

Megan Denver, Ph.D.
School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Northeastern University
m.denver@northeastern.edu
<https://megandenver.net/>

EDUCATION

2017	Ph.D., School of Criminal Justice, University at Albany (SUNY) “Targeting the “absence” in a desistance framework: Balancing risk and rehabilitation in mandated criminal background check employment decisions.” Committee: Shawn Bushway (chair), Megan Kurlychek, Justin Pickett, and Christy Visher
2009	M.A., Sociology, University of Delaware
2007	B.A., Criminal Justice and Sociology, University of Delaware Cum Laude Honors

EMPLOYMENT

2024–Present	Co-Director of the Corrections & Reentry Lab Associate Professor, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Northeastern University
2018–2024	Assistant Professor, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Northeastern University
2017–2018	Assistant Professor, College of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Florida State University
2013–2016	Graduate Research Assistant, University at Albany (SUNY) “State-Mandated Criminal Background Employment Screening: A High Stakes Window into the Desistance Process” (PIs: Drs. Shawn Bushway and Megan Kurlychek)
2009–2012	Research Associate II, Justice Policy Center, Urban Institute
2008 (Summer)	Graduate Research Assistant, University of Delaware Supervisors: Drs. Aaron Kupchik and Chrysanthi Leon
2005 – 2006	Research Experience for Undergraduates, University of Delaware
2004 – 2007	Research Assistant, Disaster Research Center, University of Delaware

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Denver, Megan, Rod K. Brunson, and Oscar Navarro. (Forthcoming). “It’s a start”: Formerly incarcerated adults’ perceptions of second-chance employers and policies. *Criminology & Public Policy*.

Denver, Megan, Oscar Navarro, and Rod K. Brunson. (Forthcoming). Bounded engagement and institutional interdependency: Exploring formerly incarcerated adults’ (non)engagement experiences and perceptions. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*.

Shi, Luzi and Megan Denver. 2025. The Transferal of Criminal Record Stigma in the Employment Context: Evidence from Conjoint and Vignette Experiments. *Criminology*. 63(1): 89-121.

Denver, Megan, Abby Ballou, and Samuel E. DeWitt. 2024. What’s in a Label? Public Use and Perceptions of Labeling Alternatives in Criminology. *Justice Quarterly* 41(6): 763–89.

Denver, Megan and James M. Binnall. 2024. The Lure of the Law for the Formerly Convicted: Pursuing the Legal Profession as a Resistance Strategy. *Law & Social Inquiry* 49(2): 740-68.

Denver, Megan and Samuel E. DeWitt. 2023. “[It’s] What You Do After the Mistake that Counts”: Positive Employment Credentials, Criminal Record Stigma, and Potential Pathways of Mediation. *Criminology*. 61(1): 5-39.

Drakulich, Kevin and Megan Denver. 2022. The Partisans and The Persuadables: Public Views of Black Lives Matter and the 2020 Protests. *Perspectives on Politics* 20(4): 1191-1208.

Denver, Megan, and Justin T. Pickett. 2022. Race, Criminal Records, and Discrimination Against Job Seekers: Examining Attitudinal Mechanisms. *Social Currents* 9(3), 226-244.

Denver, Megan, and Brandon Behlendorf. 2022. Shifting Peaks and Cumulative Consequences: Disqualifying Convictions in High-Security Jobs. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 59(3): 279-326. [Authors contributed equally]

DeWitt, Samuel E., and Megan Denver. 2020. Criminal Records, Positive Employment Credentials and Race. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 57(3): 333-368.

Lehmann, Peter S., Justin T. Pickett, and Megan Denver. 2020. Public Opinion on Criminal Records and Employment: A Test of Competing Theoretical Models. *Crime & Delinquency* 66(6-7): 995–1022.

Denver, Megan. 2020. Criminal Records, Positive Credentials and Recidivism: Incorporating Evidence of Rehabilitation into Criminal Background Check Employment Decisions. *Crime & Delinquency* 66(2): 194–218.

Lageson, Sarah E., Megan Denver, and Justin T. Pickett. 2019. Privatizing Criminal Stigma: Experience, Intergroup Contact, and Public Views about Publicizing Arrest Records. *Punishment & Society* 21(3): 315-41.

Kurlychek, Megan, Shawn Bushway, and Megan Denver. 2019. Defensible Decisions: Balancing Employer and Prospective Employee Rights in an Era of Criminal Background Checks. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal* (Special Issue: "Criminal History and Employment: Challenges and Opportunities") 38(5): 529-546.

Denver, Megan. 2019. Reshaping the Study of Recidivism: Exploring Variations in the Timing of Recidivism Following Release from Prison. *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 30(4): 565–596. (Early online view 2016)

Denver, Megan, and Alec Ewald. 2018. Credentialing Decisions and Criminal Records: A Narrative Approach. *Criminology* 56(4): 715-749.

Denver, Megan, Justin T. Pickett, and Shawn D. Bushway. 2018. Criminal Records and Employment: A Survey of Experiences and Attitudes in the United States. *Justice Quarterly* 35(4): 584-613.

Denver, Megan, Justin T. Pickett, and Shawn D. Bushway. 2017. The Language of Stigmatization and the Mark of Violence: Experimental Evidence on the Social Construction and Use of Criminal Record Stigma. *Criminology* 55(3): 664-90.

Denver, Megan, Garima Siwach, and Shawn D. Bushway. 2017. A New Look at the Employment and Recidivism Relationship through the Lens of a Criminal Background Check. *Criminology* 55(1): 174-204.

Denver, Megan. 2017. Evaluating the Impact of "Old" Criminal Conviction Decision Guidelines on Subsequent Employment and Arrest Outcomes. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 54(3): 379–408.

La Vigne, Nancy and Megan Denver. 2015. Extending Dynamic Mapping to Reentry Practitioners: An Exploration of Rhode Island's Community Supervision Mapping System. *The Prison Journal* 95(4): 493-509.

Denver, Megan. 2011. The Future of Capital Trials: An Exploration of Procedural Justice, Race, and Willingness to Serve Again. *Criminal Justice Review* 36(2): 183-200.

Denver, Megan, Joel Best, and Kenneth C. Haas. 2008. Capital Punishment Methods as Institutional Fads. *Punishment & Society* 10(3): 227-52.

Invited White Papers or Other Writing

Denver, Megan. 2025. The Why, What, and How of Conjoint Experiments. Data/Methods Brief, The American Society of Criminology's Division of Public Opinion and Policy Newsletter. Spring issue: pp. 6-8.

Bushway, Shawn D. and Megan Denver. 2025. The Myth that Most People Recidivate. *The Criminologist*. 51(2): 1-7. (March/April Issue)

Ballou, Abby, Megan Denver, and Michel-Ange Siaba. 2025. Certificates of Relief and Employability. Essay for the Corporate Coalition of Chicago's [report](#): *Fair Chance Hiring: Addressing the Talent Shortage*.

Denver, Megan, and Abby Ballou. 2022. *Collateral Consequences & Public Safety*. Arnold Ventures Discussion Paper. (This paper was [part of an AV series](#) on public safety.)

Denver, Megan. 2021. Recruitment, Assessment, and Retention in the Direct Care Workforce for Individuals with Criminal Records: A Comprehensive Model Approach. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice.

Non-Refereed Publications

Kurlychek, Megan and Megan Denver. 2018. Translating Theories of Desistance to Policy. In Scott H. Decker and Kevin Wright, editors. *Criminology and Public Policy: Putting Theory to Work*. Temple University Press.

Kurlychek, Megan, Shawn Bushway, and Megan Denver. 2016. Understanding and Identifying Desistance: An Example Exploring the Utility of Sealing Criminal Records. *Global Perspectives on Desistance: Reviewing What We Know and Looking to the Future*. Routledge.

Bushway, Shawn and Megan Denver. 2016. Book Review: The Eternal Criminal Record, by James Jacobs. Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Books, Rutgers School of Criminal Justice and School of Law. Available [online](#).

Bushway, Shawn and Megan Denver. 2015. Book Review: The New Scarlet Letter? Negotiating the U.S. Labor Market with a Criminal Record, by Steven Raphael. *Industrial Relations & Labor*.

Denver, Megan. 2013. Book Review: Beyond the Death Penalty: Reflections on Punishment, by H. Nelen and J. Claessen (Eds.) *International Criminal Justice Review* 23(1): 95-107.

Denver, Megan, Jaime Perez, and Benigno Aguirre. 2007. Local Search and Rescue Teams in the United States. *Disaster Prevention and Management* 16(4): 503-12.

Poteyeva, Margarita, Megan Denver, Lauren E. Barsky, and B. E. Aguirre. 2005. Search and Rescue Activities in Disasters. Pp. 200-216 in Havidán Rodriguez, E. L. Quarantelli and Russell R. Dynes, editors. *Handbook of Disaster Research*. Springer.

Technical Research Reports

Available online: <https://www.urban.org/author/megan-denver>

INVITED PRESENTATIONS, ROUNDTABLES AND WORKSHOPS

2025 Participant, Maryland Methods Scale Roundtable, Univ. of Maryland. (March)

2024 “Employer Insurance for People with Records.” Arnold Ventures, Building Research Ideas and Generating Evidence (BUILD) event. June.

 Corrections Innovations Day hosted by the PA DOC. Arnold Ventures, BRIDGE event. July.

2023 “Inclusive Research: How Engaging People Closest to the Issue Makes for Better Science.” National Institute of Justice conference. Plenary speaker. May 24.

 “Law and Order: Cutting Edge Science in Criminal Background Check Decisions.” Littler National Employer Conference. May 12. (Over 75 human resource representatives and senior legal counsel attended, and attendees received continuing legal education credits.)

2022 Guest speaker, career discussion and research overview. Forensic Science and Neuropsychology club at Northeastern University. February 15.

2020 “Recruitment, Assessment, and Retention in the Direct Care Workforce for Individuals with Criminal Records: A Comprehensive Model Approach.” Presentation to the National Institute of Justice (Department of Justice) and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (Department of Health and Human Services). September 2.

 “Careers in Law” panel for Phi Alpha Delta, Northeastern’s pre-law fraternity. Faculty participant. February 24.

 “Testing a stigma remediation strategy in the employment context: The interaction of positive credentials and criminal records.” Faculty presentation, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts. January 27.

2019 “Criminal Records and Positive Employment Credentials.” Faculty Research Colloquium. Northeastern University, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Graduate Student Association. November 7.

 “Criminal Records and Positive Employment Credentials.” Presentation, Utah Criminal Justice Conference, hosted by the Utah Criminal Justice Center. September 11.

2018 “Narratives as a Policy Tool? Examining Evidence of Rehabilitation in Criminal Background Check Decisions.” Seminar, Public Policy Institute of California. May 14.

“Roundtable on Law School and Bar Admission for People with Criminal Records.” Stanford Criminal Justice Center and Stanford Center on the Legal Profession, Stanford Law School. April 27.

2017

“State Mandated Criminal Background Employment Screenings: The New York State Department of Health.” Presentation to 26 grantee States participating in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ National Background Check Program. February 23.

“Obtaining Federal Dissertation Funding (NSF/NIJ).” School of Criminal Justice, University at Albany, SUNY. March 6. (With Reveka Shteynberg)

NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2024

“‘CORI-friendly, except...’: Examining Formerly Incarcerated Adults’ Perceptions of Second Chance Employers and Policies.” American Society of Criminology, San Francisco. November 2024.

2023

“All Reentry Is Local: Evaluating a Strategy to Reenter State Prisoners through Local Correctional Systems.” Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Annual Meeting. National Harbor, Maryland. March 15.

“Exclusion, Opportunity Knowledge Gaps, or Purposeful Avoidance? Exploring System Avoidance Experiences and Strategies Among Formerly Incarcerated Adults.” American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia. November 2023.

“The Transferal of Criminal Record Stigma in the Employment Context.” American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia. November 2023.

2021

“‘[It’s] what you do after the mistake that counts’: A mixed methods examination of influential positive credentials in the employment context.” American Society of Criminology, Chicago, IL, Nov 18.

2020

“Non-Non-Non Policy Reforms and Symbolic Boundary Shifting.” (Accepted for presentation at the American Society of Criminology, but conference cancelled due to COVID-19)

2019

“Change or Stability? Examining Desistance Narratives for Law Students with Criminal Records.” American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, Nov 13.

2018

“An Empirical Assessment of Disqualifying Crimes.” American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, Nov 16.

2017

“Deconstructing Drug Policy Frames: The Role of Criminalization, Political Elites, and Language in Shaping Structural Stigma.” American Society of Criminology, Philadelphia, Nov 16.

2016	<p>“The Language of Stigmatization and the Mark of Violence: Experimental Evidence on the Social Construction and Use of Criminal Record Stigma.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poster presentation, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Washington, DC, Nov 5.• American Society of Criminology, New Orleans, Nov 19.
2015	<p>“Evaluating the Impact of ‘Old’ Criminal Record Policies on Employment and Recidivism Outcomes.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Miami, Nov 13.• American Society of Criminology, Washington, DC, Nov 21.
2014	<p>“Estimating the Mark of a Criminal Record.” Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Albuquerque, NM, Nov 6.</p> <p>“Second Chances: Exploring the Relationship between Sealed Criminal Records and Employment Outcomes in New York State.” Poster presentation, American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, Nov 20.</p>
2013	<p>“Re-arrest Hazards for Returning Prisoners: A Window of Opportunity before a Return to Crime?” American Society of Criminology, Atlanta, Nov 20.</p> <p>“Control Unit Justice: Grievance Usage and Prisoner Legal Consciousness.” Law and Society Association, Boston, May 30.</p>
2012	<p>“Retesting At-Risk Youth in the GRYD Prevention Program: Measuring Progress.” American Society of Criminology, Chicago, Nov 17.</p> <p>“Sexual Assault Forensic Exam (SAFE) Payment Practice Study: Final Findings.” American Society of Criminology, Chicago, Nov 16.</p> <p>“Interim Outcomes from a Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Initiative: Safer Return.” American Society of Criminology, Chicago, Nov 15.</p>
2011	<p>“Sexual Assault Forensic Exam Payment Practice Study.” American Society of Criminology, Washington DC, Nov 19.</p>
2010	<p>“Staying Home: Perceptions of Family and Social Support Members of Formerly Incarcerated Persons Returning Home.” American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, Nov 17.</p> <p>“Weaving a tangled web: Conducting Surveys on Delinquent Behavior with Hard-to-Reach and At-Risk Youths.” American Society of Criminology, San Francisco, Nov 18.</p>

“The District of Columbia Mayor's Focused Improvement Area Initiative: Past Practices, Best Practices and Geography of Crime at Place.” Poster presentation, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, Boston, Nov. 4.

2008 “Dispute Resolutions in Secure Housing Units: California’s Inmate Grievance Process as Symbolic Structure.” American Society of Criminology, St. Louis, Nov 12-15.

“The Effect of Solitary Confinement on Mental Health: Comparing Assault and Misconduct in Supermax Prisons.” Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Cincinnati, OH, March 11-15.

2007 “The Fad Cycle in Capital Punishment Methods.” Annual Meeting of the Eastern Sociological Society, Philadelphia, March 15-18.

RESEARCH GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Internal

2024–2025 Tier 1 Grant Program, Northeastern University. Jail to Jobs Pipeline Project. Co-PI with Deborah Ramirez (School of Law). \$49,101.

2019–2025 Tier 1 Grant Program, Northeastern University. Reentering Lives of Juvenile Lifers. Co-PI with Simon Singer, Carlos Cuevas, David DeSteno, Shytierra Gaston and Daniel Medwed. \$40,700.

External

2025–2026 Arnold Ventures. Planning Phase Grant to Examine the Impact of Tablet-Based Educational Programming on Improved Outcomes and Desistance Signals for Incarcerated Individuals. Principal Investigator. (Co-I: Brian Hill, Edovo Foundation.) \$99,785.

2022–2024 National Institute of Justice. All Reentry is Local: Evaluating a Strategy to Reenter State Prisoners through Local Correctional Systems. Principal Investigator. (Co-PI: Ben Struhl). \$249,766.

2021–2024 National Science Foundation. Navigating Mainstream Institutions and Non-Traditional Alternatives Post-Incarceration. Principal Investigator. (Co-PI: Rod Brunson). \$297,178.

Ongoing Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Senator Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative Statewide Research Partner. Co-Principal Investigator with Anthony Braga and Ben Struhl.
2025-26: \$263,895. ‘24–‘25: \$258,000. ‘23–‘24: \$257,342. ‘22–‘23: \$239,942.
‘21–‘22: \$237,000. (Total to date: \$1,256,179.)

Ongoing Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative Local Action Research Partner. Co-Principal Investigator with Anthony Braga and Ben Struhl.
FY 2026: \$45,710. FY 2025: \$66,641. FY 2024: \$64,091. FY 2023: \$61,812.
FY 2022: \$61,812.

2016–2017 National Institute of Justice. Graduate Research Fellowship Program in the Social and Behavioral Sciences (2016-R2-CX-0017). \$32,000.

HONORS AND AWARDS

2021	Ruth Shonle Cavan Young Scholar Award, American Society of Criminology
2019	Outstanding Young Experimental Criminologist Award, Academy of Experimental Criminology, American Society of Criminology
2018	University Distinguished Dissertation Award, University at Albany
2017	Student Paper Award, ASC Division of Experimental Criminology
2016	ASC Gene Carte Student Paper Competition (3 rd Place)
2016	Selected Participant for the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) Graduate Student Workshop
2015	Recipient of the Karen R. Hitchcock New Frontiers Fund Award (\$500), Initiatives for Women, University at Albany
2012-2015	Hindelang Fellowship, University at Albany
2011	Employee Recognition Award, Justice Policy Center, Urban Institute
2008	Recipient of Emerald Literati Network's Highly Commended Award (Denver et al. 2007 article)
2007	Recipient of the Sociology Department's Benjamin McLuckie Award (Outstanding undergraduate work in sociology, University of Delaware)

TEACHING AND ADVISING

Courses Regularly Taught at Northeastern University

- Punishment in the Age of Mass Incarceration (CRIM 3300; experiential course)
- Research Methods (CRIM 3600)
- Punishment and Social Control (CRIM 7330)
- Advanced Research Methods (INSH 7300)

Dissertation Committees

- Cassidy Pereira. (ABD). *Reflections on 'Reality': Examining the Role of Publicized Police Brutality Footage in Legal Socialization within Black Families*. Committee Member.
- Abby Ballou. Completed (2025). *An audit study of criminal records and education credentials in two labor markets*. Committee Chair.
- Callie Hansson. Completed (2025). *An exploratory analysis of public perceptions about forced criminality in the United States*. Committee Member.
- Sarah Lockwood. Completed (2024). *Sex trafficking of male victims: How we understand the issue and our responses*. Committee Member.

- Eileen Kirk. Ph.D. Completed (2021). *Community (dis)investment: Criminological consequences of housing policy*. Committee Member.

Ph.D. Advisees

- Abby Ballou, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice
- Oscar Navarro, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice

SERVICE

Northeastern

- Graduate Committee (2020—present)
- Executive Committee, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (2023-present)
- Undergraduate Committee, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice (2018-2020)
- Faculty participant, “Preparing for a Career in Academia” Workshop (2019-2020)
- Faculty participant, Ad Hoc Committee on Methods and Statistics (2019)
- Ad Hoc Tier 1 Review Committee (2025, 2023, 2021)
- Faculty participant, “Politics and Democracy” panel for admitted students. (March 2021)

Discipline/Profession

- Editorial board member
 - *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* (2022-present)
 - *Criminology* (2024-present)
 - *Justice Quarterly* (2025-present)
- American Society of Criminology
 - Interim Executive Secretary (2024-present)
 - Annual Conference Program Committee, Sub-Area Chair (2021—Present)
 - Membership Committee (2018—2020)
- Ad hoc grant reviewer
 - National Science Foundation (NSF), Israel Science Foundation, and Arizona State University’s NSF-funded Graduate Research Fellowship Program
- Ad hoc manuscript reviewer
 - *American Journal of Sociology, Crime & Delinquency, Criminal Justice and Behavior, Criminal Justice Review, Criminology, Criminology & Public Policy, Feminist Criminology, Harvard Law Review, Journal of Experimental Criminology, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Journal of Qualitative Criminal Justice and Criminology, Journal of Quantitative Criminology, Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, Justice Quarterly, Law & Policy, Law & Social Inquiry, Law & Society Review, Social Currents, Social Problems*