



Source: Courtesy of Kristin M. Curtis

CAREERS AND RESEARCH

**Kristin M. Curtis, MA, Senior Research Program Coordinator,
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Kristin Curtis graduated with a master's degree in criminal justice from Rutgers University–Camden in 2010. While a graduate student, she worked on a nationwide research project examining policy-maker and practitioner perspectives on sex offender laws, and this experience convinced her that pursuing a career in research was the best fit for her interests and talents. She secured a position at the Walter Rand Institute (WRI) as a graduate project assistant and worked on statewide prisoner reentry studies. Kristin has quickly moved up the ranks at the WRI and in the process has worked on a myriad of criminal justice projects. Her research assignments require varied methodological approaches, including interviews, focus groups, surveys, network analysis, regression models, and geographic information systems (GIS).

One feature of working at WRI that Kristin truly values is the fact that she can participate in other areas of study outside the criminal justice realm. For instance, she has worked on projects that examine the impact of social service organization collaboration on child well-being, financial stability of families, and relationships between children and their caregivers. These projects involve the evaluation of collaborations among social service organizations in multiple New Jersey counties and employ both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Kristin has been at WRI for eight years and still enjoys her position as each day presents new challenges and different tasks, including data collection and analysis, finalizing reports, writing grant proposals for potential new projects, and supervising graduate students.

Kristin has advice for students interested in careers conducting research or using research results:

Locate faculty who engage in research in your areas of interest. Even if you are unsure what your primary research areas are, working on a research project allows you to gain exposure to different research methodologies and techniques (i.e., quantitative and qualitative). You might find you enjoy research and pick up conference presentations and academic publications along the way. Remember, college is an opportunity to explore the different career choices in the world, so take advantage of this.