

SECOND CHANCE ACT: STATEWIDE RECIDIVISM REDUCTION INITIATIVE

Purpose of Program

The U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) designed the Statewide Recidivism Reduction (SRR) Initiative to help executive branch policymakers and state corrections departments set measurable recidivism-reduction goals and develop practical, data-driven plans to achieve them.

Developing a comprehensive approach for reducing recidivism is challenging, requiring access to data, service delivery changes, coordination of multiple systems, and strategic planning. With the support of training and technical assistance, state grantees develop strategic plans informed by a data-driven assessment of the needs of the target population, drivers of recidivism in the state, and the system landscape, including how current practices align with best practices and resource availability.

They then implement the plans and other system-level reforms related to: (1) risk- and need-driven case planning and resource allocation, (2) delivery of quality programming targeting criminogenic needs, and (3) effective supervision practices. The plans include strong evaluation and sustainability components.

This program has been part of the SCA suite of programs since fiscal year (FY) 2012. Since then, more than 23 awards have been made, totaling \$32.4 million.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

- State departments of corrections or community corrections agencies
- State Administering Agencies (SAAs)

Funding Amount

Historically, BJA has awarded \$100,000 for planning grants and up to \$1,000,000 per year for 3 years of implementation.

This initiative requires a 50 percent match (half of the match must be a cash match; the remaining 50 percent may be in-kind). Match waivers can be requested at time of application.

Award Period

SRR grantees engage in up to 4 years of planning and implementation. First, states receive grants to participate in a competitive planning process to bring together stakeholders to:

- Identify drivers of recidivism.
- Review alignment of existing programs and practices with evidence-based practices.

Signed into law in April 2008 and reauthorized in 2018, the [Second Chance Act](#) (SCA) aims to enhance public safety by reducing recidivism and improving outcomes for people returning from prisons, jails, and juvenile facilities. The SCA authorizes the awarding of federal grants, aligned with the requirements of the legislation, to eligible entities to provide reentry services and programs, including employment and housing assistance, victim support, and substance abuse treatment. Additionally, SCA funds may be used to support general system improvements. The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Office of Justice Programs (OJP) funds and administers SCA grants for adults via the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and for juveniles via the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

Feature Grantee Highlights

Georgia Department of Community Supervision (FY 2014)

The Georgia Department of Community Supervision (DCS) increased coordination with existing service providers and established relationships with new ones to meet the needs of people on community supervision and reduce their risk of recidivism. Georgia DCS used a three-pronged approach: increased communication, including a web-based platform to manage individual contacts; local steering committees; and collaborative efforts such as reentry planning meetings held prior to a person's release. This process helped the department understand the full breadth of providers available in the community and strengthened coordination among providers to facilitate a continuum of services to meet the needs of people on community supervision.

Minnesota Department of Corrections (FY 2014)

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (MDOC) improved its prison reentry and supervision services by ensuring that people are connected to programs and supervised according to their risk and needs. To do this,

MDOC automated its data-sharing processes across state prison reentry and community supervision systems to share case plans based on individualized risk and needs information. This information was then used to focus risk-reduction strategies (e.g., tailoring reentry case plans and connecting people to behavioral health services) for people assessed as high or very high risk to recidivate as part of a study to analyze the impact of the strategies.

Iowa Department of Corrections (FY 2014)

The Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) developed a comprehensive matrix of core competencies for corrections agency positions at all levels — from new officers to seasoned executives — to clearly articulate and ensure a consistent understanding of what skills are necessary to effectively carry out each role. Developed over a 3-year period, the matrix draws on a comprehensive review of available research on what works to reduce recidivism, as well as evidence-based practices conducted by IDOC. As a result of these efforts, IDOC has been able to strengthen correctional culture to focus staff on effective recidivism-reduction approaches through clear job expectations, as well as hiring and promotion criteria that reflect these priorities.

- Set measurable recidivism-reduction goals.
- Develop comprehensive, data-driven plans to achieve those goals.

Then, states that put forward the strongest plans are awarded up to \$1 million for implementation, with the potential for supplemental awards to total \$3 million over 3 years. Successful implementation plans:

- 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 for them.
- Provide appropriate services and treatment that draw on evidence-based approaches and ensure high-quality service delivery.

- Use supervision policies and practices that address criminogenic risk/need and balance the goals of promoting accountability and providing needed treatment and reentry supports.

Other Information to Highlight

To reduce recidivism, successful SRR programs:

- Establish partnerships with key stakeholders and organizations.
- Use data to understand recidivism drivers, inform programming decisions, and continuously monitor progress.
- Strengthen correctional culture to reduce recidivism through committed leadership and staff engagement.

- Tailor supervision practices and programs based on risk and needs assessments.
- Use outcome data to communicate successes and continued funding needs to state leaders.

Allowable Uses of Funds

Funds can be used to support capacity-building activities, including staff training to meet the rehabilitative and supervision needs of the impacted population, assessing and addressing gaps and/or quality of service provision, standardizing new or existing strategies to promote replication and scaling, and developing and implementing performance metrics.

See the *DOJ Grants Financial Guide* at: <https://ojp.gov/financialguide/DOJ/index.htm>.

ABOUT BJA

BJA helps to make American communities safer by strengthening the nation's criminal justice system: its grants, training and technical assistance, and policy development services provide state, local, and tribal governments with the cutting-edge tools and best practices they need to reduce violent and drug-related crime, support law enforcement, and combat victimization. To learn more about BJA, visit bja.ojp.gov or follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/DOJBJA) and Twitter (@DOJBJA). BJA is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs.

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