

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/justice-reinvestment-initiative-takes-root-in-delaware>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

The Vera Institute of Justice helped Delaware reach an important milestone in its Justice Reinvestment Initiative this week, presenting results of the [final report](#) of the Delaware Justice Reinvestment Task Force to the Joint Judiciary Committee of the Delaware General Assembly, and meeting along with several task force members with Governor Jack Markell to discuss recommendations and potential legislation.

The [Justice Reinvestment Initiative](#) is a federal project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, in which jurisdictions examine prison populations and costs with the goal of cutting spending and reinvesting savings in practices that have been empirically shown to improve safety and hold offenders accountable.

During an intensive eight-month period of study, the task force found that three major factors sustain Delaware's prison population: the high rate of pretrial detention, probation revocations as a result of violations, and long prison stays.

Many of the task force's recommendations aim to reduce recidivism—the rate at which people exiting prison commit new crimes. Recidivism is the best measure of a prison system's effectiveness, and reducing it is the key to public safety. Research shows that the most effective use of corrections dollars is to target moderate-to-high-risk offenders, a concept referred to as the risk principle. By concentrating prison and supervision resources on these individuals, using the best available science, Delaware can improve public safety, hold offenders accountable, and contain corrections costs.

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