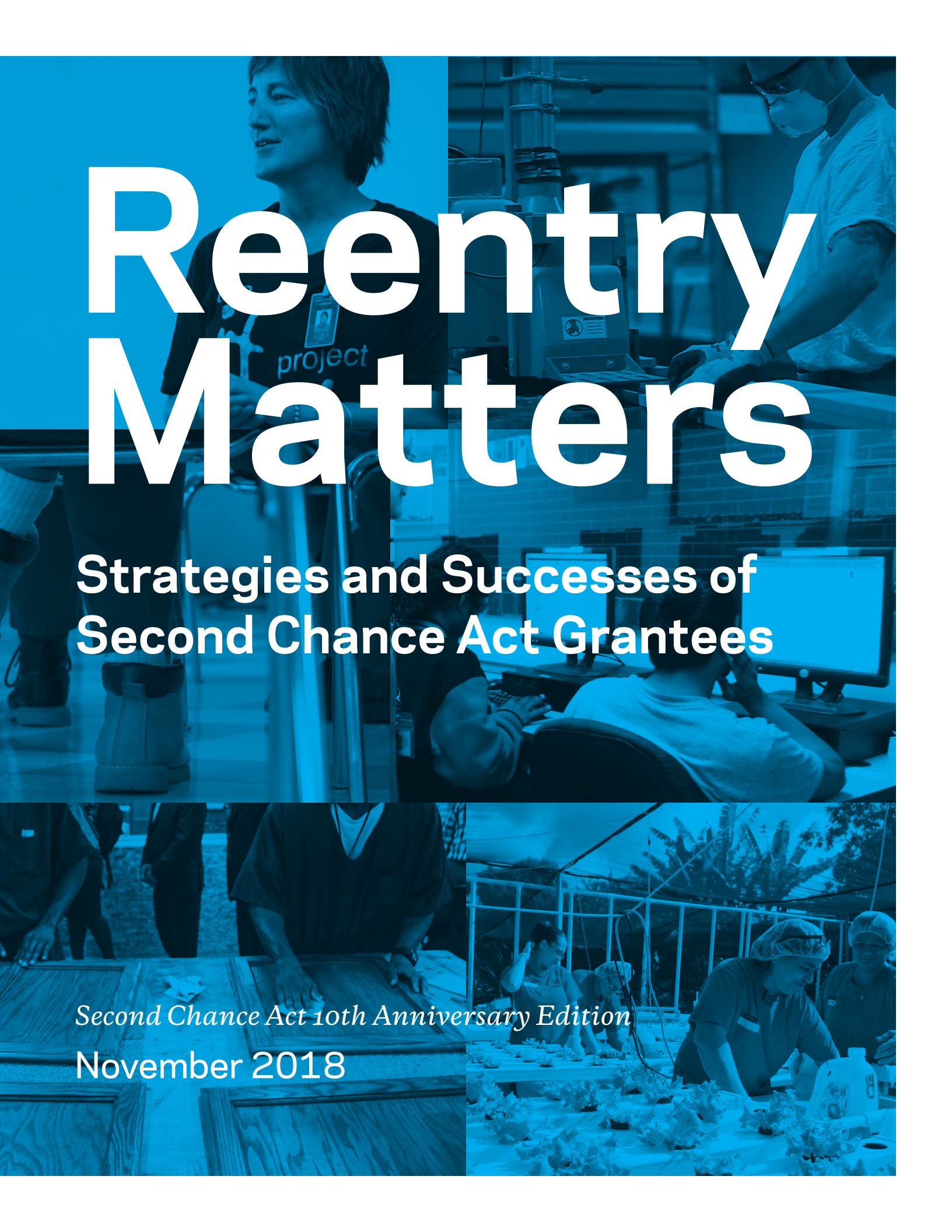




Reentry Matters

Strategies and Successes of
Second Chance Act Grantees

Second Chance Act 10th Anniversary Edition
November 2018

INTRODUCTION

After years of developments in thinking about the purpose and impact of incarceration, the concept of successful reentry has become a critical aspect of correctional missions to improve public safety and is now deeply entrenched in criminal justice policy and practice. Along with that shift in thinking has come dramatic change in what reentry looks like on the ground, as organizations and jurisdictions around the country apply both new and tested methods of responding to people in the criminal justice system and preparing them to return to their communities. Many of these organizations and jurisdictions have received funding to translate reentry philosophy into practice through the landmark Second Chance Act (SCA), which was signed into law in 2008.

Enacted with bipartisan support, SCA helps state, local, and tribal governments and nonprofit organizations in their work to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes among people who have been in the criminal justice system. Since its passage 10 years ago, SCA has supported more than 900 grants for adult and youth reentry programs, as well as systemwide improvements to help jurisdictions better address the needs of people who are incarcerated.

This brief highlights areas vital to successful reentry and offers examples of how SCA grantees have addressed these issues among the people they serve. The practices used by these programs reflect a growing body of research that shows that targeting people who have a medium to high risk of reoffending and tailoring services to meet certain needs has the greatest impact on lowering rates of recidivism.

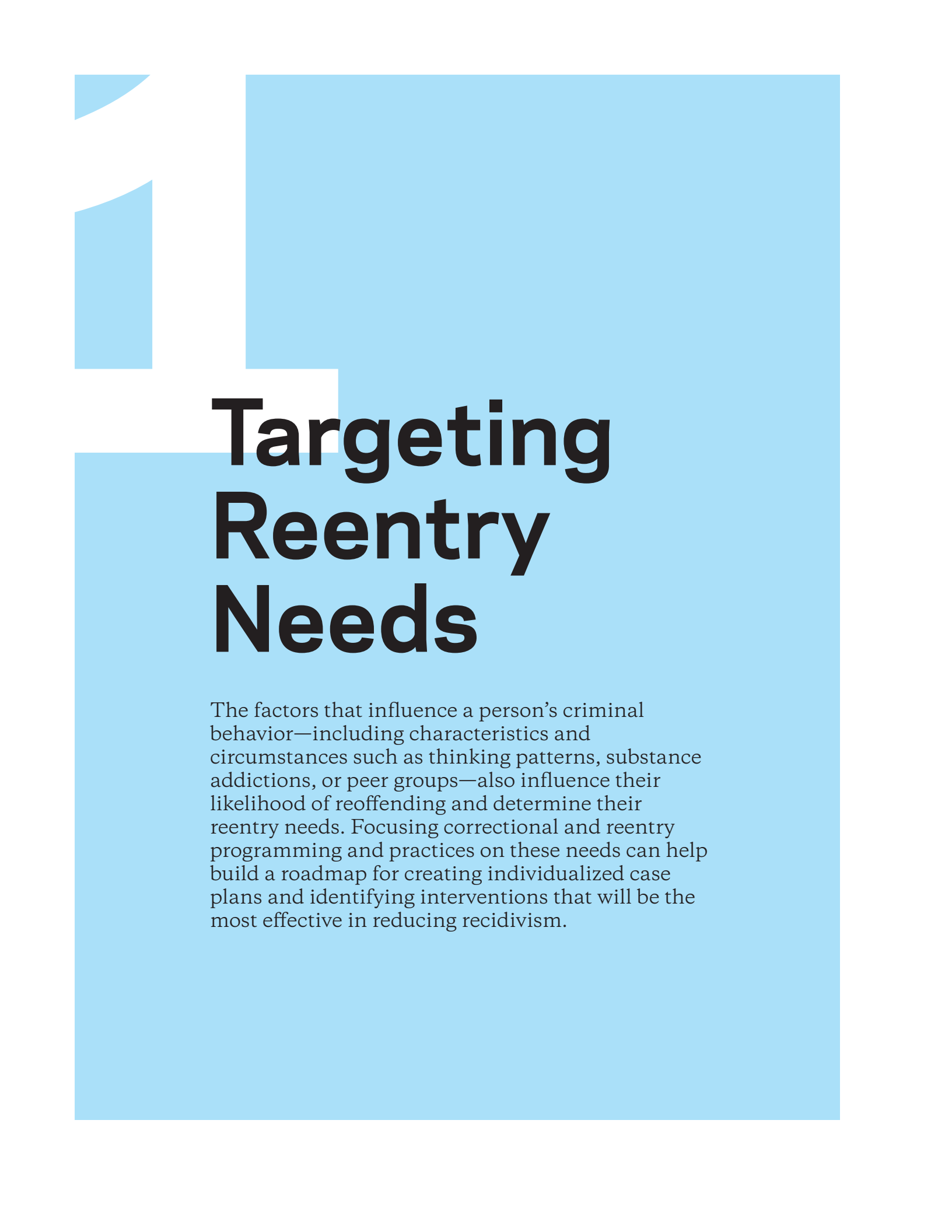
Contents

1. TARGETING REENTRY NEEDS 2

2. TAILORING APPROACHES FOR SPECIFIC POPULATIONS 11

3. MAKING COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS 20

NOTES 22



Targeting Reentry Needs

The factors that influence a person's criminal behavior—including characteristics and circumstances such as thinking patterns, substance addictions, or peer groups—also influence their likelihood of reoffending and determine their reentry needs. Focusing correctional and reentry programming and practices on these needs can help build a roadmap for creating individualized case plans and identifying interventions that will be the most effective in reducing recidivism.

Education and Employment

People often enter prison having had limited educational opportunities or attainment: a Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) study found that the majority of people incarcerated in state prisons lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.¹ Therefore, pre- and post-release educational and vocational programs for adults and youth are critical components to improving employment opportunities during reentry. A RAND Corporation study funded by an SCA grant found that, on average, people who participated in correctional education programs were 43 percent less likely to recidivate upon release and 13 percent more likely to secure employment than those who had not participated.²

Further, the stigma of incarceration and disconnection from the workforce are among the challenges people face when trying to find a job after release from prison or jail. People who have been incarcerated earn 40 percent less annually than they had earned prior to incarceration and are likely to have less upward economic mobility over time than those who have not been incarcerated.³

As part of a comprehensive reentry plan, access to education, job training in fields where there is a labor demand in the community, job readiness support, and transitional employment before and after release can help people find and sustain meaningful employment after incarceration and support their families.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Through the Michigan Department of Corrections (MI DOC) Computer Service Technician Program, men who are between 12 and 24 months from their release date are eligible to apply for training in essential skills needed for careers in the information technology field. Participants gain industry-recognized credentials by completing the Jackson College Computer Technician certificate program, where they also earn credits that can be used toward future college enrollment. In addition, the MI DOC partners with the Detroit School of Digital Technology to provide post-release services that assist program graduates with finding employment and enrolling in post-secondary education classes.

The program operates in two facilities, both of which have designated classrooms with new computers and equipment, and uses a prosocial model—a therapeutic intervention technique designed to reinforce positive social behaviors. In one facility, all participants are housed in the same unit to create a cohesive environment that allows for group study time and peer interaction, while the other location offers unlimited access to the computer classroom during school hours. Hands-on training in computer labs in both locations aims to prepare participants for taking specific technical exams upon completion of their pre-release college courses.

Due to the success of the program thus far, the MI DOC is developing a new vocational trade program that will incorporate the Computer Service Technician Program, as well as a computer coding component, in a third facility. The MI DOC will be recruiting additional participants from facilities across the state to provide even more people with opportunities that aid in successful reentry.

AS OF MAY 2018, 78 program participants had been released from prison; 59 had been back in their communities for at least 6 months. At that time, none of the 78 released participants had returned to prison due to new crimes, 35 were employed, and 35 who were still seeking employment were assigned case managers through the Detroit School of Digital Technology.⁴

UTEC (LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS)

A nonprofit organization that focuses on social and economic success for young adults, UTEC serves people ages 17 to 25 who have had serious criminal or gang involvement by providing intensive programming, including paid employment and mentoring that focuses on establishing sustained relationships with caring adults. UTEC also offers workshops for eligible young adults on a variety of topics, from career exploration to personal development to civic engagement in the community. Transitional coaches work with participants to help them with behavioral health needs through services such as crisis intervention and family conflict mediation. Coaches also encourage participation in educational programming in order to equip young adults with the skills and resilience needed to maintain stable employment and avoid further criminal activity.

UTEC's Streetworker mentoring program provides in-reach to adult and juvenile correctional facilities followed by post-release support, which begins with picking up participants on the day they are released—a seemingly simple step that helps establish a path to success from the very start of the reentry process. Young adults who choose to move forward with the program once they are back in the community are then paired with a transitional coach and gain access to employment through UTEC. UTEC offers wage-earning employment and training opportunities in its café, mattress recycling facility, culinary department, and woodshop, where participants manufacture products such as cutting boards that are sold at a local Whole Foods Market. Engaging with this hands-on training helps young adults gain essential skills that can increase their likelihood of finding well-paying jobs in the future.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

The Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) collaborates with state education agencies to support incarcerated youth by designing, implementing, and managing comprehensive pre- and post-release workforce development and educational services. One aspect of this effort is an education advocacy training for probation officers to help safeguard the rights of youth on probation in education settings, ensure that they are not removed from school before other remedial actions have been explored, and prevent them from being referred back to the justice system unnecessarily. The training focuses on (1) helping probation officers acquire all of the necessary information from schools so they can properly advocate for children under their supervision; and (2) equipping them to identify when it is appropriate to bring in a formal education advocate from the public defender's office to ensure that the school complies with legal procedures related to having students who are on probation.

78%

AS OF 2017, 78 percent of young adults who completed UTEC programming were employed two years later.⁵

"I'd spent enough time in the wrong places with the wrong people. But UTEC is the right place with the right people."

— Jimmy, former UTEC participant

Housing

Finding stable affordable housing is a critical part of successful reentry, but it can be especially difficult for people who have been incarcerated. Nationally, there are more than 1,000 known laws and regulations that may affect or restrict housing access for people who have criminal records.⁶ Even without legal and regulatory restrictions, a spotty employment or rental history can negatively impact housing applications, and many landlords, property managers, and public housing authorities reject applicants who have criminal records. Additionally, returning to one's family home may be impossible due to strained relationships or a fear of going back to the same neighborhoods and social networks in which crimes had occurred.⁷ Approximately 10 percent of people entering state and federal prisons have recently been homeless, and at least the same percentage of those who leave prisons are homeless for some period of time after release.⁸ Research suggests that if a person is not able to find stable housing upon release, he or she has a much higher risk of recidivism.⁹

To help provide a foundation for successful reentry in the community, corrections agencies, community-based service providers, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations can work in partnership to offer housing referrals and models that are available for the reentry population, including Housing First,¹⁰ permanent supportive housing,¹¹ and rapid re-housing.¹²

"[Staff] care about the people; that's their bottom line. And when they see someone who's been homeless for 20 years get into their own apartment in about 65 days and be happy and successful, they're hooked. It's experiential."

— Tom Litwicki, chief executive officer of Old Pueblo Community Services

OLD PUEBLO COMMUNITY SERVICES (TUCSON, ARIZONA)

Old Pueblo Community Services (OPCS) offers an array of reentry and housing services for people who are assessed as having a moderate to high risk of recidivism, are homeless upon release from select Arizona Department of Corrections facilities, and have substance addictions. OPCS's One Step at a Time (OSAT) program pairs participants with mentors who help connect them to services, including OPCS-operated sober housing, affordable housing, substance addiction counseling, and veterans' services. OPCS also has partnerships with Veterans' Affairs, Medicaid, local hospitals, and the Pima County health department, which further help in delivering support to this population. To better serve the community, OPCS began prioritizing Housing First and permanent supportive housing interventions over more short-term or limited housing assistance and added assisted housing units in order to reach even more people.

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS

From 2013 to 2016, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Division of Housing provided reentry services and housing placement for people with co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions through its Colorado Second Chance Housing and Reentry Program (C-SCHARP). The program was a partnership between the DOLA, the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC), and three community mental health centers. Participants started receiving evidence-based treatment services three to six months before release, and case managers from the DOC collaborated with a C-SCHARP transitional team to link participants to housing and community-based services upon reentry. Using a Housing First model, C-SCHARP worked to move participants into permanent housing as soon as possible upon release.

C-SCHARP's community mental health centers used a Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (F-ACT) model to provide wraparound support. As soon as they were released—and even before release, when possible—participants met with an F-ACT team to discuss a reentry plan based on their individual needs. F-ACT teams continued working with participants who had serious mental illnesses to provide the same level of care they would receive in an inpatient setting, while allowing for more independent living. Offering 24/7 support, F-ACT team members worked together to help participants with services that included substance addiction treatment, mental illness treatment, employment services, and health care, in addition to housing support. The DOLA has since expanded on the foundation of C-SCHARP with statewide programming that offers permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing for reentry.

AN EVALUATION OF OSAT

compared recidivism (defined as returns to prison for new crimes) at 12 months after release among program participants and people released from Arizona prisons with similar risk levels who did not participate in the program. Of the 73 participants who had been out of prison for at least 12 months as of March 2017, only 6 people (8 percent) had recidivated during that time, while recidivism among non-program participants was estimated to be as much as 16.6 percent¹³—a 50-percent difference in recidivism rate.

ACCORDING TO THE MENTAL HEALTH CENTER OF DENVER'S study of people who participated in C-SCHARP between 2014 and 2016, more than half of participants had maintained subsidized, independent housing during that time period. The three-year recidivism rate for participants who successfully completed the program was 25 percent, as compared to data from the Colorado DOC, which showed a three-year recidivism rate of 56.4 percent for people with co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions who did not participate in the program.¹⁴

Treatment for Substance Addictions and Mental Illnesses

Compared to the general population, a disproportionate number of people in the nation's criminal justice system struggle with mental illnesses and/or substance addictions. A 2012 study, for example, found that people in U.S. prisons and jails are three to five times more likely to experience serious psychological distress than the total adult general population,¹⁵ while a 2009 study found that more than half of the people in state prisons and two-thirds of people in jail met the criteria for "drug dependence or abuse."¹⁶ And these populations often overlap: up to 11 percent of the prison population have co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions.¹⁷ Furthermore, people who have mental illnesses are almost twice as likely to be reincarcerated for parole violations within one year of release than those who do not have a mental illness.¹⁸

Using appropriate and validated screening and assessment tools to inform supervision and services; providing evidence-based treatment within facilities; and increasing access to community-based treatment and continuity of care can help ensure that people receive the help they need to promote recovery and have a healthy transition back to the community once released from prison or jail.

DOUGLAS COUNTY, NEBRASKA, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND THE DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

As part of reentry services offered through the Douglas County Department of Corrections, and with an emphasis on client engagement and the use of evidence-based programming, the Matrix Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) provides treatment for people who have co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions. These comprehensive services include access to individual and group therapy, family and social support interventions, intensive case management, and relapse-prevention services. IOP relies on a strong collaboration between behavioral health and corrections agencies and sustains its operation through a variety of funding streams, including fees paid by people on probation; a state Medicaid waiver for substance addiction services; county funds; and state behavioral health funds via a contract with the state's regional authority.

IOP includes 10 weeks of structured programming and 26 to 36 weeks of case management and continuing care. IOP counselors and case managers facilitate a voluntary "coffee chat" for program graduates at a local coffee shop once a week to talk through the struggles and successes they are experiencing in their recovery processes. This peer support helps the graduates tackle challenges they may face as they reintegrate into the community.

90%

SO FAR, 130 PEOPLE have graduated from IOP, with graduation ceremonies often taking place weekly. To accommodate more participants, IOP staff expanded the program in 2017 to serve one group of participants during the day and another at night. As of June 2018, 90 percent of those receiving six months of post-release case management services had not recidivated while in the program.¹⁹

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

Through a collaboration between the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the Capital Area Human Services District, the Metropolitan Human Services District, and the Council on Alcohol and Drug Addiction of New Orleans, the New Beginnings program provided evidence-based treatment for co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions, as well as Motivational Enhancement and cognitive behavioral therapies, from 2014 to 2016. Treatment and services began at least three months before release and continued for eight months after release.

New Beginnings counselors used a risk and needs assessment tool to determine what should be prioritized in each participant's programming and worked to tailor case management to provide effective interventions. Transition teams also helped facilitate communication between corrections staff and community-based treatment providers to offer details about each participant's treatment plan, giving probation and parole officers a baseline understanding of what services the people under their supervision needed to succeed when reentering the community.

NEW BEGINNINGS was recognized for its achievements through a 2017 Innovation in Corrections Award from the American Correctional Association. The New Beginnings program design is now being used to address opioid addiction in Louisiana.

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Based on a first-of-its-kind partnership among multiple Mississippi agencies, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (MDMH) Co-Occurring Reentry Program works with the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) to provide pre- and post-release treatment and recovery support for people who are returning to Hinds County from MDOC facilities, have co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions, and are assessed as having a medium to high risk of recidivism. The key to the program is a multidisciplinary team that integrates correctional and behavioral health services to improve participant outcomes. Medication management, recovery support services, treatment sessions, and MDOC supervision meetings are all located at Hinds Behavioral Health Services (HBHS), a community mental health center and partner on the program, to minimize transportation issues and increase retention. HBHS also works in partnership with MDMH to link program participants with housing, medical, vocational/educational, and faith-based services. In particular, the program works to increase the availability of permanent supportive housing for people who have mental health needs and are experiencing chronic homelessness. The program uses electronic information sharing across multiple reporting platforms to measure and evaluate program and participant outcomes.

The Co-Occurring Reentry Program has also initiated system-level change by implementing standardized screening for co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions for everyone who comes into the state prison system, and training probation and parole agents in Thinking for a Change (T4C). T4C is an evidence-based cognitive behavioral curriculum that involves teaching people under supervision skills aimed at decreasing their risk of recidivism. The department's goal is to achieve multi-agency buy-in for developing risk and needs assessment-informed reentry plans.

Family Support

More than half of the people who are incarcerated in prisons and jails are also parents of minor children. An estimated 2.7 million children in the U.S. have a parent in prison or jail—1 in every 28 children.²⁰ They and other family members can face financial difficulties, housing instability, loss of emotional support and guidance, and social stigma as a consequence of having a loved one in prison. These challenges often have significant impacts on children of incarcerated parents, who have an increased risk of poor school performance,²¹ substance addiction, and mental health needs.²²

Strong family relationships are also an essential part of reentry because people returning to their communities often rely on relatives for help with housing, transportation, and finances, in addition to emotional support.²³ Programs that focus on cultivating these relationships can improve outcomes for both incarcerated people and their families by engaging families in the reentry process and providing them with pre- and post-release services. For parents specifically, these services may include parenting workshops and peer support, financial literacy classes, and organized family visits to correctional facilities.

THE UP CENTER (NORFOLK, VIRGINIA)

The Up Center's Strengthening Fathers program provides pre-release reentry services that aim to improve outcomes for young fathers ages 16 to 24. The program offers parenting workshops, case management services, individual counseling, and family reunification assistance to help promote healthy relationships and enhance family engagement. The program also assists with transportation for children to visit their fathers before release and, with participants' permission, staff can work with participants' families to engage them in case planning.

As participants enter the post-release phase of the program, they are matched with a mentor and offered housing, education, and workforce training services to aid in the reentry process. In addition, through a partnership with the Norfolk Division of Child Support Enforcement, the program offers guidance and connections to community resources to help participants overcome barriers to paying child support. Strengthening Fathers staff also maintain a strong relationship with the county probation and parole agency, which provides supervision aimed at helping those under their care achieve the goals identified in their transition plans. This collaboration further enhances participants' chances for successful program completion.

THE STRENGTHENING FATHERS PROGRAM administers *On My Shoulders*²⁴ and *Within My Reach*²⁵—research-based programs aimed at fostering healthy relationships through stress management techniques, communication skills, and cultivating gratitude. Of those who successfully completed the program from 2012 to 2016, 95 percent exhibited increased knowledge of effective parenting skills and 96 percent showed an increase in parental involvement. In addition, 76 percent had obtained a digital literacy certificate and/or GED, and 56 percent obtained full-time unsubsidized employment, while another 24 percent obtained part-time employment.

INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Next Step 2 Healthy Families (NS2HF) program—a partnership between Indiana State University (ISU) and the Next Step Foundation Inc., a faith-based nonprofit organization—targets young mothers ages 18 to 24 who are incarcerated in one of six rural county jails. NS2HF connects these women with pre-release programming designed to support them in reuniting with their children after incarceration. NS2HF uses a parenting curriculum and one-on-one mentoring as well as an assessment tool that employs a gender-responsive method of collecting initial data on participant service needs. Additionally, NS2HF provides gender-specific, coordinated reentry case planning and services whereby participants learn about child health and development, how to use positive reinforcement in parenting, skills for establishing healthy co-parenting relationships, and financial literacy.

The program is particularly strong due to its use of peer mentorship. Jail commanders at the six participating county jails have permitted peer mentors to enter the facilities, even though many of those mentors have felony criminal records. NS2HF staff found that participants relate best to mentors who are also young mothers and have had similar experiences of losing custody of their children, entering into recovery, navigating services, and restoring relationships with their children. Due to the positive impact of these supportive one-on-one relationships, many of the women currently in the program plan to enroll in the mentoring certification process to become peer mentors themselves. Mentors, participants, and participants' children also meet monthly for activities that promote parental involvement and give participants the opportunity to practice parenting skill-building in real time with input from their mentors.

96

PARTICIPANTS
ENROLLED

BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND JUNE 30, 2018, NS2HF's peak enrollment was 96 participants. Of those, only five had been placed on inactive status because of failure to make contact with their mentors upon release, but two of those women subsequently returned to the program.²⁶ NS2HF uses virtual matching software, which includes a smartphone app that pairs volunteer mentors and participants. The software also functions as a database for mentor-participant interactions and as a communication tool that allows the program manager to check in regularly with volunteer mentors.

NS2HF Peer Mentor Coordinator Christy Crowder (pictured with her son) is in long-term recovery from an opioid addiction and is a certified addiction peer recovery coach. Crowder mentors 20 of the program's young mothers herself in addition to training and supporting the other peer mentors on staff.



Photo courtesy of Christy Crowder



Tailoring Approaches for Specific Populations

In addition to recognizing individual needs, programs can also tailor services based on common needs among population groups. Correctional and reentry interventions are more effective at reducing recidivism when they account for characteristics such as the age, race, ethnicity, gender, or geographic location of a target population.²⁷

Youth and Young Adults

Research on adolescent development shows that youth are more likely than adults to engage in risky behaviors, are heavily swayed by peer influences, and fail to account for the long-term consequences of their decisions. Additionally, youth in the juvenile justice system often have significant needs that span multiple service systems, such as child welfare, education, mental health, and substance use.²⁸ Young adults ages 18 to 24 also have distinct developmental needs and may be involved in either the juvenile or adult criminal justice system. Because they account for a disproportionately large share of arrests, violent crimes, and recidivism, the young adult population is an important focus for both systems.²⁹

To reduce reoffending and improve other outcomes—such as prospects for earning a high school diploma or finding steady employment—programs aimed at youth and young adults in the justice system should employ a coordinated approach across service systems, adopt evidence-based practices and programs shown to yield positive results for this population, and tailor strategies to reflect developmental needs.

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION AND CORRECTION

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) is working to lower the risk of reoffending for young adults ages 18 to 24 at a moderate to high risk of recidivism—as determined by the Ohio Risk Assessment System, a validated tool—by piloting a program that addresses the distinct needs of this population. The Justice Involved Young Adults Initiative (JIYAI) is aimed at young adults on probation and parole in four Ohio counties and employs supervision officers who are specially trained in a curriculum focused on young adults. The curriculum includes training in young adult brain development, trauma-informed care, cognitive programming to develop problem-solving and social skills, motivational interviewing, and cognitive behavioral interventions for people seeking employment.

Through this pilot, ODRC staff have been collecting data on the effectiveness of using text messages, pre-release prison in-reach, enhanced community contact, and other supervision techniques. The ODRC's research partner, Betagov, will assist with data analysis, problem assessment, strategy development, monitoring, and performance evaluation. Three of the pilot counties are in a partnership with the Center for Employment Opportunities, where young adults are referred for cognitive behavioral intervention, job coaching, and job placement. The fourth county is incorporating a mentorship program for the JIYAI participants.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has worked to expand reentry services and initiate comprehensive, sustainable reforms across the state to help ensure the successful reentry of youth in their care. To help achieve these goals, the DJJ established a formal youth reentry task force, which has grown to include more than 70 member organizations and more than 100 individual members representing a diverse group of youth-serving agencies and community stakeholders. The task force is divided into subgroups based on key areas that impact recidivism and positive youth outcomes, such as family and living arrangements, parenthood, peer groups, behavioral health and substance addiction, vocational training and employment, and education.

The task force has also engaged other government agencies to advance its goal of improving reentry outcomes, including by working to restore Medicaid benefits for youth leaving incarceration within a few days of release, rather than the standard two to three months. The DJJ built a map and database of community resources with more than 1,500 entries, which enables youth and their families to search for reentry services listed by county, zip code, and service type. DJJ Office of Reentry Services staff can also use the map to find services to incorporate into transition plans for youth in their care.

JENNIFER DEWEESE, whose son was in DJJ custody for a month for stealing a neighbor's car, was invited to serve on the task force as a parent representative. Based on her experience with the DJJ, DeWeese recommends that other states follow Georgia's example and involve parents of youth who are incarcerated in efforts to improve the juvenile justice system. "So many government entities are perceived to be insular and not willing to accept information from the outside," DeWeese said. "I found DJJ [to be] just the opposite."

"Most of us have not experienced having a child in detention ... [But DeWeese is] a subject-matter expert on that ... She has devoted her time to helping us think through some of the things that we need to do with our youth in custody ... Her statements add a lot of value to the discussion."

- B. Keith Jones, a task force leader and director of the Georgia DJJ's Office of Reentry Services

Women

As a small proportion of the total correctional population, women often find that correctional and reentry programs are not created and delivered with their needs in mind. Yet women face a distinct set of issues, including high rates of substance addiction, mental illness, victimization, and trauma,³⁰ and women in jails are the fastest growing correctional population.³¹ According to a BJS study of people in prisons and jails, women were more likely than men to have had a history or shown symptoms of a mental illness.³² Women accounted for 25 percent of the people on probation and 13 percent of people on parole at the end of 2015,³³ and women returning to their communities after incarceration may struggle to find employment, reach financial stability, and maintain recovery, often while working to retain custody of children.

Reentry programs can focus specifically on assisting women by addressing mental illnesses and substance addictions; reinforcing parenting skills and assisting with family reunification; and offering mentoring, recovery coaches, and other supportive networks as women transition back into their communities from prison or jail.

SANTA MARIA HOSTEL (HOUSTON, TEXAS)

The Path to Recovery program, part of the multi-site Santa Maria Hostel, provides substance addiction treatment and supportive housing to women in Harris County, Texas, who are returning to the community after incarceration and have been assessed as having a moderate to high risk of recidivism. The program assigns peer mentors to women who are pregnant or parenting minor children and have histories of trauma and co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions. Participants receive pre-release mentoring for three months along with transitional services and post-release mentoring for six months based on individual need.

Working closely with the county sheriff's office, the local drug court, and other local programs, agencies, and criminal justice professionals, Santa Maria Hostel places Path to Recovery participants in one of its specialized residential facilities for a period of up to a year, often with their young children. These facilities provide comprehensive programming that includes educational and vocational services, life skills training, and more. When women leave the Santa Maria facilities, recovery coaches continue to provide the net of support they need to maintain their recovery and stay in their community.



82%

BETWEEN 2013 AND 2015, Santa Maria Hostel reported that 82 percent of Path to Recovery program participants had no record of reoffending of any kind.³⁴

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Seattle Police Department (SPD), in partnership with the IF Project initiative, operates a gender-responsive reentry program with comprehensive services for women returning to King County, Washington, from the Washington Corrections Center for Women.

The program aims to develop personalized reentry plans for women, including assistance with accessing substance addiction treatment and employment services. Named for its founding question—“if there was something someone could have said or done that would have changed the path that led you here, what would it have been?”—the IF Project is a collaboration among law enforcement, community members, and people who are currently and formerly incarcerated that encourages participants to share firsthand experiences of incarceration through writing and video diaries.

SPD and the IF Project have also partnered to create a women’s reentry center as an outgrowth of the IF Project based on its core principles of using self-inventory to build awareness and facilitate healing. The goal of the reentry center is to support women as they transition back into the community through writing workshops as well as a mentoring program and a health and wellness curriculum aimed at reducing recidivism.

“Being in a women’s prison is very different than being in a men’s prison. When they reenter society, many of these women are being taken out of a supportive family living environment . . . We want the reentry center to be a place where they can come back together and say, ‘We all have something in common; we’ve all been to prison.’ That peer-to-peer connection starts empowering them and lets them help each other create a safe place where they can have the conversations they can’t have with the outside world.”

— SPD Detective Kim Bogucki



Photo credit: Kathlyn Horan, TinFish Films

Tribal Communities

Reentering tribal communities from prison or jail presents unique challenges because of the ways in which local, state, federal, and tribal criminal justice and social service systems intersect, which is different for each tribal government and state. Tribal communities are often underserved and have high levels of need, with high rates of victimization³⁵ and unemployment³⁶ and scarce housing.³⁷ Additionally, even though they represent a small proportion of people in jails, from 1999 to 2014 the number of American Indians and Alaska Natives incarcerated in county and city jails increased by nearly 90 percent.³⁸ Despite this, culturally competent services are rarely available in correctional facilities.³⁹

Jurisdictions and service systems can work together to build strong relationships and provide evidence-based, culturally competent services to help support Native Americans who are returning from prison or jail to tribal lands or other communities.

ALASKA NATIVE JUSTICE CENTER

The Alaska Native Justice Center (ANJC)—a tribal nonprofit organization—serves Alaska Native people in the Anchorage area by working to integrate culturally relevant practices into its reentry programs and services. Before release, participants receive individualized case management and transition planning services, employment and workforce assistance, and housing assistance. Case management continues after release, and other services include Moral Reconciliation Therapy; transitional mentoring and peer-to-peer support groups; treatment for co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions; and vocational training.

To further their work, ANJC collaborated closely with the Alaska Department of Corrections to create a cultural competency training program for corrections officers. As a member of the Alaska Native System of Care, a group of Native nonprofit organizations that works together to align resources, ANJC also connects with local health care providers who specialize in working with the Alaska Native population to facilitate treatment services that are culturally aware and responsive.

IN ANJC'S 2018 FISCAL YEAR, all reentry programming participants completed 40 hours of volunteer service that they felt would contribute to their community.⁴⁰

CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES (MONTANA)

The Flathead Reservation Reentry Program (FRRP) serves members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes or other federally recognized tribes who are returning to the Flathead Reservation in Montana from a correctional facility and have co-occurring mental illnesses and substance addictions. In conjunction with the Tribal Defenders Office, FRRP provides comprehensive pre-release services, including mental illness treatment, case management, and legal advocacy and aid. Behavioral health considerations are integrated into the sentencing, pre-release, and post-release case management and reentry processes. Further, program staff are incorporating two scales designed to measure historical trauma among Native peoples—the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale—into their risk and needs assessments.

Program graduates emphasize the significance of the help they have received through FRRP—from guidance in securing financial aid for college, to help with forms during hospital stays—in their continued reentry success, and staff work to build a sense of trust and community so that participants have a greater chance of complying with the requirements of community supervision and thereby lowering their overall risk of recidivism.

“[The program has helped me] with completing school, being compliant with probation, being honest.”

— Jesse, program graduate who earned a degree in highway construction training from Salish Kootenai College

“The people that work here really do care about our clients. But the other thing that’s really important to know is the resilience of our clients ... They talk about the help that they got from us, but I know that they [have overcome] incredible barriers ... probably barriers I wouldn’t have been able to get over. So there’s a lot to be said for them and their character.”

— Ann Miller, managing attorney,
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Defenders Office

Rural Jurisdictions

In rural jurisdictions, typical reentry obstacles are compounded by fewer resources and limited public transportation. In a survey of adult community supervision agency representatives in rural areas, 91 percent of respondents said that trains were not available in their area, while 59 percent said that buses were not accessible to the people they serve. According to 78 percent of respondents, stable housing is extremely difficult to secure.⁴¹ Access to employment is another significant hurdle, whether due to there being fewer businesses in remote areas or a decline in industries that have traditionally been found in rural counties.⁴² Many rural counties must partner with nearby counties to share resources and service providers, and people returning to rural areas after incarceration are often forced to drive for hours to receive reentry services. The struggle to reach programming can impact people's ability to comply with the required conditions of community supervision or, for those who have substance addictions or mental illnesses, distance from treatment can impact recovery.

To address these challenges, reentry programs in rural communities can partner with local businesses to enhance job opportunities and coordinate with schools to help people earn credentials while they are still incarcerated. In addition, programs can offer assistance with transportation, as well as tailor services to offer online accessibility when possible.

"The reentry program saved my life. When I was in jail, they put me on the right path and they got me focused on why I wanted to change. They kept me focused on getting back to my kids and my family."

— Middle Tennessee Rural Reentry program graduate Haley George, who became a quality auditor at local manufacturing plant JSP International after earning a certificate in injection molding



Photo credit: Allen Houston, CSG Justice Center

FRANKLIN COUNTY, TENNESSEE, SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

The Middle Tennessee Rural Reentry (MTRR) Program works to help people in the Franklin County jail find employment after release by offering pre-release training programs and creating close partnerships with local businesses. Because the closest technical school is approximately 50 miles away from the jail (making transporting people to the site cost-prohibitive) and technical colleges in the area have 6- to 12-month waiting lists for enrollment, access to vocational programming is limited. To counter these hurdles, MTRR facilitates job opportunities for participants by connecting them with local employers, such as a nearby car-part manufacturing plant. The program also provides comprehensive services to increase participants' chances of success after incarceration. Services include Moral Reconciliation Therapy; job-readiness training, including interviewing tips and how to prepare a résumé; parenting classes; substance addiction and mental illness treatment; and classes where participants earn industry and community college certificates.

WORKFORCE CONNECTIONS INC. (LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN)

Workforce Connections Inc. provides mentoring services for men and women returning from local jails and state prisons to a rural and semi-rural area in western Wisconsin. This population is spread out over more than 6,000 square miles, making access to crucial reentry resources significantly more difficult than it is in more populous urban areas with more transportation options. In response to this challenge, the program moved mentor training online to make participation easier for people who might not be able to easily travel from more rural areas to attend classes in person. To keep people spread out across a large distance engaged over time, Workforce Connections Inc. uses social media. In particular, the program uses a closed Facebook group administered by staff to allow mentors, participants, and staff to share success stories, schedule events, and post other helpful information. Because the program's target population is often transient in nature and can change addresses or phone numbers frequently, having easy access to an online community helps them stay committed to the program.

OF THE 54 MTRR PARTICIPANTS
who entered the program and
were released from jail between
January 2016 and June 2017,
approximately 80 percent were not
rearrested during that period.⁴³



Making Comprehensive Systems Improvements

In addition to providing services, SCA grantees also engage in system-wide strategic planning and collaboration to examine and improve practices, build staff capacity, and better prioritize resources to have the greatest impact on recidivism. Unlike grants that support programming for a small subset of the population, statewide programs can empower agency administrators to impact recidivism through sustainable policy and procedural changes, cultivate their workforces, and establish their states as national models of innovation and interagency collaboration.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE STATE OF IOWA AND THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

The Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) brings together representatives from the governor's office, state policymakers, and corrections leaders to set measurable systemwide recidivism-reduction goals and to develop practical, data-driven plans to achieve those goals. In 2015, IDOC leaders partnered with the Iowa Department of Health Services to develop strong connections between prisons, community supervision agencies, and community-based mental health and substance addiction service providers. The two agencies jointly crafted a curriculum to help corrections staff and service providers better understand the challenges faced by people reentering their communities after incarceration and to learn the language of each other's systems and how they operate. In an effort to incorporate the goal of recidivism reduction into the day-to-day operations of its staff, the IDOC also trains officers in core correctional practices such that they take into consideration each person's assessed risk and needs.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has implemented a statewide reentry strategic plan aimed at improving outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system by developing a reentry and intervention manual for how best to serve youth who are incarcerated or under parole supervision in Virginia. The manual provides guidance for all staff who are involved in the assessment, treatment, transition, and reentry of youth who are or have been in DJJ facilities, including personnel involved in central admission and placement; juvenile correctional centers; the court service unit's division of education; health services; and behavioral services and reentry units. The DJJ trained staff throughout the state on how to use the manual and is working to develop performance measures that will be used to monitor staff adherence to the manual's policies and procedures.

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

The Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) has developed a statewide, cross-disciplinary strategic plan that focuses resources on education and wraparound support for people released from prison who are at the highest risk of recidivism as determined by a validated risk and needs assessment tool. The NDOC director worked with the governor to mandate that their department, the Division of Parole and Probation, and the Department of Human Services all use the same assessment when working to target the risk and needs of the reentry population. This common assessment usage enhances efficiency by fostering more timely and accurate communication between the NDOC and community-based supervision and service providers. The department also created a reentry resource guidebook for case managers and community supervision staff to consult as they serve the state's reentry population. The guidebook lists community-based resources organized by all 17 counties in Nevada, covering needs from clothing to employment services and transportation, in addition to treatment services.

TRAINING PROVIDED THROUGH IOWA'S Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction (SRR) program has resulted in widespread adoption of data-driven practices. Staff choose to override risk and needs assessments less than 10 percent of the time, meaning that they strictly adhere to data-driven practices in the vast majority of cases.⁴⁴

FACING A FEMALE PRISON INCARCERATION RATE that is 43 percent higher than the national average,⁴⁵ NDOC leaders engaged consultants in 2018 to conduct the Women's Institutional Needs and Strengths (WINS) Agency Assessment at the state's only women's prison. The resulting assessment report offers recommendations for the facility to enhance its implementation of evidence-based, gender-responsive practices as part of Nevada's statewide initiative to reduce recidivism.

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The National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) was established in 2008 by the Second Chance Act (Public Law 110-199) and is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. The NRRC provides education, training, and technical assistance to state and local governments, tribal organizations, territories, community-based service providers, nonprofit organizations, and correctional institutions working to improve reentry. To learn more about the NRRC, visit nationalreentryresourcecenter.org.



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