



Louisiana Justice Reinvestment (JRI)

Louisiana currently spends \$700 million annually on corrections, but one in three people return to prison within three years of their release.¹ By reinvesting through Justice Reinvestment (JRI), Louisiana can reduce recidivism and improve public safety.

What is JRI?

Justice Reinvestment is a strategy to enhance public safety by decreasing public spending on incarceration and reallocating the savings towards prevention and rehabilitation. Nationally, two thirds of states have already embraced JRI, including southern states like Texas, South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi.² In Louisiana, Justice Reinvestment has taken the form of ten bills, which Governor John Bel Edwards signed into law on June 15, 2017.³ Passed with bipartisan consensus, Louisiana's JRI legislation is expected to reduce the state's prison population by ten percent by 2027.⁴ The JRI package was passed after a year-long study of Louisiana's prison system by the Justice Reinvestment Task Force, a legislatively created body comprised of legislators, judges, sheriffs, a district attorney, a public defender, the Secretary of Corrections, and community members, including crime victims. Collectively, the bills work to reduce barriers to successful reentry, diminish recidivism, promote alternatives to incarceration, and support crime victims.

Pew Charitable Trusts provided nonpartisan data analysis and technical assistance to Gov. Edwards, legislative leaders, and members of the Justice Reinvestment Task Force. Pew's expertise allowed the Justice Reinvestment Task Force to offer data-driven recommendations and evidence-based best practices. The JRI legislation requires that data be collected about the initiative's progress and shared with the public.⁵ Accordingly, JRI can also serve as a tool to evaluate the current operations of Louisiana's criminal justice system.

How does JRI work?

JRI reduces mandatory sentences and accelerates release dates for persons who pose minimal risk to society.⁶ Over the next ten years, Louisiana's JRI legislation is projected to save \$262 million while enhancing public safety.⁷ The savings come from the earlier release of low risk persons, the decreased likelihood that they will return to prison due to minor parole violations, and reduction in recidivism rates. Specifically, changes to the habitual offender 'cleansing periods'⁸ and mandatory minimum sentences, amendments to the violent crimes list, connecting drug sentences to drug amounts, and consolidation of property crime statutes all work to reduce sentences on the front end.⁹ On the back end, capped probation terms, accelerated opportunities for parole eligibility, and increased use of administrative sanctions for parole violations all work to release people sooner and avoid their return to prison.¹⁰ Additionally, Louisiana's legislation supports reentry by suspending child support payments while a person is incarcerated and by allowing people convicted of

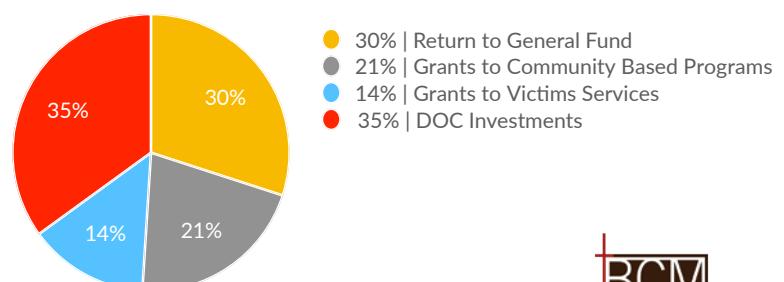
certain drug offenses to access the welfare system (SNAP/TANF), from which they were previously barred.¹¹

In fiscal year 2017-2018, 70% of savings are legislatively mandated to be reinvested in programs and services that ease reentry, support crime victims, and reduce recidivism, with the other 30% returning to the State's general fund.¹² For each year thereafter, 20% of the savings go directly to the Office of Juvenile Justice, while the remainder of the savings are to be reinvested as described above (50%), or returned to the State's general fund (30%).¹³ As depicted in the pie charts, a portion of each year's savings will be allocated through a competitive grants process, to which community based organizations may apply.¹⁴ The Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DOC), the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement (LCLE), and the Administration of Criminal Justice will administer grants. Depending on the year, the DOC will also retain 25-35% of funds for its own programing and treatment services.¹⁵

Why does JRI matter?

JRI mandates that sheriffs, judges, district attorneys, the Office of Juvenile Justice, and the Department of Corrections employ evidence-based reentry practices and alternatives to incarceration, and provides a reliable funding stream to support this work for the next ten years.¹⁶ These actors must share data with the State Legislature and general public, who can then better advocate for data-driven decision making throughout the criminal justice system.¹⁷ Because of JRI, the State will publically distribute statistics on prison admissions, sentencing, habitual offender sentencing, parole, community supervision, medical furlough, certified treatment and rehabilitation programs, workforce development, work release programs, and cost savings and reinvestment. Informed legislators can use this data to create performance metrics and develop additional recommendations, then evaluate and adjust as JRI implementation proceeds.

JRI in Fiscal Year 2018



What's happening with JRI now?

Many of the JRI reforms took effect on or before November 1, 2017, but the remaining start dates are staggered over the next two years.¹⁸ The Acts on sentencing, probation, and parole are already in effect, along with restored SNAP/TANF eligibility.¹⁹ The first annual data report is due to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee and the public by June 30, 2018.²⁰ Enhanced rights for crime victims and provisions concerning fines and fees will commence August 1, 2018.²¹ Suspension of child support, which provides relief from the prior law requiring support payments despite an incarcerated person's inability to perform paid work, is not effective until January 1, 2019.²² By February 1, 2018, the Louisiana Felony Class System Task Force (created by the 2017 legislative session) must develop recommendations for the 2018 session in order to increase transparency and consistency across Louisiana's felony sentences.²³ Meanwhile, DOC will calculate parole eligibility dates on an ongoing basis, including for adults sentenced to life without parole as juveniles, enabling their accelerated release.²⁴ The Board of Pardons and Parole will continue to hold parole hearings where applicable in accordance with the revised eligibility dates. As people return to their families, community based organizations are working to address unmet needs.

What's the future of JRI?

Louisiana's Justice Reinvestment legislation requires community oversight and collaboration from various systems actors:

- » The **Louisiana Felony Class System Task Force** must put forth classification recommendations for each of Louisiana's felonies to be considered by the State Legislature during the 2018 Regular Session;²⁵
- » The **Department of Corrections** must ensure the accuracy of time calculations for release, improve educational and vocational programming, and partner with organizations offering reentry services and alternatives to incarceration;²⁶
- » The **Office of Juvenile Justice** must make strategic investments to reduce the number of court-involved youth and prevent them from reentering the criminal justice system;²⁷
- » **District Attorneys** must implement victim-focused training and trauma services;²⁸
- » The **Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** must distribute information and forms concerning the suspension of child support payments during incarceration.²⁹ DCFS must also provide TANF and SNAP support to previously ineligible individuals convicted of certain drug crimes;³⁰
- » **State Offices, Boards, and Commissions** must grant professional licenses to applicants previously convicted of nonviolent offenses, unless the offense involved fraud or is directly related to the work for which the license is sought;³¹
- » **Nonprofits** must use evidence-based reentry practices and implement alternatives to incarceration consistent with best practices.³² They should also assist families whose child support has been suspended by incarceration;³³
- » **Judges** must carry out reforms to the probation process including release on bond for rearrested parolees and reduced use of administrative jail sanctions for probationers/parolees.³⁴ When assessing fines and fees for felonies, judges must evaluate financial hardship to the defendant and his dependents;³⁵
- » **Sheriffs** should evaluate and improve existing reentry programming to better connect with life outside;³⁶
- » **Legislators** should require that the Legislative Budget Committee rely on JRI's data collection provisions to ensure that reinvestment spending is evidence-based and impactful;³⁷ AND
- » **Louisiana residents** should call for public and continuous evaluation of the Justice Reinvestment outcomes. Information about outcomes will be distributed and monitored by the Justice Reinvestment Implementation Oversight Council.³⁸

For more information visit: <http://doc.louisiana.gov/>

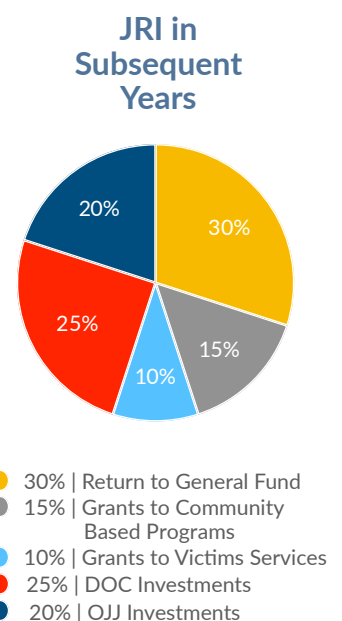
JRI by 2027

3,000+
people returned
sooner to their
families

10%
reduction in LA's
prison population

12%
reduction in
LA's community
supervision
population

\$262M
in savings
over 10 years



Citations

1. Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Package, available at http://www.doc.la.gov/media/1/Justice%20Reinvestment%20Task%20Force/la_final.package.summary_2017-6-7_final.pdf
2. Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force Report, available at https://www.lasc.org/documents/LA_Task_Force_Report_2017_FINAL.pdf.
3. http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/legislature/article_168c6d6e-5089-11e7-a0d6-7f67135f59a4.html
4. Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Reforms Practitioner's Guide, (LA Dep't of Corrections July 30, 2017). The practitioner's guide is also the source for the pie charts, for which calculations have been confirmed based on Act 261.
5. Acts 261, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
6. Act 281 & 282, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
7. <http://doc.louisiana.gov/justice-reinvestment-task-force>
8. The term 'cleansing period' denotes the time elapsed between the current prior offenses.
9. Acts 281 & 282 LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
10. Acts 280 & 282, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
11. SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is more commonly known as food stamps; TANF is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which provides short-term financial assistance. Acts 264 & 265, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
12. Act 261, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
13. Id.
14. Id.
15. Id.
16. Id.
17. Act 261, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
18. Acts 265, 280, 281 & 282 LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
19. Acts 265, 280, 281 & 282 LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
20. Act 261, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
21. Acts 258 & 260, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
22. Act 264, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
23. Essentially, the work of the Task Force is to recommend a classification for each of Louisiana's existing felonies. If adopted, the sentence for a given felony would be consistent with the others in its class. Act 281, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
24. Act 277, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
25. Act 281, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
26. Act 261, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
27. Id.
28. Id.
29. Suspension means that the child support order is modified to zero dollars during any period of incarceration of 180 days or more. Act 264 requires the suspension of child support during incarceration (unless the crime is against the child or custodial party, or the offender has the means to pay). Act 264, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
30. Act 265, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
31. Act 262, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
32. Act 261, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
33. Act 264, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
34. Act 280, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
35. Act 260, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
36. Act 261, LA Leg., Reg. Sess. (2017).
37. Id.
38. La. Exec. Order No. 17-33 (Dec. 11, 2017).

Baptist Community Ministries

Origin

In 2015, Baptist Community Ministries (BCM) celebrated two decades of service to the Greater New Orleans region. But our service to the community actually began in 1926 with the opening of Southern Baptist Hospital. The hospital, a leading regional medical center, was located in the heart of Uptown New Orleans. For several generations, the hospital provided excellent healthcare to patients of all faiths.

Due to the changing healthcare landscape in New Orleans, a decision was made to sell the hospital in 1995. The proceeds from the sale were used to create BCM, a faith-based philanthropic foundation. The focus changed from providing direct care to individual patients to making social investments (grants) in local nonprofits to improve the health of the community.

Vision

Baptist Community Ministries is committed to the development of a healthy community offering a wholesome quality of life to its residents and to improving the physical, mental and spiritual health of the individuals we serve.

Mission

In response to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ and in keeping with our Baptist heritage, Baptist Community Ministries (BCM) invests its human capital and financial resources in the five-parish Greater New Orleans region. BCM uses the ways and means set forth below towards achieving its Vision:

Philanthropy – identify ideas and partner organizations that address critical community needs in the areas of Health, Education, Public Safety and Governmental Oversight; support these ideas and partner organizations with financial grants and expert consultation

Chaplaincy Services – identify partner organizations that will benefit by offering pastoral care services to their staff and the individuals they serve; deploy professionally trained chaplains to provide pastoral care in these organizations

Congregational Wellness – identify partner congregations that will benefit by offering wellness ministries to their faith communities; train volunteer registered nurses and lay health advocates to establish and maintain these wellness ministries

Values

Baptist Community Ministries is a faith-based Christian organization that:

- » Shows unconditional acceptance and compassion to those we serve
- » Has reverence for the dignity of each person and the cultural diversity of the community
- » Demands responsible stewardship of its charitable assets
- » Commits to being accountable to the community