

Meet & Greet with Senior Social Science Analyst Dr. Marie Garcia

Monday September 20, 2021 at 1:00pm EDT/10:00am PDT

Dr. Marie Garcia Biography

Marie Garcia, Ph.D., is a Senior Social Science Analyst in the Office of the Director at the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). In this role, she provides leadership and technical expertise to the NIJ Director on issues related to corrections and offender reentry, and is the lead staff for activities related to the implementation of Title I of the *First Step Act*. Dr. Garcia leads and coordinates with federal partners to develop long-term research agendas on issues related to offender reentry and recidivism reduction, and acts as liaison and disseminates information about NIJ program requirements to in- and external stakeholders. She earned her doctorate in criminal justice from Temple University, where her research focused on the impact of disorganization and crime on levels of trust in Philadelphia, communities and crime, and institutional corrections. Dr. Garcia's research portfolio at NIJ focuses on institutional and community corrections, offender reentry, risk and needs assessments, and special offender populations. Prior to NIJ, Dr. Garcia worked as a mental health counselor at Valley State Prison for Women in Chowchilla, CA. Her writing has appeared in *Justice Quarterly*, *Criminology & Public Policy*, *The Journal of Research on Crime and Delinquency*, *The Journal of Family and Marriage*, and *Criminology*. Dr. Garcia is committed to addressing the challenges faced by individuals under the supervision of the justice system and criminal justice personnel through innovation and science.

Dr. Marie Garcia Contact Information

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Questions asked during Meet & Greet with Dr. Marie Garcia

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Background

1. Before we dive into the many hats you wear as a Senior Social Science Analyst at the National Institute of Justice, can you talk to us a bit about what led you to research and the field of corrections, more broadly?
 - a. "personal impact of policy"
2. Walk us through your graduate schooling and professional trajectory. We know you worked within a correctional facility for women, where did that happen within your schooling?
3. What prompted you to look for a career outside of the university space, and specifically into federal service? And, did you consider other industry spaces?
 - a. If you did, what ultimately led you to the decision to enter federal service?
4. What advice would you give to students who are still deciding whether they want to end up in a University or AltAc (yet research intensive space)? Specifically, what advice would you give about breaching this topic with your mentor(s)?
 - a. How about conferences and engagement with professional societies?

Federal Service & Research

5. The hats you wear at NIJ are plentiful! There's the (1) Federal Legislation implementation hat; (2) Setting the Research agenda hat, and; (3) Project Management hat. Can you talk us through how you help with federal legislation implementation? And, how a background in research helps you through this process?
 - a. Sounds simple, but this is a question we ask all speakers from various AltAc settings – who is the “audience” for your research?
 - b. How does your PhD and time in grad school help you in your current role advising the NIJ Director on the state of evidence regarding corrections and helping with agenda setting?
6. Can you talk us through how you set the corrections research agenda and how a background in research helps you through this process?
 - a. It seems like multiple stakeholders inform how you set the corrections-related research agenda for NIJ. How do you balance the interests and needs of the current administration (e.g., the Attorney General, the White House, Congress) with what you hear from practitioners (e.g., state-level DOCs, practitioner-oriented professional societies)? How do you deal with competing interests?
7. Can you talk us through what it means to be a scientist on a federal research project? To date, what project has excited you most?
8. At times, you've taken a break from NIJ to work with Bureau of Prisons (BOP), can you talk to us about your detail? Is this common? What's the detail process?
9. Can you conduct original research at NIJ? How is research and evidence incorporated in other aspects of the agency? Do you participate in intra-agency research work?
 - a. How about dissemination, what does that look like? How does NIJ prioritize dissemination of research findings (e.g., NIJ's edited volumes, practitioner publications, peer-reviewed/empirical publications)?

Working Culture of Federal Service

10. How would students hear about potential federal service positions? What is generally the process for applying?
 - a. In other spaces, we know there are job talks and other processes to show application of technical knowledge. Does that happen in federal spaces, too?
11. How does federal service differ from other non-profit and private jobs?