
2025 National Association of Sentencing Commissions Annual Conference Themes

MADISON, WISCONSIN





Themes

- Aging prison and offender population
- The benefits of developing partnership to improve outcomes, data collection, and research
- Research to understand unique populations within the criminal legal system
- Conducting impact analysis on criminal justice initiatives and proactive monitoring of outcomes
- Understanding where a state's Commission falls within the criminal justice system



Aging Prison and Offender Population

- Various presenters, including representatives of Illinois and Minnesota, highlighted a trend in which offender and inmate age has been increasing, with the youngest age cohort (~18 to ~26) making up a smaller portion of the total prison admissions and a decreased share of the overall prison population.
- This trend has led to questions surrounding: `
 - The costs of incarcerating older individuals
 - The theory that individuals "age out" of criminal activity
 - The potential for older individuals with long criminal histories driving prison growth going forward



Developing Partnerships to Improve Outcomes, Data Collection, and Research

- Missouri has partnered with Recidiviz (tech nonprofit) to develop a time-served calculator, outlining parole eligibility timelines and conditional discharge dates. They plan on redesigning presentence investigation reports to include these details and historical recidivism outcomes associated with various sentencing options.
- Pennsylvania has partnered with external researchers for a 5-year plan to investigate the implementation of new guidelines and will be measuring sentencing outcomes
 - Speaks to the importance of analyzing external and internal decision-making and implementation
- Pennsylvania collaborated with the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Veterans, and PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to identify veterans who are justice involved



Research to Understand Unique Populations within the Criminal Legal System

- Researchers from Illinois and Oregon discussed their Commission's usage of unique statistical methods to better capture Hispanic and Latino identity among the individual's involved in the criminal justice system.
- In 2025, Pennsylvania undertook a comprehensive report on veterans in the criminal justice system and found that this population was heavily undercounted and have a differing typical offending pattern from non-veterans.



Conducting Program Evaluations on CJ Initiatives and Proactive Monitoring of Outcomes

- States, such as Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Utah, Michigan and others are using sentencing databases and cross-agency longitudinal datasets as a resource to evaluate several criminal justice initiatives (e.g. the implementation of justice reinvestment initiatives (JRI), existing/new versions of sentencing guidelines, Blakely v. Washington, etc.)
- States like Virginia and Alaska have continuous federated access to various pretrial indicators that facilitate the creation of reports and dashboards



How does a sentencing commission fit within the broader criminal justice system?

- Several states identified that their scope falls within one or more of these roles:
 - A resource on sentencing data, guidelines, and statutory suggestions
 - Pennsylvania, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, etc.
 - An avenue for criminal justice data analysis and research
 - Virginia, Alaska, Utah, Oregon, and Pennsylvania
 - Facilitator of controversial criminal justice discussions
 - North Carolina & Pennsylvania
 - An advocate for conflict resolution, reform and consensus in criminal justice policy
 - All