



Guidance for States Requesting Assistance Through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, Phase I

TA awards will assist states 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 states implement more cost-effective measures to yield savings and reinvest in strategies to increase public safety.

To request JRI assistance, an elected or appointed state official must first express interest via e-mail at justicereinvestment@urban.org or by phone at 202-261-5385. This informal contact will be followed by an orientation process, during which a the state must work with a TA provider to build a shared understanding among state and local policymakers about the justice reinvestment process; ensure the jurisdiction has the data available to adequately ground the process in facts; and secure bipartisan support from key state leaders within all three branches of government (please refer to [BJA's website](#) for more information about these initial steps required of states to express an interest in becoming a JRI state). If the TA provider determines as part of the assessment process that that the state has not been able to meet these initial requirements, it may recommend to Pew and BJA that the state not submit a TA request letter.

Letters requesting technical assistance (TA) under the [Justice Reinvestment Initiative \(JRI\)](#) for Phase I in a state will be accepted only upon the request of the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). All letters requesting assistance will be reviewed by the JRI Steering Committee—comprising BJA, Pew, and the TA providers—in accordance with the criteria below. Based upon that review, BJA may only accept a subset of jurisdictions into Phase I. Letters requesting assistance should be addressed to Juliene James, BJA and Adam Gelb, Pew. A copy of the letter should also be sent to the Urban Institute. Letters should be mailed to the attention of:

Juliene James
Senior Policy Advisor
Bureau of Justice Assistance
810 Seventh Street NW
Washington, DC 20531
juliene.james@usdoj.gov

Adam Gelb
Project Director
Pew Center on the States
901 E Street, NW, 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20004-1409
agelb@pewtrusts.org

Justice Reinvestment Initiative
Attention: Lindsey Cramer
Urban Institute
2100 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
justicereinvestment@urban.org

Letters will be accepted a rolling basis; however, JRI can be of most effective assistance if states engage with the process six to nine months prior to the start of their next legislative session. State officials should consider that in the timing of their submission. Letters should be no longer than 10 pages in length (exclusive of signature pages).

The following sections describe the content of the letters for states. The individual who would spearhead the initiative (e.g., legislator, governor, corrections head, state commissioner, attorney general, etc.) should submit the letter.

Elements of JRI Phase I TA Request Letter:

1. Express an understanding of justice reinvestment goals, process, and intensity and state why justice reinvestment will be helpful for the state at this time.
2. Explain what the state's need for justice reinvestment is and the specific goals for using the justice reinvestment approach.
3. Describe and demonstrate support from all three branches of government.
4. Describe and demonstrate bi-partisan support for the process.

5. Commit to appointing an effective working group of senior policy makers to guide the process.
6. Commit to making data available and to prioritize data requests from the technical assistance provider.
7. Commit to providing the staff support to assist its assigned TA providers in their delivery of intensive technical assistance, which includes qualitative and quantitative research, policy analysis, stakeholder engagement, communications support, and project management.
8. Scope of analysis and policy development to be conducted (developed with TA provider).

Signatories

Recommended

1. Governor
2. Chief Justice (or other leader of the judiciary)
3. Senate President
4. Speaker of the House
5. Secretary/Director of the Department of Corrections

Recommended but Optional

1. Attorney General
2. Chairs of the relevant legislative committees
3. Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
4. Minority Leaders of the House and Senate
(especially if bipartisan commitment has not been demonstrated by required leaders)