



# Department of Justice



## Office of Justice Programs

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\*\*\*\*\*PUBLICATION ADVISORY\*\*\*\*\*

### NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE EXAMINES RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS IN CORRECTIONS

WASHINGTON – The Office of Justice Programs’ National Institute of Justice today released a white paper presenting an overview of the randomized controlled trial design as a method for evaluating programs in state prison settings. A randomized controlled trial, or RCT, is considered the gold standard method for evaluating outcomes of programs and policies. This study discusses considerations and challenges when an RCT evaluation is conducted in a state prison.

“There is a real misconception among many in the field that it is too difficult, costly, or impractical to conduct a randomized controlled trial in a prison,” said NIJ Director David Muhlhausen. “We need to overcome that misconception as learning what really works in reducing recidivism is essential to public safety.”

Approximately 1.3 million inmates are housed in state prisons nationwide, which is more than half of the total population of all incarcerated individuals. A recent national estimate shows about 83% of inmates released from state prisons are rearrested within nine years of release. Rigorous program evaluation can help state prison systems implement effective policies and programs that address the issue and improve prisoner reentry outcomes.

**TITLE:** *Randomized Controlled Trials in State Prisons*

**AUTHOR:** National Institute of Justice

**WHERE:** <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/254767.pdf>

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The Office of Justice Programs, directed by Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Katharine T. Sullivan, provides federal leadership, grants, training and technical assistance, and other resources to improve the nation's capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal and juvenile justice systems. More information about OJP and its components can be found at [www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov).

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at [www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years](http://www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years).

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