Video footage, pictures, and presentations from a groundbreaking forum on recidivism and reentry are now available on the National Reentry Resource Center website. The forum, coordinated by the Council of State Governments Justice Center, brought together leaders from all 50 states. Click here to learn more and to access these resources.

To bring home one of the key themes from the forum, we have also published a case study from Vermont on how policymakers made it easier to track changes in their state's recidivism rates. Throughout the forum, many state leaders discussed the difficulty they faced in generating routine reports that clearly and succinctly track changes in the state’s recidivism rates. Without such user-friendly, practical, and current data, designing a recidivism-reduction plan that is likely to succeed and that can be monitored effectively is nearly impossible. “It’s really hard making policy if you don’t have good data to base it on,” Vermont State Senator Richard Sears said. Without such information, he added, “we couldn’t say what programs were working and where to invest money.”

This case study describes Vermont’s experience establishing and maintaining a reliable recidivism measure as part of its statewide recidivism reduction strategy — a challenge that will be familiar to policymakers everywhere. The steps that Vermont policymakers took to address this challenge are a useful example of what state (and local) leaders grappling with similar issues can do in their jurisdictions.

To read this case study, click here.

The recidivism reduction forum was sponsored by the Council of State Governments Justice Center (which coordinates the National Reentry Resource Center), the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the Public Welfare Foundation, and the Pew Center on the States.

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