Promote Smart Decarceration

The Issue

Globally, the United States is the leader in incarceration, which has led to staggering economic, social, and human costs for our society. This social justice and human rights crisis substantially over-incarcerates the most vulnerable in society including historically marginalized groups, communities impacted by economic disadvantage, and people with behavioral health disorders.

Societal Goal

The Promote Smart Decarceration (PSD) Grand Challenge was launched more than 5 years ago to advance innovations inside and outside the criminal legal system to replace the ineffective use of incarceration. This entails a proactive, cross-sector, and evidence-driven approach that addresses existing social, racial, and economic disparities and promotes a philosophical shift in how we think about incarceration and public safety. Ultimately, smart decarceration seeks to build social capacity through robust and community-driven responses to local issues without resorting to the default punitive and carceral approach.

A Decade of Work

- The PSD Grand Challenge addresses factors that directly and immediately impact criminal legal system processes (e.g., implementation of bail reform) and an individual's experience in the criminal legal system, including incarceration, reentry, and community supervision. It also includes an emphasis on factors and circumstances leading up to incarceration (e.g., interactions with police).
- The PSD Grand Challenge is organized around three key outcomes: 1) Substantially reducing the number of people incarcerated in jails and prisons; 2) Redressing racial, economic, and behavioral health disparities among people who are incarcerated; and 3) Maximizing public safety and personal and community well-being. It also aims to:
  - Reverse civic and legal exclusions for persons with criminal charges and convictions.
  - Reduce the overall footprint of the criminal legal system by implementing policies and practices that build social and institutional capacity to support the safety, health, and well-being of communities most impacted by incarceration.
  - Prioritize the reduction of racial, health, and economic disparities as key outcomes in decarceration efforts.
  - Reallocate carceral resources to community-based supports, such as housing, education, health, and employment.
  - Work toward abolishing carceral systems that harm people and communities.
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Resources

- Websites:
  - https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/promote-smart-decarceration/
  - www.smartdecarceration.org
  - https://ijrd.csw.fsu.edu/
  - https://csd.wustl.edu/items/decarceration/
  - www.sw-cj.org
  - www.familywellbeingandjustice.com

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