

After the Win: Tips for Successful Implementation of Prison Closure

Here are some of the most common ways that prison closure has been supported and achieved:

Ensuring accountability by raising public awareness about the promised changes:

- ⇒ Ask your Governor to hold a public bill signing event, or to allow you to photograph and publicize a private signing
- ⇒ Ask important supporters (Governor, legislative champions, agency officials) to issue a press release or media advisory
- ⇒ Write up a fact sheet or newsletter article and share it with key stakeholders
- ⇒ Host conference call / webinar or provide a briefing/workshop
- ⇒ Work with media to call attention to key events, e.g., House hearing, Senate passage, significant anniversary
- ⇒ Track progress through your newsletter, blog or social media; consider using a “countdown clock” if there is a definite date for closure of your youth prison
- ⇒ When a youth prison is closed, hosting a big event to mark its closure, and use attention to the event to again call on lawmakers to ensure that kids can't be locked up there again (e.g., by knocking down the building itself.)

Ensuring changes are happening in the **right way** and **at the right level**:

- ⇒ Ensure that the legislation enacting your changes creates an implementation commission or designates an existing body to serve as one
- ⇒ Also ensure that the enacting legislation directs the money saved to be re-invested in a continuum of community-based alternatives to incarceration and early intervention and prevention services
- ⇒ Ask a researcher / university to do an implementation study
- ⇒ Host an event (e.g. key implementation date) to discuss real time implementation
- ⇒ Weigh in during the agency regulatory / rulemaking process
- ⇒ Draft a template rule / regulation to share with the agency
- ⇒ Encourage multiple stakeholders to share the impact the changes have had on them
- ⇒ Meet with agency officials and ask for them to issue additional guidance / policy
- ⇒ Show how it can be done effectively by sharing information on other jurisdictions

Collecting and sharing **good data**:

- ⇒ Ensure that the legislation enacting your changes creates a new body or designates an existing body to track data and/or issue report or work with your legislative champions to write and pass a separate bill requiring data collection and reporting.
- ⇒ Ask the relevant government agency to collect and report data
- ⇒ Ask an existing juvenile or criminal justice body to track and report data
- ⇒ Ask your State Advisory Group on juvenile justice or your state JJ Specialist to use JJDPA Title II funds to track data, study implementation, and issue a report
- ⇒ Issue a Freedom of Information Act request for data or to see if policy has changed

Engaging directly impacted **youth and families**:

- ⇒ Survey youth, families, and community
- ⇒ Ensure youth and families are appointed to implementation committees, study panels, etc.
- ⇒ Ask youth and families to help with raising public awareness and all other implementation strategies discussed here

Thanking your supporters and priming your stakeholders for **further reform**:

- ⇒ Thank everyone involved with individual notes or letters (including photos if possible)
- ⇒ Thank key supporters publicly on social media
- ⇒ Write up an article for your newsletter with photos
- ⇒ Issue a press statement thanking supporters
- ⇒ Host a celebration event and/or incorporate into an existing event
- ⇒ Give an award to key policymakers

Example from the Field: Counting down to closure

THE CONNECTICUT JUVENILE TRAINING SCHOOL CLOSES IN...



The Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance ensured accountability for, and raised awareness about, the closure of their state's youth prison by including a countdown clock on their website's homepage (www.ctjja.org), saying "The Connecticut Juvenile Training School Closes in __ Days, __ Hours, __ Minutes, __ Seconds."