
Criminal justice administrators, local, state and federal policymakers, and justice reform advocates throughout the US are coming to the realization that the current average daily prison population of 2 million is unsustainable, especially with costs approaching $5 billion a year and a continuing recidivism rate of over 40%. Even in countries with far lower incarceration rates than the 750 per 100,000 in the US, policymakers are grappling with high costs and the ineffectiveness of current approaches, and seeking alternatives. Although women are particularly appropriate candidates for alternative approaches (85% of their offenses are non-violent and related to a cycle of substance abuse, sexual, physical and psychological trauma) they are frequently omitted from these discussions. The MWJN’s goal for 2011-2012 was to raise awareness of women’s circumstances, disseminate information about women-centered approaches, and raise interest in cost-effective alternatives to incarceration for women in Massachusetts. The MWJN produced:

1. **A Women-Centered Training Approach** *(Fact Sheet #1)*
   - Created a training outline for Massachusetts Department of Probation incorporating:
     a. Evidence based research and practice
     b. Trauma-informed research and practice
     c. Relational-cultural research and practice
   - Presented training outline to 70 probation officers.
   - Wrote training proposal and explored funding with support of Dept. of Probation.
   - Presented training outline to MWJN members.

2. **A Review of Risk And Needs Assessments (RNA) Appropriate for Women** *(Fact Sheet #2)*
   - Examined critiques of RNA instruments by Gender-responsive experts
   - Reviewed RNA instruments utilized primarily by CJ personnel
   - Reviewed RNA instruments utilized primarily by substance abuse/medical personnel

3. **A Critique of the Correction Master Plan (CMP), 2012: Focus on Women** *(Fact Sheet #3)*
   - Summarized data on predicted population of women in state and county facilities, 2020
   - Reviewed strategic recommendations for facilities to accommodate women in 2020
   - Identified ongoing areas of concern for women

4. **An Update of Massachusetts Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI)** *(Fact Sheet #4)*
   - Updated data previously documented in 2011 ATI for Women Project
   - Conducted outreach in MA to identify new ATI initiatives.
   - Discussed initiatives with MWJN members and identified areas for development

5. **A Review of Recent International Policy for Women Offenders** *(Fact Sheet #5)*
   - Visited exemplary projects working with women offenders in the UK.
   - Presented paper on ATI at international conference, University of Cambridge, UK.
   - Reviewed innovative strategies to address women offender concerns

6. **A Summary of the Gender-Responsive, Community-Based Program Report** *(Fact Sheet #6)*
   - Formed a Women in Prison Coalition that identified programs in four counties
   - Provided documentation on 17 programs providing resources to women in prison, on probation, pre-sentencing and post-release.
Other Activities

- Provided testimony to the Massachusetts Judiciary Committee on health and pregnancy concerns.
- Established contact with the Governor’s Criminal justice Commission re: women offenders

This work could not have been accomplished without the support of numerous experts throughout the Commonwealth.

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