



Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition 2013 Annual Report



COLORADO CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM
COALITION

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Message from CCJRC Board President

Dear Friends and Supporters of CCJRC

Those of us who seek justice and believe in equality know that it is not always clear a field of obstacles. At CCJRC, we are healthcare reformers, immigration crusaders, lawyers, advocates, and nonprofit professionals, and we believe wholeheartedly in our mission to reduce mass incarceration in Colorado.

CCJRC was founded in 1999 to support legislation sponsored by Senator Dorothy Rupert (Boulder) and Representative Penfield Tate (Denver) for a three-year halt on prison expansion. Although unsuccessful, this campaign launched CCJRC's efforts to build a statewide, grassroots movement for criminal justice reform.



CCJRC believes that we are overusing incarceration in Colorado. Instead of addressing the underlying social and economic causes of crime, mass incarceration only exacerbates these problems in a cycle that ultimately destabilizes communities, particularly in low-income communities of color most targeted and represented in the prison population.

CCJRC believes, at its most basic, reducing the prison population involves engineering three trends: reduce the number of people that go to prison, shorten the length of time people spend in prison, and increase the number of people released from prison. Fundamentally ending mass incarceration as a cultural norm requires engagement on multiple fronts using multiple strategies simultaneously. We would like to thank you for reading our annual report and hope that you are inspired to engage and join us in the fight to end mass incarceration.

Yours Truly,

Signature

Our Mission

The mission of the Colorado Criminal Justice reform Coalition is to reverse the trend of mass incarceration in Colorado. We also unilaterally oppose the use of for-profit, private prisons in Colorado.

About Us

CCJRC successfully advocates for criminal justice policy reform that reduces the prison population, reinvest correctional savings into treatment, supports successful reentry into community and promotes public safety. People directly impacted by the criminal justice system make up a significant percentage of our membership and their leadership is evident at all organizational levels including our Board, staff, and volunteers. CCJRC includes over 100 organizations and faith communities and over 6,800 individual members throughout the state.

Framework for Change

Oppose Prison
Expansion

Build & Mobilize a
Statewide Coalition

Policy Reform
Advocacy

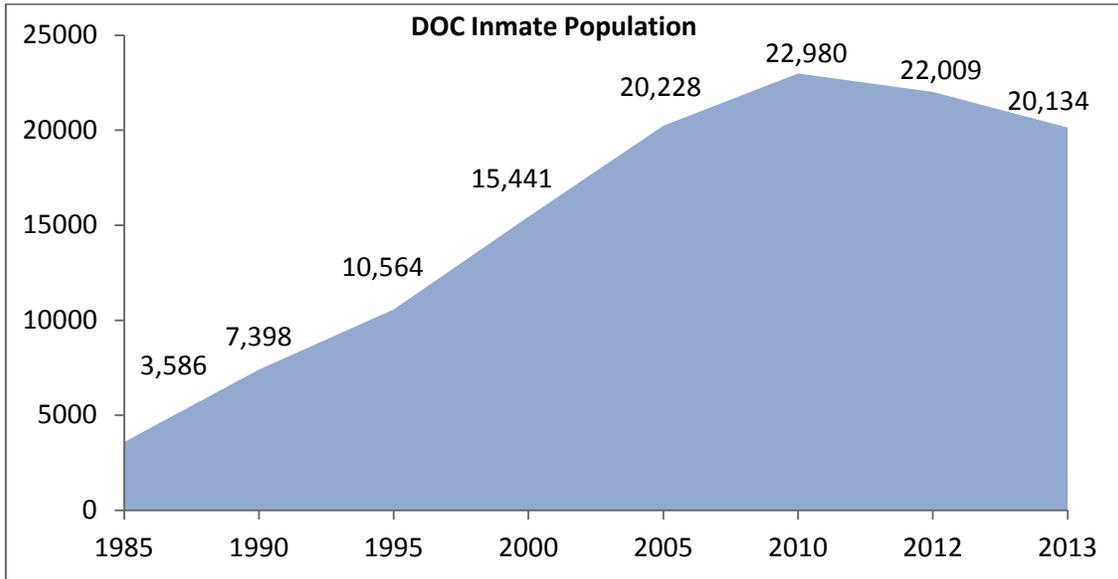
Resource for
People Impacted

Strategies for Change

- ❖ Public Education
- ❖ Research
- ❖ Policy Advocacy
- ❖ Community Organizing
- ❖ Coalition Building
- ❖ Litigation
- ❖ Lobbying

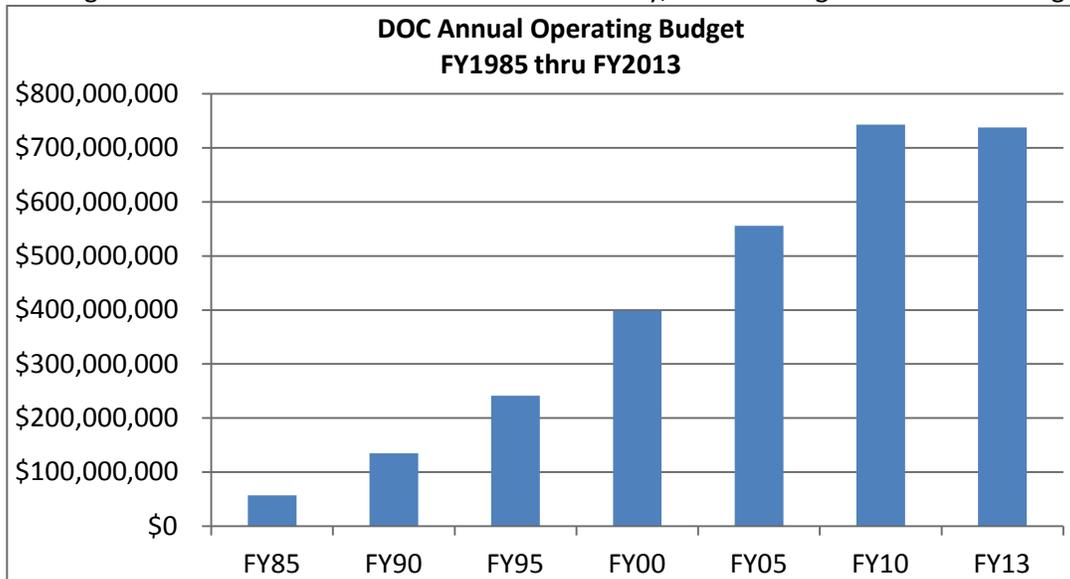
Historical Prison Population Growth in Colorado

Since 1985, Colorado has experienced unprecedented growth in the prison population and budget. In 1985, the Colorado Legislature passed HB 85-1320 (known as the “Mielke” bill) which doubled the maximum prison sentence for all felony offenses. At the time, it was believed that HB1320 would have little impact on the prison population. However, within the first five years of passage the prison population doubled and continued to grow at unprecedented rates until the middle of 2010. At the end of FY2013, there were 31,808 people under jurisdiction of the Colorado Department of Corrections, with 20,382 inmates in prison and 11,426 on parole.



In 1985, legislators also believed that increasing sentence lengths under the Mielkebill would not have much impact on the Department of Corrections’ (DOC) budget. However, legislators were very wrong and the prison budget has increased more than 12-fold since FY1985. The annual state prison budget grew from under \$60 million in 1985 to over \$740 million in FY 2013. The state also spent over \$800 million building new prisons and currently has contracts with 4 private prisons.

As the DOC budget grew, it consumed a growing portion of the state’s general fund budget, increasing from 2.8% in 1985 to 7% in FY13. Historically, K-12 and higher education budgets



were most impacted by cuts in order to increase funding to the Department of Corrections.

Due to a number of dynamics, including passage of numerous sentencing reform bills, the prison population started to decline in mid-2010 and several prisons were closed.

In March of 2013, the Director of the Department of Corrections, Tom Clements, was murdered by a man on parole. In addition to the devastating loss of a visionary reformer, this event triggered a crack-down on people on parole, in part driven by relentless negative media coverage. The parole revocation rate started to increase as did the overall prison population and the Director of Adult Parole was fired. In June 2013, Rick Rameish was named the new Executive Director of DOC and in December Walt Pesterfield was named the new Director of Parole. Both men were recruited from outside Colorado.

Our Impact in 2013

Despite this unfathomable backdrop, 2013 was one of our most successful years. We successfully advocated for the passage of several significant sentencing reform bills at the state Legislature. We launched the first campaign in Colorado to ensure that justice involved people were included in the new healthcare opportunities under the Affordable Care Act. We widely distributed the 3rd addition of our re-entry guide to help people successfully reintegrate back into the community after release from prison, and we did extensive outreach and education to raise awareness and support for the need to reform our broken criminal justice system.



Public Education

CCJRC conducted over 50 presentations to approximately 250 people including community groups, congregations, classrooms, advocacy groups and organizations. We also tabled at numerous community fairs, festivals and events. Our educational efforts focus on increasing knowledge and awareness of the drivers and impacts of mass incarceration-particularly on children and families, collateral consequences which are those legal sanctions and restrictions imposed upon people because of a criminal record, felony voting rights and the significance of community involvement in criminal justice reform. CCJRC added 648 new members as a result of our base building efforts. In 2013 CCJRC also participated as subject matter experts on local, state, national and international conference panels.



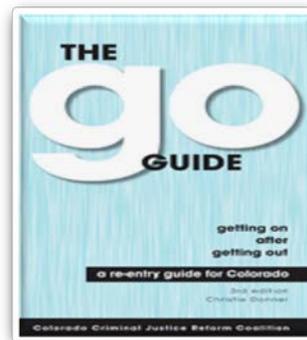
Increase Access to Health Care for Justice Involved People

In the summer of 2013, CCJRC launched a new campaign to increase access to healthcare and behavioral health treatment for justice involved people as a result of new opportunities under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). National data indicates that the majority of justice involved people do not have health insurance and that an estimated 75% would be eligible for insurance through Medicaid. CCJRC believed that that ACA was a “game changer” for justice involved people, particularly because of the better access to substance abuse and mental health treatment. We also realized that neither the criminal justices system nor the healthcare providers were focusing on ACA implementation for justices involved people. As a first step, CCJRC started to convene a stakeholders group which brought together healthcare providers, criminal justice agencies, community services providers, advocates, and formerly justice involved people. CCJRC partnered with the Colorado Center on Law & Policy to coordinate this campaign.



The Go Guide

CCJRC’s 3rd edition of *Getting On After Getting Out: A Re-entry Guide for Colorado* was published in late 2012. This 200 page book provides extensive information to help people prepare for release and successfully reintegrate back into their families and communities. The GO Guide is the only resource of its kind in Colorado that provides critical information and resources available to help people released from prison. In 2013 CCJRC distributed over 15,000 thousand copies to people in prison, on parole, or in halfway houses. Others who are using the GO Guide include family members, criminal justice agencies and direct service providers.



Policy Reform Achievements



From the video "What Works in Colorado" by Brave New Films

The 2013 legislative session was one of the most intense sessions CCJRC has been involved in but also the most productive in terms of the number, depth and breadth of criminal justice reform bills that were passed and signed into law. CCJRC’s participation on task forces of the Colorado Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice and helped form several key pieces of legislation in this year.

“Colorado has been on the forefront of criminal justice reform, adopting policies that are less about incarceration and more about prevention and rehabilitation. Now it’s time to take that work further, overhauling the drug code to reduce sentences for low-level drug offenders and using the savings to fund treatment and research on what works”

www.Youtube.com - Brave New Films – What Works in Colorado, April 15, 2013

CCJRC served on the Commission's **Drug Policy Task Force** which made recommendations to



rewrite the entire Controlled Substances Act. CCJRC was one of the key participants in the development of these recommendations. Introduced with bi-partisan sponsors, **SB13-250** included the following major provisions: (1) creating a separate sentencing grid for drug offenses; (2) allowing felony drug convictions for possession to be reduced to a misdemeanor upon successful completion of probation; (3) requiring the court to exhaust all appropriate sentencing options other than prison for convictions of low level drug offenses; (4) creating different felony crime levels to distinguish between low, medium, and high-level dealers based on drug quantity; and (5) adding \$3.5 million annually to expand

access to treatment. SB 13-250 was CCJRC's highest priority bill and it passed the Legislature on a vote of 99-1 and signed into law.

CCJRC also served on the **Comprehensive Sentencing Task Force** of the Commission and helped develop several recommendations that were introduced and adopted by the Legislature and signed into law.

- ❖ **HB13-1156:** Created a pre-filing diversion program for adults statewide and provided funding to implement.
- ❖ **HB13-1160:** Rewrote the crime classification for all theft offenses based on the amount of the theft and consolidated other theft-related crimes into the theft statute. For example, theft of under \$2,000 was lowered to a misdemeanor rather than a felony. Previously, theft of \$1,000 or more was a felony.
- ❖ **HB13-1129:** Creates a resource and training center in the Division of Criminal Justice to promote evidence-based practices by criminal justice agencies

It was a very big agenda in criminal justice reform in 2013. In order to keep you informed, CCJRC sent out legislative updates every Friday throughout 2013 and issued *Action Alerts* when your involvement was particularly critical. If you would like to see all the bills that CCJRC followed during the 2013 legislative session please visit our website at www.ccjrc.org under Current Legislation.

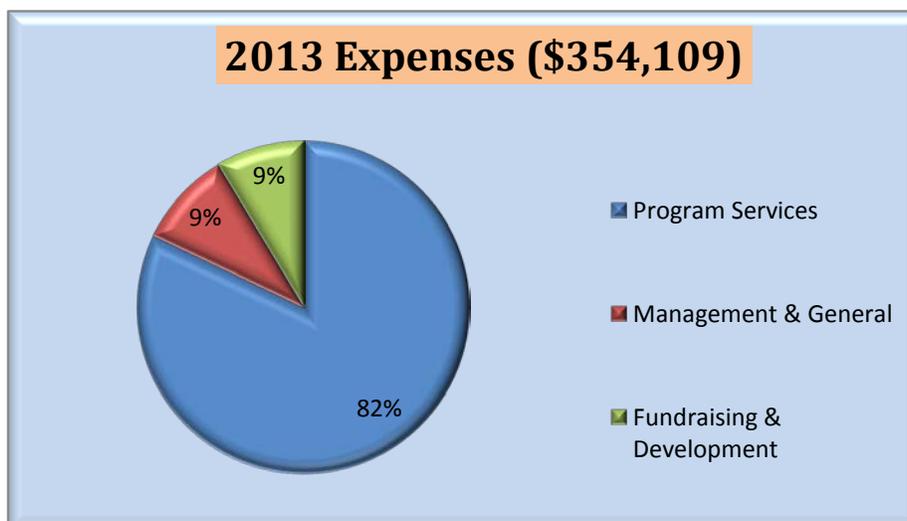


Resources and Financial Management

CCJRC is diligent in ensuring that organizational policies and practices promote sound fiscal management, transparency, accountability, long-term sustainability and a healthy work environment for our employees. CCJRC primary sources of revenue are from foundation grants and individual contributions. CCJRC does not apply for government funding that could persuade or influence our commitment to an independent voice that's needed in true justice policy reform. CCJRC is deeply aware that all contributions, regardless of size, are gifts and we exercise lean spending practices for the most efficient and effective use of our funding. CCJRC supporters, both individual and foundations, can be secure in knowing CCJRC makes sure that all organizational and programmatic priorities are in alignment with our vision, mission and values.



2013 revenue includes a multi-year grant that is available for use in 2014 and 2015.



Long-Term Funding Strategy

CCJRC incorporates multiple fundraising strategies in order to diversify our funding sources, including foundation support, earned income, and individual donations. Although we provide copies of the re-entry guide for free to people in prison and on parole, the guide is also available for sale (\$10 per copy) to others. CCJRC also has multiple strategies for soliciting individuals for donations. We have a vibrant monthly donor program called our “Freedom Fighters” which has grown each year. The CCJRC Board of Directors organizes an annual fundraising event that raises money from sponsorships, ticket sales, and silent and live auctions. We also do direct mail appeals to people on our mailing list. 100% of our Board of Directors contributes financially to the organization.

2013 Voices for Justice



CCJRC wants to thank all of our sponsors and guests for making our annual fundraising event the best we've ever had. See you in 2014!!!

\$250 — Justice Sponsors

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THANK YOU TO OUR 2013

VOICES FOR JUSTICE

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\$1000 Sponsors



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- Mental Health Center of Denver · the
- McGuire Law Office, LLC · Lillmer, Lane
- and Newman, LLP · OMNI · Signal
- Behavioral Health · Jeff Thormodsgaard
- Iredale and Yoo, APC

CCJRC is proud to announce Mesa County’s “One Less” project as its 2013 Rupert Tate Game-Changer Award recipient!



Thank you CCJRC Members

Our members make CCJRC politically powerful and receive our quarterly newsletter, *The Colorado Justice Report*, action alerts, and announcements for community meetings and events.

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