

The Second Chance Act

Facts and Data

- Since 2009, Second Chance Act grants have been awarded to agencies and organizations in 49 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories.
- Second Chance Act-funded programs have served an estimated 164,000 people.⁹
- Of the program participants who received employment services, more than 12,000 have obtained employment since 2011.¹⁰
- Federal, state, and local corrections facilities held nearly 2.2 million people at the end of 2015,¹¹ which amounted to at least 1 in every 200 U.S. residents.
- It is estimated that 47,000 youth are incarcerated in juvenile detention and correctional facilities on any given day.¹²
- At least 95 percent of people incarcerated in state prisons will be released back to their communities at some point.¹³
- 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.¹⁴

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
FY2017	\$68 million
FY2018	\$85 million



Background

Almost all of the nearly 2.2 million people incarcerated in the United States will be released at some point. People 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.¹
- **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.² In a separate study of prison and jail populations, BJS found that more than 70 percent of the people with mental illnesses also had co-occurring substance use disorders.³
- **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.⁴ Of all people entering prisons and jails, those with mental illnesses are twice as likely to have been homeless.⁵
- **Education and employment**—Two out of five people incarcerated in prison or jail lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.⁶ 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.⁷
- **Children and families**—Approximately 2.7 million children in the United States have a parent who is incarcerated.⁸

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 to fund initiatives and programs to address these goals.

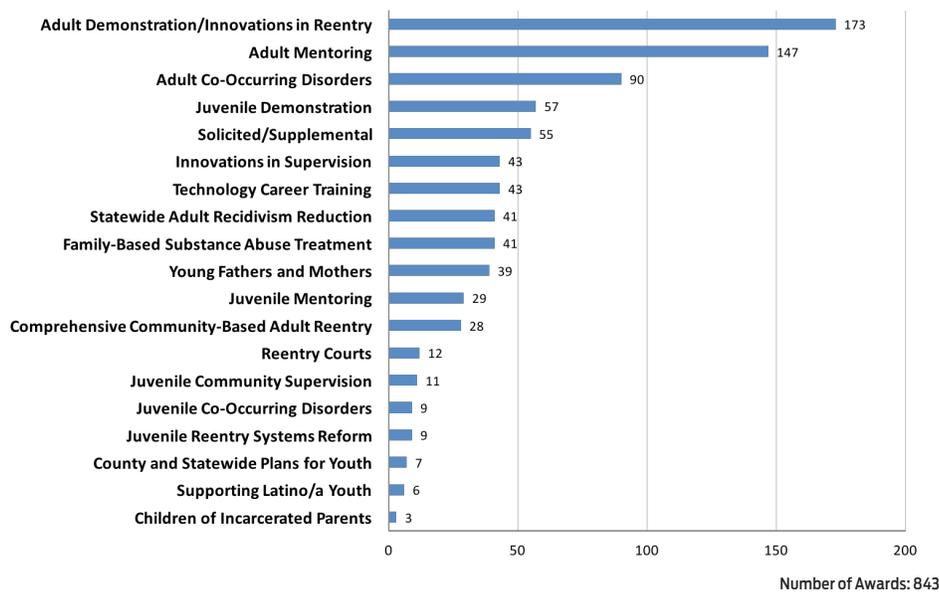
About the Second Chance Act Grant Program

Since 2009, more than 840 Second Chance Act grant awards have been made to government agencies and nonprofit organizations from 49 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories for reentry programs serving adults and juveniles. As of December 2017, an estimated 164,000 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.

Second Chance Act Grantees

- The **Allegheny County (PA) Jail Collaborative's** reentry programs link people with service coordination, education, job readiness, treatment, family supports, and other services at least five months prior to release. Service providers assess each person's risk and needs during his or her first 30 to 60 days in jail and collaborate with jail staff to direct people to needed in-jail services and treatment. The programs then prepare participants for discharge and connect them with supports in the community. The Urban Institute's analyses of the Allegheny County Jail Collaborative's two Second Chance Act-funded programs indicated that both programs reduced rearrest—by 70 percent for one program—and prolonged time to rearrest.¹⁵
- 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.
- In Connecticut, **The Connection** offers transitional housing, case management, and peer mentoring services to people returning to their communities after incarceration. Clients are referred through the Connecticut Department of Correction and the Court Support Services Division of the state's judicial branch. Clients, with the help of peer mentors, develop and remain engaged in individualized reentry and treatment plans with the goal of finding stable housing, gaining employment, and reestablishing natural supports in their community.
- The **Executive Office of the State of Iowa and the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC)** led a statewide initiative to build quality assurance into IDOC programs, enhance IDOC staff training and improve job competencies, and ensure pre-release planning for people transitioning back to their communities. IDOC also partnered with the Iowa Department of Health Services to strengthen connections between prisons, community-based corrections, and community mental health and substance use service providers. These initiatives are supported by a reentry task force that includes policymakers, judges, public defenders, faith-based community organizations, service providers, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and other organizations that work within the criminal justice system.

Second Chance Act Awards by Grant Program



Notes

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6. 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.

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Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016), available at bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus15.pdf.

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