



Guidance for Submitting Phase I Letters of Interest for Local Jurisdictions

TA awards will assist localities in assessing the primary cost and population drivers associated with their criminal justice systems. This information will be used to develop policy recommendations aimed at helping local jurisdictions implement more cost-effective measures to yield savings and reinvest in strategies to increase public safety.

The Bureau of Justice Assistance invites local jurisdictions to submit letters of interest to be considered for a Phase I award of technical assistance (TA) under the [Justice Reinvestment Initiative \(JRI\)](#). TA awards will assist localities in assessing the primary cost and population drivers associated with their criminal justice systems. This information will be used to develop policy recommendations aimed at helping localities implement more cost-effective measures to yield savings and reinvest in strategies to increase public safety.

All letters of interest will be reviewed by the JRI Steering Committee in accordance with the criteria below. Based upon that review, BJA will conditionally accept a subset of jurisdictions into Phase I and assign a technical assistance provider to help develop a plan that outlines the site's intentions and capacity for implementing justice reinvestment. Letters of interest should be addressed to the Urban Institute, the JRI National Oversight, Coordination, and Assessment entity, and can be e-mailed as a PDF document to justicereinvestment@urban.org or mailed to the attention of:

Justice Reinvestment Initiative
Attention: Lindsey Cramer
Justice Policy Center
Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Please note that as of January 2012, no new local sites are being considered. Please contact Urban via e-mail (justicereinvestment@urban.org) or by phone at 202-261-5385 if you would like to be notified of updates on local site selection opportunities.

When letters are accepted, they will be reviewed on a rolling basis; however, a final decision for participation will only occur after the submission deadline. Letters should be no longer than 4 pages double spaced.

The following sections describe the content of the letters for local jurisdictions. The individual who would spearhead the initiative (e.g., legislator, county executive, corrections head, local commissioner, sheriff, etc.) should submit the letter.

Local LOI criteria:

Letters from local jurisdictions should include information regarding the following:

- Description of the strengths and challenges associated with the jurisdiction's criminal justice system written in the form of a problem statement. Include any key statistics and/or specific information related to the local criminal justice population, such as:
 - Annual and monthly jail admissions and releases

- Average daily jail population
- Average length of jail stay
- Composition of jail population (e.g., breakdown by conviction offense, age, race, gender, etc.)
- Demonstration of site's commitment and ability to provide crime, arrest, conviction, jail, community supervision, and any other data relevant to the JRI data analysis.
- Description of the jurisdiction's interest in participating in JRI and what the jurisdiction hopes to accomplish.
- Discussion of any work related to justice reinvestment (either at the state or local level) in which the jurisdiction has engaged.
- Description of an agency/collaborative group that will be dedicated to lead the justice reinvestment effort, including the commitment of any in-kind resources.
- Provision of contact information for site coordinator.
- Specify a point of contact for data-related questions.
- Commitment of key leadership to participate in the effort and share their respective agency's data, evidenced by signatures from the relevant individuals.
- Indication of whether the jurisdiction has worked with any of the following organizations (if so, please list the relevant initiative(s) or project(s)):
 - The Center for Effective Public Policy
 - The Council of State Governments Justice Center
 - The Crime and Justice Institute of Community Resources for Justice
 - The Pew Center on the States
 - The Urban Institute Justice Policy Center
 - The Vera Institute of Justice
- NOTE: This information is requested for the purpose of assigning a TA provider should the jurisdiction receive an award; preference will not be given to jurisdictions based solely upon their prior experience working with these organizations.

If you have any questions, please refer to the JRI Frequently Asked Questions [website](#).

Please direct any further questions or comments to:

Lindsey Cramer, JRI Project Manager
Urban Institute Justice Policy Center
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 261-5385 (t) / (202) 659-8985 (f)
justicereinvestment@urban.org

Once a JRI local site has been conditionally accepted, each of the following criteria must be satisfactorily accomplished within three months, in order to continue to receive Phase I assistance and to advance to Phase II candidacy.

1. The site has identified participants in JRI working group or task force

- ✓ All key stakeholders in the jurisdiction formally agreed to participate in JRI.
- ✓ There is a leader (or team) who will be responsible for spearheading the initiative.
- ✓ The site has designated an on-site project coordinator who can devote adequate time to this initiative and whose other job responsibilities align with JRI.

- ✓ The site has a collaborative planning body that works on criminal justice issues, or if such an entity does not currently exist in the jurisdiction, the site has a plan for the development of a criminal justice planning body.
- ✓ The site has demonstrated a sufficient history of interagency public safety collaboration.
- ✓ The site has demonstrated a commitment to the principles of evidence-based practices, evidenced by previous implementation or an understanding of and verbal commitment to implement evidence-based practices.
- ✓ The site has resources to support its involvement in this initiative.

2. The site has worked with technical assistance provider to develop an agreement on the milestones that will be pursued regarding a data collection and analysis strategy

The site is committed to **sharing** data between agencies and with TA provider.

- ✓ The site is able to easily **collect** the following statistics:
 - Annual and monthly jail/prison admissions and releases for the last 5-10 years
 - Average daily jail/prison population for the last 5-10 years
 - Average length of jail/prison stay by offense type
 - Composition of jail/prison population (e.g., breakdown by conviction offense, age, race, gender, etc.)
 - Any other statistics that may describe the nature of the jurisdiction's criminal justice population (at the TA provider's discretion), such as:
 - recidivism rates
 - % of population with mental health issues
 - % of individuals cycling in and out of jail or prison more than twice a year
 - % of pre-trial detainees (if local site applicant)
 - % of admissions due to probation and/or parole revocation
 - % of individuals released to post-release community supervision
 - distribution of inmates by offense type
- ✓ The site is able to easily **analyze** data to understand the drivers of its corrections population.
- ✓ The site will work with the TA provider to develop jail/prison population projections for the next 5-10 years.

3. The site has a plan for an announcement and kick-off of the JRI process

- ✓ The site has plans to issue a press release and has coordinated its planning efforts with the TA provider and BJA.
- ✓ The site has developed a formal team charter that identifies the project's mission and goals, defines team members' roles and responsibilities, and sets clear and realistic milestones and deadlines.

4. The site has a plan to coordinate with related local/state initiatives

- ✓ The site has identified the universe of other existing relevant projects and initiatives in its jurisdiction and state.

- ✓ The site has a plan for how it will work with its local/state counterpart.
- ✓ The site has a plan for integrating this initiative with other existing or pending grants or technical assistance projects that relate to the criminal justice system at the local or state level, including the allocation of staff time and overall coordination plan.
- ✓ The site and/or the technical assistance provider has provided information relating to any additional resources to which the jurisdiction has access that could support justice reinvestment and any site plans for capital projects or the construction of jail, prison, or residential treatment facilities.