

Marta Nelson is the Director of Government Strategy at the Vera Institute of Justice, where she coaches and leads state and local policy and legislative advocacy to reduce criminalization and mass incarceration. She also researches and writes about sentencing policy and sentencing reform. Prior to joining Vera, she served from 2014–2019 as the executive director of reentry and special counselor for criminal justice initiatives in the office of New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. She guided legislative and administrative changes that reduced barriers affecting people with criminal convictions and helped the state deliver comprehensive bail reform in 2019. Previous positions include the executive director of the New York City office of the Center for Employment Opportunities, an organization that helps formerly incarcerated people find and keep jobs after leaving prison and, during her previous tenure at Vera, the director of Vera demonstration projects Project Greenlight and Adolescent Portable Therapy. Marta began her public service career as prisoner rights attorney at the Legal Aid Society of New York following her time with a private law firm and a judicial clerkship. She has a JD from the University of Michigan Law School and a BA in religious studies from Brown University.