PIF programs encourage local jurisdictions to supervise more offenders in the community and achieve better outcomes, namely lower recidivism and fewer prison commitments. They are premised on the idea that if the supervision agency or locality succeeds in sending fewer low-level offenders to prison thereby causing the state to incur fewer costs some portion of the state savings should be shared with the agency or locality.

By delivering fewer prison commitments, agencies or localities receive a financial reward, which is reinvested into evidence-based supervision programs. A new report from Vera's Center on Sentencing and Corrections [Performance Incentive Funding: Aligning Fiscal and Operational Responsibility to Produce More Safety at Less Cost](#) details how PIF programs can lead to better offender outcomes while reducing overall corrections costs. It presents the findings of a summit held in September 2011, which was convened by Vera, the Pew Center on the States, and Metropolis Strategies, to discuss the key challenges and tasks that states must address to develop and implement a PIF program. Achieving positive outcomes, such as reduced recidivism and revocations and safer and stronger communities, is a goal that tax payers, policymakers, and criminal justice professionals can all agree on. By emphasizing the use of evidence-based practices, reporting on outcomes, and paying for success, PIF programs can help states reduce their corrections costs, strengthen their community supervision programs, and build safer neighborhoods.

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