



## Guidance for States Requesting Assistance Through the Justice Reinvestment Initiative

States accepted into the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) receive assistance from a technical assistance provider to assess the primary cost and population drivers associated with their criminal justice systems. This information will be used to develop policy recommendations that are cost-effective, yielding savings that will be reinvested in strategies to increase public safety. Upon adoption of the policy recommendations through legislation, states will receive implementation planning assistance and are eligible for limited seed funding to kick-start implementation efforts.

To request JRI assistance, an elected or appointed state official must first express interest via e-mail at [justicereinvestment@urban.org](mailto: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 \(JRI\)](#) 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](mailto:juliene.james@usdoj.gov)

Adam Gelb  
Project Director  
Pew Center on the States  
901 E Street, NW, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20004-1409  
[agelb@pewtrusts.org](mailto:agelb@pewtrusts.org)

Justice Reinvestment Initiative  
Attention: Lindsey Cramer  
Urban Institute  
2100 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
[justicereinvestment@urban.org](mailto: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 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, implementation planning, targeted training, 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)