

HOW THE STATEWIDE RECIDIVISM-REDUCTION PROGRAM CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR STATE

State policymakers everywhere are calling on their corrections directors to work with other criminal justice leaders and community-based service providers to reduce reincarceration and rearrest rates for adults leaving prison. Reentry pilot projects are invaluable vehicles to test new ideas and approaches and to demonstrate how it is possible to help people stay crime-free after they leave prison and return home. Such pilot projects, however, often advance relatively small programs that have very limited resources and support a fraction of all adults coming out of prison in need of services. These programs are also often not part of a comprehensive plan and consequently cannot have

an across-the-board impact on statewide recidivism rates that translates into hundreds, or even thousands, of fewer people returning to a state's prison system each year.

The Second Chance Act's Comprehensive Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction (SRR) Program was designed by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to address this need for broad-based, sustainable change. The program focuses on how governors, their staffs, and state corrections administrators can design and implement concrete, research-based strategies that make system-level reform possible and that yield statewide reductions in the number of people reincarcerated.

GRANTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

States that receive SRR grants are encouraged to adhere to the following principles:¹

- 1 Focus on the individuals who are most likely to recidivate based on risk/need assessments and use that information to determine the type and intensity of programming and supervision that should be provided them.
- 2 Provide appropriate services and treatment that draw on evidence-based approaches and ensure high-quality service delivery.
- 3 Use supervision policies and practices that address criminogenic risk/need and balance the goals of promoting accountability and providing needed treatment and reentry supports.

SRR grantees engage in planning and implementation processes:

- 1 First, states receive grants to participate in a competitive planning process. They bring together stakeholders, set measurable recidivism-reduction goals, and develop comprehensive, data-driven plans to achieve those goals.
- 2 Then, states that put forward the strongest plans are awarded \$1 million for implementation, with the potential for supplemental awards to total \$3 million over three years.² BJA envisions that these states will act as centers of excellence that can stand as national models for statewide recidivism reduction while achieving public safety goals.



GRANTEE ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY THE SRR PROGRAM

EXPLORATION

Commit to reducing recidivism and assess drivers

- Assess the legal and political landscape and convene, engage, and educate stakeholders
- Analyze relevant data about what factors are driving recidivism
- Identify and focus on populations with disproportionately high recidivism rates and develop reduction goals

For example, Michigan's Department of Corrections chose to target moderate- to high-risk individuals returning to Wayne County, based on data showing that 21 percent of technical parole violators returned to prison from the county.

DEVELOPMENT

Assess the system and identify implementation goals

- Assess current practices using Recidivism-Reduction Checklists and identify strengths, gaps, and barriers
- Develop specific implementation goals and plans informed by relevant evidence-based practices
- Establish a governance structure that promotes adaptive and technical leadership

For example, the Minnesota Department of Corrections convened working groups to analyze their system and develop consensus-based recommendations. Through their reviews, the groups identified opportunities to strengthen the use of evidence-based supervision policies and programming in the community to help meet their goal of reducing recidivism by 4 percent after two years.

INSTALLATION

Put in place the specific policy, procedure, and practice changes

- Build infrastructure and administrative supports, including a data system to support decision making
- Change written policies and procedures to promote adherence to evidence-based practices
- Develop staff competency through education, training, and ongoing coaching and support

For example, the Rhode Island Department of Corrections is implementing evidence-based assessment, programming, case management, and supervision practices throughout the system by rewriting department-wide policies and procedures, training staff, and enhancing their data collection capacity.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Evaluate changes and improve continually

- Promote fidelity to evidence-based practices and programs through quality assurance
- Collect systemwide data and conduct process and outcome evaluations
- Sustain activities through continuous communication and improvement

For example, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has partnered with other state agencies to develop an integrated information-sharing process to ensure all relevant performance measures related to recidivism are tracked and routinely reviewed by key stakeholders.

“Unlike grants that support programming for a small subset of the population, the SRR program can empower corrections administrators to impact recidivism statewide through sustainable policy and procedural changes.”

— A.T. Wall, Director, *Rhode Island Department of Corrections*

Guidance and Technical Assistance for All States on Using the SRR Model

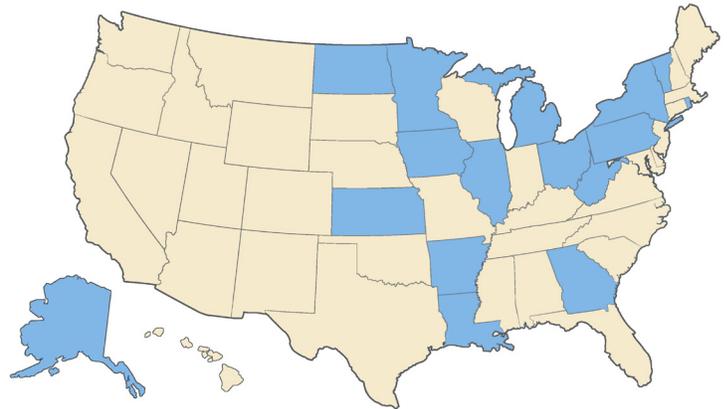
A state does not need to receive a grant to benefit from the SRR program. Any state can access the toolkit of resources and guidance being developed to help with each step in the recidivism-reduction process. The SRR program will also be creating both leadership and training opportunities to support states’ efforts. Working with partners such as the National Governors Association, the American Probation and Parole Association, and the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the CSG Justice Center will offer a range of materials on the SRR project webpage in 2015 at csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/the-reentry-and-employment-project, including the following:

- Self-assessment checklists and an accompanying guide for policymakers and practitioners
- Case studies from states that have successfully reduced recidivism and/or implemented promising practices
- Lessons learned from grantees that use implementation research to guide effective service delivery
- A guide on how to synthesize and present data to help state policymakers and corrections leaders collaboratively monitor recidivism-related indicators and improve policy

“Following an intensive and collaborative planning and evaluation process, this grant brings resources to bear that will improve collaboration with various stakeholders across Iowa, advance evidence-based practices, and enhance staff training. This project is designed to be self-sustaining, resulting in long-term recidivism reduction well beyond the project end date.”

— John Baldwin, Director, *Iowa Department of Corrections*

SRR Grantee States FY2012–14



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|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| Alaska | Louisiana | Pennsylvania |
| Arkansas* | Michigan | Rhode Island |
| Georgia* | Minnesota* | Vermont* |
| Illinois* | New York | West Virginia |
| Iowa* | North Dakota | |
| Kansas* | Ohio* | |

* States that have received more than one SRR grant

“The SRR program helped our state analyze the drivers of recidivism and develop a data-driven plan. The investments made through this program can result in better outcomes for people leaving prison and for the communities to which they return.”

— Richard Sears, *Vermont State Senator*

Future Grant Opportunities and Additional Resources

To stay informed about any upcoming grant solicitations and other guidance or resources on recidivism-reduction efforts, sign up for updates for the **National Reentry Resource Center** and “reentry” topics at csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe.

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ENDNOTES

1. The program began in 2012 and served the 16 states through 2014. Additional outreach to states is dependent on continued federal funding.
2. The grant amount and duration are as of FY2014. The five states selected to implement their plans based on their potential to reduce the statewide recidivism rate were Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Vermont.



The Council of State Governments Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. It provides practical, nonpartisan advice and evidence-based, consensus-driven strategies to increase public safety and strengthen communities. To learn more about the Council of State Governments Justice Center, please visit csjusticecenter.org.



Established by the Second Chance Act, the National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) provides education, training, and technical assistance to states, tribes, territories, local governments, community-based service providers, nonprofit organizations, and corrections institutions involved with prisoner reentry. The NRRC's mission is to advance the reentry field by disseminating information to and from policymakers,

practitioners, and researchers and by promoting evidence-based principles and best practices. The NRRC is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and is a project of the Council of State Governments Justice Center, in cooperation with the Urban Institute, the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the American Probation and Parole Association, and other key partner organizations.



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this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. To learn more about the Bureau of Justice Assistance, please visit bja.gov.

An extensive collection of resources on prisoner reentry and recidivism-reduction strategies is also available at the NRRC, providing a one-stop, interactive source of reentry information; individualized, targeted technical assistance for Second Chance Act grantees; and training, distance learning, and knowledge development to advance the reentry field. For more information, visit csjusticecenter.org/nrrc.