

Arnold Ventures Criminal Justice

We strive to advance community safety and the values of fairness, effectiveness, and racial justice throughout the justice system.

The U.S. criminal justice system should promote community safety and uphold constitutional and human rights for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, identity, or economic status. Unfortunately, the current system strips too many people of their jobs, families, health, liberty, and dignity. It puts people of color at risk, disproportionately harms low-income people, limits the potential of juveniles caught in the system, doesn't provide adequate opportunities for redemption and reintegration, and incarcerates people at a higher rate than most other countries in the world. Moreover, it does all this at an enormous economic cost and without ensuring community safety.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Arnold Ventures' work in criminal justice aims at changing the system to improve people's lives and strengthen community safety. Our goal is to root out racial and economic inequities that produce unjust outcomes and to identify and address the information, evidence, and capacity gaps, as well as underlying structures, that impede reform.

To get a clear picture of these challenges, and address them, we look at the justice system as a whole — from the causes and effects of violence in our communities, through the systems of policing and pretrial, through sentencing and the conditions of incarceration, through probation and parole, and ending with return and reintegration.

- Our **Reducing Violent Crime** portfolio builds an evidence base of what works to decrease violence, including problem identification, prevention and intervention strategies, and effective investigations of violent crime.
- Our **Gun Policy Research** portfolio focuses on empirical research, legal scholarship, and policy engagement around the effectiveness of various interventions to reduce gun violence.
- Our **Police Response** portfolio advances research and policy that leads to better outcomes for people experiencing behavioral health crises and less harm during police interactions such as traffic stops.
- Our **Police Accountability** portfolio strengthens the regulation of law enforcement and improves accountability through policy changes that reduce or eliminate structural barriers to reform.
- Our **Bail Reform** portfolio furthers research and policies around due process protections and the use of financial conditions — with the goals of reducing the number of people jailed because they cannot afford bail and improving community safety and wellbeing.
- Our **Public Defense** portfolio addresses the crisis of underfunding and overwork in the public defense system and works to ensure the full realization of the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of the right to counsel through increased access, quality, and independence of counsel.



- Our **Prosecution** portfolio investigates prosecutor policies, specifically the ways prosecutors use their discretion and the impact those choices have on families and communities.
- Our **Prisons** portfolio develops bold ideas to improve the conditions and culture within prisons, increase transparency and accountability, and safely reduce incarceration through reforms to sentencing and release policies.
- Our **Community Supervision** portfolio promotes better outcomes for people on probation/ parole and aims to reduce revocations and end supervision's role as a driver of prison admissions, limit the reach of supervision agencies into people's lives, and promote justice and increase fairness.
- Our **Fines and Fees** portfolio works on unwinding incentives to maximize revenue and breaking the cycle of debt that punishes lower income people and keeps them tied to the justice system by seeking to eliminate fees and ensure that fines are equitably assessed and collected.
- Our **Reintegration** portfolio focuses on expanding access to employment, housing, and other basic needs for people with criminal records by advancing policies that reduce and remove overly broad legal barriers and create pathways for record clearance.
- Our **Cross-Cutting/Exploratory** team is working across the different portfolios to break down silos and support the development of transformational thinking and new policy ideas, especially those that bridge political and ideological divides across stakeholders invested in justice reform.



FUNDING STRATEGY

To help drive evidence-informed policy change, we are engaged in grantmaking to a wide range of partners who conduct the following kinds of work:

1. **Research** to identify and investigate problems throughout the criminal justice system, build evidence about what does and does not work, and test innovations
2. **Policy development** to translate evidence into actionable and durable solutions that can be implemented at the local, state, and federal level
3. **Strategic litigation** to directly challenge injustice and inequities in the criminal justice system and protect reforms
4. **Communications** to amplify research, evidence-based policy solutions, and innovative approaches to messaging about criminal justice reform
5. **Advocacy** to implement and defend evidence-informed legislation and regulatory changes at various levels of government

