

COALITION FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

REENTRY TOOLKIT

A RESOURCE FOR STATE ADVISORY GROUPS

2024



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REENTRY 101:

WHAT: Reentry is the process of preparing and planning for a young person to reintegrate into their community after a period of incarceration or residential placement. Reentry planning includes identifying appropriate housing, education, financial support, jobs, medical care, and more.

When offered wholistic and individualized support and resources, youth can successfully reintegrate back to their family, community, or alternative home-like settings. They can achieve advancement in education and/or employment and work towards other meaningful personal goals. Be mindful that not all youth can return back to their families, so connecting them to healthy support systems within the community is crucial. This could include mentors, local peer support groups, community centers, or clubs.

WHY: Reentry planning is important because it sets the groundwork for success by helping to arrange stable housing, continued education, employment or vocational training, re-enrollment into health

insurance coverage, and continued mental health and/or substance use treatment. Strong reentry planning has been found to reduce recidivism by increasing the likelihood of youth attending school and going to work. Alternatively, barriers to reentry increase the likelihood of recidivism.

WHO: Reentry planning should be driven by young people themselves, along with supportive adults that can ensure that youth receive all the support and resource connections they need to succeed in the community.

Who are the supportive adults whose job is it to get youth positively reengaged in the community after release? The parole or probation officer? The social worker? The case manager? Or the community partner? All of these professionals can be involved in the process to support reentry as a mutual responsibility. Youth need a team of people to help plan for reentry. Team members may include a reentry coordinator or case manager, a parent or guardian, a mentor, facility staff, an educator, health professionals, housing providers, lawyers, or other key people in the youth's support system.

Partnerships with local young people with lived expertise can also be an effective way to support improving reentry practices. They can serve as trainers, reentry team members, and subject matter experts in developing reentry planning tools and resources. Young people can also be agents of change by endorsing legislation or supporting adoption of policies and initiatives that uplift youth empowerment and youth-centered approaches.

CALLS TO ACTION



- Host listening sessions connecting young people exiting the system with those who have successfully entered back into the community to streamline advice and mentorship.
- Brief young people on the opportunity to join State Advisory Groups or other youth focused organizations in your state.



HOW: State Advisory Groups and state agencies should assess current policies and practices to ensure that youth, families, community-based organizations, and agencies are represented as partners in the reentry process.

How is the reentry planning process tailored to meet individual's needs? Are equitable practices being fostered? For example, youth with disabilities or LGBTQIA2S+ youth may need additional services such as medical services or support groups tailored to their needs and identities. Reentry planning should be individualized and should include equity considerations.


Planning for reentry at the outset of incarceration or out-of-home placement is critical. System professionals should begin setting up a concrete transition or exit plans on the day a young person enters the youth legal system. This includes careful case planning and management so that youth in custody, or under probation or parole, receive needed

services throughout their involvement with the youth legal system. This is known as discharge planning. Discharge planning allows youth and their case worker to find resources to secure housing, education, employment, vocational training, and other public benefits. Providing counseling at the outset of incarceration or out-of-home placement is vital and gives young people opportunities to focus on their future. It is important to keep in mind that even with the best discharge planning, unanticipated challenges and family crises may develop. For this reason, reentry resources will require on-going support, back-up plans, alternatives, and check-ins once youth are placed back into community settings. Talking youth through their options and supporting them through any challenges or pivots is critical for reentry success.

IN 2023, CJJ'S EMERGING LEADERS COMMITTEE CREATED RECOMMENDATIONS ON REENTRY WHICH THEY RELAYED TO OJJDP'S ADMINISTRATOR LIZ RYAN. THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDED:

- 1.** Providing guidance that explains what should be included in a reentry plan for youth who are leaving the justice system. This should include housing, education, employment, mental health, physical health, child care, and related supports. Guidance should clarify that the creation of such plans should begin at the time of sentencing.
- 2.** Providing grant funding so young people can transfer to a community facility before they're released. The goal of these facilities would be to gain job experience and build wealth, so they are ready financially to live on their own. Youth should receive supports in gaining employment, understanding bank accounts, and other essential life skills.
- 3.** Creating a measure similar to that which enables young people to stay on their parents' health insurance plans into early adulthood, but which is specifically focused on ensuring youth in the justice system are able to access services and supports such as mental health, educational, training, and housing opportunities, until age 26 after they have exited the justice system.
- 4.** Supporting for youth to seal or expunge their record, and resources on where to go to. In this process, youth should be connected with employers who are actively hiring regardless of legal system involvement.

STEPS TO TAKE POST-RELEASE

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- ☐ Conduct a thorough comprehensive assessment of each young persons needs, (includes housing, educational, vocational, childcare, transportation, mental health, and substance abuse needs). Assessments should be utilized as a tool to identify needs, risk factors, and protective factors.
 - ☐ Appoint a qualified reentry coordinator/mentor to each young person. This role serves as a point person for youth to ask questions about accessing resources and the reentry process in general. The person in this role should be approved by the young person before the partnership moves forward.
 - ☐ Review the requirements and conditions of probation orders or parole agreements with each young person. This should be done with somebody that can explain the conditions of release and answer any questions regarding the agreement.
 - ☐ Seal record if possible (see 'Know Your Rights' section for information on how to do so).
 - ☐ Assist in collecting and filing necessary paperwork in one location (see below):
 - State-issued driver's license or identification card,
 - Social security card,
 - Birth certificate,
 - Health records (includes vaccinations, medication information, x-rays, and test results)
 - School records (classes taken, grades, attendance records, and test scores)
 - Probation or parole conditions,
 - And emergency contact list.

HOW STATE ADVISORY GROUPS (SAGS) CAN IMPLEMENT BEST REENTRY PRACTICES

- State Advisory Groups can assess what community programs or supports exist to support youth in the reentry process (e.g., independent living programs or mentoring) and can make recommendations to ensure that reentry resources are accessible, culturally appropriate, and youth-centered.
- Work reentry needs and ensure a continuum of placement options are included the three-year plan.
- Utilize Title II funding to support reentry programming.
- Conduct research and/or build reports on successful local reentry programming.

REENTRY NEEDS

- Reentry Mentor
- Financial Literacy Support
- Tax Assistance
- Employment Opportunities and Occupational Assistance
- Housing
- Food Security
- Medical Care
- Mental Health Services
- Substance Abuse Recovery Services
- Schooling
- Additional Individualized Resources (ex: clothing, daycare, immigrant documentation assistance, disability support, transportation, etc.)

In addition to providing the above resources, it is vital to provide the assistance and supports necessary to utilize them and ensure continued success in society. For example, in addition to providing resources for medical care, a reentry mentor or transition case worker should provide guidance in understanding and navigating the healthcare system, or in addition to supporting employment, provide training on how to set up a bank account and sign up for direct deposit. The following sections break down some of the key reentry needs listed above and outlines resources and programming models SAGs and practitioners can refer to.



REHABILITATION & AGE

Rehabilitation can serve as a foundation for successful reentry, as it can focus on supporting a youth's needs as opposed to punishing them. Rehabilitation should be centered around fostering support for the individual young person. The purpose of rehabilitation is to address the root cause of the issue that led youth to where they are rather than addressing symptoms. Understanding the root cause allows for determining what specific supports are needed to foster the youth's healing and well-being.

Supportive rehabilitation programming equips youth with necessary tools, support, and resources. Rehabilitation programs can include life skills and soft skills development (e.g., communication, time-management, emotional regulation, stress management, conflict resolution, and problem solving.) Acquiring these skills can better prepare youth to navigate their environment and anticipate challenges they may encounter upon reentry.

It is important to keep in mind that different individuals and age groups have different needs. For example, school-aged youth might prioritize getting reconnected to school first, whereas older youth may need employment support and financial literacy education. All young people will need support with housing, health, and positive social connections, but there is no one size fits all solution for these supports. Make sure reentry plans are developmentally appropriate to each individual and that reentry plan addresses the current priorities and needs of the young person.

Supervision and care for all youth should include development of skills that support healthy transition to adulthood. One way to support this is to create uniform statewide standards for independent living. Standards should be clear and concise, address needs, and be informed by young people. Some states use independent living curriculums delivered through service providers. However, all independent living curriculums should be reviewed periodically to ensure relevance or add to lesson plans as new skills and needs are identified. A model of successful youth-led independent living curriculum can be found here: [Mana Resources](#).

Resources:

- The [Youth in Custody Certificate Program](#) by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform provides curriculum designed to assist leaders in implementing changes to assist outcomes for youth.
- [Ch.10 Effective Programs and Services](#) outlines learning models and goals for programming aimed at addressing youth risk and need.

POTENTIAL NEEDS FOR YOUTH UNDER THE AGE OF 18:

- **Housing + Family Reunification:** Youth under the age of 18 frequently reintegrate back into the home they resided in prior to legal system involvement. Reentry planning should include creating a safety plan and reintegration plan with the youth's family/guardians to ensure smooth transitioning and reunification success.
- **Education:** Youth under the age of 18 will need to be reconnected and enrolled in school. This should include enrollment, record transfers, and resource connections both in and out of their school. Youth should receive support connecting to school counselors, teachers, and school-based resources (e.g., tutoring, clubs, or extra curricular activities). Reentry professionals should ensure education records from facilities are transferred to the young person's school, including transcripts, report cards, testing scores, or IEP/504 Plan (if applicable).
- **Transportation:** Reentry plans should include inquiring what youth needs are in regard to transportation. How do they plan on getting to school? Are they in need of access to bus or train passes?
- **Extracurricular activities:** Make sure youth know what local recreational activities are available to them in their community. This can include programming at libraries, recreation or community centers, or spaces where youth can engage with their hobbies and interests, as well as meet other peers their or connect with coaches or mentors.
- **Housing:** Youth over 18 may have different housing needs than youth under 18, as they may transition to independent living. For this reason it is vital that reentry planning includes identifying where a youth is going to stay (plan for desired location) and creates a pathway to safe and stable housing. Information on housing options can be found under the 'Housing' section.

POTENTIAL NEEDS FOR YOUTH OVER THE AGE OF 18:

- **Education:** Assess educational goals and determine if the young person is still working on a high school diploma or GED or whether they would like to attend college or a vocational program. Reentry professionals should partner with facility staff to assist youth in completing relevant enrollment or applications forms, including financial aid forms if applying to college. Information on financial aid can be found under the 'Education' section.
- **Transportation:** Reentry plans should include inquiring what youth needs are in regard to transportation. Youth may wish to secure their own transportation such as a car or bike. Reentry teams should provide resources on obtaining a driver's license, purchasing a car, obtaining insurance, etc.
- **Finances:** Youth over 18 may need resources and information on how to attain a credit card/build credit, pay bills, and achieve basic financial literacy. Resources on any system fines or fees and payment planning should be considered as well. More information and resources can be found under the 'Finances' section.
- **Medical care:** Reentry plans must cover what healthcare options are available for each young person to cover mental, physical, and dental needs. Additional information on medical care can be found under the 'Healthcare' section.

HOUSING



An integral part of successfully reentering a community is accessing safe and affordable housing. Transition planning should ensure that secure and stable housing is available during the youth's transition back to their community. For young people over 18, housing can be another opportunity to connect youth to areas outside of what they know. Assisting young people in finding jobs and housing in new cities and communities expands opportunities and new life paths where individuals can not only survive but thrive. For youth that are under 18, reentry plans should include ensuring the home they are returning to is safe and prepared to receive the young person. For youth that are over 18, plans should include information on how to secure affordable housing.

Young people should be made aware of all housing options that may suit their short-term and long-term needs. These include independent living homes, supported living facilities, and host homes (see below):

- *Transitional housing:* Transitional housing, also known as reentry residential centers, are a temporary place for people exiting prisons or jails to stay before moving on to their own housing.
- *Supported living:* Supported or supportive living/housing is a housing subsidy coupled with supportive services. This could include anything from assistance with cooking to using the internet. Programs are offered through cities and towns, through high school and community college partnerships, and through private companies.
- *Host homes:* Short-term housing intervention for young people experiencing homelessness. The goal of short-term host homes is to provide a safe, temporary, welcoming space for up to six months where young people have time to repair their relationships with self-identified and chosen family and/or make decisions about other housing options with the support of a caring housing case manager and affirming adult mentor.

Youth also need to be made aware of their housing rights and the recourse they have when their needs are not being met. The Fair Housing Act prohibits housing discrimination based on protected classes, race, color, religion, sex or sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or familial status.

Resources:

- The Department of Housing and Urban development keeps a [list of local fair housing organizations](#) that provide legal redress. Local and state governments can also provide eviction injunctions while a dispute is being investigated.
- Youth should also have guidance regarding their rights to safe housing and protections against predatory renting measures. Many states, such as [Rhode Island](#), have Renter's Handbooks that detail the state's rules for evictions, access to essential services such as gas and electricity, and rent control schemes.
- Support young people in identifying local programs and resources that provide individual access to housing and down payment supports. Options such as local churches, community centers, and FindHelp should be considered. [FindHelp](#) connects individuals to resources in their area including housing, health, and employment.
- Short term options for acute transitional needs such as [Point Source Youth](#) that provide rapid rehousing, are also available.
- Access a Point Source Youth panel on host homes [here](#).



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Even when youth are in placement, they have rights, such as the right to talk with a lawyer. SAGs and reentry practitioners should support youth education on what rights they have while incarcerated or in out-of-home placement. A lawyer may be able to help youth plan where they will live or go to school, how to get medical care or a state ID, and find other useful services after they are released. Youth may want to maintain contact with the lawyer who represented them in court, but that lawyer may not be available to help with reentry. If that lawyer cannot assist, youth can ask their reentry coordinator to help them find another lawyer who can assist with reentry. Reentry plans should include communications with the youth's lawyer prior to release.

Resources:

- The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is a nonprofit human rights organization dedicated to preserving the rights of individuals across the United States. Resources are outlined at [Know Your Rights | American Civil Liberties Union](#).
- Record Sealing and Expungement - Sealing or expunging records helps protect the privacy rights of young people. A record can make it harder for you to get a job, go back to or get into school, find a place to live or stay in your current home, or join the military. Therefore, it is important for you to get your record cleared if possible. The process to get a juvenile record cleared is different in each state. Your state may use the term “sealing,” “expunging,” “deletion,” “destruction,” or “expunction.” These are all words that describe ways in which your record can be shielded from the public in order to avoid long-term consequences. Refer to your state statute to understand state laws and how to go about shielding records. Contact your lawyer or local public defender's office to find out what you need to do to get your juvenile record cleared. An informational breakdown of record protection on a state-by-state basis can be found through the [Juvenile Law Center](#).
- Additionally, you can contact The Gault Center to get information about who may be able to assist in clearing juvenile records. Contact information can be found at [Contact – The Gault Center](#).

- Note: Ensure youth you are working with know what their confidentiality rights are regarding their legal system involvement.
- Note: Most states have pardons that the governor can implement. Ensure practitioners educate youth on the pardon process and the requirements for applying,
- Note: Inform youth about state and local laws on record sealing and the differences in requirements if the individual was charged as a youth or as an adult.

Sealing and expungement can be critical to preventing or mitigating barriers to housing and employment.



CALL TO ACTION

SAGs can recommend automatic expungement to their governors as part of their annual or bi-annual reports.

EDUCATION

Pre- and post-release educational and vocational programs are critical components of reentry. Assessing individual needs and goals and connecting youth with the appropriate resources for school enrollment, GED programs, college applications, vocational programs or apprenticeships are critical steps in the reentry planning process.

Instituting high quality educational programming inside facilities is also critical, as research shows that incarcerated youth who did not complete high school were rearrested at the highest rate of 60.4%.

Additionally, it is imperative to ensure the transfer of credits and records from correctional facilities to community schools or higher education institutions to support youth in staying on track with educational attainment goals.

School districts can use the flow of funds to all states through Title I, Part D of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act to support reintegration of justice-involved youth into schools.



Resources:

- Connect youth to local GED courses, when appropriate - locate nearby courses [here](#).
- Connect youth to scholarships and scholarship information. See examples below:
 - [Prison Scholar Fund](#)
 - [Finding and Applying for Scholarships | Federal Student Aid](#)
 - Tip: Students can always reach out to schools to ask for more financial aid!
- The [Underground Scholars Program](#) assists incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and system impacted individuals with getting into and graduating college.
- The Council of State Governments 2018 report, "[Reentry Matters Strategies and Successes of Second Chance Act Grantees](#)," outlines examples of comprehensive plans and programs focused on education (page 4-5).
- Best practices in education should be applied to schooling inside youth facilities. Support should take into account transitions to and from schooling outside of facilities. Models and practices can be found in [Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education in Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings](#).



Resources cont'd.

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, state education agencies and local education agencies are required to provide students and families experiencing homelessness with information regarding community and local public agency resources.

The following are national and local resources that educators, students, parents and advocates may use to find helpful:

- [National Alliance to End Homelessness \(NAEH\)](#)
- [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth \(NAEHCY\)](#)
- [National Center for Homeless Education \(NCHE\)](#)
- [National Network for Youth \(NN4Y\)](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection](#)

EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER READINESS SUPPORT

The stigma of incarceration and legal system involvement are challenges youth face when trying to find a job after release. As part of a comprehensive reentry plan, access to education, resume and job readiness support, job training in fields where there is a labor demand in the community before and after release can help people find and sustain meaningful employment after incarceration. It is important to introduce youth to a wide scope of job opportunities and career path exploration, both in and outside of the towns they reside in. Youth with lived-experience emphasize the importance of being introduced to new areas, occupations, connections, and opportunities outside of where they grew up in order to broaden horizons and create new paths.



Resources:

- Several organizations keep lists of companies that hire formerly incarcerated people such as the [Second Chance Employer Program](#).
- Young people should have access to resources such as [interview training](#) and [resume and cover letter guidance](#) specifically pertaining to how to write about incarceration when applying to jobs.
- The Council of State Governments 2018 report, "[Reentry Matters Strategies and Successes of Second Chance Act Grantees](#)," outlines examples of comprehensive plans and programs (page 4-5).
- Additional resources on career exploration, job preparation, and trainings can be found at [CareerOneStop](#).

CALL TO ACTION



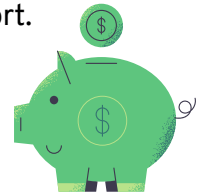
Develop partnerships with local employers to start an employment pipeline for system-involved youth and advocate for the removal of restrictions to commercial licensing.

Income stability for a young person and/or their family can play a key role in maintaining or obtaining housing. Connecting youth and families to living-wage jobs or career opportunities is crucial for long-term reentry success and homelessness prevention.

FINANCES

It is vital that young people and their families have access to financial health resources. Financial literacy can support housing stability, ensuring young people are equipped with knowledge on how to budget and pay bills, such as rent or utilities. SAGs can play a role by knowing basic financial literacy resources to be relayed to youth, families, and reentry staff. Financial health impacts social, mental, physical, and familial wellbeing. It is important that young people and their families have access to resources on budgeting, credit, compensation for their work, paying bills, and tax filings. Below is a list of resources related to financial literacy and financial support.

Resources:



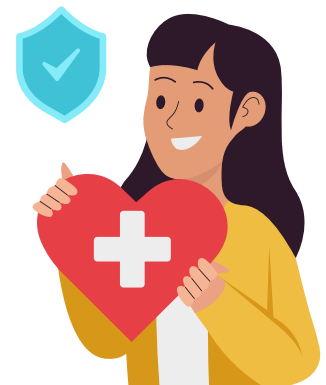
- Budgeting
 - [MyMoney | First Bank](#) is a digital banking tool that assists with budget management as well.
 - For more information on achieving financial literacy through a token economy, see [here](#).
- How to save (how much to save, how to create a savings account):
 - [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) mails free booklets on financial literacy.
- Credit development and usage
 - An Experian article (found [here](#)) covers tips on starting to establish and build credit, while outlining what specifically to avoid in order to protect young people's credit.
 - [Self lender programs](#) - Youth can send in an amount of money, and the company loans it back to the youth, improving their credit score.
- Paystubs
 - Information on what paystubs are and how to read them can be found [here](#).
- How to pay bills
 - [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills | Youth.gov](#)
 - The FDIC has a curriculum [here](#) that breaks down financial literacy skills relevant to paying bills or paying for college, transportation, and more. Curriculum additionally covers basics on borrowing and setting financial goals.
- State assistance programs (e.g., emergency rental assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), etc.)
 - [ACCESS HRA](#) - Apply for SNAP/food assistance, cash aid, child support, Medicaid, and more here.
 - A list of food assistance programs can be found [here](#).
 - The article [here](#) breaks down what government assistance programs are available and how to apply for them (ex.: TANF and student financial aid).
 - Calling 211 can connect community members to rental assistance.
- Taxes and IRS Paperwork
 - This article lists out what documentation is vital to keep and how to organize them: [How to Organize Your Important Documents](#).
 - How to fill out a W-9: About Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification | [Internal Revenue Service](#)

HEALTHCARE

The unique circumstances and challenges faced by young people transiting from the youth legal system include disrupted healthcare continuity and limited resources. The stigma associated with their involvement in the justice system often acts as barriers to receiving the necessary medical care. By offering accessible and youth-centered healthcare interventions, including regular check-ups, mental health screenings, reproductive health services, and substance abuse treatment, we can ensure their holistic well-being is prioritized and addressed. Equipping them with the knowledge and resources to advocate for their own healthcare needs is also vital in promoting self-empowerment and long-term health outcomes. Prior to release, individuals should be made aware of their healthcare options.

Resources:

- [Youth Summit Slide Deck 2022](#)
- Contraceptives and Reproductive Health
 - [Planned Parenthood](#) for free medical services without insurance.
 - Gender-inclusive resources:
 - [Outcare](#) provides a database of gender-inclusive healthcare practitioners
 - The [Televerde Foundation](#) provides reentry services for women.
- The [LGBTQ+ Healthcare Directory](#) is a free database of healthcare providers knowledgeable and sensitive to the unique health needs of LGBTQ+ people.
- How to subsidize medications:
 - Tools such as [GoodRx](#)
 - A list of [drug assistance programs by state](#)
- Youth-focused resources on social security:
 - [Youth | Social Security Administration](#)
 - Social Security - [The Red Book - Resources for Youth](#)
 - States can use Medicaid to fund wraparound services.



CALL TO ACTION

Review Medicaid State plan and advocate for it to include wraparound services.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SERVICES

System involvement often includes traumatic environmental factors, such as incarceration in detention facilities. Upon exiting the system, mental health and trauma-healing typically are often unaddressed, or youth often encounter obstacles when trying to access appropriate mental health services to support their well-being. To ensure a comprehensive reintegration plan, it is essential to include support and connections to mental health services tailored specifically to youth exiting placement or detention.

CALL TO ACTION

SAGs and practitioners should identify partners at mental and behavioral health agencies, hospital systems, or local providers to find existing resources. Youth and family input can be crucial to determine if existing resources are meeting their needs or what challenges exist in accessing and participating in these services.

Resources:

- [How to Access Therapy](#)
- [Therapy For Black Girls](#), [Therapy for Black Men](#)
- [Inclusive Therapists](#)
- [National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network](#)
- The Mental Health America's [2023 BIPOC Mental Health Toolkit](#) is filled with free resources to support teams in taking action for BIPOC mental health.
- Stress management tools:
 - [Dialectical Behavior](#) Therapy (DBT) Tools
 - Connecting with support group
 - Meditation / yoga practices
 - [AAKOMA Project](#): offering 5 FREE sessions of virtual therapy to racially/culturally marginalized individuals nationwide
- [Ok2Talk](#): online platform where individuals can anonymously share/express their feelings and experiences with mental health
- [The Steve Fund](#): a crisis line specifically for youth of color (Text STEVE to 741741)



SUBSTANCE USE

Substance use is a risk factor that should also be considered in reentry planning. This risk is often exacerbated by a lack of available substance use prevention, education, or rehabilitation services. Identifying local, age appropriate, and financially accessible resources is critical for youth to support successful reentry and possible risks of recidivism, especially since refraining from drug use is a frequent condition of release that may be monitored by a court, probation, or parole agency.

Resources:

- Rutgers Juvenile Justice and Youth Development Certificate Program occasionally offers a course on Adolescent Substance Use. The course is worth continuing education credits and provides vital foundational knowledge of youth substance use with the goal of improving service delivery and quality of care in criminal justice settings. Course and contact information can be found [here](#).
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA) outlines best practices for successful reentry from criminal justice settings for people living with mental health conditions and/or substance use disorders [here](#).
- [Substance Abuse Prevention](#) found on Youth.gov outlines elements of effective prevention programs.
- The Council of State Governments 2018 report, "[Reentry Matters Strategies and Successes of Second Chance Act Grantees](#)," outlines treatment and information on substance use (page 8-9).

YOUTH AUTONOMY & ENGAGEMENT

What does authentic engagement look like when working with youth and families? Youth engagement should take the form of autonomy considering each young person knows their needs best. It is vital to emphasize youth autonomy and empowerment throughout the reentry process. Each young person has unique needs, interests, and goals. Youth autonomy in reentry planning enables practitioners to tailor supports to align with these individual needs.



REENTRY MENTORSHIP



It is important to foster community-based care and positive relationships for young people outside of the facility to ensure young people feel safe and supported during the reentry process. One evidence-based way to support reentry success is providing youth access to mentors before the youth leaves the facility. Mentors should conduct consistent pre- and post-transition check-ins and should be available to the young person to answer any questions. Mentors should be paired with a young person based on an established criteria that promotes a good fit. Reentry mentors that have had lived experience in the system itself or who come from the same communities as the young person, frequently referred to as credible messengers, can be effective in building trusting and receptive relationships with the young people they are working with.

Resources:

- [MENTOR](#) assists with connecting young people to mentors.
- The Council of State Governments Justice Center and the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute, with the support of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention released the following resource in 2024: [Restorative Justice Practices and Credible Messengers: Promising, Innovative Approaches for Improving Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System](#). The document identifies key takeaways from the research, implementation considerations, and shares program examples.
- Additional resources on how to develop credible messenger programs can be found via the [Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement](#).

CALL TO ACTION

SAGs who identify mentorship as a priority can allocate funding or support finding credible messengers and culturally specific mentors for youth. This work should be done in partnership with youth SAG members and community.

GENERAL REENTRY TOOLS & REENTRY-FOCUSED ORGANIZATIONS

- Youth.gov breaks down best reentry practices, as well as directs practitioners to diversion programs and points of intervention. See more at [Reentry | Youth.gov](#).
- The National Reentry Resource Center has compiled a list of organizations and service providers who can address different reentry needs. The list can be found [here](#).
- The Juvenile Justice Information Exchange has created a collection of resources from a variety of organizations all addressing reentry and aftercare, found [here](#).
- Find information on how practitioners can build a reentry team and how youth can navigate post-system involvement at [Reentry Starts Here: A Guide for Youth in Long-Term Juvenile Corrections and Treatment Programs](#).
- [Root & Rebound](#) is an organization of advocates, activists, and lawyers that assists people navigating reentry. Their aim is to reduce the harms perpetuated by mass incarceration through legal advocacy, public education, policy reform and litigation. More information can be found [here](#).
- In-facility reentry program model: [San Bernardino County Probation Department Gateway to ARISE Orientation Handbook](#).
- [Return Home Baltimore](#) is an organizational model breaking down what reentry services are needed.

HOTLINES

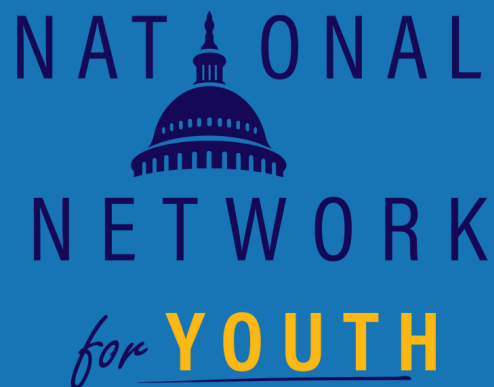


- [211](#) - Calling 211 can assist people with meeting needs such as housing, food, transportation, health care, and more. It is the most comprehensive source of information about local resources and services in the country.
- Meals on Wheels - 1-888-998-6325, can find local meal provider [here](#).
- Free Telephone Counseling Hotlines in the United States can be found at [OpenCounseling](#)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 24/7 365 days a year
- National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Routing Service: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) 24/7 365 days a year
- Runaway Safeline: 1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929) 24/7 365 days a year
- Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888 24/7 365 days a year
- Trans Lifeline: 877-565-8860 24/7 365 days a year
- LGBT National Youth Talkline: 800-246-7743



Supporting youth as they transition out of the legal system is crucial for their successful reintegration into society. Effective reentry is crucial for reducing recidivism and promoting positive outcomes for youth. This toolkit is meant to provide an overview of best practices for supporting reentry, with a focus on evidence-based strategies and programs. Implementing best practices for reentry requires a multi-disciplinary approach and collaboration among various stakeholders and community members. By focusing on individualized planning, evidence-based interventions, and community support, State Advisory Groups can ensure young people reintegrate into their communities and build brighter futures.

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