

District of Columbia Crime Policy Institute Strategic Plan

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Introduction

With funding from the Justice Grants Administration in the Executive Office of the District of Columbia Mayor, the District of Columbia Crime Policy Institute (hereafter "DCPI") was established at the Urban Institute, in collaboration with the Brookings Institution, through the jointly administered Partnership for Greater Washington Research. DCPI is a non-partisan, public policy research organization focused on crime and justice policy in Washington, DC. DCPI's mission is to support improvements in the administration of justice policy, through evidence-based research. Through the Partnership for Greater Washington Research, DCPI will connect to a substantively diverse team of prominent scholars and policy experts. Working collaboratively, DCPI will create a knowledge base that informs long-term strategic planning and short-term operations research to address juvenile and criminal justice challenges in the District of Columbia. DCPI will produce timely, practitioner-oriented research to aid the Justice Grants Administration (JGA) and the Executive Office of the Mayor (EOM) in the development and implementation of evidence-based crime and justice policy.

This strategic planning document describes DCPI's mission, management and core objectives: 1) the development and implementation of a mathematical model to predict the costs and benefits of new crime and justice policies and programs to the District of Columbia; 2) the creation of a publicly-accessible library of crime and justice research in the District of Columbia; and 3) the identification and implementation of research projects of interest to the District of Columbia's JGA and EOM.

Management

DCPI will be administered by the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute. The Urban Institute was founded in 1968 as a private, nonprofit corporation in Washington, DC. It is nationally known for its objective and nonpartisan research and educational outreach on the nation's social, economic, and governance challenges. Through broad conceptual studies, program evaluations, and administrative and technical assistance, the Institute helps public and private decision makers address these problems and strives to raise citizens' understanding of policy issues and trade-offs. The Justice Policy Center

(JPC) is one of the Urban Institute's ten policy centers. JPC conducts research and evaluation designed to improve justice and public safety policies and practices at the national, state, and local level. The Center's research is founded on both the rigorous application of analytic methods and a pragmatic understanding of on-the-ground operations.

The Brookings Institution is a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington, DC, whose mission is to conduct high-quality, independent research and to provide innovative, practical recommendations that advance three broad goals: strengthening American democracy, fostering the economic and social welfare, security and opportunity of all Americans, and securing a more open, safe, prosperous and cooperative international system. For more than 90 years, Brookings has analyzed current and emerging issues and produced the highest quality research, policy recommendations, and analysis on a full range of public policy matters. Brookings brings together more than 200 leading scholars in government and academia, drawn from the United States and abroad.

Together, the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution have formed the Partnership for Greater Washington Research, which is co-Directed by Margery Turner, Vice President for Research at Urban Institute and Alice Rivlin, Senior Fellow and Director for Greater Washington Research at Brookings. This Partnership combines the talents and capacity of two premier public policy research organizations and focuses them on the issues and challenges facing Washington, DC, and the quality of life for residents of the nation's capital. Policymakers in the District of Columbia face complex, interconnected problems in a rapidly evolving city, and need solid information and analysis that integrates a variety of factors and indicators. The Partnership offers access to the full complement of subject matter experts, methodologists, and policy analysts resident at both institutions to assist in informing decisions. Thus, housing DCPI within the Partnership for Greater Washington Research provides the District not only with researchers well-versed in criminal justice policy and practice, but it also provides expertise in a multitude of other domains associated with crime and delinquency, providing a more robust set of tools for identifying and addressing these issues facing DC.

DCPI will be managed by a core staff from the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute: John Roman, Ph.D. will serve as the Executive Director of DCPI and manage DCPI's operations, provide oversight of all research, and lead the development and implementation of the cost-benefit model. Jocelyn Fontaine, Ph.D. will lead outreach to criminal and juvenile justice stakeholders as the Deputy Director. Joshua Markman will be the Policy Area Manager, and will manage the research library and DCPI infrastructure. The core DCPI staff will oversee all operations of DCPI's infrastructure and operations, under the direction of the JGA and EOM. Together, they will manage day-to-day DCPI operations; develop and implement a research agenda through discussions with key stakeholders, JGA, and the Research Advisory Group; coordinate with identified subject matter experts chosen to lead the research projects; and ensure that

all programmatic and financial reporting requirements of DCPI are met.

To assist DCPI in the development and design of research projects, the Urban Institute will convene an objective Research Advisory Group to advise project staff. The goal of the Research Advisory Group is to assist staff in identifying potential research projects, formulate hypotheses, assist in the design of research projects, and overcome potential implementation obstacles. The members of the Group will include academics with expertise in juvenile and criminal justice research, and professionals with prior service in a policy-making capacity in DC or the federal government. The Research Advisory Group is not vested with any decision-making powers related to the operation or direction of DCPI.

Core Mission and Objectives

DCPI is generally modeled after the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP). WSIPP was created by the state's legislature in 1983 to estimate the costs and benefits of implementing policies and programs in Washington State that had demonstrated positive effects in other jurisdictions. Research conducted by WSIPP spans a broad range of substantive domains, including education, criminal justice, welfare, children and adult services, health, utilities, and general governmental activities. WSIPP has evolved into a national model for its role in producing timely, scientific research that has aided the development and implementation of evidence-based policy in Washington State. DCPI will pursue similar goals of informing evidence-based policymaking, contributing high-quality research on crime and justice, and establishing a national model for integrating scientific research into local governance. To achieve its mission of developing timely, rigorous scientific research on juvenile and criminal justice policies and programs, DCPI will have three core objectives.

The first objective is to develop and put into practice a next generation statistical model that predicts the costs and benefits of implementing evidence-based programs in Washington, DC. The model will incorporate knowledge developed from past research on program effectiveness and use those data to forecast outcomes in Washington, DC. This information will be combined with data on the expected costs of operating each program in Washington, DC and the expected benefits. DCPI researchers will use newly developed empirical approaches to aggregate costs and benefits to make recommendations to advance criminal and juvenile justice policy and practice.

Second, to develop a sound evidence-base to make those recommendations, DCPI will create an on-line library that houses findings from as many prior studies of crime and justice in the District of Columbia as can be identified. Key study findings will be summarized on the website with links to the original research. Once prior research is cataloged in the library, new studies will be added as they are completed. The DCPI website will also include summaries of the roles of all government agencies (local and

federal) and links to agency web-sites, as well as links to community-justice partnerships concerned with reducing crime and improving public safety. To the extent data are available on crime trends and other public safety measures, those data will also be available on-line for researchers, stakeholders and the public to access.

The third core objective of DCPI is to develop original research on crime policy matters of interest to the Mayor and the citizens of the District of Columbia. DCPI research will generally fall into two categories: 1) research that informs strategic objectives; and 2) research concerned with ongoing justice systems operations. The goal of the first objective is to identify recurring events with long-term impacts on crime and public safety in the District of Columbia and identify evidence-based solutions. The goal of the latter objective is to assist agencies in improving outcomes by implementing evidence-based policies and practices. Initial recommendations for research in both areas will be developed by DCPI staff after meeting with key leaders of DC agencies and submitting these ideas to JGA and EOM for consideration. In future years, DCPI staff will include the Research Advisory Group in the formulation of research proposals. Studies conducted by DCPI will be carried out by researchers associated with the Urban Institute, the Brookings Institution, and researchers from external organizations, as appropriate. Core DCPI staff will identify the appropriate lead investigator early in the development of project proposals and submit proposed investigators to JGA and EOM along with research objectives. While core DCPI staff will perform some of the research tasks associated with DCPI, every effort will be made to identify subject matter experts within the larger cadre of experts affiliated with the Partnership for Greater Washington Research.

Conclusion

The creation of the Washington, DC Crime Policy Institute marks an important step toward the institutionalization of evidence-based crime and justice policy and programming in Washington, D.C.. Creating and sustaining an entity such as DCPI is a forward-looking venture that few state or local governments have pursued, despite the wealth of data supporting evidence-based policymaking. In the long-term, an effective policy research agency like DCPI can assist in the development of more efficient policies, programs, and practices that can improve public safety and reduce public costs.