

LANGUAGE GUIDE

The following are suggested terms to describe the people and communities impacted by the criminal legal system.

These terms are encouraged because we believe they center the humanity of *people* versus terms that have historically relegated people to a single characteristic of their lived experience or larger systems of violence and oppression. **We also encourage our partners to ask those you are working with to indicate their preferred names and terms.** For more suggested terms and to learn more about why these terms and words matter to us, see the John Jay College Institute for Justice and Opportunity's Language Guide: Suggested Terms for People and Communities Impacted by the Criminal Legal System and Letter on Why Words Matter.



INSTEAD OF

"Convict," "Prisoner,"
"Inmate", "Offender"

USE TERMS LIKE

"Incarcerated Person/People,"
"Incarcerated Student"



INSTEAD OF

"Ex-Con," "Ex-Offender"

USE TERMS LIKE

"Formerly Incarcerated Person/People,"
"System-Impacted Person/People"



INSTEAD OF

"Parolee," "Probationer"

USE TERMS LIKE

"Person/People on
Parole/Probation"



INSTEAD OF

"Violent Communities,"
"Bad/Disadvantaged Communities"

USE TERMS LIKE

"Communities that Experience
High Rates of Violence"



INSTEAD OF

"Drug Offenders," "Sex
Offenders," "Violent Offenders"

USE TERMS LIKE

"People Convicted of
Drug/Violent/Sex Offenses"

