

The Second Chance Act

Facts and Trends

- Federal and state corrections facilities held nearly 1.6 million prisoners at the end of 2012. This amounts to one in every 201 U.S. residents.^{viii}
- An additional 4.8 million individuals were under probation or parole supervision in the community.^{ix}
- It is estimated that 60,000 youth are incarcerated in juvenile detention and correctional facilities on any given day.^x
- At least 95 percent of people incarcerated in state prisons will be released back to their communities at some point.^{xi}
- Over 600,000 individuals were released from state and federal prisons in 2012.^{xii}
- A study of recidivism in 40+ states found that more than four in 10 people released from state prisons were reincarcerated within three years of their release.^{xiii}

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

Background

Nearly all of the 1.6 million individuals incarcerated in the U.S. 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 return to incarceration. These challenges may include:

- **Mental health**—In a study of jail populations, researchers found rates of serious mental disorders that are three to six times more than those found in the general population: 15 percent of men, 31 percent of women.ⁱ
- **Substance abuse**—Three-quarters of people released from prisons have a history of substance use disorders. Over 70 percent of individuals with serious mental disorders also have a substance use disorder.ⁱⁱ
- **Housing and homelessness**—A national survey of jail populations found that 15 percent had been homeless in the year before their incarceration—up to 11 times more than the estimate for the general U.S. adult population.ⁱⁱⁱ Individuals with mental health disorders entering prisons and jails are twice as likely to have been homeless in the year prior as those without.^{iv}
- **Education and employment**—Two out of five people incarcerated in prison or jail lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.^v Employment rates and earning histories of people in prisons and jails are often low before incarceration 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 post-release.^{vi}
- **Children and families**—Approximately 2.7 million children in the U.S. have a parent who is currently incarcerated, and more than 10 million minor children have a parent who has been incarcerated at some point in their child's life.^{vii}

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.

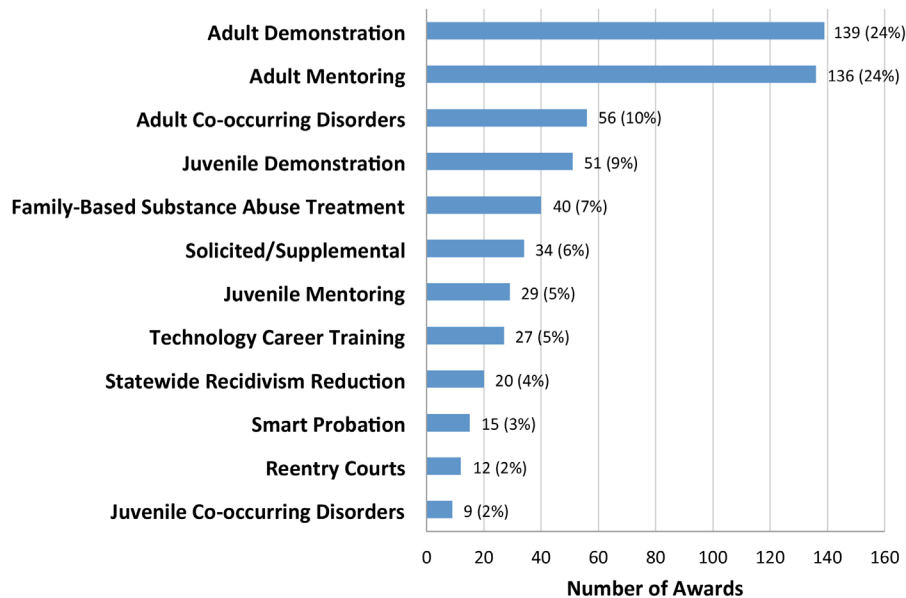
About the Second Chance Act Grant Program

Since 2009, nearly 600 Second Chance Act grant awards have been made to government agencies and nonprofit organizations from 49 states for reentry programs serving adults and juveniles. Grantees provide vital services—including employment training and assistance, substance abuse 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 improved 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.

Reentry Matters: Examples of Grant-Funded Initiatives

- The **Montgomery County (MD) Department of Correction and Rehabilitation** partners with Montgomery College and the workforce development organization MontgomeryWorks to offer computer-based training and job placement assistance to individuals within 12 months of their release. Classes can range from basic computer skills to college courses in industry-accepted certificate programs. In addition, participants receive targeted reentry services, including substance abuse treatment, housing, GED classes, and mentoring.
- The **Texas Juvenile Justice Department's** Second Chance-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.
- The **Harlem Parole Reentry Court** in New York City emphasizes job readiness and the use of a risk assessment tool to determine individuals' risk levels and needs. According to an ongoing evaluation, the reincarceration rate for program participants 12 months after release was 14.7 percent, compared to 19.3 percent for a group of similar individuals who were on parole but did not participate in the reentry court. Additionally, about one-third of participants were employed 12 months after release, compared to only a quarter of the comparison group, and more participants were employed full-time than in the comparison group (25 percent vs. 19.8 percent).^{xv}
- The **Illinois Department of Corrections** used its Second Chance grant to expand its Moms & Babies Program, a prison-based nursery program located at the Decatur Correctional Center in central Illinois. The program reinforces family relationships by allowing qualified mothers to keep their newborn babies with them in prison for up to 24 months. Family can be a key factor in successful reentry—some research has shown that people who regularly interact with their families while incarcerated are less likely to recidivate than those who do not.^{xvi}

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. National GAINS Center for People with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System, *The Prevalence of Co-occurring Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders in Jails* (Delmar, NY: GAINS Center, 2002), available at gainscenter.samhsa.gov/pdfs/disorders/gainsjailprev.pdf.
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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 www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/mhppji.pdf.

- v. 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.
- vi. Harry J. Holzer, Steven Raphael, and Michael A. Stoll, *Employment Barriers Facing Ex-Offenders* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2003), available at www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410855_holzer.pdf.
- vii. Pew Charitable Trusts, *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility* (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010), available at www.pewtrusts.org/UploadedFiles/www.pewtrusts.org/Reports/Economic_Mobility/Collateral%20Costs%20FINAL.pdf?n=5996.
- viii. E. Ann Carson and Daniela Golinelli, *Prisoners In 2012: Trends In Admissions And Releases, 1991-2012* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2013), available at www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p12tar9112.pdf.
- ix. Lauren E. Glaze and Erinn J. Herberman, *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2012* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2013), available at www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus12.pdf.

- x. "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement: 1997-2011," Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, accessed March 26, 2013, available at <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezacjrp/>.
- xi. 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.
- xii. Carson and Golinelli, *Prisoners In 2012: Trends In Admissions And Releases, 1991-2012*.
- xiii. Pew Center on the States, *State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons* (Washington, DC: Pew Charitable Trusts, 2011), available at www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Pew_State_of_Recidivism.pdf.
- xiv. Based on preliminary findings from an ongoing evaluation to be released in 2014.
- xv. Creasie Finney Hairston, "Family Ties During Imprisonment: Do They Influence Future Criminal Activity?" *Federal Probation* 52, no. 1 (1988): 48–52.