

# Vermont Prison Research and Innovation Network

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**Senate Committee on Institutions**

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# Overview for Today

- What PRIN is & Why it Exists
- Origins & History of PRIN
- Vermont Prison Surveys
- Impact of PRIN & Lessons Learned
- PRIN Today & Looking Ahead



# What is PRIN?

A long-term **research-practice partnership (RPP)** between the Vermont DOC and UVM.

- Lived experience as expertise
- Independent data and research
- Knowledge for action and transformation



*Partnership in action in SSCF, the PRIN anchor facility*

# Why PRIN Exists

Despite their scale and impact,  
prisons are among the least  
transparent and most  
understudied public institutions in  
the country.



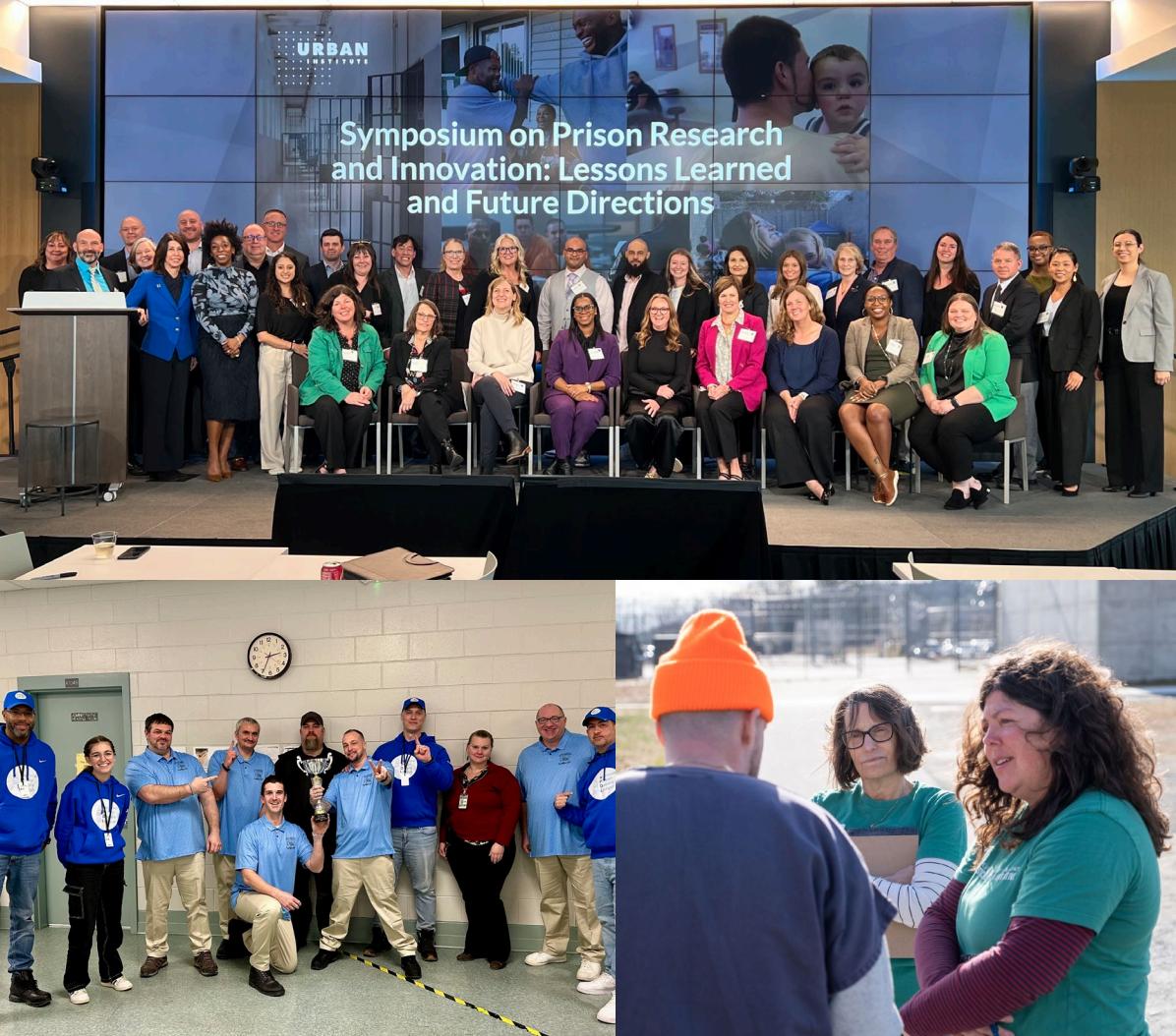
*Typical two-person cell at SSCF.*

# Origins & History of PRIN

2019: Early UVM-DOC collaboration

2020-2024: **Urban Institute Grant**

- 5-state consortium
- Community-engaged research
- Pilot facility
- Steering & Executive committees



*Top: PRIN symposium at Urban Institute; Bottom Left: VT PRIN council and NPDL win; Bottom Right: Lived experience survey co-creation*

# Vermont Prison Surveys

## Trusted, independent data

- Co-created with corrections staff and incarcerated individuals
- Anonymous and confidential
- Provides trendlines for facility and statewide insights



# VERMONT PRISON CLIMATE SURVEY

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# 2024

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Prison Research  
and Innovation  
Network (PRIN)

[go.uvm.edu/justiceresearch](http://go.uvm.edu/justiceresearch)



# Insights from Vermont Prison Surveys

## Data Walk and Data Dialogue

*“The prison doesn’t prepare people for release. The prison doesn’t have enough staff to operate the facility.”*

*“Other people make decisions about our daily work...they have no understanding how their actions impact people who actually do the work.”*

- **94% of staff do not feel there are enough staff to meet the needs of the prison.**
- **83% of incarcerated individuals do not feel prepared for release.**

*Data from PRIN baseline surveys, 2021*

# Impact of PRIN

**Insights from surveys guide change:**

## **Operational practices and culture**

- Staffing support and recruitment strategies, healthcare services, facility coffee shop, honors unit

## **Expanded partnerships**

- Peer recovery, restorative justice, postsecondary education, parental incarceration, and more

PUBLIC SAFETY

## **Vermont state prisons open door to community-based addiction recovery services**

The Department of Corrections is collaborating with recovery centers statewide to replicate a successful program at the Rutland prison after receiving \$1.5 million from the Legislature this year.

By Tiffany Tan  
June 2, 2024, 6:01 am

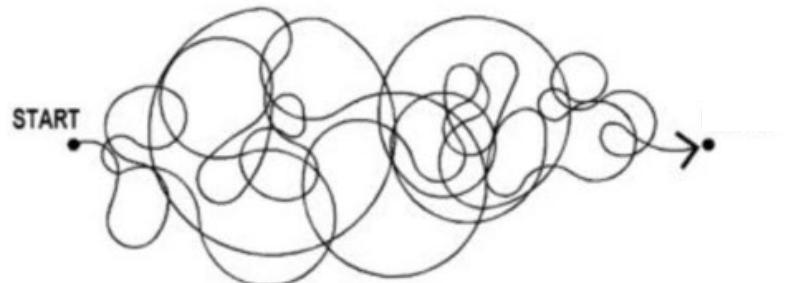


Tracie Hauck is the director of the Turning Point Center of Rutland. Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

# PRIN Lessons Learned

- Progress is not linear
- Trust and relationships matter
- Lived experience is expertise
- **Data builds shared understanding and focus**
- Change is complex and interconnected

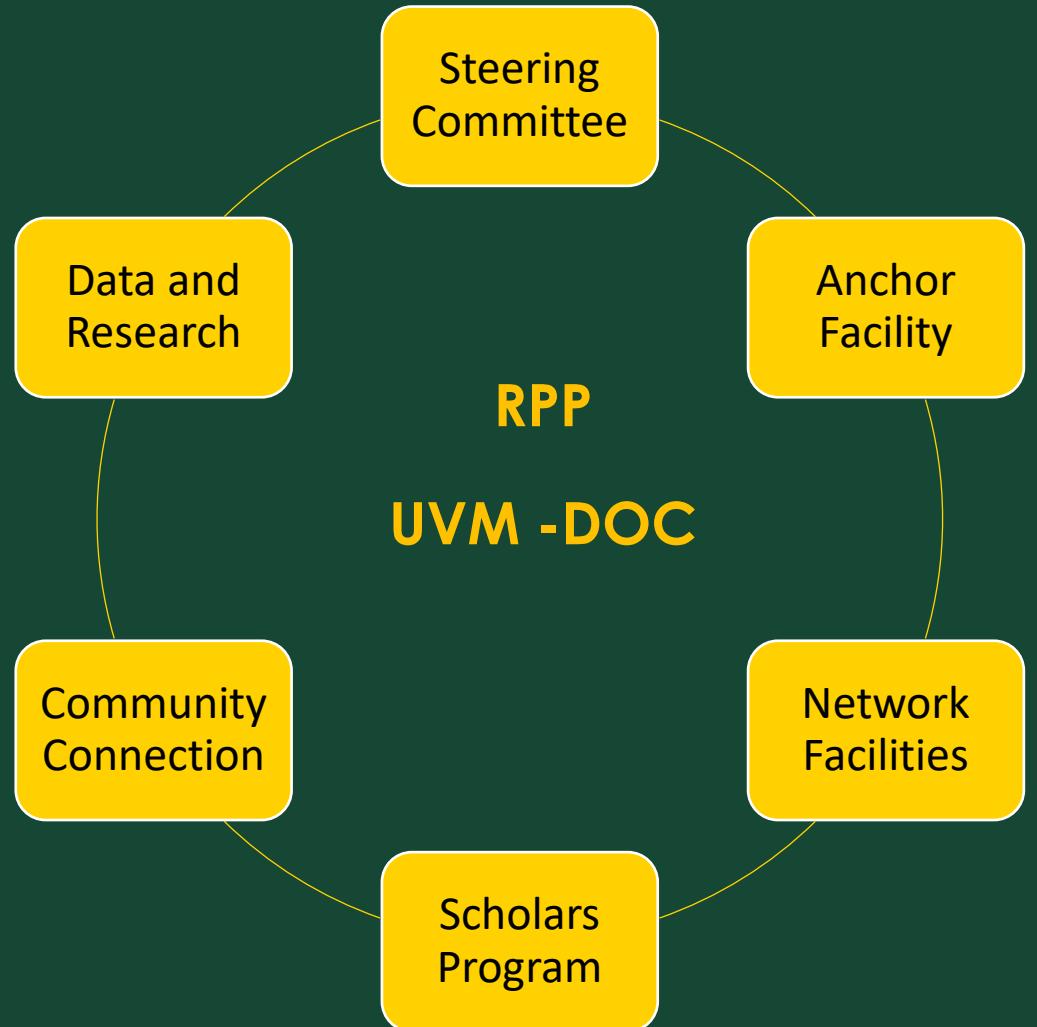
PROGRESS IS NOT LINEAR.



# PRIN - 2025

## Sustainable Statewide Infrastructure

- UVM – DOC long-term, research-practice partnership (RPP)
- DOC Anchor facility and PRIN council
- UVM Justice Research Center



# PRIN - 2025

## Activities

- Expanded steering committee
- Launched UVM PRIN scholars program
- Orientation Site Visits at SSCF, PRIN council
- Foundational expansion work with MVRCF
- Community partnerships



*Top: Justice Research Center scholars; Bottom Left: SSCF quilt project with Interaction VT; Bottom Right: MVRCF – first PRIN expansion site.*

# PRIN - 2025

## Data Dialogues

Deeper dive into contextual understanding of these data

- Revealed complex, interconnected challenges
- Identified need to better understand conditions that shape these challenges and implementation of efforts to address them.

- **94% of staff do not feel there are enough staff to meet the needs of the prison (2021).**
  - **92% in 2022 and 84% in 2024** ■
- **83% of incarcerated individuals do not feel prepared for release (2021).**
  - **89% in 2022 and 84% in 2024**

# PRIN in 2026

## Research

- Data briefs – spring 2026
- Survey administration in SSCF and MVRCF – summer 2026
- Composite storytelling and process mapping – summer 2026
- Focus on dissemination and communication



## Innovation

- Support and process for data-informed change in facilities

# Vermont Health and Justice Collaborative

*What we see inside prisons is shaped by the systems around them.*

## PRIN Research

- Vermont Prison Surveys
- Qualitative Stories
- Administrative Records

## PRIN Innovations

- Operational Practices
- Culture Change
- Expanded Partnerships

## Collective Impact

- Aligned Efforts
- Ecosystem Lens
- Shared Measurement

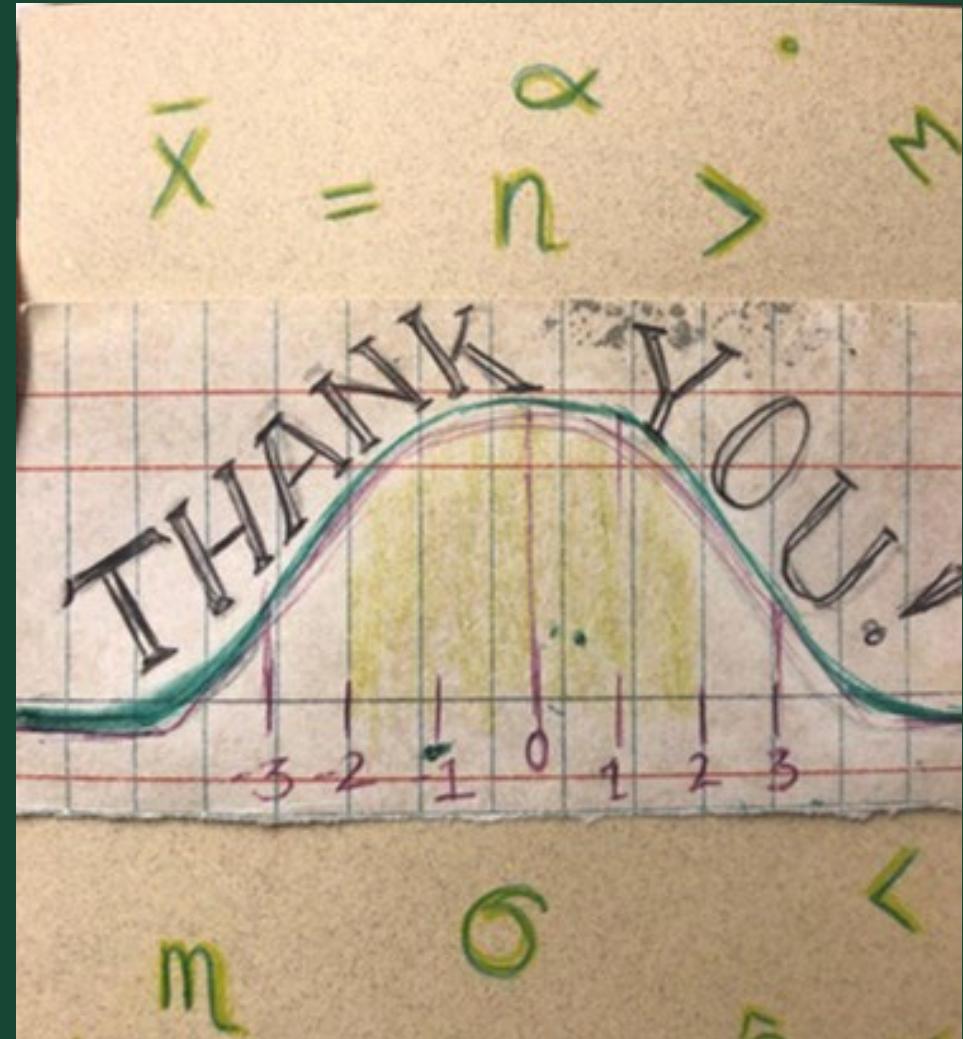


# Thank You

In partnership with,

- PRIN Steering Committee
- PRIN Anchor Facility and SSCF Council
- Justice Research Center team
- Community Collaborators

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*Image credit: Thank you to the women from Statistics 051 spring 2019 in CRCF.*