

Measuring Success Beyond Recidivism

Metrics, Data Sources, and Lessons From the Field

This project was supported by Grant No. 2019-MU-BX-K041 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



Virtual Meeting/ Conference Recording Notice

This session is hosted by the National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC). The NRRC is operated by the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) which allows for the recording of audio, visuals, participants, and other information sent, verbalized, or utilized during business related meetings. By joining a meeting, you automatically consent to such recordings. Any participant who prefers to participate via audio only should disable their video camera so only their audio will be captured. Video and/or audio recordings of any AIR session shall not be transmitted to an external third party without the permission of AIR.

What Is the Office of Justice Programs?

- The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provides grant funding, training, research, and statistics to the criminal justice community.
- OJP is one of three grant-making components of the Department of Justice along with the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).

Office of Justice Programs

BJA - Bureau of Justice Assistance

BJS - Bureau of Justice Statistics

NIJ - National Institute of Justice

OVC - Office for Victims of Crime

OJJDP - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

SMART - Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking

U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance

BJA works with communities, governments, and nonprofit organizations to reduce crime, recidivism, and unnecessary confinement, and promote a safe and fair criminal justice system.



**BJA Director
Karhlton F. Moore**



Five Major Strategic Focus Areas

Improve public safety through measures which build trust with the community and ensure an effective criminal justice system

Reduction in recidivism and prevention of unnecessary confinement and interactions with the criminal justice system

Integration of evidence-based, research-driven strategies into the day-to-day operations of BJA and the programs BJA administers and supports

Increasing program effectiveness with a renewed emphasis on data analysis, information sharing, and performance management

Ensuring organizational excellence through outstanding administration and oversight of all of BJA's strategic investments

Fund – Invest diverse funding streams to accomplish goals.

Educate – Research, develop, and deliver what works.

Equip – Create tools and products to build capacity and improve outcomes.

Partner – Consult, connect, and convene.

Track News and Updates on Social Media

#ReentryMatters

#SecondChanceMonth

#SecondChanceMonth23



Session Overview

- Introductions
- Examining Recidivism as a Reentry Outcome
 - Its uses and limits
- Exploring Alternate Measures & Data Sources of Reentry Success
 - Well-being, stability, and desistance
- Using Alternate Reentry Success Measures in Evaluation
 - Northeast Kentucky Adult Community Reentry Program Evaluation
- Q&A

Introductions



Janeen Buck Willison, MSJ
Senior Justice Researcher
Justice Practice Area
RTI International



Lisa Shannon, PhD, MSW
Professor of Social Work
Morehead State University

Morgan Taylor, BSW
Morehead State
University



Alisha Williams, MSW
Project Manager
Mountain Comprehensive Care Center

Robin Henry
Peer Support CSA
Mountain Comprehensive Care Center

Recidivism: Definition and Uses

- Foundational criminal legal system (CLS) concept
 - Refers to an individual's return to law-breaking behavior as measured by a new arrest, prosecution, conviction, incarceration, or violation (e.g., noncompliance with a community supervision order)
- Often calculated as a simple binary (yes/no) metric
- Used broadly to measure CLS performance, program efficacy, and participant success and rehabilitation

Recidivism: Limits as a Primary Outcome

- Measures failure, not success
- Misaligned with desistance
- Conflates individual behavior and system responses
- Provides an incomplete measure of program performance
- May not be the most salient outcome for many people returning to the community after incarceration

Measuring Beyond Recidivism

Key constructs that reflect the core goals of reentry (NASEM 2022)

- Well-being
 - ❑ Physical, mental, and emotional health; cognition; quality of life
- Social reintegration and stability
 - ❑ Housing, employment, education, social/family supports, civic engagement
- Desistance
 - ❑ Changes in number, frequency, and severity of law-breaking behaviors; increase in pro-social behaviors/attitudes

Measures, Methods, and Data Sources

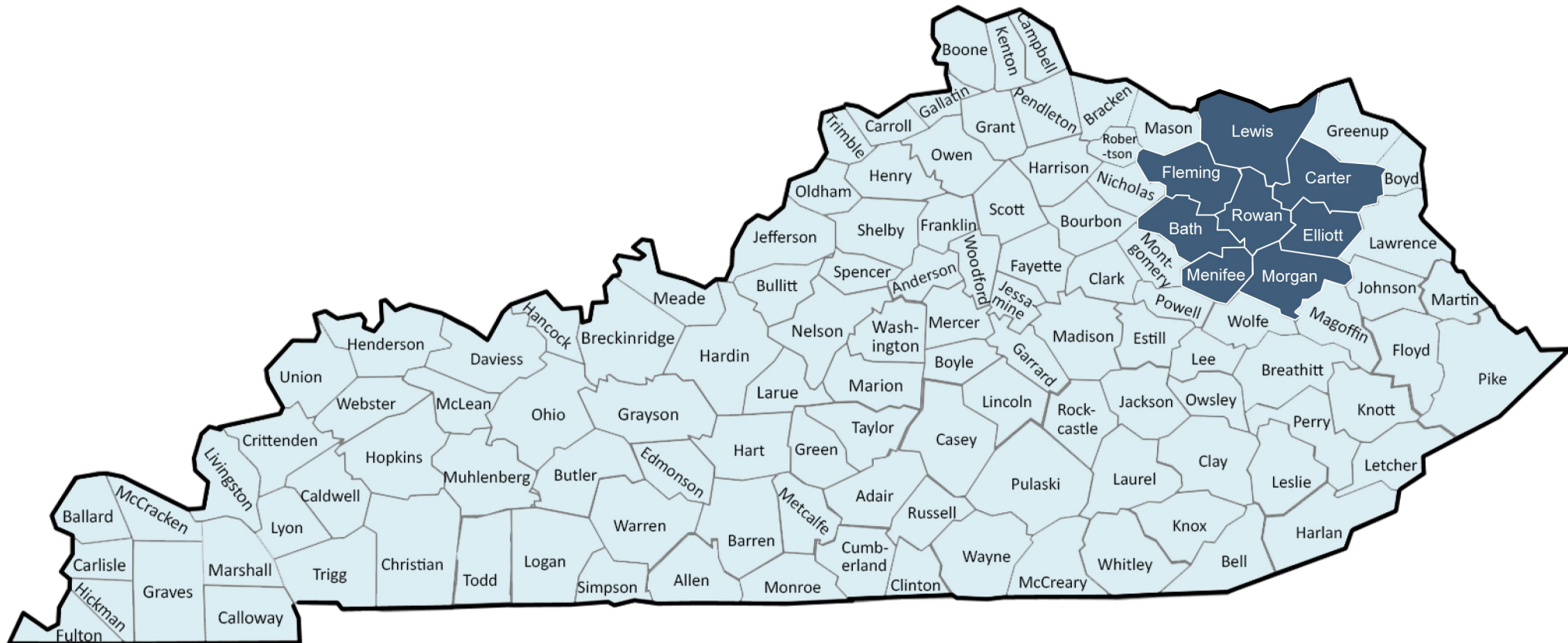
- Align outcomes with core program goals and activities
 - ❑ Develop a logic model
- Engage staff and program participants to identify and define key outcome beyond CLS involvement
- Use a mix of methods and data sources
 - ❑ Administrative data (program data, CLS, and social services records)
 - ❑ Self-report data from brief surveys, interviews, and focus groups
 - ❑ Explore validated assessments and other tools or scales; incorporate into program operations
- Consider resources and comparison group

Mountain Comprehensive Care Center (MCCC): Northeastern Kentucky Adult Community Reentry Program Project Implementation, Evaluation, and Lessons Learned

Lisa Shannon
Morgan Taylor
Alisha Williams
Robin Henry



MCCC Second Chance Act Initiative



MCCC Reentry Program



- **Objective:** Reduce recidivism by 25% and improve public safety



- **Target population:** 150 medium to high-risk adults based on the LSI-R assessment



- **Eligibility:** Services provided during the inmate's last 90 days of detention. Participants have to be released to Rowan County or surrounding counties.

Core Components



- Peer support



- CSA (Community Support Associate)



- Case management



- Mental health/SUD treatment (pre-release and post-release)



- LSI-R assessment, psychosocial assessment



- Evidence-based curriculum (New Direction)

Pre-Release Activities



- Order birth certificates



- Order GED transcripts



- \$20 hygiene assistance (every 6 weeks)



- EKART/SITE (assistance with clothing for employment)



- Application for sober living



- Scheduled Vivitrol (as needed)



- Provide clothing for release

Post-Release Activities



- Provide transportation and/or bus passes
- Order transcripts
- Set up email
- Set up appointment for health screening
- Set up appointment for ID/license
- Sign up for benefits (food stamps, health insurance, etc.)
- Food box
- Provide participants with clothing, bedding, laundry basket, and detergent

Evaluation Components

There were **three** primary components to the project evaluation:



Process Evaluation

- Qualitative interviews with key stakeholders (annually; administration, staff, and participants). *These data are not discussed as part of this presentation.*



Outcome Evaluation

- Interviews/self-report data: pre-release (baseline) and follow-up (3 months post-release)



Secondary Data

- Excel file containing information from MCCC and other agencies providing information on recidivism, employment, housing, services linkages for family stability and access to entitlement benefits

Evaluation Questions

(1) What community partnerships are integral to establishing a comprehensive and holistic reentry process?

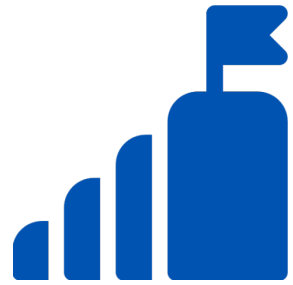
(Primary sources of information: process evaluation data)

(2) Does the provision of services to individuals exiting the Rowan County Detention Center (RCDC) impact post-release recidivism?

(Primary sources of information: secondary data)








(3) Does the provision of services to individuals exiting the RCDC impact other individual outcomes (e.g., family stability, economic stability, housing stability, substance use, mental health functioning, and access to entitlement benefits)?

(Primary sources of information: outcome evaluation & secondary data)



Key Success Measures **Beyond Recidivism**

Key Success Measures

- Per the grant solicitation, one of the success measures was
 -  ○ Post-discharge **recidivism**
- On the basis of grant goals/objectives and holistic focus on individual recovery/reentry, other success measures of interest were
 -  ○ Employment/Education
 -  ○ Housing stability/Living arrangements
 -  ○ Substance use
 -  ○ Mental health functioning
 -  ○ Family stability/Reunification
 -  ○ Access to entitlement benefits

Measures: Outcome Evaluation



- **Substance use:** abstinence (past 90 days)



- **Mental health functioning:** mental health symptoms (i.e., anxiety, depression, cognitive difficulties, trouble controlling violent behavior, and taking prescribed medication for a psychological or emotional problem; past 90 days)



- **Employment:** employment pattern (past 90 days)








- **Education:** being enrolled in a school or job training program (currently)



- **Housing stability/Living arrangements:** living arrangements (past 30 days)

Measures: Secondary Data

-  • **Recidivism:** re-incarceration in the **12 months** post-jail discharge (and after community reentry) *(This definition was selected to be consistent with the baseline recidivism rate included in the grant.)*
-  • **Employment:** post-jail discharge employment (any)
-  • **Housing stability/Living arrangements:** participant's receipt of housing placement services from MCCC (any)
-  • **Family stability/reunification:** *for those individuals who needed reunification services, the receipt of pre- or post-release services from MCCC (any)*
-  • **Access to entitlement benefits:** post-release receipt of entitlement benefits (e.g., Medicaid, SSI/SSDI, SNAP)



Examples From the Final Project Data

Final Data: Outcome Evaluation (1)

- **Substance Use (Abstinence/past 90 days):**



- **30% increase** in *alcohol* abstinence



- **Significant 1,300% increase** in *drug* abstinence ($p < 0.001$)

- **Mental Health Functioning (past 90 days):**



- **22% decrease** in anxiety symptoms



- **28% decrease** in depression symptoms



- **23% decrease** in cognitive difficulties (trouble understanding, concentrating, or remembering)



- **13% increase** in controlling violent behavior



- **31% increase** in taking prescription medication for a psychological or emotional problem

Final Data: Outcome Evaluation (2)

- **Employment (past 90 days):**



- **Significant 65% decrease** in being *unemployed and looking for work* ($p < 0.001$)



- **Significant 400% increase** in being *employed full-time* ($p < 0.001$)



- **100% increase** in being *unemployed and disabled*

- **Education (current enrollment):**



- **100% increase** in being *enrolled part-time*

- **Housing stability/Living arrangements (past 30 days):**



- **42% decrease** in living in *someone else's apartment, room, or house*



- **41% increase** in living in their *own/rented apartment, room, or house*



- **73% decrease** in living on the *street*



- **100% decrease** in living in a *shelter*

Final Data: Secondary Data (1)



- **Recidivism (12 months post-jail discharge):** 32% recidivism rate in the 12 months after discharge



- **Employment (any/post-jail discharge):**
 - 64% had employment after jail discharge
 - 30% were looking for employment after jail discharge



- **Housing stability/Living arrangements:**
 - 91% received housing services

Final Data: Secondary Data (2)

- **Family stability/Reunification:**



- 64% received pre-release services
- 67% received post-release services

- **Access to entitlement benefits (any/post-jail discharge):**



- 65% received any entitlement benefits
- 64% received Medicaid
- 50% received SNAP
- 9% received SSI/SSDI



Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned



- Close **partnership and collaboration** between the project and evaluation team are key



- Having the **appropriate community partnerships** is key to getting the various sources for needed data (e.g., the DOC/jail for recidivism data)



- **Regular (and honest) communication**



- Collection of a variety of outcomes provides rich data but adds **complexity** as other measures may be harder to collect (e.g., family reunification)

Thank you!

Janeen Buck Willison

Senior Justice Researcher

jbuckwillison@rti.org

<https://www.rti.org/>

Lisa Shannon

Evaluation Director

Professor of Social Work

Morehead State University

l.shannon@moreheadstate.edu

Alisha Williams

Project Manager

Mountain Community Care Center

<https://www.mtcomp.org/>

Join the NRRC's distribution list to receive
National Reentry Resource Center updates!

<https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/subscribe>

