THE RECIDIVISM REDUCTION CHECKLISTS
A Resource for State Leaders and Corrections Agencies

Hosted by the National Reentry Resource Center

In partnership with the Association of State Correctional Administrators and the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice
The resource center is continually updating its website with materials relevant to the reentry field.

Please register for the monthly NRRC newsletter at: http://eepurl.com/tsnaH, and please share this link with others in your networks that are interested in reentry.
Presenters

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*Division Director, National Initiatives, Council of State Governments Justice Center*

Panelists:  
- **Dr. Gary Dennis**  
  *Senior Policy Advisor, Corrections, Bureau of Justice Assistance*
  
- **A.T. Wall**  
  *Director, Rhode Island Department of Corrections*

- **Justin Jones**  
  *Director, Oklahoma Department of Corrections*

- **Brigid Adams**  
  *Reentry Branch Manager, Kentucky Department of Corrections*

- **Tony Streveler**  
  *Director of Research and Policy, Wisconsin Department of Corrections*
Presentation Overview

- Project Overview
- State Reentry Coordinators’ Checklist Content
- Operationalizing the Checklists
- Additional Support for Recidivism Reduction Work
- Questions & Answers
Project Overview

State Leaders’ National Forum on Reentry and Recidivism

- Bipartisan Engagement
- Representation from all 50 states

U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH)
U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
Takeaways from the Forum

Many states still face challenges with implementing practices that can help reduce recidivism

Normed and validated risk assessments are used to inform case management decisions

- No: 21%
- Partial: 23%
- Yes: 57%

Case plans and programming address individuals' criminogenic needs

- No: 29%
- Partial: 36%
- Yes: 32%

Responsivity factors are attended to and considered in program placement decisions

- No: 40%
- Partial: 33%
- Yes: 26%

Charts shown average response rates to questions pertaining to the three topics shown in the Pre-Forum survey (n=38)
Takeaways from the Forum

States are developing plans to reduce recidivism

- Set Reduction Target
  - In Progress (Post-Forum)
  - Yes (Post-Forum)
  - Yes (Pre-Forum)

- Have Statewide Plan
  - + 18 States

- Track Recidivism Rates
  - + 21 States
The Recidivism Reduction Checklists

Legislative and Executive Policymakers  |  State Corrections Administrators  |  State Reentry Coordinators

**Reducing Statewide Recidivism: Checklist for Legislative and Executive Policymakers**

Why should recidivism reduction be a state priority?
- All across the country, the bipartisan narrative is clear: recidivism is a major cost to society and it is preventable.

**Reducing Statewide Recidivism: Checklist for State Corrections Administrators**

**Goal 1:** Make recidivism reduction an agency priority and a key measure of success for programs or policy changes.

1. **Policy and Performance Expectations**
   - Recidivism reduction is only possible when services and treatments are meaningful or relevant.

2. **Implementation Load**
   - Recidivism reduction goals are incorporated into the agency's oversight or strategic plans.

3. **Implementation Status**
   - Recidivism reduction goals are included in work plans and performance evaluations.

**Reducing Statewide Recidivism: Checklist for Reentry Coordinators**

**Goal 1:** Make recidivism reduction an agency priority and set reduction targets for specific programs or policy changes.

Checklists are available at nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/projects/checklists
### Key Steps and Goals across the Checklists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative and Executive Policymakers</th>
<th>Step 1: Make Recidivism Reduction a State Priority</th>
<th>Step 2: Develop Plan to Implement Policies to Reduce Recidivism</th>
<th>Step 3: Track Progress and ensure accountability</th>
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The Goals:

1. Make recidivism-reduction an agency priority and set reduction goals for specific programs or policy changes

2. Focus resources on the individuals who are most likely to reoffend

3. Establish programs and practices that have been shown to reduce recidivism and ensure they are implemented with fidelity

4. Implement community supervision policies and practices that promote successful reentry

5. Measure recidivism-related outcomes and establish a reporting process that promotes accountability for results
Research Behind the Goals

Focusing on Higher Risk Individuals

Halfway Houses to Promote Reentry: Efficacy as a Function of Offender Risk*

* Approx. 3,500 offenders placed in halfway houses, compared to 3,500 not placed in a halfway house

(Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005b)
Research Behind the Goals

Addressing Criminogenic Needs

Recidivism Reductions as a Function of Targeting Multiple Criminogenic vs. Non-Criminogenic Needs*

Better outcomes

More criminogenic than non-criminogenic needs

More non-criminogenic than criminogenic needs

Poorer outcomes

(Andrews, Dowden, & Gendreau, 1999; Dowden, 1998)
Research Behind the Goals
The Risk, Need, Responsivity Principles

Impact of Adhering to the Core Principles of Effective Intervention: Risk, Needs, and Responsivity*

- Adhere to all 3 principles
- Adhere to 2 principles
- Adhere to 1 principle
- Adhere to none

* meta-analysis of 230 studies (Andrews et al., 1999)
Efficacy of Halfway Houses as a Function of Adherence to the Principles of Effective Intervention: Overall CPAI Rating*

* Approx. 7,300 offenders placed in halfway houses, compared to 5,800 not placed in a halfway house

(Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005a)
Research Behind the Goals

Treatment-Oriented Approach to Supervision

Intervention Effects by Supervision Approach

Better outcomes

-5%  5%  15%  25%

Surveillance-oriented

Poorer outcomes

-5%

Treatment-oriented

(Aos et al., 2006)
Research Behind the Goals
Swift and Certain Sanctions Model

Probation Revocations – Hope versus Comparison Group

(Aos et al., 2006)
Principles that Underlie the Checklist Goals

1. Focus on changing offender behavior

2. Management must be goal- and data-driven

3. Staff must receive appropriate and on-going training

4. There must be quality assurance, oversight and accountability to assure fidelity to programming
Panel Discussion – Checklist Content

**Principle 1: Changing Offender Behavior**

Examples from State Reentry Coordinators’ Checklist:

**Goal 2:** Moderate- and high-risk individuals are assessed to determine which dynamic criminogenic risk factors need to be addressed through programming

**Goal 3:** Prison- and community-based programs are designed to effectively address the factors that make individuals more likely to recidivate and enhance responsivity to treatment

**Goal 4:** Positive reinforcements and incentives are incorporated into the supervision process and used appropriately to encourage positive behavior changes
Panel Discussion – Checklist Content

Principle 2: Goal- and Data-Driven Management

Examples from State Reentry Coordinators’ Checklist:

**Goal 1:** Supervisors and managers are able to effectively communicate the value of recidivism reduction to front-line staff.

**Goal 5:** Data on short-term outcomes are collected to indicate progress toward recidivism-reduction goals, such as changes in individual attitudes, behaviors, or responsiveness to services.

**Goal 5:** Supervisors and managers hold performance management meetings with staff to discuss data findings, identify areas that need improvement, and reward staff for progress.
Panel Discussion – Checklist Content

Principle 3: Staff Training

Examples from State Reentry Coordinators’ Checklist:

**Goal 2:** Prison staff, probation and parole officers, and community-service providers are trained to perform assessments and to use the results to inform case management plans.

**Goal 4:** Community supervision officers are provided training in communication techniques that promote intrinsic motivation for positive change (i.e., enhance responsivity).

**Goal 4:** Community supervision officers are trained to understand and respond effectively to the special needs of individuals with mental illnesses, substance use disorders, or co-occurring disorders.
Panel Discussion – Checklist Content

Principle 4: Quality Assurance, Oversight, and Accountability

Examples from State Reentry Coordinators’ Checklist:

**Goal 2:** Supervisors observe assessment processes to ensure staff are conducting and using assessments correctly and observations are reflected in staff performance evaluations

**Goal 3:** Program-quality assessment tools (such as the correctional program checklist) are conducted on at least an annual basis and used to improve program implementation

**Goal 4:** Supervisors review recommendations for revocation before they are approved in order to ensure they are warranted, based the seriousness and type of the offense and risk level of the individual
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Operationalizing the Checklists

Implementation Lead

In order to effectively implement the checklist, reentry coordinators need assistance from key personnel:*

- Administrators of the agency
- Mid-level management and Program managers
- Front-line supervisors
- Training staff
- Staff directly involved in reentry coordination—institutional staff and parole officers
- Human resource staff
- Research staff

*Staff involved should have some level of decision-making authority
Operationalizing the Checklists

Implementation Status
Once key personnel are identified, the reentry coordinator should work closely with those individuals to assess:

If policy or performance expectations are currently being implemented
- (N) Not implemented at all
- (PL) not implemented, but planned
- (P) partially implemented
- (F) fully implemented

Once checklist is complete
- The checklist should be updated periodically
- Results should inform administrators of needed policy and practice changes
- Agencies should develop a plan to address deficiencies with timelines
Panel Discussion – Using the Checklists

**Outreach and Education:** Checklists outline key components of effective reentry practices and recidivism reduction strategies

- Checklists can be guides to educate the public on reentry efforts and recidivism reduction strategies
- Checklists can be used to educate legislative or executive policymakers on policy and funding priorities needed to advance recidivism reduction goals
- Checklists can be used to educate administrators, management, and frontline staff on the key components of effective reentry practices and recidivism reduction strategies
Panel Discussion – Using the Checklists

**Assessment:** Checklists are used as an assessment tool to gauge comprehensiveness of reentry practices

- Checklists provides an opportunity to inventory current policies, procedures, and practices, and identify gaps
- Checklists are designed to record information and progress on implementation of a comprehensive reentry strategy
- Checklists provide an opportunity for agencies to assess if data are being collected accurately, reliably, and have utility
Panel Discussion – Using the Checklists

**Strategic Planning:** Planning efforts can be guided by checklists at both the policy and administrative level

- Checklists provide a framework for developing long-term reentry procedures and recidivism reduction strategies
- Checklists provide a thorough framework for policy and procedure development at the agency level
- Checklists provide a framework to develop long-term planning for staff development, hiring practices, and evaluation
Panel Discussion – Using the Checklists

**Oversight:** Checklist can assist with oversight of a reentry initiative and recidivism reduction effort

- Checklists can be used as an auditing tool to inform administrators on status of efforts and realign resources if necessary
- Checklists can be used as an agency quality assurance tool
- Checklists can be used to develop and retool staff performance evaluations to capture desired practices
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Recidivism Reduction Checklists

Overview

The recidivism reduction checklists are a user-friendly, source of information on the many policies and practices that go into a comprehensive, effective reentry initiative. There are three checklists, each tailored to a specific audience:

1. Executive and Legislative Policymakers
2. State Corrections Administrators
3. State Reentry Coordinators

These checklists can help familiarize state leaders with key issues related to recidivism reduction, and help them honestly evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their reentry efforts through enhanced communication and coordination.

The Recidivism Reduction Checklists

Each checklist's intended audience is described below. To view a checklist, click on an audience.

Project Background

The recidivism reduction checklists build upon the December 8, 2011 State Leaders' Forum on Reentry and Recidivism. During this forum, state leaders began developing recidivism reduction goals, designing plans to achieve those goals, and identifying ways to track progress.

In a follow-up survey with forum participants, it became clear that state leaders would benefit from additional guidance on best practices and tools for enhancing communication with policymakers, state corrections directors, and reentry staff. The recidivism

http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/recidivism-reduction-checklists
The Recidivism Reduction Checklists

Each checklist’s intended audience is described below. To view a checklist, click on an audience.

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>This checklist is targeted at policymakers in the executive or legislative branches and their staff as well as other reentry champions outside of corrections.</td>
<td>This checklist is targeted at directors, secretaries, and commissioners of state corrections departments, including probation and parole.</td>
<td>This checklist is targeted at high-level staff members that manage reentry efforts within corrections departments.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

An example of how DOCs can use the checklists:

- **Quarterly**, the reentry coordinator updates the State Reentry Coordinators’ Checklist by facility and briefs the corrections director on the status of implementation.
- **Semi-annually**, the corrections director and reentry director use the State Corrections Administrator’s Checklist to assess key areas that need to be enhanced through department-wide

Getting Started

What is included in the checklists, and how do they align with one another?

- The checklists include actions related to measuring recidivism and setting reduction targets: policies and practices that research has

http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/recidivism-reduction-checklists
The checklists include actions related to measuring recidivism and setting reduction targets; policies and practices that research has shown to reduce recidivism; and administrative practices that are necessary for ensuring data-driven accountability for results. The checklists present similar information, but with varying levels of detail to meet the needs of distinct audiences.

The policies and practices in the executive and legislative policymakers’ checklist fall under three key steps, while the policies and practices in the state corrections administrators’ and state reentry coordinators’ checklists are organized by five common goals. These key steps and goals align to ensure that all stakeholders have a common understanding of the key policy components that impact recidivism.

**Key Steps and Goals across the Checklists**

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<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal 4:</strong> Implement effective community supervision practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Goal 5:</strong> Measure outcomes and promote accountability</td>
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</table>

Annually or as needed, the corrections director and reentry director use the Executive and Legislative Policymakers’ Checklist to brief the governor’s staff and members of the legislature on progress with implementation and any policy or budgetary needs.

http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/recidivism-reduction-checklists
How should the checklists be used?

- **Outreach and education:** These checklists succinctly outline the key facets of effective reentry policy and can be used by corrections leaders to easily brief legislative or executive policymakers and their staff on best practices.

- **Assessment:** Policymakers and corrections staff can use the checklists to assess the comprehensiveness of their recidivism reduction efforts. The reentry coordinators’ checklist is specifically designed for recording information about implementation.

- **Strategic planning:** Whether at the policy or administrative level, strategic planning can be greatly informed by the checklists. Each checklist provides a framework for developing a thorough, long-term plan for addressing recidivism.

- **Oversight:** For corrections administrators or reentry coordinators overseeing reentry initiatives, the checklists can be used as a tool for periodically auditing reentry efforts across the department.

Where can I get additional information?

- Click here for a glossary of key terms and concepts used in the checklists.
- Many of the recidivism reduction strategies in the checklists are based on the Risk, Need, Responsivity principles for changing offender behavior. More information on these principles can be found at: http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/announcements/principles-of-recidivism-reduction
- The following resources provide additional information related to the checklists’ content: Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council:
  - Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council
  - The National Summit on Justice Reinvestment and Public Safety
  - A Ten-Step Guide to Transforming Probation Departments to Reduce Recidivism
  - Increasing Public Safety Through Successful Offender Reentry
  - Putting Public Safety First: 13 Parole Supervision Strategies to Enhance Reentry Outcomes

Acknowledgements:

On April 16, 2011, a group of corrections directors, state policymakers, and researchers came together to discuss strategies for addressing the challenges identified during the December 8, 2011 Statewide Recidivism Reduction Forum. The recidivism reduction checklists were conceptualized through this collaborative

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State Reentry Coordinators’ Checklist Content

Operationalizing the Checklists

Additional Support for Recidivism Reduction Work

Questions & Answers
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS