

The agencies of the U.S. corrections enterprise manage offenders confined in prisons and jails and those who have been released into the community on probation and parole. The enterprise is one of the three central pillars of the criminal justice system, along with police and the courts. Corrections agencies face major challenges from declining budgets, increasing populations under supervision, problems of equity and fairness in administering justice, and other concerns. To better achieve its objectives and play its role within the criminal justice enterprise, the sector needs innovation in corrections technology, policy, and practice. This report draws on published literature and new structured deliberations of a practitioner Corrections Advisory Panel to frame an innovation agenda. It identifies and prioritizes potential improvements in technology, policy, and practice in both community and institutional corrections. Some of the top-tier needs identified by the panel and researchers include adapting transcription and translation tools for the corrections environment, developing training for officers on best practices for managing offenders with mental health needs, and changing visitation policies (for example, using video visitation) to reduce opportunities for visitors to bring contraband into jails and prisons. Such high-priority needs provide a menu of innovation options for addressing key problems or capitalizing on emerging opportunities in the corrections sector. This report is part of a larger effort to assess and prioritize technology and related needs across the criminal justice community for the National Institute of Justice's National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center system.