





Office of Lieutenant Governor

Juliana Stratton



"Advancing equitable policies and practices within the State of Illinois is a collaborative effort that begins with listening to the wisdom within our communities. Communities of color have been disproportionately affected by the war on drugs and COVID-19. As we think about the legacy of the JEO Initiative and its future, we must continue to lead with a lens of equity and trauma-informed care to connect our state to resources and heal from the harm that has been committed."

- Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton





The Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative: An Introduction

On February 11, 2019, Governor J.B. Pritzker signed Executive Order 2019-09 to establish the Justice, Equity, and Opportunity (JEO) Initiative. The JEO Initiative, led by the Lieutenant Governor, helps fulfill the Administration's vision of reimagining public safety and equity for the State of Illinois through a trauma-informed and healing-focused lens. The JEO Initiative's staff advises the Lieutenant Governor on policy and legislation, in addition to convening advocates and stakeholders to advance transformative practices.

The Lieutenant Governor oversees the following agencies that are relevant to the JEO Initiative's work:

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)	Established in 1983, ICJIA is dedicated towards improving the Administration's vision of justice
	and public safety in collaboration with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor's JEO Initiative.
Conceal Carry Licensing Review Board (CCLRB)	As part of the Illinois State Police, the CCLRB considers objections made by law enforcement to an applicant's concealed carry permit to determine whether they are eligible for a permit.
Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ)	Established in 2006 as a separate entity from the Department of Corrections, the DJJ serves, and houses youth committed to state custody by providing comprehensive rehabilitative services.
Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB)	The ILETSB, or the Board, is a state agency which provides quality standards and training for law enforcement and correctional officers.
Prisoner Review Board (PRB)	The PRB acts as an independent body to impose release conditions for individuals exiting IDOC custody, determine good conduct credit for incarcerated persons, and notify families upon an incarcerated person's release from custody.
Sentencing Policy Advisory Council (SPAC)	SPAC is a non-partisan and independent commission created by the Illinois General Assembly in 2009 to review sentencing policies and examine how these practices impact the criminal justice system as a whole.



The JEO Initiative serves as a model for the nation's efforts to reform the justice system through the ability to:

- a. **Convene** and create a collaborative environment, especially among stakeholders, state agencies, and organizations with which they work.
- b. **Improve** communications across state agencies and ensure a coordinated, holistic effort to transform and implement changes to the justice system and issues of equity.
- c. **Support** research and pilot programs that will test groundbreaking efforts to implement healing, trauma-informed, and equitable policies and practices while providing data analysis to assess program efficacy and guide new efforts.
- d. **Advise** decision-making to ensure the different branches of Illinois government work proactively to create a fairer and more equitable justice system.

The Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative: Transformative Policies and Practices

Goals

The JEO Initiative's work spotlights four goals that guide short-term and long-term efforts:

- a. Address the social determinants of crime and incarceration.
- b. **Improve** equitable deflection and diversion opportunities from the justice system.
- c. **Improve** conditions and address the needs of vulnerable populations impacted by historical disinvestment and trauma.
- d. **Support** positive reentry outcomes to reduce recidivism.

Context and Background for JEO Justice Work

COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Black and Latinx communities in Illinois and across the nation. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor knew it was imperative to engage in strategic conversations and planning to address how COVID-19 recovery efforts should take place in light of the historical disparities experienced by communities of color. The JEO Initiative has convened stakeholders and organizations across Illinois to explore low- or no-cost solutions, points of synergy, and opportunities for collaboration that could improve outcomes for communities across Illinois that are trying to recover from the effects of this global pandemic. Black and Latinx people disproportionately face barriers when attempting to access employment, housing, health care, food, and education. Public safety diminishes through the collapse of family structures, household income, as well as access to nutrient-dense and healthy foods. The communities affected by the social and economic factors aforementioned see an increase

in policing and incarceration. The JEO Initiative is focused on healing and transformative justice reform efforts to address the root causes of system involvement as people of color are overrepresented within the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). During the last fiscal year (FY2022), IDOC admitted 18,370 residents and provided 16,758 exits. This report outlines how the JEO Initiative has worked towards a process of shifting how the administration addresses public safety and healing-focused policies and practices.

The Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative: Transformative Policies and Practices

The JEO Initiative advanced various deliverables for each of these goals in 2022.

Goal #1: Address the social determinants of crime and incarceration

The Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program: The Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (CRTA) legalized adult-use cannabis in Illinois on January 1, 2020. The act also established the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program. The R3 Program invests 25% of tax revenue from adult-use cannabis sales to fund grants that support communities that are most impacted by economic disinvestment, violence, and the severe and multi-layer harm caused by the war on drugs. In total, the R3 Program Board has granted nearly \$150 million to more than 300 organizations statewide.

The R3 Program Board is chaired by the Lieutenant Governor and includes stakeholders from communities the program seeks to serve, including those with lived experiences in the justice system. The R3 Program Board funds the following types of programs:

- a. Civil Legal Aid
- b. Reentry
- c. Economic Development
- d. Youth Development
- e. Violence Prevention

The R3 Program Board approved grant awards totaling \$31.5 million for 81 organizations during the first round of funding in 2021. An additional \$3.5 million in funding was made available for 27 first-round grantees that applied for supplemental assistance to address youth development and violence prevention during the crucial summer months of 2022.

An additional \$4.5M in supplemental funding was available for first-round grantees in the summer of 2022, and first-round grantees in good standing received two additional years of funding to ensure continuity in program operations.

The second round of the R3 Program provided \$44.5 million in grants to 148 grantees and their collaborative partners. A total of 75% of funds were designated for new organizations and



organizations with annual budgets of less than \$2 million. The second round of funding saw over a 25% increase in applications, with particularly large increases in applicants that serve communities outside of the Chicago metropolitan area.

To ensure that legislators, potential applicants, and other stakeholders received information about the grant opportunity, the Lieutenant Governor's JEO Initiative and ICJIA engaged in concerted outreach efforts. Over a dozen information sessions were attended by leaders of organizations that serve Black and Latinx communities impacted by incarceration, reentry, child poverty, gun violence, and disinvestment.

Outreach materials were provided in Spanish and state websites with information regarding the R3 Program could be translated into 17 other languages. Additional language assistance services were and continue to be available upon request, as noted on the R3 website.

Technical assistance and webinars were made available for review on ICJIA's websites and social media platforms to assist organizations in the application, funding, budget, and program narrative creation process. ICJIA and the University of Illinois-Springfield have also developed a self-guided online course to inform potential applicants about the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act, which regulates organizations that receive state funds in Illinois.

After receiving feedback from the R3 Program Board and applicants, ICJIA prioritized grant management building and pathways toward sustainability for smaller organizations. The Institute 2 Innovate, or i2i, will launch in 2023 to support the work of grassroots organizations by providing one-on-one coaching and technical assistance.



Governor JB Pritzker and Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton met with the Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce to discuss how the Chamber is using a grant from the R3 Program to spur economic development.

Violence Prevention Strategy: In 2020, ICJIA convened numerous state agencies, including the JEO Initiative and stakeholders, to identify funding priorities and develop a statewide violence prevention effort. Over the past two years, JEO has been a significant partner of



ICJIA's Statewide Violence Prevention Planning Group which has helped to guide approximately \$289,312,943 back into communities throughout the state plagued by the effects of gun violence, drugs and mass incarceration.

Charitable Trust Stabilization Fund – Office of the Treasurer: The Charitable Trust Stabilization Fund is a statewide program that provides non-profit organizations with annual budgets of \$1 million or less grant funding through the Office of the Treasurer. Funding for the programs come from the filing fees that non-profits pay to incorporate with the State of Illinois. The State Treasurer's Office and an 11-member committee assists with the management and guidelines of the Fund and provide Treasurer Frerichs with grant recommendations. The 11-member committee consists of appointees from state government agencies and six private citizens. Ariana Correa, Program Manager of the JEO Initiative, has served on the Charitable Trust Stabilization Board as Lieutenant Governor Stratton's designee since June 3, 2021. Since her involvement, Ariana Correa has provided recommendations for funding to the program areas of housing, food, workforce, and economic development. Furthermore, she has also met with the Director of the Charitable Trust to advocate for and discuss equitable programmatic definitions, determinations, and scoring criteria. In 2022, the Charitable Trust Stabilization Committee approved grant awards totaling \$192,500 for 10 organizations during the first round of funding (Spring) and \$194,949 for another 10 organizations during the second round (Fall).

Trauma-Informed Illinois Efforts: Throughout the year of 2022, JEO worked in collaboration with experts and stakeholders to assess current trauma-informed and healing-focused efforts, as well as improvements that may be needed for the state to become a more trauma-informed leader and model. An informal Ad-hoc working group was convened consisting of partners from agencies such as Illinois Justice Project, Illinois ACE's Response Collaborative, Center for Childhood Resilience, Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition, Illinois State Board of Education, as well as state policy makers and advocates throughout the state. This group met monthly to share research and strategies, as well as composed a mission and guiding principles to assist this group with developing recommendations.



At the Governor's Education Symposium hosted by the Hunt Institute, Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton shared how Illinois is supporting the whole child and building a trauma-informed education system.



Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force: The Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force is a statewide effort that seeks to proactively help immigrant communities across the state. Led by the Illinois Department of Human Services, the 27-member Task Force focuses on COVID-19's impact, access to services, disbursement of funds, state practices by Immigration Customs Enforcement, and the disparities in immigrant communities that lead to incarceration, educational, financial, and housing insecurity, among others. Ariana Correa, Program Manager of the JEO Initiative, has served on the Task Force since December 1, 2021.



Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton speaks after Governor JB Pritzker signed the disaster declaration procuring resources for the more than 500 migrants sent to Illinois on buses from Texas.

Goal #2: Improve equitable deflection and diversion opportunities from the justice system.

The Illinois Mental Health Task Force: JEO Initiative continues to collaborate and serve on the Illinois Mental Health Task Force. Led by former Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Anne M. Burke, the Illinois Mental Health Task Force is established with goals to build a community-by-community approach supported by statewide leadership from all three branches of government; conduct a statewide mapping or needs assessment to identify what is working and what gaps exist; assist in creating a vision for Illinois' mental health continuum of care; develop and implement a statewide strategic plan; and ensure accountability through transparency and accessible reports on Task Force activities.¹ During the year of 2022, the Task Force distributed and compiled responses from a community assessment survey and hosted a series of judicially led, multidisciplinary Regional Councils and Resource Mapping Workshops throughout the state's five regions. The Task Force continues to develop recommendations to the improve the courts in this state and community responses for individuals with mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders.

¹ https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/courts/additional-resources/mental-health-task-force/



Goal #3: Improve conditions and address the needs of vulnerable populations in correctional facilities.

John Howard Association (JHA) Prison Monitoring: The JEO Initiative was instrumental in working with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and John Howard Association (JHA) throughout this year to help increase transparency and understanding of current policies and practices within IDOC facilities. Regular conversations were convened to share information and data around policy changes, population numbers, needs and changes, facility issues, staffing levels, as well as many other issues affecting people in custody, their loved ones, and employees at IDOC. Over the past year, JHA was able to resume in-person prison monitoring visits, conduct multi-day prison visits, and pilot the Measures of Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) survey in many IDOC facilities with the goal of surveying every prison in Illinois within one year to better assess issues, concerns, and culture inside of prison facilities. There is also a IDOC staff survey component called Staff Quality of Life (SQL) being rolled out on-line.

Illinois Higher Education in Prison Task Force (ILHEPTF): The ILHEPTF is a statewide effort created through the 102nd General Assembly's House Joint Resolution 27. The resolution recognized the need for policy and legislative supports to provide incarcerated people with safe and dignified learning environments and to ensure equitable expansion of educational opportunities throughout the state. The ILHEPTF is comprised of 19 statutorily required members, including state agency representatives, legislators, students, and administrators with higher education in prison experience, subject matter experts, and individuals who have been incarcerated in Illinois. Members represent a broad range of research, practice, and policy expertise in higher education and criminal justice. The Task Force met between February and July 2022 to craft recommendations to grow quality higher education in prison programming in Illinois. The ILHEPTF final report was completed on July 31st, 2022, and presented to the General Assembly in October of 2022. Orlando Mayorga, Reentry Coordinator of the JEO Initiative and McCormick Foundation Fellow, was appointed Chair of the Task Force by the Office of the Governor.

Use of Humanizing Language Towards Justice System Impacted persons: People who are incarcerated are often referred to in an array of dehumanizing labels, such as inmates, criminals, prisoners, convicts, delinquents, felons, and offenders. These labels continue to follow, categorize, and stigmatize people impacted by the criminal justice system, even after they complete their sentence of incarceration and return to the community. Instead of using these terms to describe people, it is best practice to use person-first language, such as "person impacted by the justice system," that does not dehumanize the person being described.

In 2022, JEO prepared a memo for the Illinois Prisoner Review Board (PRB) that highlighted the importance of using person-first language and recommended removing the use of the term "offender" when referring to people who are incarcerated. The PRB developed an internal policy to advise their board members and staff to use person-first language when referring to people who are incarcerated and/or being reviewed by the PRB members.



This memo builds upon a similar memo that the JEO team prepared for the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) the previous year. As a result, IDOC incorporated into its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan that the IDOC will remove the use of the term "offender" from all communication when referring to people who are incarcerated in its facilities.



Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton visited with Chicago Botanic Garden Windy City Harvest Corps program, which employs 30-40 system-impacted people and veterans to help them gain hands-on technical training and certificates.

Goal #4: Support positive reentry outcomes to reduce recidivism.

State ID Program: The State ID to Returning Residents Program is designed to provide State Identification (ID) cards to persons being released from IDOC facilities. Obtaining state identification is one of the most critical barriers to successful reentry facing thousands of formerly incarcerated individuals in Illinois each year. Possessing valid state identification significantly reduces recidivism, while lacking it often prevents individuals who are being released from accessing safe and supportive housing, education, and social services. The State ID Program aligns with the JEO Initiative's goal of supporting positive reentry outcomes to reduce recidivism.

With the concerted effort and advisement of the Office of the Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton's JEO Initiative, the State ID Pilot launched in December of 2020 in collaboration with the Office of First Lady MK Pritzker, Illinois Secretary of State (SOS) and the IDOC. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), local county clerks' offices, and the Social Security Administration (SSA) have also collaborated with this initiative.



This program emerged during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, to address the needs of people being released from IDOC facilities during a time when SOS offices were closed. The program started in 2021 at two designated IDOC facilities. Within two years, all IDOC correctional facilities throughout the state have been equipped and activated for the State ID Program, which has provided over 1,400 State IDs to people returning to their community. In accordance with state law, the State IDs are issued at no cost to the recipient prior to their release.

Healing Beyond Harm Restorative Justice Pilot Program: During the Summer of 2022, the JEO Initiative launched the Healing Beyond Harm (HBH) pilot program, in collaboration with the Illinois Prisoner Review Board, Illinois Department of Corrections, Cook County State's Attorney Office (Victim Services Unit), and Adler University's Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice (IPSSJ). As a first-of-its-kind Restorative Justice (RJ) pilot in the State of Illinois, this program has two main components: Restorative Conference (Harm Repair Dialogues), and Project Transformation, Healing, and Accountability through Written Words (Project THAWW). The HBH pilot is centered around the needs of the crime survivor and aims to promote healing and accountability. This program also seeks to address personal and systemic traumas held by the primary stakeholders and impacted communities.

The first component of this program is Restorative Conferences (Harm Repair Dialogue). A Restorative Conference can only be initiated by a crime survivor and allows for a facilitated conversation between the harmed person and the person who committed the harm. Trained RJ practitioners prepare both participants well in advance of a face-to-face dialogue. Restorative Conferences have a key focus on the emotional well-being and healing process of both participants.

The second component is Project THAWW, which allows an incarcerated person the opportunity to write a letter of apology to the person they harmed. Pilot participants receive assistance from volunteers trained in RJ practices. The process of drafting an apology letter helps participants to actualize accountability for their actions. Once letters are finalized, they undergo a review process before submission into the Apology Letter Bank repository that is housed within the Illinois Prisoner Review Board. Crime survivors have the option to receive the apology letter or not. If a crime survivor consents to communicating with the person who caused harm, this process can eventually lead to a facilitated Restorative Conference. There are currently two IDOC facilities participating in this component of the pilot.

The HBH Restorative Justice Pilot aims to set a new precedent in Illinois by centering this program around the crime survivor, and providing the opportunity to focus on the social, emotional, and mental well-being of all the impacted parties. A crime survivor is not obligated to participate in any component of the HBH Pilot.





Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton addressed Restorative Justice Practitioners from across the United States at the National Association of Community and Restorative Justice Conference.

Illinois Reentry Council (IRC): JEO works in partnership with the Illinois Justice Project to convene experts and stakeholders from throughout the state to advance holistic reentry policy recommendations, streamline reentry services and coordinate statewide resources for people returning to their communities from IDOC facilities. There are over 28,000 people in Illinois prisons and over 225,000 under some form of criminal legal system supervision. The ramifications of mass incarceration in Illinois have become more evident over time, disproportionately impacting low-income people from under-resourced communities. The reentry process for many is complex and it is necessary to alter major policies and practices on multiple fronts.

The IRC is composed of justice system-impacted people, executive, judicial, and legislative elected officials, government administrators, service providers, law enforcement, researchers, and advocates.

In 2022, the Illinois Reentry Council was pivotal in the following Reentry developments:

- The IRC Innovations Committee Pilot, composed of five justice system-impacted persons.
 The purpose of this committee is to provide leadership roles for justice system-impacted people who will be responsible for identifying small grant funding opportunities for reentry organizations.
- Over \$80 million in new public sector funding dedicated to reentry housing and support services for people returning to their communities from incarceration.
- Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) investment increase by \$16 million for the Housing for Justice Involved Persons Program.

Illinois Resentencing Task Force: The Illinois Resentencing Task Force is a statewide effort created through the 102nd General Assembly's *HB3587/Public Act 102-0099*. Alongside other sentencing policy experts and stakeholders from throughout the state, JEO Director Yaacov Delaney served on this Task Force, providing a unique policy lens along with lived experience within the justice system to consider alternative options for incarcerated people who have received extensive sentences. The Task Force met during the year of 2022, studying and discussing innovative ways to reduce the Illinois prison population and considering equitable measures to ensure sentences of imprisonment will promote justice and public safety. Key focus areas considered were: the community interest in public safety, the victims' and survivors' interests in subjective justice for their individual cases, community standards regarding the purpose of incarceration – punishment, deterrence, fairness, the interests of the families of the incarcerated and their communities, issues of public safety, restorative justice, and economic impacts, rehabilitation, and the current justice system's need to resolve cases efficiently and produce positive outcomes. The Task Force's final report/recommendations is public and was sent to the Illinois General Assembly in January 2023.

2023 Projected Deliverables

The Initiative will work towards the following non-exhaustive set of deliverables during its third year.

Goal #1: Address the social determinants of crime and incarceration.

The Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program: The Office of the Lieutenant Governor and ICJIA will execute future R3 funding rounds in 2023 to reinvest in communities that have been disproportionately affected by disinvestment and the War on Drugs.

Violence Prevention Strategy: A staff member of the JEO Initiative will continue to engage with ICJIA to equitably advance resources across the state that address reduction in violence.

Charitable Trust Stabilization Fund: A staff member of the JEO Initiative will continue to engage with the Charitable Trust Stabilization Board, attend quarterly meetings, and recommend qualified applications for grant funding through the Office of the Treasurer.

Advancing Trauma-Informed Illinois Efforts: JEO Initiative staff will engage with the statewide Trauma Informed Work Group to develop trauma-informed and healing-centered recommendations.

Serving on Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force: A staff member from the Office of the Lieutenant Governor will continue to engage with the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force to proactively impact the state's immigrant communities. The Task Force will develop a report and recommendations to submit to the Governor and General Assembly in 2023.





Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton with Natasha Coleman, a recipient of Star Farm Chicago business incubator, which helps BIPOC woman acquire farmland in Chicago's Back of the Yards Neighborhood.

Goal #2: Improve equitable deflection and diversion opportunities from the justice system.

Serving on Illinois Mental Health Task Force: The Illinois Mental Health Task Force's efforts engaged several hundred advocates and partners to develop an Action Plan Report which is scheduled for public review in January 2023. The JEO Initiative will continue to engage in the Task Force's developments and advancement of the Action Plan Report.

Advancing Digital Equity Resources: JEO will convene experts and stakeholders throughout the state with the purpose of expanding access to digital equity resources for marginalized communities.

Goal #3: Improve conditions and address the needs of vulnerable populations impacted by historical disinvestment and trauma.

John Howard Association (JHA) Prison Monitoring: JEO Initiative staff will continue its collaborative work with IDOC and JHA to ensure equitable policies are practiced inside of the IDOC facilities.

Illinois Higher Education in Prison Task Force Recommendations: JEO Initiative staff will work with experts and stakeholders to advance the recommendations proposed by this Task Force.

Women in Justice: JEO will convene women leaders, experts, and stakeholders throughout the state to discuss the impact of our current justice system on women and families and viable policy solutions.





Orlando Mayorga receiving Changemaker of the Year Award from the John Howard Association for his reentry policy work with the JEO Initiative (pictured from right to left: JHA Board President Jwanza Hughes, Orlando Mayorga, and JHA Executive Director Jennifer Vollen-Katz).

Goal #4: Support positive reentry outcomes to reduce recidivism.

Illinois Reentry Council (IRC): JEO Initiative staff will continue to engage with the IRC as it advances policies, strategies, and resources for people throughout the state of Illinois who are returning to communities after incarceration.

Illinois Resentencing Task Force: JEO Initiative staff will continue to engage with the experts and stakeholders to advance the proposed resentencing recommendations of this Task Force.

State ID Program: JEO Initiative will continue to work in partnership with First Lady MK Pritzker's office, the SOS and IDOC to identify and address gaps and ensure the continuity of this reentry program.

Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice – 21st Century Transformation Model: The JEO Initiative will work with IDJJ and SOS to expand the State ID program services to youth who are being released from IDJJ facilities and Aftercare.

Healing Beyond Harm (HBH) – Restorative Justice Pilot: As the HBH pilot continues to be implemented and actualized, JEO will continue to collaborate with its partners to develop an advisory council that reflects the voices of crime survivors.





Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton presented JEO Director Yaacov Delaney with the Illinois Prison Project Advocate of the Year Award.

Conclusion

The deliverables are not an exhaustive list of the JEO Initiative's projects during 2023. Priorities and goals set for the next fiscal year are subject to modification and expansion. As we enter a new gubernatorial term within the State of Illinois, we must prioritize the wisdom and work within communities to reimagine and transform policies and practices across our state. The JEO Initiative thanks the staff from the Office of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, ICJIA, as well as members of the General Assembly, agency heads, and community stakeholders for their unwavering commitment towards collaborative efforts to reform justice, equity, and opportunity within the State of Illinois.



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