

# The Second Chance Act

## Facts and Data

- Since 2009, Second Chance Act grants have been awarded to agencies and organizations in 49 states and the District of Columbia.
- Second Chance Act-funded programs have served more than 137,000 people.<sup>ix</sup>
- Of the program participants who received employment services, more than 12,000 have obtained employment since 2011.<sup>x</sup>
- Federal, state, and local corrections facilities held more than 2.2 million people at the end of 2014.<sup>xi</sup> This amounted to at least one in every 200 U.S. residents.
- It is estimated that 53,000 youth are incarcerated in juvenile detention and correctional facilities on any given day.<sup>xii</sup>
- At least 95 percent of people incarcerated in state prisons will be released back to their communities at some point.<sup>xiii</sup>
- A study of recidivism in more than 40 states found that more than 4 in 10 people released from state prisons were reincarcerated within 3 years of their release.<sup>xiv</sup>

## Federal Funding of Second Chance Act Programs

FY2009	\$25 million
FY2010	\$100 million
FY2011	\$83 million
FY2012	\$63 million
FY2013	\$67.5 million
FY2014	\$67.7 million
FY2015	\$68 million
FY2016	\$68 million

## Background

Almost all of the more than 2.2 million people incarcerated in the United States will be released at some point. Individuals returning to their communities from prison or jail have complex challenges and needs that contribute to the likelihood that they may be incarcerated again. These challenges include:

- **Mental health**—In a study of jail populations, researchers found rates of serious mental disorders that are three to six times higher than those found in the general population, affecting approximately 15 percent of men and 31 percent of women.<sup>i</sup>
- **Substance use**—A survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) found that about half of people in state and federal prisons had substance use disorders.<sup>ii</sup> In a separate study of prison and jail populations, BJS found that more than 70 percent of the people with mental disorders also had co-occurring substance use disorders.<sup>iii</sup>
- **Housing and homelessness**—A national survey found that 15 percent of people incarcerated in jail had been homeless in the year before incarceration—up to 11 times more than the estimate for the general U.S. adult population.<sup>iv</sup> Of all individuals entering prisons and jails, those with mental health disorders are twice as likely to have been homeless in the year prior.<sup>v</sup>
- **Education and employment**—Two out of five people incarcerated in prison or jail lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.<sup>vi</sup> Employment rates and earning histories of people in prisons and jails are often low as a result of limited education, physical and mental health problems, or other challenges; the stigma of having a criminal record and having been out of the workforce often exacerbate these challenges after release.<sup>vii</sup>
- **Children and families**—Approximately 2.7 million children in the United States have a parent who is incarcerated.<sup>viii</sup>

## The Second Chance Act

In April 2008, Congress passed the Second Chance Act, first-of-its-kind legislation enacted with bipartisan support and backed by a broad spectrum of leaders in law enforcement, corrections, courts, behavioral health, and other areas. The Second Chance Act represents a federal investment in strategies to reduce recidivism and increase public safety, as well as to reduce corrections costs for state and local governments. The bill authorized up to \$165 million in federal grants to state, local, and tribal government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

## About the Second Chance Act Grant Program

Since 2009, more than 700 Second Chance Act grant awards have been made to government agencies and nonprofit organizations from 49 states for reentry programs serving adults and juveniles. As of June 2015, more than 137,000 people returning to their community after incarceration have participated in these programs. Grantees provide vital services—including employment training and assistance, substance use treatment, education, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims support, and other services—to make a person's transition from prison or jail safer and more successful. The grants also support the improvement of corrections and supervision practices that aim to reduce recidivism. The Second Chance Act's grant programs are funded and administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.

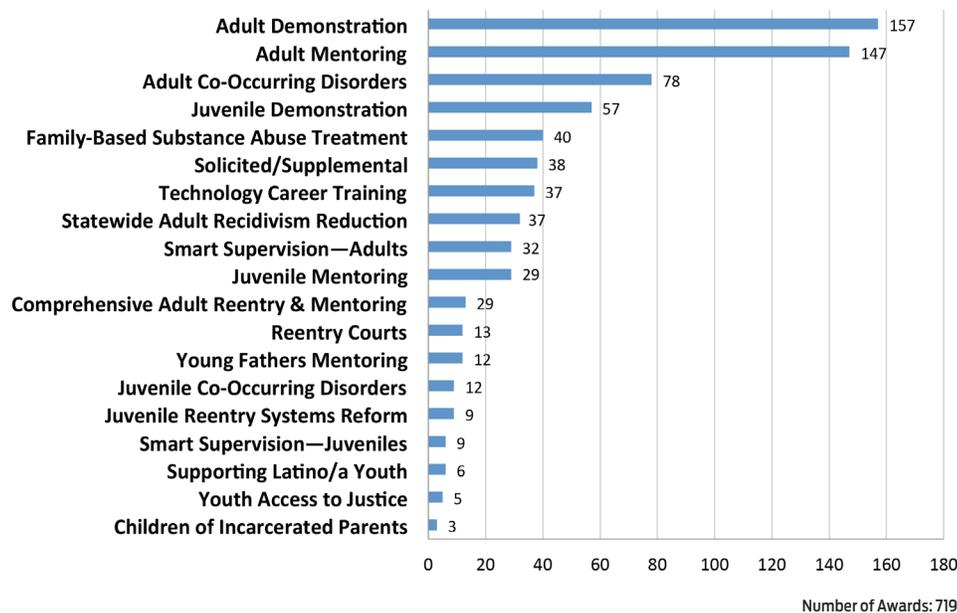
**JUSTICE CENTER**  
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS



## Second Chance Act Grantees

- The **Allegheny County (PA) Reentry Initiative** links people with service coordination, education, job readiness, treatment, family supports, and other services at least five months prior to release. Service providers assess the risk and need of every individual during his or her first 30 days in jail and collaborate with jail staff to direct individuals to needed in-jail services and treatment. The program then prepares participants for discharge and connects them with supports in the community. A recent evaluation conducted by the Urban Institute found that the program had reduced rearrest rates among participants by more than 50 percent.<sup>xv</sup>
- The **Texas Juvenile Justice Department's** Second Chance Act-funded program provides family-focused reentry services to gang-affiliated youth, ages 13 to 19. Based on assessments at intake, the agency offers comprehensive case management and a range of services based on the individual needs of each youth. According to a recent study of past program participants, approximately 80 percent had not been rearrested within 20 weeks of release, compared to 70 percent of the youth in a comparison group.
- **Washington State's Department of Social and Health Services'** Bridge to Recovery program offers integrated, evidence-based mental health and substance use disorder treatment and reentry planning for youth. The program also connects youth with community-based organizations that offer legal assistance, tutoring, gang prevention programming, mentoring, and other services. Youth may earn school credits through the program, helping them work toward their education and employment goals.
- In Tennessee, **Project Return** provides reentry services primarily related to job acquisition. Its Family Ties program is aimed at noncustodial parents who have child support obligations, providing mentoring services as well as assistance with reducing, paying, and understanding the obligations of child support. Project Return's Pathways program targets the unique needs of women involved with the justice system and offers counseling and educational opportunities. And since 2013, the agency's social enterprise, PRO Employment, has temporarily employed more than 125 men and women preparing for long-term employment.

### SECOND CHANCE ACT AWARDS BY GRANT PROGRAM



## Notes

i. Henry J. Steadman, Fred C. Osher, Pamela Clark Robbins, Brian Case, and Steven Samuels, "Prevalence of Serious Mental Illness among Jail Inmates," *Psychiatric Services* 60, no. 6 (2009): 761–765.

ii. Christopher J. Mumola and Jennifer C. Karberg, *Drug Use and Dependence, State and Federal Prisoners, 2004* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006), available at [bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/dudsfp04.pdf](https://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/dudsfp04.pdf).

iii. Doris J. James and Lauren E. Glaze, *Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006), available at [bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/mhnpjii.pdf](https://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/mhnpjii.pdf).

iv. Greg A. Greenberg and Robert A. Rosenheck, "Jail Incarceration, Homelessness, and Mental Health: A National Study," *Psychiatric Services* 59, no. 2 (2008), available at [ps.psychiatryonline.org/data/Journals/PSS/3837/08ps170.pdf](https://ps.psychiatryonline.org/data/Journals/PSS/3837/08ps170.pdf).

v. James and Glaze, *Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates*.

vi. Caroline Wolf Harlow, *Education and Correctional Populations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003), available at [bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf](https://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf).

vii. Harry J. Holzer, Steven Raphael, and Michael A. Stoll, *Employment Barriers Facing Ex-Offenders* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2003), available at [urban.org/UploadedPDF/410855\\_holzer.pdf](https://urban.org/UploadedPDF/410855_holzer.pdf).

viii. The Pew Charitable Trusts, *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility* (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010), available at [pewtrusts.org/-/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs\\_assets/2010/CollateralCosts1.pdf](https://pewtrusts.org/-/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2010/CollateralCosts1.pdf).

ix. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, "Fact Sheet on Second Chance Act Grant Program Accomplishments: October 2009–March 2015" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2015, unpublished report); U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Fact Sheet on QJJD Second Chance Act Grant Program Accomplishments: July 2009–June 2015" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2015, unpublished report).

x. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, "Fact Sheet on Second Chance Act Grant Program Accomplishments: October 2009–June 2014" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2014).

xi. Danielle Kaebler, Lauren Glaze, Anastasios Tsoutsis, and Todd Minton,

*Correctional Populations in the United States, 2014* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015), available at [bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus14.pdf](https://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus14.pdf).

xii. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement: 1997–2013" (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention), accessed September 23, 2015, available at [ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/](https://ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/).

xiii. Timothy A. Hughes and Doris James Wilson, *Reentry Trends in the United States* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2002), available at [bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/reentry.pdf](https://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/reentry.pdf).

xiv. Pew Center on the States, *State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons* (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2011), available at [pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedfiles/Pew\\_State\\_of\\_Recidivism.pdf](https://pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedfiles/Pew_State_of_Recidivism.pdf).

xv. Janeen Buck Willison, Sam G. Bieler, and KiDeuk Kim, *Evaluation of the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative Reentry Programs* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2014), available at [www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413252-Evaluation-of-the-Allegheny-County-Jail-Collaborative-Reentry-Programs.pdf](https://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/413252-Evaluation-of-the-Allegheny-County-Jail-Collaborative-Reentry-Programs.pdf).