

Principles for cutting corrections costs

1. Protect public safety

- Do not release individual prisoners who present a demonstrable threat to the public in general or to any particular person
- Provide evidence-based risk reduction programs to prisoners with severe behavioral problems regardless of their security classification
- Maximize the opportunity to address people's needs while they are incarcerated
- Use validated risk assessment tools and objective, verifiable evidence to determine whether each person eligible for parole presents a current risk of reoffending

2. First do no harm

- Do not jeopardize the health or safety of prisoners or staff by worsening conditions in prisons that are already overcrowded
- Do not place prisoners at higher security classifications than are necessary
- Do not "max out" any prisoner directly from segregation or maximum security
- Eliminate expensive and often counterproductive restrictions on probationers and parolees; tailor conditions of supervision to each individual's actual risks and needs.

3. Treat prisons as a scarce resource

- Incarcerate only people who present an ongoing risk to public safety or whose crimes require the harshest punishment
 - Do not sentence people to prison who do not meet one of these criteria
 - Do not keep people in prison longer than a court has determined appropriate for punishment or than is necessary because of current risk
 - Do not return parolees to prison unless their conduct demonstrates that any level of community supervision would pose a danger to the public
- Do not use prison to deliver services that could be community-based, whether it is mental health or substance abuse treatment, education or the care of people who are aging or medically fragile.

4. Follow the research

- Undertake or identify relevant research; do not avoid seeking answers because they may not fit preconceptions
- Use credible research to develop policies, even when it contradicts popular assumptions
- Require all opposition to cost-saving measures to be justified by credible evidence
- Routinely evaluate all programs, services and contracts for quality and efficiency

5. Innovate

- Be willing to experiment with non-traditional programs or practices
- Seek common interests with non-traditional allies
- Find ways to supplement corrections resources through other government agencies, higher education, private foundations, non-profits and volunteers