

RESEARCH CONCEPT PROPOSAL

HOMELESSNESS & REENTRY

1. Provide an overview of the problem you wish to research.

There are a number of reasons why many individuals who have been incarcerated struggle to reintegrate into society once released. These reasons range from difficulties in finding housing and employment to problems with addiction and mental health. Each of these individuals has a unique story and unique set of circumstances. The common thread however, is a systemic lack of support for said individuals post-imprisonment.

We seek to uncover a correlation, if one exists, between the rate of individuals who return to prison / spiral into homelessness and the economic disparity of a given region. In a given city, as the gap between rich and poor widens, do incarceration rates increase? If our findings indicate such a correlation, can improvements in education/vocation skills help reduce the amount of individuals living on or beneath the poverty level. Subsequently, could education/vocation skills have a positive effect on the incarceration rate? Given the consistency in high recidivism rates, we expect there to be an identifiable culprit. We believe the answer is somewhere in the gap between the poor and the mega-rich.

2. State the overall value to the community of the research you will be doing.

If we are able to highlight a connection between the wealth disparity of a region and high re-incarceration rates, how can that information be used to incite positive change? By shedding light on a link between wealth inequality and incarceration rates, our study could suggest that improving education can serve as an agent for change of incarceration/reincarceration. By making modern education/vocational programs accessible/affordable in affected areas, we could help produce a larger number of competitive professionals --in turn helping to reduce the wealth gap.

We believe there are fundamental resources that are not equally accessible to all economic classes. Common-sense resources like education and healthcare, or even essential resources like clean drinking water are not equally available to all people in this country. Our research intends to illustrate one side effect of that reality.

3. What are your research assumptions?

- When conducting research on a subject that deals with inequalities in America, the prime assumption is that race will be a factor on *some* level. Our research will center around the financial disparities of the populous and how it relates to imprisonment, but given this country's history, racial biases will likely be woven into the fabric of the data. *[We assume however, that the patterns we might identify based on race will only be marginally significant to whatever governing entity is capable of funding/green-lighting necessary changes.]*
- We assume there to be an inherent desire in most individuals experiencing recidivism (not including those who deal with mental health issues) to break out of the cycle and successfully reenter society.
- We assume that individuals who are released after completing a sentence do not have the financial footing to self-sustain once freed. This means the individual was on the bottom end of the gap *before* imprisonment.
- We assume that there *are* services currently in place that conduct similar studies but for some reason or another are not resonating with the appropriate factions.

4. A description of those who would contribute to and benefit from the research and findings (user mapping).

Our research will serve the following users:

- *[Individuals recently released from prison who don't have family support or financial footing to sustain themselves while they situate a form of income.] (eventually)*
- Social activists (individuals or organizations) who are dedicated to shrinking the wealth inequality gap and/or improving homelessness rates.
- Outreach programs (and/or organizations like Ascend) that can help formerly convicted individuals get back on their feet.

The aforementioned entities can work with local officials / policy makers to help generate change for the cause.

5. Potential data sources.

This is the most crucial part of the process. Our ideal situation would be to gain access to an awesomely detailed API with all the relevant data points nicely stored for us, waiting to be fetched. After some digging that started to feel extra unrealistic. The next best thing might be if we found relevant data in a CSV file. That also became kind of a long shot. Instead we have compiled a list of articles and reports. Each of these links has *some* data to help us get started with piecing together an arc. In the near future we will be ready to begin communication with Ascend and find out what data they might have access to. In the meantime, here's our start:

TOP SOURCES

DataLA

Los Angeles Open Data

- <https://data.lacity.org/>
- <https://data.lacity.org/A-Well-Run-City/311-Homeless-Encampments-Requests/az43-p47q>
-

Census Data

Los Angeles County, California

- [People and Population](#) (Charts + Maps)
- [Earnings In The Past 12 Months](#) (Tables)

Other Homelessness Links

USICH.gov

[United States Interagency Council on Homelessness: California Homelessness Statistics](#)

EndHomelessness.org

[SOH: State and CoC Dashboards: State of Homelessness](#)

Socrata.com

[Homeless Quarterly Report by Theme](#)

LACounty.gov

[County of Los Angeles Open Data](#)

LAHSA.org

[2020 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count –City of Los Angeles](#)

Los Angeles Times (need subscription)

[*L.A spent \\$619 million on homelessness last year. Has it made a difference?*](#)

Other Prison Links

OAG.ca.gov

[*Back on Track report - Los Angeles*](#)

Rand Corporation

[*Higher Education Programs in Prison Reduce Recidivism*](#)

CALHPS.com

[*California Health Policy Strategies - Supporting the Prison & Jail Reentry Population*](#)

Los Angeles Times (need subscription)

[*Mentally ill homeless people keep going to jail. But a study says L.A. County can fix that.*](#)

Prison Policy

[*Nowhere to go: Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people*](#)

CASI.CJCJ.org

[*California Sentencing Institute - adjusted rates of adult and juvenile arrests and incarcerations 2009-2016*](#)

LA.MyNeighborhoodData.org

[*The Neighborhood Data for Social Change \(NDSC\) platform - USC Project*](#)

Maps.Latimes.com

[*Portal to cities in LA county, maps and helpful demographic states for cities and neighborhoods*](#)

LAHSA.org

[*Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority*](#)

LCPSR.umich.edu

[*Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities, 2012*](#)

Other Wealth Disparity Links

PolicyLink.org

[An Equity Profile of the Los Angeles Region](#)

AASC.UCLA.edu

[*The Color Of Wealth in Los Angeles*](#)

Fred.stlouisfed.org

[*Income Inequality in Los Angeles County, CA*](#)