

The Second Chance Act: Juvenile Reentry

Background

Recent efforts among state and local leaders to reduce the number of youth who are incarcerated have yielded impressive results: the national juvenile incarceration rate has been cut in half over the past decade.¹ Yet state policymakers, practitioners, and advocates alike recognize that reforming the juvenile justice system requires more than incarcerating fewer youth. What constitutes success is ensuring that, whenever possible, youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system receive the necessary community-based services and supports to ensure their successful transition from incarceration and other forms of system supervision to a crime-free and productive adulthood.

States have struggled, however, to achieve these goals. Recent research indicates that rearrest rates for youth being supervised in the community remain unacceptably high, and states have struggled to improve outcomes for the smaller number of youth who remain incarcerated. These young people typically face many challenges in reentry. They may not receive the necessary support from their families, peers, schools, and communities. They may struggle to connect with treatment for mental health or substance use disorders when they return to their communities after confinement, or they may face barriers to enrolling in an appropriate educational or vocational program. And the landscape of the juvenile justice system is more fragmented than ever: as of 2013, almost two-thirds of incarcerated youth were placed in facilities administered by local governments or a combination of private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations,² compared to 10 years ago when most incarcerated youth were placed in juvenile correctional facilities run by state governments.

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. Approximately 20 percent of these grants have been awarded to agencies and organizations serving a juvenile justice population.⁷ Grantees provide vital services—including case management, education, substance use and mental health treatment, family therapy, housing, mentoring, victim support, and others—to make a youth's transition from system supervision to the community safer and more successful. The grants also support the improvement of corrections and supervision practices that aim to reduce recidivism. Programs funded by the Second Chance Act have reached nearly 24,000 youth.⁸ The Second Chance Act's grant programs are funded and administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.

Key Facts

- 1 million youth cycled through juvenile courts in 2013.³
- More than 53,000 youth were confined in juvenile detention and correctional facilities in 2013.⁴
- In 2012, more than 100,000 youth and young adults were released from residential placement to the supervision of state and local probation and parole agencies, and an additional 260,000 juveniles were adjudicated directly to community supervision.⁵
- Youth reincarceration rates in some states are close to 50 percent within three years of release from incarceration.⁶

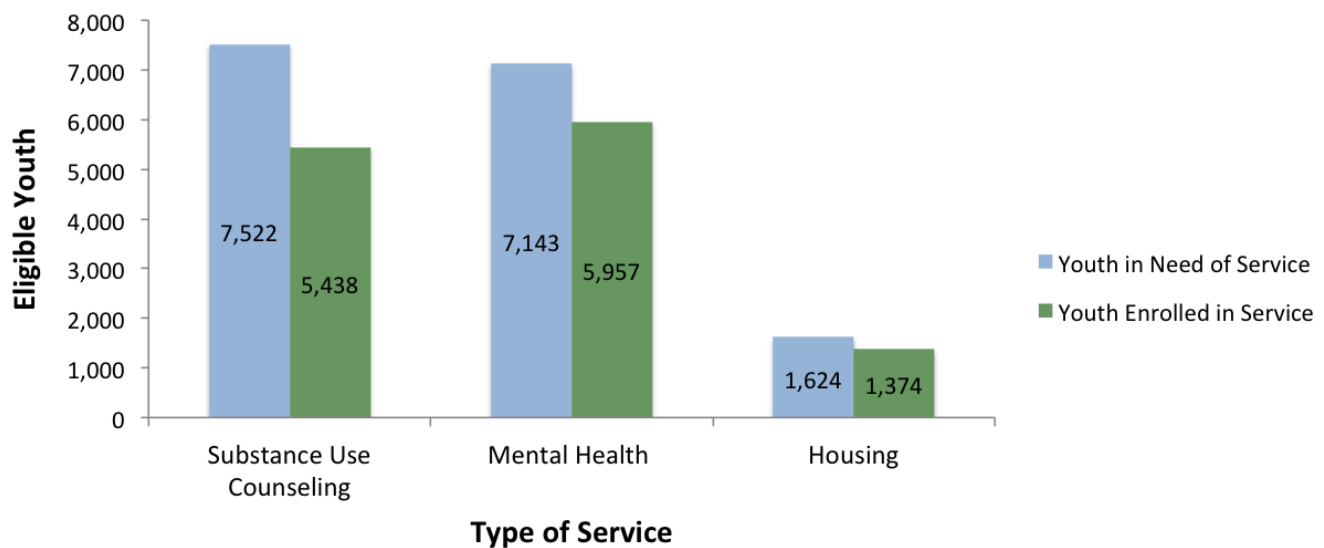
Federal Funding of Second Chance Act Programs

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

Examples of Second Chance Act Grant-Funded Juvenile Reentry Initiatives

- San Francisco.** The Juvenile Collaborative Reentry Unit (JCRU) provides pre- and post-release case management services to youth returning from juvenile probation camps and correctional facilities. Case managers develop individual reentry plans that include goals for strengthening family relationships; improving housing, education, and employment opportunities; and enhancing substance use treatment and prosocial activities. In the first 3 years of the pilot program, probation violations fell 14 percent, rearrests declined 17 percent, and new convictions dropped 57 percent.⁹
- The Texas Juvenile Justice Department.** The Second Chance program provides family-focused reentry services to gang-affiliated youth. The program supports comprehensive case management and services based on the individual needs of each young person, including cognitive behavioral therapy, anger management, education, and employment. According to a recent study of program participants, approximately 80 percent had no further contact with the juvenile justice system within 4 to 6 months of release.¹⁰

Figure 1. Eligible Youth in Need of Services and Enrolled in Services through Second Chance Act Funding: July 2009–June 2015



Source: The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. "Fact Sheet on OJJDP Second Chance Act Grant Program Accomplishments."

Notes

- "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement: 1997–2013," National Center for Juvenile Justice, last modified October 2015, <http://www.ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>.
- Ibid.
- Sarah Hockenberry and Charles Puzanchara, *Juvenile Court Statistics 2013* (Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2015), <http://www.ojdp.gov/ojstatbb/njcda/pdf/jcs2013.pdf>.
- "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement: 1997–2013," National Center for Juvenile Justice.
- Melissa Sickmund and Charles Puzanchara, eds., *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report* (Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2014).
- Tony Fabelo et al., *Closer to Home: An Analysis of the State and Local Impact of the Texas Juvenile Justice Reforms* (New York: The Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2015).
- Since 2009, 142 of the 719 Second Chance Act grants awarded by the Office of Justice Programs have targeted youth in the juvenile justice system.
- 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 OJJDP Second Chance Act Grant Program Accomplishments: July 2009–June 2015" (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2015, unpublished report).
- "Critical Elements of Juvenile Reentry in Research and Practice," David Altschuler and Shay Bilchik, The Council of State Governments Justice Center, last modified 21 April 2014, <https://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/posts/critical-elements-of-juvenile-reentry-in-research-and-practice/>.
- Kathleen A. Fox, Vicent J. Webb, Alejandro Ferrer, Charles M. Katz, and Eric Hedberg, *Gang Intervention Treatment Re-Entry Development for Youth (GITREDDY): A Report on the First Year of Implementation* (Huntsville, TX: College of Criminal Justice, Sam Houston State University, 2012), 23.