



WHAT WE KNOW

Justice Involved Individuals Describe How to Fix the Criminal Justice System

A Request for Submissions

The New Press, a public interest book publisher, and the Center for American Progress (CAP), a public policy think tank, request submission of essays for consideration to be included for publication in a book featuring criminal justice reform ideas from formerly and currently incarcerated individuals. The book has the working title of What We Know and is expected to be edited by Daryl Atkinson and Vivian Nixon, both formerly incarcerated individuals now leading criminal legal reform organizations. They are also members of the steering committee of the Formerly Incarcerated Convicted People's Family Movement (FICPFM), a national effort to bring the voices of formerly incarcerated people and their families to the justice reform table.

Essays may be from 2500-5000 words and should be focused on a specific, serious, well-defined suggestion for how to improve a particular aspect of any part of our current system, from police encounters and arrests, to sentencing, incarceration, and re-entry. Essays should contain elements of the author's personal story in service of illuminating the suggested reform. Thoughtful, original ideas that are not already widely in circulation and under discussion are especially welcome.

The top 12-20 essays will be published in the finished book, and the authors will receive \$500 each. Authors of the top 50 essays that were not selected for publication will also receive \$50 each. Co-authored pieces will be considered; additional payment for additional authors will be at the discretion of The New Press and CAP. The New Press, CAP, and the editors retain full and final authority over the selection of the pieces that are published and/or receive a financial award.

The New Press, CAP, and the editors reserve the right to reject or select essays for any reason allowed under law. However, essays will be selected based on the following:

- I. **Policy Recommendation:** Applicants should clearly identify a specific issue or problem within the criminal justice system and propose a well-developed, targeted policy solution to address it.
- II. **Concept:** Applicants are encouraged to propose new and progressive ideas for improving the criminal justice system. Policy proposals should be informed by lived experiences with the justice system.
- III. **Feasibility & Impact:** Proposed reforms should be realistic and actionable, with the potential to create meaningful change within the criminal justice system.



- IV. **Readability:** Successful essays will be engaging and combine narrative storytelling from the author’s own experience or knowledge, which illustrates a specific problem, with an original, constructive idea for how the problem might reasonably be remedied.

To be considered, all submissions must include a cover sheet that includes the following information:

1. Full Name
2. Submission Category (currently incarcerated or formerly incarcerated)
3. Mailing address
4. Additional contact information: email address and phone number (if available)
5. Current Employer & Job Title (if applicable)
6. Brief description of criminal record, including the nature of the charge(s) and the approximate dates served in prison or jail.
Please note: only authors who are currently or formerly incarcerated will be considered.
7. Preferred method for receiving financial award. If you’d like to designate a third party to receive your award, please provide their name and mailing address. Applicants may submit additional materials at their discretion, including a short biography, links to publications, a social media account, or resume. These materials are optional and will not factor into scoring decisions.

Submissions should be sent to smartoncrime@americanprogress.org under the subject: “What We Know Book” no later than January 4, 2019.

In cases where electronic submission is not possible, handwritten or typed submissions may be sent to:

Center for American Progress
ATTN: “What We Know” Book
1333 H Street NW, 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Mailed submissions should be postmarked no later than January 4, 2019. If you require additional accommodations, please contact smartoncrime@americanprogress.org.



ABOUT THE NEW PRESS AND THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS

Established in 1990, The New Press is an award-winning not-for-profit book publisher in the public interest. The New Press’s criminal justice reform publishing program includes landmark books such as Marc Mauer’s classic Race to Incarcerate, Michelle Alexander’s best-selling New Jim Crow, and Peter Edelman’s 2018 Robert F. Kennedy Award-winning Not A Crime To Be Poor, as well as works by Paul Butler, David Cole, Susan Burton, James Kilgore, Nell Bernstein, Paul Wright, Monique Morris, and many others. Taken together, New Press criminal justice books represent the single most successful and sustained publishing program on progressive criminal justice reform in the country.

The Center for American Progress (CAP) is an action-oriented think tank that develops substantive, implementable policies and resources and provides them to changemakers across the country. CAP’s Criminal Justice Reform Team focuses on shrinking the footprint of the criminal justice system under the banner of Smart on Crime policies and strategies — those that are fair, just and proportional, comprehensive, and informed by evidence and data.