

Safeguarding Justice for Everyone



Vera
INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

vera.org @verainstitute

Letter From the President



Nicholas Turner, president

Our Mission

To be agents of change.
To help build and improve justice systems that ensure fairness, promote safety, and strengthen communities.

Our Vision

A society that respects the dignity of every person and safeguards justice for everyone.

At the Vera Institute of Justice, we're driving change at a historic time. Many more Americans—of all persuasions—are joining us in recognizing justice reform as a national imperative. We're leveraging that attention to work in novel and cutting-edge ways: mining big data to unearth injustice and reveal its solutions, using competitions to find the most motivated public sector leaders to work with, and shaping debate and public understanding. These new methods will help us better accomplish the same goal we've pursued for over 50 years since our founding in 1961: to concretely reform systems and policies so that all people are safe and experience fairness, and families and communities are strengthened. Together, we're focused on three core priorities: closing mass incarceration's front door by reducing the misuse of our nation's jails; making sure conditions for those behind bars reflect a commitment to human dignity and provide for restoration; and delivering safety and justice to an increasingly multi-cultural and diverse America.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Turner', written in a cursive style.

Nicholas Turner, president

Our Commitments



Securing Equal Justice

We're committed to delivering on the promise of equal treatment enshrined in the Constitution by working with law enforcement to build community trust, ensuring that people with disabilities have full access to the justice system, and striving to keep immigrant families together.



Ending Mass Incarceration

We're working to stop mass incarceration where it starts—in jail—and aiming to make our prisons places of safety and transformation, by ending the widespread use of solitary confinement, and by securing needed services for incarcerated people—like college classes—to help them succeed when they go home.



Strengthening Families and Communities

The criminal justice system damages the lives and livelihoods of families and entire communities. We're making sure that fewer kids get caught up in the system, that their families are able to support them, and that people with mental health and substance use issues receive appropriate treatment instead of punishment.

How We Work

The Vera Institute of Justice works in partnership with local, state, and national government officials to tackle the most pressing injustices of our day—from the causes and consequences of mass incarceration, racial disparities, and the loss of public trust in law enforcement, to the unmet needs of the vulnerable, the marginalized, and those harmed by crime and violence.

“We knew there were problems, but we didn’t understand the parameters of those problems. Vera really opened our eyes.”

—**Gregg Marcantel, former secretary, New Mexico Department of Corrections**

“[Without Vera’s help] we would have a bigger jail. And we wouldn’t have pretrial services, or if we did, they would be much less developed than what we have today.”

—**Andy Kopplin, former deputy mayor, New Orleans**

“I have seen firsthand the positive impact that the Pathways from Prison [to Post-secondary Education] Project has on students and the prison environment, and I strongly encourage other jurisdictions to provide their own incarcerated populations with the opportunity to learn and grow.”

—**David Guice, commissioner, North Carolina Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice**



- › We **study** problems that impede human dignity and justice.
- › We **pilot** solutions that are at once transformative and achievable.
- › We **engage** diverse communities in informed debate.
- › We **harness** the power of evidence to drive effective policy and practice.

Our locations:

New York

Washington, DC

New Orleans

Los Angeles

Our Impact



Helped New Orleans reduce its jail population from 6,300 on the eve of Hurricane Katrina to 1,600 as of April 2016.



Delivered new insights on the growth of jail incarceration in each of our nation's 3,000 counties—by building an online, interactive data tool that connects 14 million data points.



Helped New Mexico reduce the number of people held in solitary confinement by 36%.



Helped launch in New York City the first universal public defender program in the nation for poor immigrants facing deportation, which is now being used as a model for similar programs nationwide.



Expanded access to high-quality college education for more than 12,000 incarcerated people in 28 states through the Second Chance Pell Pilot Program.



Helped the Housing Authority of New Orleans overhaul their rules so that people with criminal histories are no longer shut out of public housing.

Driving Change



Credit: Jackson Citizen Patriot/MLive.com

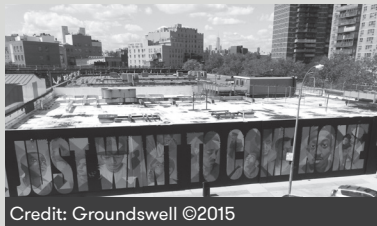
CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice, college-in-prison participant

“The transformation was amazing; it was my first opportunity to have higher education, and it allowed me to see life through a different set of lenses.” —Devon Simmons



Former John Gardner Fellow in Public Service at Vera

“If I could reform the prison system...it would be to emphasize and recognize people’s humanity...to truly make these spaces a space where rehabilitation and growth and understanding can occur.”
—Danny Murillo



Credit: Groundswell ©2015

New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Family Reentry Pilot Program participant

“Now that I can live here (with my family in public housing), I can worry about employment, I can worry about going back to school—thank God for family support.” —Raul Burgos