Earned Probation Credits in Florida

5-year impact in Florida

Establishing an earned-credit system allowing Floridians to reduce their probation sentences by participating in educational programs or maintaining employment status could amount to $75M in reduced community corrections costs over 5 years, while reducing the probation population in Florida by 4,000-4,400 people.

The opportunity

As of December 2020, 179,594 adults were on probation in Florida (more than 1 out of every 100 residents), constituting the 5th highest probation population in the United States. More than 60,000 individuals were placed on probation in FY20-21, with an average probation sentence length of approximately 2.5 years.

179,594 adults on probation in Florida by the end of 2020

$230M spent on community corrections in Florida (FY20-21)

Corrections spending in Florida exceeded $2.7B in FY20-21, with $230M dedicated to community corrections. This marks a $26M increase in community corrections spending since FY15-16, in spite of declining crime rates. Meanwhile, Florida’s probation program struggles to achieve its goal of reducing recidivism through community integration. Close to 50% of Floridians placed on probation in FY20-21 already had prior supervision commitments, and in FY18-19, 18,461 Floridians had their probation revoked for a technical violation; altogether, the probation completion rate was only 58%. Granting up to 60 days of sentence reductions to people on probation who participate in the workforce for 6 months or complete GED programs would incentivize employment and educational achievement, which have been shown to lower the likelihood of recidivism. Therefore, this policy could facilitate swift and successful community reintegration, while reducing expenditures on Florida’s costly probation system through decreased probation sentences.

Projected population impact

4,000 - 4,400 fewer adults on probation in Florida by the end of 2027

2,500 Life years back from probation after 5 years

Impact of similar policies in other states

▷ Louisiana

In 2017, Louisiana signed the Criminal Justice Reinvestment Act, which implemented earned compliance credits and decreased the probation population by almost 6,000 within eight months. The legislation is predicted to reduce each probation officer’s caseload by 12% on average, allowing officers to focus more closely on higher-risk individuals.

▷ Arizona

In 2008, Arizona passed the Safe Communities Act, which established earned sentence credits for individuals who complied with the terms of their supervision. Since the passage of the act, Arizona has seen a 29% decrease in probation revocations.