

Planning & Implementation Guide

Second Chance Act

Technology-Based Career Training Program for Incarcerated Adults and Juveniles

DESCRIPTION

This Planning & Implementation Guide is intended for recipients of the Second Chance Act Technology-Based Career Training Program for Incarcerated Adults and Juveniles grants administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. Grantees will complete this guide in partnership with a technical assistance provider from the National Reentry Resource Center over the course of their grant.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center prepared this guide with support from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

About the Planning & Implementation Guide

The National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) has prepared this Planning & Implementation Guide (P&I Guide) to support grantees in developing and refining a technology-based career training program that will support successful reentry and reduce recidivism. The guide is not intended to serve as a step-by-step blueprint, but rather to cultivate discussion on best practices, identify considerations for your collaborative effort, and help you work through key decisions and implementation challenges.

Although the guide was developed as a tool for grantees, it also serves as an important tool for your NRRC technical assistance provider (“TA provider”) to understand the status and progress of your project, the types of challenges you are encountering, and the ways your TA provider might be helpful to you in making your project successful.

You and your TA provider will use your responses to the self-assessment to collaboratively develop priorities for technical assistance.

Any questions about this guide should be directed to your TA provider.

Contents of the Guide

The guide is divided into six sections, each with assessment questions, exercises, and discussion prompts. The self-assessment questions and exercises are built on evidence-based principles and emerging practices. Your answers will provide insight into your program’s strengths and identify areas for improvement. As you work through the sections, take note of the corresponding supporting resources in the final section, which contain suggestions for further reading and provide access to important resources and tools. Your TA provider may also send you additional information on specific topics to complement certain sections. If you need additional information or resources on a topic, please reach out to your TA provider.

TA Provider Contact Information

Name:

Phone:

Email:

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SECTION 1: GETTING STARTED AND IDENTIFYING GOALS

Although your TA provider has read the project narrative that you submitted in response to the Second Chance Act (SCA) solicitation, there may have been updates or developments since your original application was submitted. This exercise is intended to give your TA provider a sense of your current project goals and your initial technical assistance needs.

Please provide the following documents, if available, to your TA Provider at your earliest convenience:

- MOUs and information-sharing agreements Training program overview
 Program policy and procedure manual Participant orientation materials



EXERCISE 1: BASIC INFORMATION

A. Grantee Information

Lead Agency (<i>Who applied for the grant?</i>)			
Primary Agency (<i>Who is managing the day-to-day operations of the grant program?</i>)			
Project Name:			
Primary Point(s) of Contact	Name:		Name:
	Title/Role:		Title/Role:
	Agency:		Agency:
	Email:		Email:
	Phone:		Phone:
Correctional Partner	Correctional Agency (<i>e.g., Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections</i>)		Facility Name (<i>e.g., Hunt Correctional Center</i>)
		Facility Type (<i>e.g., State men's prison</i>)	

B. Partner Inventory

Organization	Role in Program/Support Offered
Strategy for continued engagement:	
Strategy for continued engagement:	
Strategy for continued engagement:	
Strategy for continued engagement:	



EXERCISE 2: IDENTIFYING PROGRAM GOALS AND TRACKING PROGRESS

All SCA grant programs are tasked with working to reduce recidivism. Including reducing recidivism, list the goals for your program, the outcome indicators associated with those goals, and your strategy for tracking progress toward those goals.

Goal	Outcome Indicators	Strategy for Tracking Progress Toward Goal
<i>Example: Improve post-release employability for formerly incarcerated men.</i>	<i>Example: Employed in a part-time or full-time job</i>	<i>Example: Case managers will meet monthly with participants and report on successes. After one year, case managers will follow up with participants regarding employment each quarter.</i>



SECTION 2: DEFINING OR REFINING YOUR TARGET POPULATION

It is important to have criteria to define your target population, as your grant award is a limited resource. Your community will likely have more individuals who could benefit than you are able to serve; your grant project should serve those who are most likely to benefit from it. Having clearly defined criteria also helps to clarify what information you will need to obtain through screening, assessment, referral, or other processes to determine whether individuals are eligible.



EXERCISE 3: DEFINING OR REFINING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligibility Criteria	Qualifying Characteristics (What qualifies someone for this program?)	When and how is eligibility determined?
Example: Risk of Reoffending	Example: A moderate to high risk for recidivism	Example: The LSI-R tool is administered within 48 hours of intake by appropriately trained corrections staff.
Risk of Reoffending (e.g. Medium to high risk)		
Age/Gender		
Education (e.g., 9 th grade reading and math level)		
Incarceration Location (e.g., ABC County Jail)		
Time until Release (e.g., 18 months)		
Release Status and/or Location (e.g., Released on parole to ABC County)		
Other (please specify):		



EXERCISE 4: ASSESSING YOUR RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS

A. Screening and Assessment Process Table

Type of screening and/or assessment tool	Criminogenic	Mental Health	Substance Use	Employability	Educational	Interests Inventory
Name of tool (specify year/generation)						
Who administers the assessment?						
When is the assessment administered?						
How are the assessment results recorded and stored (electronic database, electronic spreadsheet, paper files, etc.)?						
Which partners have access to the results?						
Do they receive this information automatically or is it available upon request?						
Is the tool re-administered? If so, when and by whom?						
Do staff receive training on the proper use of the tool? (y/n)						
Do staff receive booster training sessions on the proper use of the tool? (y/n)						
List any additional screening or assessment tools that the program uses.						

B. Recruitment and Enrollment Process

Describe the point at which potential participants first learn about the program, how is it presented to them, and the process for enrolling eligible individuals in the program.

C. Enrollment Definition

Describe the minimum level of participation needed to consider someone a program participant. (This is independent of program completion)

D. Participant Orientation Process

Describe how new participants are oriented to the program after enrollment.



SECTION 3: SERVICE PROVISION AND SUPPORT

Evaluating what services and resources your program provides can help to assess your current capacity and develop a strategy to address any gaps that are identified. This inventory can also help you to anticipate challenges that may arise while addressing a range of individual needs.



EXERCISE 5: SERVICE PROVISION AND EVIDENCE-BASED CURRICULA

*Provide an inventory of your program's services, including interventions and methods. For example, the service might be an evidence-based curriculum such as *Thinking for a Change* or cognitive-behavioral therapy, or it might encompass other support services such as transportation, housing, or a GED class.*

Service Provided to Program Participants	Curriculum Name	Pre-release, Post-release, or Both	Service-Delivery Method ¹	Service Provider ²	In-House, Contracted, or Referral	Available to All Program Participants ? (y/n)	Grant-Funded? (y/n)



EXERCISE 6: CONNECTIONS TO HEALTH CARE COVERAGE AND OTHER BENEFITS

¹ Service-Delivery Method: e.g., one-on-one, group setting, etc.

² Service Provider: name of provider

Do you or a partner agency track the number of people in the target population who have public health care coverage?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you or a partner agency track the type of coverage (e.g., Qualified Health Plan [QHP]; Medicaid; Medicare)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you or a partner agency help participants apply for health care coverage?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you or a partner agency track the number of people you assist in applying for health care coverage?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Describe any challenges you or your collaborators have had in helping participants apply for public health care coverage.		
Do you or a partner agency track the number of people in the target population who come in with SSI and/or SSDI benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have staff in your agency or partners received training in SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are you or a partner agency tracking the number of people you assist in applying for SSI and/or SSDI?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Describe any challenges you or your partner agencies have had in helping participants apply for SSI and/or SSDI.		



SECTION 4: CAREER TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Preparing for your technology-based career training program will likely require you to acquire equipment, hire or contract with instructors/trainers, and develop job-placement and employment-support programming. During the planning process, consider the sustainability of your initiative and how that will influence certain decisions such as purchasing or renting equipment, hiring instructors in-house or contracting with a partnering agency, etc.



EXERCISE 7: PREPARATION AND PLANNING

Equipment, Supplies, and Trainers/Instructors

Will you purchase or rent equipment or supplies necessary for participation and completion of the vocational training?	Purchasing	Renting	N/A
Notes:			
If purchasing, once the equipment and supplies are installed, will they remain in use after grant funding ends?	Yes	No	N/A
Notes:			
Are trainers/instructors employed by an outside, contracted organization or employed by the lead agency?	Contracted	Lead Agency	N/A
Notes:			
If trainers/instructors are employed by the lead agency, please explain the qualifications and training process required for the position. If they are contracted, please specify what type of agency employs them (e.g., accredited school/college, industry employer, union, etc.)			
Notes:			



EXERCISE 8: BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND JOB DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Job placement is an important component of vocational reentry programs. A program participant may be job ready and have the necessary skills to find sustainable employment but not be hired because of collateral consequences and employer concerns. There are two elements of addressing these issues:

- Engaging the participant: providing ongoing employment, retention, and advancement services to program participants (e.g., counseling, transportation assistance)
- Engaging employers: emphasize participants' skill sets and qualifications, be available to provide employers or participants with certifications and credentials, educate about employer benefits (e.g., Federal Bonding Program, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, subsidized employment)

A. Employer Training and Business Engagement

A priority consideration in the Technology-Based Career Training grants is to “provide ongoing training to employers and potential employers on successful approaches to working with trainees/employees engaged through the program.” If this is a part of the program, please use the box below to explain how employers will be engaged and what the training comprises. If this is not a part of the program, please indicate any interest in including ongoing training in the future.

B. Job Development and Retention Support

Please describe your job-development, job-placement, and retention-support strategies.



SECTION 5: DATA COLLECTION, PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT, AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

You will need to collect data for different purposes: to meet the requirements of your grant, to track participant progress through the program and other grant project activities (e.g., program operations), to measure the grant project's performance on an ongoing basis (performance measurement), and to determine whether the grant project is operating as intended and having the intended results (process and outcome evaluations, respectively). It is important to understand the different uses of data early on during your planning to help you determine the best way to collect, manage, and analyze them.

Establishing effective data management begins with determining what information should be collected, what tools will be used to collect that information (e.g., forms, spreadsheets, electronic databases), and whether there are policies in place to ensure that the data are regularly updated. There are three primary types of information to consider when developing a data management strategy:

- Demographic information (e.g., age, gender, eligibility information)
- Service information (e.g., service plans, participation, assessment information)
- Outcome data (e.g., recidivism, successful and unsuccessful completions, employment)

This section will also help to define key performance measures including recidivism and successful program completion. It is important to clearly define successful completion of the program in a way that is distinct from your measures of success. The definitions below distinguish between “successful completion” and “measures of success.”

- **Successful completion** is the minimum requirements that qualify someone as having participated fully in the program. For example, successful completion can require going through specific programs/curricula, completing a percentage or a number of hours of programming, or compliance with the specialized case plan expectations for a set period of time. Based on the definition you develop, it is possible that supports and services will continue to be provided after someone completes the program, but this definition will serve as a clear cut-off for purposes of evaluation.
 - *Example 1: Anyone who attends 80% of the training program classes AND receives the certification before release*
 - *Example 2: Anyone who attends 80% of the training program classes AND gains employment AND/OR enrolls in an educational program after release*
- **Measures of success** are the intended outcomes of successfully completing the program, such as recidivism reduction, gainful employment, reductions in technical violations, etc.
 - *Example: Participants who have gained employment and remained employed for one year without reconviction*



EXERCISE 9: DEVELOPING A DATA-COLLECTION STRATEGY

A. Data Collection

1. How do you currently collect the data you need for any relevant grant requirements (e.g., Performance Measurement Tool)? If data are not currently collected, describe your plan to do so.	
2. How does the program currently store the following key data points: risk and needs assessment results, service plans, participation, successful and unsuccessful completions, and participant recidivism rates?	
3. How are the collected data shared among relevant agencies and partners?	
4. How are the data stored (e.g., electronically, in paper files, shared drives, or network databases)?	

B. Performance Measures

1. How do you define “successful completion”? ³	
2. What is your definition of recidivism (e.g., rearrest, reconviction, reincarceration, etc.)? ⁴	
3. What is the tracking period for recidivism (e.g., one year, three years, five years)? ⁵	
4. List any additional performance measures you intend to track.	

C. Defining Outcomes and Setting Targets

³ PMT defines successful completion as discontinuing participation in the program after completing all program requirements. Completion definitions can be either process-based (e.g., program participant has completed 70 percent of program requirements or case plan within one year), or outcome-based (e.g. program participant has achieved core benchmark goals of the program, such as changes in risk and needs level, attaining stable housing, attaining employment, achieving a GED, etc., within one year).

⁴ Recidivism is defined in many different ways, and states and localities calculate recidivism rates using different methodologies. For example, some measurements of recidivism account only for reincarceration on new offenses, while others include revocations of probation or parole due to technical violations that result in reincarceration, or reconvictions that do not result in a prison or jail sentence.


⁵ The tracking period must allow for uniform “time at risk to recidivate” for all participants tracked. (For example, all participants have at least one year on probation or parole after completing the program or upon release from prison when determining the one-year recidivism rate.)

At the beginning of the program, the planning team should determine clear definitions for each outcome and how they are verified, and distribute that information to program staff and partners.

- How do you define the outcome?
 - **Example:** Employment: In this program, what does it mean to be employed? What is the threshold for defining a participant as employed? Different definitions of employment may include, but are not limited to, any combination of the following: being employed for a specific length of time, retaining a minimum number of scheduled hours each week, and earning a specific wage or higher.

- How do you verify outcomes?
 - **Example:** Employment: In this program, what documentation does a staff member need to determine that a participant is employed according to the program’s definition of employment? Different forms of verification may include, but are not limited to, a paystub or an employment verification letter.

Outcome	Definition	Verification	Target
<i>Example: Employment</i>	<i>Example: Employed for 30 days AND earning at least minimum wage AND scheduled to work a minimum of 20 hours per week</i>	<i>Example: Paystub or employment verification letter</i>	<i>Example: 50 participants /year</i>

 **EXERCISE 10: PROGRAM EVALUATION**

If you are planning to conduct an evaluation of your program, whether internally or through an independent evaluator, please respond to the following questions.

1. Who is conducting the evaluation?	
2. What are you planning to measure in the evaluation beyond the PMT measures?	
3. Are you using a comparison group to assess the success of the program? If so, what is the comparison group?	
4. With whom do you intend to share evaluation data?	
5. What is your ongoing strategy for engaging with your evaluation partner?	



SECTION 6: SUSTAINABILITY

This section focuses on strategies for achieving long-term program sustainability through focused efforts initiated at the beginning of the grant. Sustainability is difficult to achieve, and even more challenging if left for “the last minute” as grant dollars are coming to an end. Developing a sustainability plan at the onset is essential to build a strong program that can continue after the SCA funding concludes.



EXERCISE 11: ASSESSING YOUR SUSTAINABILITY

Read the following statements and consider the degree to which your jurisdiction has implemented each policy or practice. The answer options are as follows: N = not implemented or planned, PL = planning stage, P = partially implemented, and F = fully implemented.

Sustainability Expectations	N	PL	P	F	Notes
All staff in the agency are aware of the program, its core components, and its target population.					
Stakeholders are meaningfully engaged in the project on a regular basis.					
A champion (not including program staff) publicly advocates for the continuation of the program.					
Program leaders can articulately discuss the value of the program.					
Program leaders are able to tailor their message about the initiative to different audiences, considering the goals of the audience (e.g., community supervision, mental health treatment, jail administrators).					
There is a working group of diverse stakeholders focused on developing a sustainability plan.					
Program staff have identified funding streams from federal, state, and local governments, foundations, and private organizations that can sustain the project after current federal funding expires.					
Data collected for the evaluation results are shared with each stakeholder and tailored to their specific interests.					



EXERCISE 12: CREATING A SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

A. Reviewing Potential Resources

Have you identified components of your program (such as staffing, policy or practice changes) that could continue in the absence of dedicated funding? If so, please list them here.		
List the two most important program components that you need to sustain, and the partners who can potentially provide resources for those components.	<i>Sustainable Components</i>	<i>Partner Resources</i>
List potential federal, state, and local government, foundation, and private funding opportunities.		
List program support items that can be donated (i.e. clothing, goods, and services) and the organizations to approach for relevant donations.	<i>Needed Items</i>	<i>Donating Organizations</i>

B. Promoting Your Program

What are your opportunities for sharing program success? (Examples include reentry task force meetings, community meetings, faith-based organizations, newsletters, etc.)	
Who in your agency or program is responsible for promoting the success of your program? (Examples include the communications officer, program director, public affairs manager, etc.)	
What is your strategy for spreading the word about your program?	

C. Next Steps for Sustainability

Please use the answers to the self-assessment and the information above to identify action items, responsible people, and timelines for completion in order to promote long-term sustainability.

Sustainability Action Item	Person Responsible	Due Date or Timeframe



APPENDIX A: SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Key Resources

- National Reentry Resource Center (<http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc>)
- National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>)

Screening, Assessment, and Risk-Needs-Responsivity

Screening and Assessment for Criminogenic Risk

- Desmarais, Sarah L., and Jay P. Singh. *Risk Assessment Instruments Validated and Implemented in Correctional Settings in the United States*. New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2013. <http://csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/publications/risk-assessment-instruments-validated-and-implemented-in-correctional-settings-in-the-united-states/>.

Screening and Assessment for Substance Use, Mental Disorders and Co-occurring Substance Use and Mental Disorders

- Ford, Julian, Robert L. Trestman, Fred Osher, Jack E. Scott, Henry J. Steadman, and Pamela Clark Robbins. *Mental Health Screens for Corrections*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, 2007. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/216152.pdf>.
- Peters, Roger, Marla G. Bartoi, and Pattie B. Sherman. *Screening and Assessment of Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System*. Delmar, NY: CMHS National GAINS Center, 2008. <http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ScreeningAndAssessment.pdf>.

Risk-Needs-Responsivity

- Bonta, James, and Don A. Andrews. *Risk-Need-Responsivity Model for Offender Assessment and Rehabilitation*. Ottawa, Canada: Public Safety Canada, 2007. <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsracs/pblctns/rsk-nd-rspnsvty/rsk-nd-rspnsvty-eng.pdf>.
- The Council of State Governments Justice Center. *Risk Assessment: What You Need to Know*. New York: The Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2015. <http://csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/posts/risk-assessment-what-you-need-to-know/>.
- D'Amora, David. "Risk Need Responsivity 101: A Primer for SCA and JMHCP Grant Recipients." Webinar held by the Council of State Governments Justice Center, New York, NY, March 31, 2015. <http://csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/webinars/risk-need-responsivity-101-a-primer-for-sca-and-jmhcp-grant-recipients/>.
- Latessa, Edward J., Lori Brusman Lovins, and Paula Smith. *Follow-Up Evaluation of Ohio's Community Based Correctional Facility and Halfway House Programs—Outcome Study*. Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati, 2010. http://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/reports/project_reports/2010%20ODRC%20HWH%20FINAL%20REPORT2.pdf.
- The Pew Center on the States. *Risk Needs Assessment 101: Science Reveals New Tools to Manage Offenders*. Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2011. http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pes_assets/2011/PewRiskAssessmentbriefpdf.pdf.

Job Training and Employment Support Resources

- Duran, LeAnn, Martha Plotkin, Phoebe Potter, Henry Rosen. *Integrated reentry and employment strategies: reducing recidivism and promoting job readiness*. New York, NY: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2013. <https://www.bja.gov/Publications/CSG-Reentry-and-Employment.pdf>
- Jacobs, Erin. *Returning to work after prison: Final results from the transitional jobs reentry demonstration*. MDRC, 2012. http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_626.pdf
- *Ready to Work: Job Driven Training and American Opportunity*. Washington, DC: The White House, 2014. https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/skills_report.pdf
- Research on Reentry and Employment, NIJ.gov, last modified April 3, 2013, <http://www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/reentry/Pages/employment.aspx>
- *What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, 2014. <http://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/jdt/jdt.pdf>

Evidence-based Behavioral Health and Community Support Practices

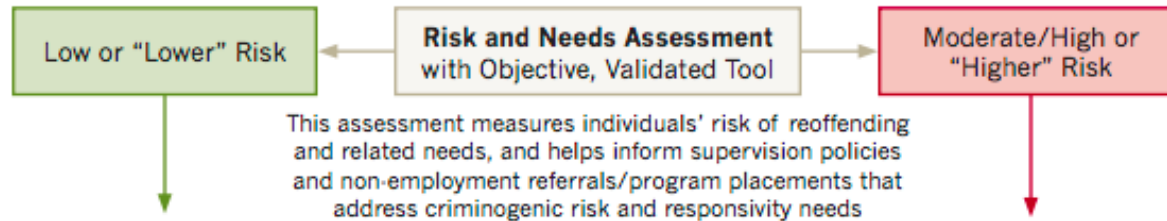
- Aos, Steve, Marna Miller, and Elizabeth Drake. *Evidence-Based Adult Corrections Programs: What Works and What Does Not*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2006. <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/924>.
- Blandford, Alex, and Fred Osher. *Guidelines for the Successful Transition of People with Behavioral Health Disorders from Jail and Prison*. New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2013. <http://csqjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Guidelines-for-Successful-Transition.pdf>.
- Bogue, Bradford, and Anjali Nandi. *Motivational Interviewing in Corrections: A Comprehensive Guide to Implementing MI in Corrections*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, 2012. <http://static.nicic.gov/Library/025556.pdf>.
- The Council of State Governments Justice Center. *Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community*. New York: The Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2005. <http://csqjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/1694-11.pdf>.
- Covington, Stephanie S., and Barbara Bloom. "Gender-Responsive Treatment and Services in Correctional Settings." *Women and Therapy* 29, no. 3/4 (2006): 9–33. <http://stephaniecovington.com/assets/files/FINALC.pdf>.
- The National Judicial College. *Principles of an Effective Criminal Justice Response to the Challenges and Needs of Drug-Involved Individuals*. Reno, NV: The National Judicial College, 2012. <http://www.judges.org/wp-content/uploads/DIO-monograph0113.pdf>.



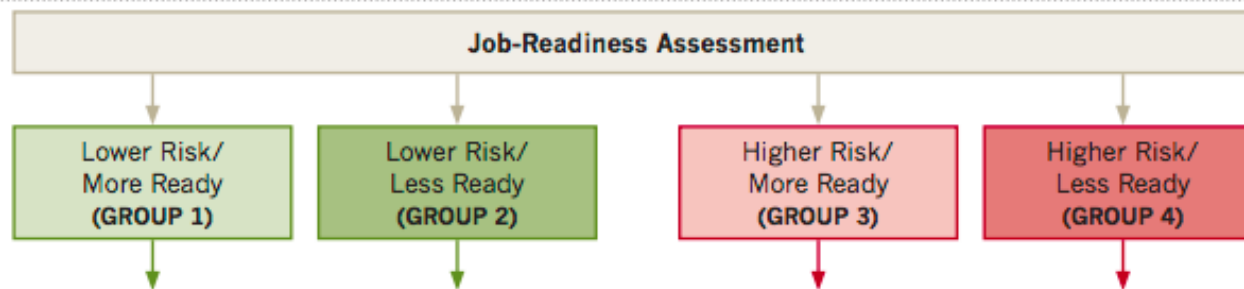
APPENDIX B: THE RESOURCE-ALLOCATION AND SERVICE-MATCHING TOOL

The Resource-Allocation and Service-Matching Tool

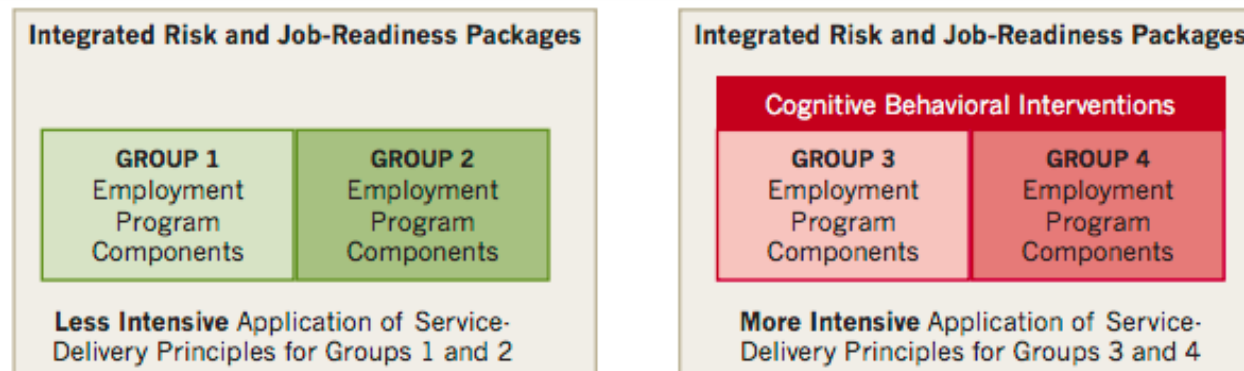
**Step 1:
Assess Risk
and Needs**



**Step 2:
Assess Job
Readiness**



**Step 3:
Deliver Targeted
Services**





APPENDIX C: PROGRAMS SERVING JUVENILE POPULATIONS

Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism & Improving Other Youth Outcomes

Decades of research have identified four core principles for reducing recidivism and promoting positive outcomes for youth in the juvenile justice system. These principles help policymakers and practitioners make informed decisions about how to use their resources to improve reentry outcomes for a population that is often served by the justice, behavioral health, and other social service systems. A detailed understanding of these principles should inform your work with youth during all phases of your reentry project. The four principles are to

1. Base supervision, service, and resource-allocation decisions on the results of validated risk and needs assessments;
2. Adopt and effectively implement programs and services demonstrated to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes, and use data to evaluate the results and direct system improvements;
3. Employ a coordinated approach across service systems to address youth's needs; and
4. Tailor system policies, programs, and supervision to reflect the distinct developmental needs of adolescents.

Principle 1: *Base supervision, service, and resource-allocation decisions on the results of validated risk and needs assessments.*

The first core principle for reducing recidivism and improving other youth reentry outcomes—which sets an evidence-based foundation for everything that follows—is for juvenile justice systems to use validated risk assessments as the most objective way to identify youth who are least and most likely to reoffend. Your organization should determine whether your correctional agency partner administers risk assessments, as well as validated mental health and substance abuse screenings and assessments, and ensure that you receive the results of these assessments to inform your case planning and service decisions.

Principle 2: *Adopt and effectively implement programs and services demonstrated to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes, and use data to evaluate the results and direct system improvements.*

Validated assessments help improve youth outcomes by identifying whom the juvenile justice system should prioritize for intensive supervision and services and what needs should be the focal point for case planning and reentry services. Your organization should build upon this foundation by using research to guide how you address youth's primary service needs. Programs and practices designed to promote youth's positive development, particularly through cognitive behavioral and family/community-centric approaches, have proven to substantially reduce recidivism and improve other outcomes for youth who are at high risk of reoffending. Your organization should match these services to youth's needs, assess and support service quality, and measure the resulting outcomes to achieve the most significant impact.

Principle 3: *Employ a coordinated approach across service systems to address youth's needs.*

The majority of youth released from confinement have significant mental health, substance use, child welfare, and education needs. Your organization can improve service access, speed, and quality by collaborating with other service systems to address youth's comprehensive needs in a coordinated fashion and in ways proven by research to be effective.

Some of the critical cross-systems partners for juvenile justice initiatives include:

- *Mental health:* Approximately 60–70 percent of youth in confinement have a diagnosable mental disorder and over 27 percent have serious mental disorders (meeting criteria for certain severe disorders or having been hospitalized for a mental disorder).
- *Substance use:* Approximately 25–50 percent of youth in confinement have significant substance use disorders, often co-occurring with mental disorders at rates of 60 percent or more.
- *Child welfare:* As many as 65 percent of youth in the juvenile justice system may have past or current involvement in the child welfare system, with prevalence rates increasing at the deeper end of the system.
- *Education:* Youth in the juvenile justice system are significantly more likely than their peers to receive suspensions or expulsions; have academic skills well below their grade level; have a learning and/or developmental disability; and to drop out of school.

Principle 4: *Tailor system policies, programs, and supervision to reflect the distinct developmental needs of adolescents.*

A growing body of research confirms that the differences between adolescents and adults are developmental—the result of biological and neurological conditions unique to adolescence—and that ignoring these distinct aspects of adolescent development can undermine the potential positive impact of system interventions and even do more harm than good. As such, a developmentally appropriate approach to working with youth should undergird all of your services.

Your organization should deliberately and systematically engage families, other supportive adults, and even youth themselves in reentry planning and services. At the same time, you should train and support staff in evidence-based techniques to engage and motivate youth and promote positive behavior.

GRANTEE RESOURCE: The Council of State Governments Justice Center's report titled [*Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System*](#) provides in-depth research and recommendations on these four core principles. It also provides insights from research and practice on how to implement the principles effectively, as well as examples of how state and local juvenile justice systems have operationalized the principles through their own reforms.

Additional research and resources on reentry can be found at <http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/juvenile-reentry/>.