

The Better Government Competition is an annual idea contest that attracts the interest of experts and ordinary citizens alike. Since 1991, the Competition has served as a forum that rewards and promotes the nation's most innovative policy ideas. Implementation of the Competition's winning entries has saved Massachusetts well over half-a-billion dollars, and has driven numerous changes in state and federal policy.

The 2015 Competition: Each year the Competition focuses on one of the country's biggest challenges. For 2015, Pioneer Institute seeks innovative **ideas to reform America's troubled criminal justice system** by reexamining policies that have driven mass incarceration and resulted in significant fiscal and human costs. Competitive proposals will include creative approaches to reducing the state and federal prison population, reducing recidivism, and addressing racial disparities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. We seek ideas that make government more effective and efficient, protect individual liberties and make our communities safer.

How to Enter

Submit an idea paper of five or fewer pages describing the problem you're addressing and your solution. The "idea" can be a new concept or a recently implemented program that shows promising results. Be sure to touch briefly on the following elements:

- **A description, with relevant background, of the problem to be addressed.**
- **An explanation of the proposed solution and how it will change current practice.** If appropriate, cite examples of similar approaches that are currently in place. If possible, discuss the costs and benefits of your approach compared to current practice, potential obstacles to implementation, and the potential for replication in Massachusetts. Please note: Legal obstacles or the need for new legislation should not be considered barriers to entry. Also, we may seek further information regarding your proposal.

Potential areas for applicants to consider:

- **Improving reentry services and reducing the collateral consequences of a criminal record,** including ways to eliminate discrimination against individuals with certain prior convictions and improve probation and parole policies.

- **Curtailing prison population growth,** including sentencing reform, effective alternatives to incarceration such as drug courts, and incentives for prison population reduction and cost control in corrections.
- **Improving law enforcement,** including community programs, predictive policing, nuisance abatement and data-driven enforcement and risk assessment.
- **Promoting channels through which to reduce juvenile delinquency and truancy in school,** including reform of inappropriately harsh sentencing laws for youth offenders and youth-oriented community programs.
- **Reforming the legal code to address racial disparities in the criminal justice system,** including revisions to policies that disproportionately impact people of color.
- **Other ideas?** The ideas outlined above are illustrative, and meant to stimulate your thinking. Submitters are not limited to the categories listed above. Feel free to focus your attention on your own idea for criminal justice reform.

Competition Schedule:

- **Entry Deadline:** Papers of up to five (5) pages due by Monday, April 6, 2015, 4:00 pm ET
- **Submit by email** at bgc@pioneerinstitute.org (include your paper as an attachment)
- **Submit online** at <http://bgc.pioneerinstitute.org/>
- **Winner and Runners-Up Announcement:** Friday, May 22, 2015
- **BGC Compendium and Awards Dinner:** In late June 2015, winning entries will be published and distributed to policy makers and opinion leaders; awards will be presented at a dinner ceremony.

Questions?

Contact:
Shawni Littlehale
Director, Better Government Competition
Pioneer Institute
185 Devonshire Street, 11th Floor, Boston, MA 02110
P: 617-723-2277 ext. 207
E: slittlehale@pioneerinstitute.org