

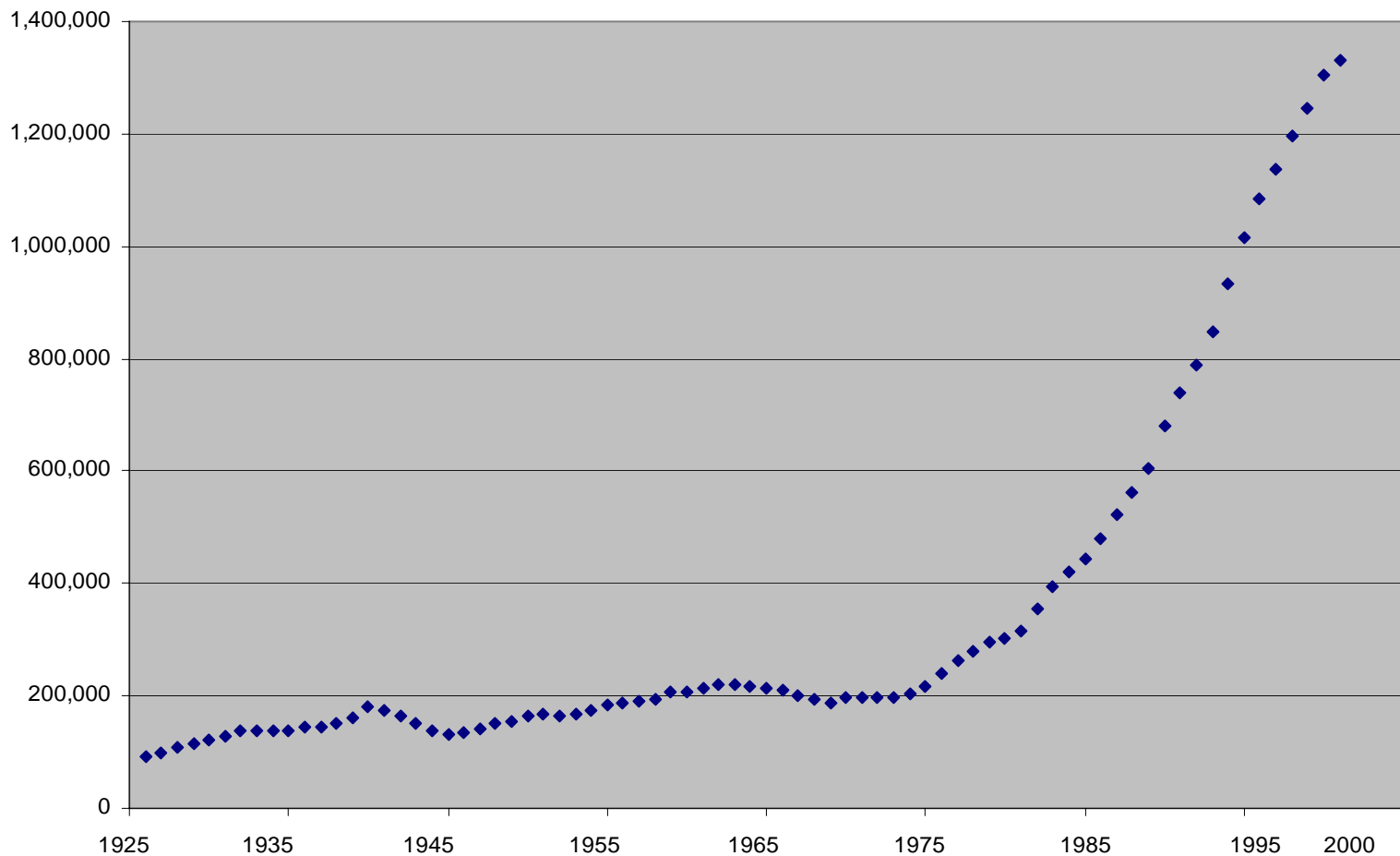
Correctional Programs in the Age of Mass
Incarceration:
What Do We Know About
“What Works”

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The Age of Mass Incarceration

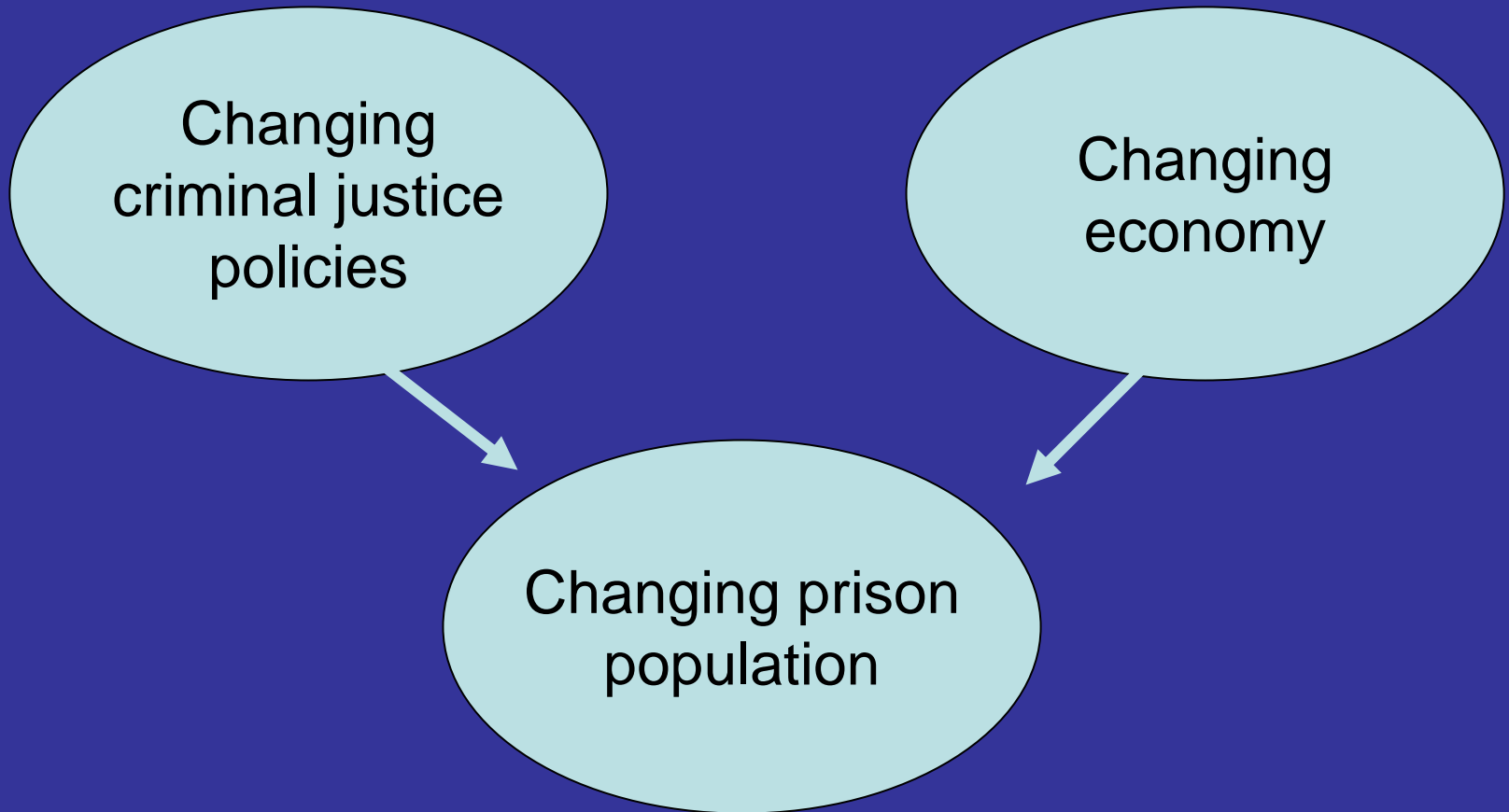
Federal and State Prisoners in the U.S.: 1925-2000



The Age of Mass Incarceration

- Current imprisonment rate: 705/100,000
...world's leader
- Corrections “industry” is a \$65B per year enterprise
- **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:**
Of the 2.2 million currently in jail or prison
...95 percent will eventually be released

The Age of Mass Incarceration



650,000 ex-offenders released each year.

Prison Life

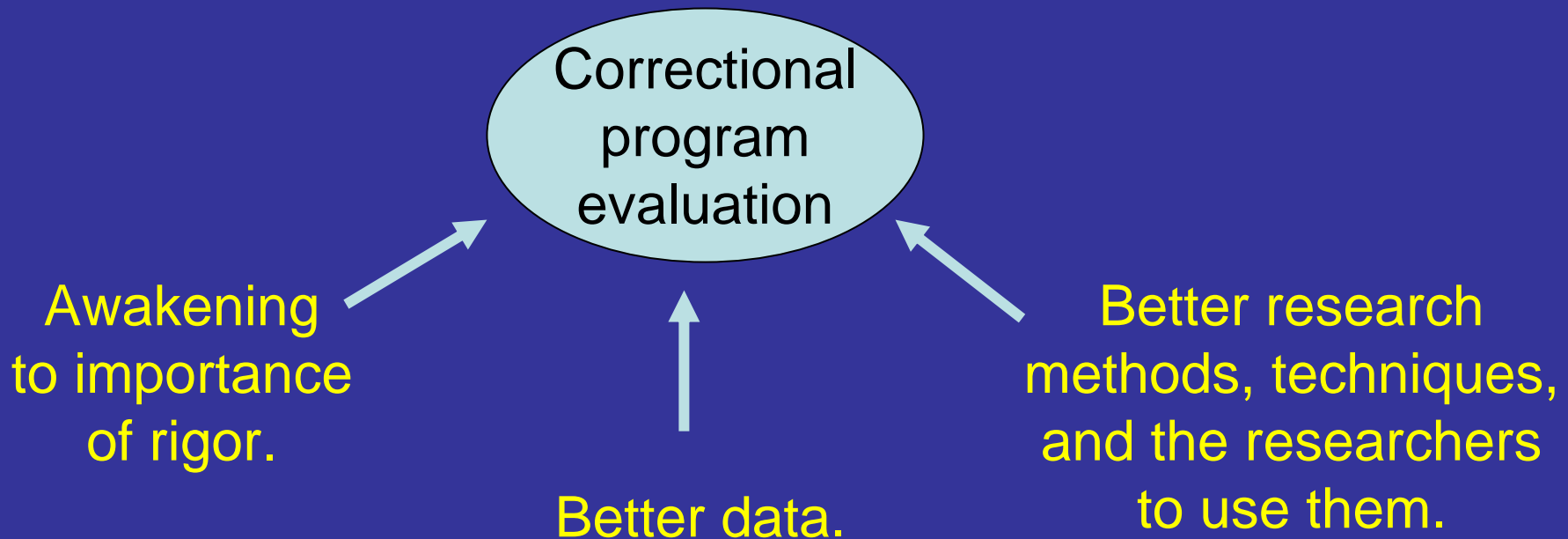
- Prisoners
 - Low education, young, minority, male,
1/2 serving sentences for non-violent offenses
- Dominant track
 - Short stay, low security facility, low levels of program participation
- Prison life
 - Staff and space shortage for bringing programs
 - Security is paramount
 - Service to facility (kitchen work, cleaning, etc.) a top priority
 - Substantial facility to facility movement

Programs to Impact Employment (Recidivism)

- Education
 - Adult Basic Education (ABE)
 - GED preparation and testing
- Vocational training
- Employment
 - work camps
 - prison industry employment
 - work release
- Post release programs (employment programs)

Evidence on Effectiveness?

- As of 2000...evidence base is weak
- Better research? Lessons from education?



Recent Evidence from Three Sources

- Random assignment experiment
 - CEO evaluation in NYC
- Large-scale, longitudinal survey study
 - National SVORI evaluation
- Use of rich administrative data
 - Lessons from Florida

Center for Employment Opportunities Evaluation

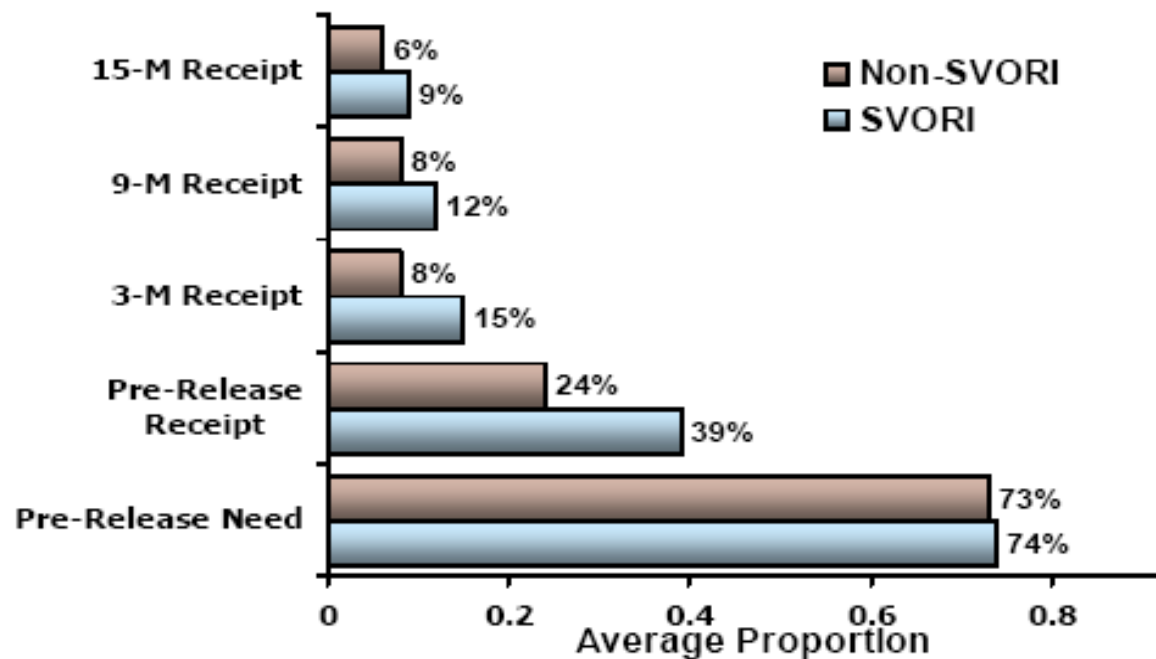
- CEO model
 - immediate “transitional employment” in minimum wage “neighborhood work project” jobs
 - assistance with job placement
 - post placement assistance
- First year findings from random assignment evaluation
 - no long run employment or earnings gains
 - substantial recidivism effects

Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative Evaluation

- SVORI...a \$100 million federal grant program to 69 various correctional programs over 3 years
- Evaluation...five year evaluation of 69 sites and intense *impact* evaluation of 16 selected sites
- Findings from propensity score estimates

Service Need & Receipt

Employ/Educ./Skills Building Services





Propensity Score impact estimates

	Bin 2	Bin 3	Bin 4
# of statistical tests	107	107	107
SVORI 'better' than non-SVORI	67	78	74
SVORI significantly better than non-SVORI ($\alpha=.05$)	8	6	5
SVORI significantly better than non-SVORI ($\alpha=.10$)	19	12	12
Non-SVORI better than SVORI	40	29	33
Non-SVORI significantly better than SVORI ($\alpha=.05$)	2	0	0
Non-SVORI significantly better than SVORI ($\alpha=.10$)	2	0	3

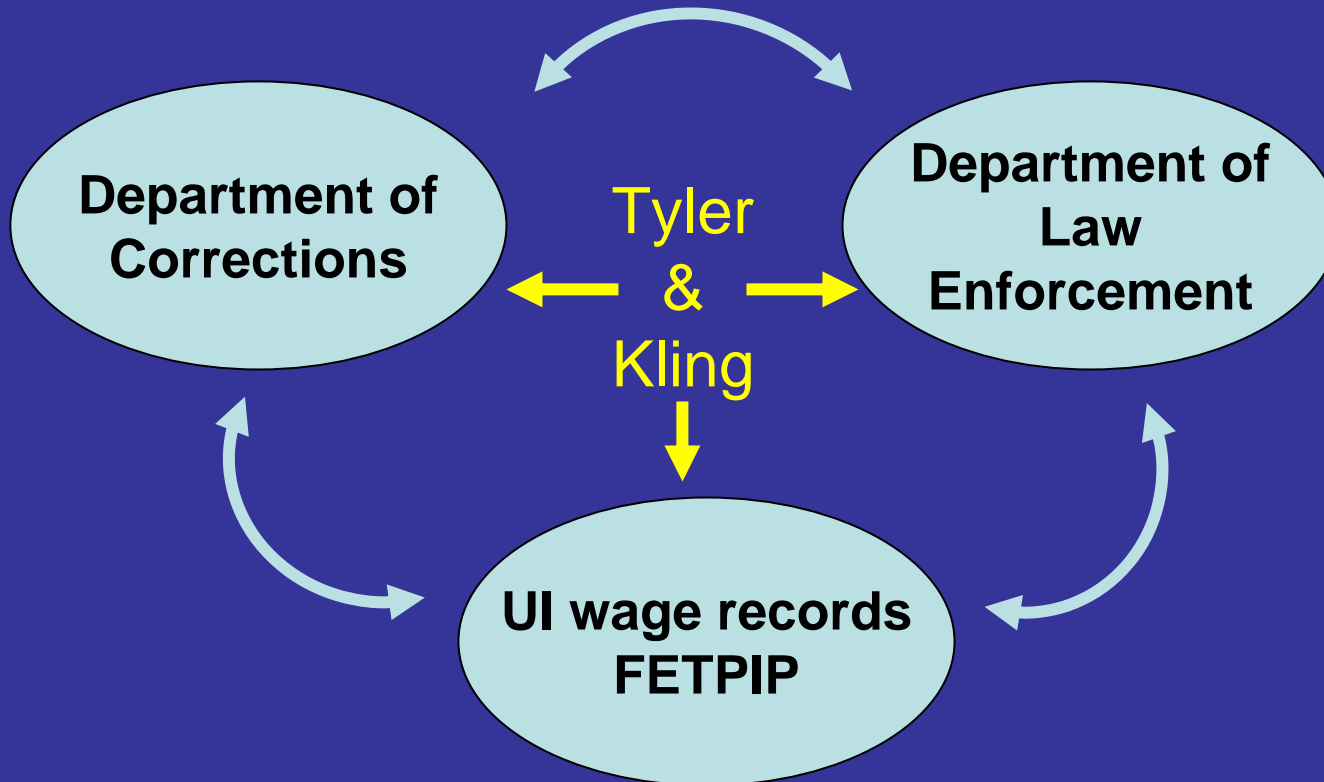
Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative Evaluation

- Take away:
 - Very few of the programs funded by SVORI work...or
 - Given low levels of receipt of “treatment,” it’s welcome news to find *any* positive effects

Using Rich Administrative Data to Estimate Program Impact

The Florida Example:

Russell Sage Foundation funded data collection 2000-2002



1M records, everyone arrested in Florida since 1990,

complete panel of:

arrests convictions incarceration spells program participation

UI wage records

Lessons from Florida

- Using rich set of control variables, getting a “prison GED” associated with increased earnings, but only for minority offenders (Tyler and Kling 2004)
- When looking at education, vocational, or employment programs...
 - Everything looks good in participant vs. nonparticipant comparisons...but with more sophisticated models...
 - Only positive earnings effects for prison industry work and work release
 - Only positive recidivism effects for work release
- Berk (2007) work release recidivism effects only for those who committed “income generating” crimes

Lessons from Most Recent Research

- Hard to turn lives around
- Simple comparisons will tell us little
- Null results in good studies may be result of...
 - “weak” implementation of good programs
 - delivering effective programs to the wrong offenders
 - programs don’t systematically impact outcomes
- Employment programs (e.g., CEO) may impact recidivism, but not through increased employment or earnings...rethink the mechanisms of employment → desistance
- More targeted programs?
 - employment programs toward offenders who commit “income generating” crimes
 - cognitive-behavior and drug abuse programs toward violent crime, drug use, etc.