

METHODOLOGY

We conducted three two-hour focus groups in September 2017 with 31 people in three locations across the United States. The groups were conducted in urban Hamilton County, Ohio; rural Franklin County, Missouri; and suburban Suffolk County, New York. Locations were chosen based on several factors, including their voting histories: Ohio, which has historically been a swing state in presidential elections; Missouri, which has voted for the eventual winner of all but three presidential elections; and Suffolk County, New York, which supported Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election after Barack Obama won the county in the 2008 and 2012 elections. We also avoided states that had decriminalized recreational marijuana at the time we conducted the groups.

Prior to designing the focus group moderator's guide, we reviewed recent survey research and conducted five interviews with experts in incarceration policy and public opinion related to criminal justice.

In all groups, participants were recruited by professional market research firms according to Public Agenda's specifications to represent a cross section of the public in those counties in terms of gender, age, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity and political party affiliation. During recruitment, potential participants were asked whether they had ever been arrested or served a prison sentence, although they were not recruited solely on that basis. Focus groups took place in market research facilities, and all participants were compensated for their time. Senior Public Agenda staff moderated the focus groups, which were video recorded and professionally transcribed. Public Agenda's research team collaboratively developed a coding scheme and coded the focus group transcripts using Dedoose qualitative analysis software.

More information about this study can be obtained at <http://www.hiddencommonground.org> or by emailing research@publicagenda.org.