

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/how-can-district-attorneys-offices-use-restorative-justice>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Restorative justice is a framework that views crime, conflict, and wrongdoing as harm to relationships and not merely violation of the law by focusing on people who have been harmed and their needs, while also holding people who have caused harm directly accountable for those needs. Restorative justice successes include reduced recidivism, high satisfaction rates from all participants, and cost savings. Prosecutors should offer restorative justice as a genuine alternative as early in the life of a case as possible. This fact sheet explains restorative justice and explores ways in which prosecutors can use restorative justice models.

Restorative justice provides an alternative way to address crime, seeking to offer community support instead of alienating or isolating people who commit crimes. Prosecutors can lead the way in implementing restorative justice approaches to harm.

Restorative processes should be voluntary for all impacted parties, not mandatory or coercive.

Different types of restorative justice models have been used in the criminal legal system to address different kinds of harm, including community conferencing, restorative circles, family group conferencing, and more.

To find the best model for their needs, district attorneys offices should contact existing restorative programs in their jurisdictions and involve community members in creation and implementation.

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