

PHILADELPHIA'S REENTRY SERVICES LANDSCAPE



Executive Summary • AUGUST 2019

Philadelphia Reentry Coalition (PRC) increases communication, facilitates collaboration, and builds capacity to create a stronger reentry support network for Philadelphia's returning citizens.¹ The Coalition's 115 member organizations include community-based organizations, service providers, researchers, advocates, returning citizens, faith-based groups, and local, state, and federal government agencies.

In the winter of 2018, the Coalition worked with Temple University's Department of Criminal Justice to conduct a survey to learn more about the organizations and programs that provide reentry services to adults in the Philadelphia area. This survey, completed by Coalition member organizations, asked questions about the Coalition, how member organizations support returning citizens, the programs and services provided, program capacity, operations and eligibility characteristics, funding, data collection processes, and data sharing. We received responses from 102 of the 106 member organizations we had at the time, giving us an overall response rate of 96%. Of the 89 organizations that offer some kind of programs, direct services, or resources to people with criminal justice system involvement, 71 organizations (or 80%) completed the comprehensive inventory of services portion of the survey about 118 separate programs. **While not exhaustive of all programs and services represented within the PRC, or of all reentry resources available in Philadelphia, these programs provide a meaningful sample from which we can obtain a baseline for organizational capacity, services, strengths, gaps and needs.**

Key Findings

Across a wide breadth of topics, several key findings stand out from the survey data. First, that Philadelphia has a solid foundation of reentry services and cross-sector collaboration to build on to improve reentry outcomes. Second, there is a clear need for continued alignment of fragmented and siloed efforts. Third, practices of tracking outcomes and impact are inconsistent. Fourth, there are significant gaps in Philadelphia's reentry services, which we need to address and continuously assess. Finally, we see many opportunities to offer a stronger network of supports to people coming home – and break the cycle of recidivism- by working together.

Finding #1: Philadelphia has a solid foundation of reentry services and cross-sector collaboration to build on.

- ◆ **Many reentry and related programs are collectively serving tens of thousands of people annually.** Survey data represent 118 distinct programs across 71 organizations. Programs reported serving as few as 22,930 and at most 36,425 people annually (with duplication). For comparison, in 2015

¹ The term "returning citizen" is commonly used in Philadelphia to refer to community members who are formerly incarcerated. The term is not highly technical, and is defined by people differently. In this report, "returning citizens" refers to Philadelphians who have been previously incarcerated (and does not refer to citizenship status).

an estimated 25,000 people returned to Philadelphia from incarceration. The 98 programs that reported on budget/funding represent a total estimated annual budget of at least \$40,050,000.

- ◆ **Existing untapped capacity could serve more people.** 82% of programs do not have a waiting list, 70% do not have a cap for participants. In total, programs estimate that they could serve at least 7,723 and at most 13,200 more people annually *without* additional resources.
- ◆ **Wide-ranging stakeholder participation in the Coalition reflects a shared commitment to aligning reentry efforts and goals.** The Coalition is made up of a wide array of stakeholders that includes non-profit and government agencies, grassroots organizations, academic and research institutions, and others. Almost 90% of individual respondents participate in at least one of the Coalition's subcommittees. On average, people estimated that they had participated in 6 Coalition activities or events in the previous year, and 16% indicated they participated in more than 12 activities or events.
- ◆ **Evidence of the Reentry Coalition's impact is emerging.** 75% of member organizations indicated that they benefit from their involvement in the Coalition. When members described specific partnerships that developed through the Coalition and have had positive impacts on their work, a few key themes emerged, suggesting that some of the Coalition's impacts include: deepening partnerships between providers and government agencies; development of one-off partnerships that improve resources for clients; facilitation of partnerships that result in program development; the availability of a central hub; and the building of community around a shared purpose of reentry. One member wrote, "the Coalition has enabled us to broadly connect to the systems that affect the population [that we serve]."
- ◆ **There is optimism about reentry collaboration in Philadelphia.** Members overwhelmingly agree that reentry organizations and agencies across Philadelphia are increasingly working together more and/or engaging in more aligned activities. Over 78% of members believe that collectively we are moving in the RIGHT direction.

Finding #2: There is a clear need for continued alignment of fragmented and siloed efforts.

- ◆ **The ecosystem of reentry services is made up of many small programs and small organizations.** 65% of organizations serve fewer than 1,000 people annually. More than half of the programs surveyed are serving 500 or fewer people annually. 44% are serving 250 or fewer people annually. Almost half (44%) of the programs that shared funding information reported annual budgets of less than \$50,000 a year. Another 27% reported annual program budgets between \$50,000 and \$250,000.
- ◆ **Current resources are mismatched with needs.** Programs are not spread evenly across the city, nor does the concentration of program sites mirror the estimated needs of Philadelphia's returning citizens. Although program sites can serve different numbers of people, it is notable that a ZIP code like 19124 has 3 to 4 program sites, and in 2015 over 1,500 people returned there from incarceration (compared to 19104, where there were more than 9 program sites and fewer than 400 people returned to in 2015).²
- ◆ **Many programs are not formally partnered with criminal justice agencies.** 53% of programs had no formalized partnership with criminal justice agencies, 28% had at least one partnership but none that included a financial contract with a criminal justice agency, and another 19% had services contracted by an agency.

² <https://data.phila.gov/visualizations/prison-releases/>

- ◆ **No single funder drives program alignment; reentry services are supported by multiple funding sources.** Only 20% of programs get any of their budget from state government, followed by 28% who get funding from federal government. Just over 30%, or 65 programs, get funding from the City of Philadelphia; for half of those, the funding constitutes less than a third of their budget. Overall, 46% of programs have no government funding at all. 18% of programs reported relying on private donations or charitable contributions for more than a third of their funding, and 29% received more than a third of their budget from private foundations.

Finding #3: Practices of tracking outcomes and impact are inconsistent.

- ◆ **Recidivism is frequently not tracked as a performance measure.** Almost 70% of programs do not track recidivism as a performance measure. Slightly more than half of the programs that track recidivism as a performance measure get data from a criminal justice agency or information system.
- ◆ **Participant information is collected but frequently not stored electronically or updated regularly.** While over half of the programs collect many types of information about participants (such as biographical, current services received, career assessment/plan, or a needs assessment), that information is not frequently stored electronically and updated regularly. For example, 42% of programs collect information about recidivism, 27% update that information regularly, and only 22% store the information electronically.
- ◆ **Different types of client outcomes are not tracked equally.** 62% of programs track employment-related outcomes, 57% track education, 42% track progress on reentry plans, 34% track housing, 31% track health outcomes, 28% track substance use, 26% track mental health outcomes, and only 21% track outcomes related to family.
- ◆ **A majority of programs have never been evaluated.** 57% of programs have never been evaluated at all, and only 31% have had an external evaluation. 23% have been evaluated internally.

Finding #4: There are significant gaps in Philadelphia’s reentry services, which we need to address and continuously assess.

- ◆ **Across many domain areas, employment support services—not core education and training—are offered most frequently.** Basic job readiness is offered by 61% of programs, with soft skills building a close behind at 58%. 54% offer computer access, and 52% offer job search services.
- ◆ **Key basic survival resources, and some types of education, are among the least frequently offered services.** Financial assistance with utilities, rent assistance, family prison visitation support, medical appointments transportation, ESL, and postsecondary education are each offered by 12% or fewer of programs.
- ◆ **Programs have mixed eligibility requirements.** The programs are associated with a mix of eligibility criteria that *may* limit capacity to serve those who are at the highest risk of recidivism.³ Only a quarter of programs have no specific eligibility criteria and many programs represented in the survey serve only those with an exclusive referral source. Almost a third have criteria related to age. There are programs

³ Eligibility requirements can function to both limit access generally *or* increase access for targeted groups, depending on how they are structured.

(at least 50%) that will serve those arrested and convicted of arson and those arrested and convicted of sex offenses, which are two groups of people sometimes prohibited from accessing services.

- ◆ **Many programs do not have specialized services for returning citizens or flexible hours, and almost none have childcare.** 51% of all of the programs have specialized services for returning citizens or people involved with the criminal justice system. Over half of the programs accept walk-ins. Less than 20% of programs have evening hours, only 10% have weekend hours, and only 3% have child care.
- ◆ **There is a varied availability of case management across programs.** Nearly a quarter of programs do not offer any case management at all. Nearly three quarters (68%) of programs employ basic resource management, which has no intentional follow up. Fewer than half of programs offer long-term case management that includes services and assistance for at least a year. 29% of programs provide intensive case management, defined by a minimum of twice weekly services and follow up, and only 8% of programs offer medical case management.
- ◆ **Explicitly reentry-focused programs have more limited capacity, stricter eligibility, more services specialized by gender, but no specialized services for LGBTQ community.** Compared to the larger group of 118 programs, these programs are slightly more likely to have a waiting list or a yearly cap on the number of participants they can serve, and are less able to serve additional participants with existing resources. Explicitly reentry-focused programs are more likely to require an exclusive referral source, have criminal justice system involvement eligibility requirements, or include substance use as a criteria, and less likely to have no eligibility requirements at all. The reentry-focused programs were noticeably more likely to have specialized services for men or women. Notably, none of the reentry-focused programs in this sample had specialized services for LGBTQ individuals.

Finding #5: We see many opportunities to offer a stronger network of supports to people coming home – and break the cycle of recidivism—by working together.

- **Reentry Coalition member organizations suggested numerous ways that the Coalition could improve reentry outcomes by deepening collaboration to help reentry programs achieve greater impact both individually and collectively.** Respondents wanted more active facilitation of partnerships between service providers and government agencies, stronger policy advocacy and public education, increased centralization of information about reentry resources, more capacity-building for community-based organizations including support obtaining additional funding, better research and data, and new mechanisms of accountability for the quality of service delivery and evaluation of impact.

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this report, including the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition members who completed the survey.