

REENTRY ALABAMA



ALABAMA COMMISSION ON REENTRY



2025

COMMITTEE REPORT

THE STUDY COMMISSION ON
INTERAGENCY COOPERATION
AND COLLABORATION
ON THE REHABILITATION OF
FORMERLY INCARCERATED
INDIVIDUALS

Kay Ivey Governor | **Cam Ward** *Chairman*

LETTER FROM COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

On behalf of Governor Ivey and our state legislative leadership, it has been an honor to serve as chairman of the Reentry Commission. Spanning public and private sectors, this team is comprised of excellent leaders from across the state who came together over the past year to study the state’s reentry systems – or the pathways and prospects open to formerly incarcerated Alabamians after their release. Through our work, the Commission devised a strategic plan with recommendations to build an even stronger, safer state by lowering recidivism.



Lowering recidivism benefits Alabama’s economy just as much as it impacts public safety. People with good paying jobs are incentivized to keep those jobs, take care of their families and stay out of trouble. They do not want to go back to prison. Instead, our data finds that they are using the tools, knowledge and training provided by Alabama’s reentry programs to benefit businesses’ bottom-line. Whether it’s welding at state docks, construction with home builders, repairing high tech machines for advanced manufacturers or prepping for new powerlines with utility providers, the people who have participated in Alabama reentry systems’ programming are succeeding in life after prison. However, we know we can do more.

Over the past year, the Reentry Commission met with leaders, advocates and other stakeholders to get a better understanding of challenges faced by those reintegrating into society after prison – especially our neighbors who have fallen through the cracks. Each commission member siphoned through the data and determined the best solutions to address these challenges. This report highlights our committee’s findings and offers recommendations for the future of reentry in Alabama.

The report also highlights the myriad achievements of our state agencies: the education and training offered by the Alabama Community College System and Ingram State Technical College, substance use treatment programs developed by the Alabama Department of Mental Health, job placement offered by the Alabama Department of Workforce and rehabilitation efforts like the Perry County PREP Center and our network of Day Reporting Centers – where programming centers on education, training, addiction recovery and counseling. Since its opening in 2022, well over 300 graduates have completed the PREP program, and not one has returned to prison. This success demonstrates that when we invest in second chances, we are not just changing individual lives but strengthening our entire state.

Alabama’s reentry systems are strong thanks to the partnership and dedication of our state agencies, private sector job creators and various stakeholders. This collaborative approach and the support of our state’s elected leaders will help break the cycle of crime, promote lasting change and lessen the burden of incarceration on Alabama’s taxpayers. By continuing to enhance reentry in our state, we can help build a brighter future for all Alabamians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cam Ward". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cam Ward

The Commission & Vision

Pursuant to ACT 2024-404 of the Legislature, the Study Commission on Interagency Cooperation and Collaboration on the Rehabilitation of Formerly Incarcerated Individuals – also known as Reentry Alabama – was extended through 2025 to continue reviewing Alabama’s reentry needs.

The Commission reviewed, researched and documented potential challenges to reentry for formerly incarcerated Alabamians while recommending actionable solutions – both in the near term and over time – to address these issues and ensure success for those coming back into society.

Each stakeholder presented data concerning their area of expertise. These unique insights formed a framework for the Commission to build out a strategic plan. Additionally, partners like the Council of State Governments Justice Center helped guide the process and offered technical assistance and recommendations to further the Commission’s mission.

This group strategically planned ways to reduce recidivism – from identifying and implementing proven strategies that support successful reintegration after incarceration, fostering collaboration among state agencies to support reentry and expanding access to education and mental health programs to eliminating barriers to reentry and pursuing partnerships with the private sector to create a workforce/job-opportunity pipeline for those served by our reentry efforts.

The Commission has been critical to building upon Alabama’s Reentry 2030 Framework, part of the state’s ambitious plan to slash recidivism rates in half over the next six years. Achieving this goal will lead to a stronger workforce and safer communities throughout the state. Success also means easing the burden on government services and taxpayers by keeping parolees from returning to prison.

This report offers new insights and recommendations for state agencies and stakeholders to ensure Alabama’s reentry system works as safely, effectively and efficiently as possible. Ultimately, these guidelines will help Alabama reach its goal of reducing recidivism by half.

TOPLINE FINDINGS: Improved cooperation and streamlining resources will be essential to an even more efficient and effective reentry system for the state. This includes building on already successful programs, like the PERRY COUNTY PREP MODEL while also implementing new policies, like common-sense occupational licensing (bill currently in legislature). All committee members committed their agencies will ensure this cooperation and collaboration will be achieved.

- **Align with National Recidivism Goals:** Alabama adopts the Reentry 2030 national framework, aiming to reduce recidivism by 50% by 2030 through coordinated state goals and metrics aligned with national benchmarks.
- **Expand Education and Job Training in Facilities:** Increase access to GED, vocational, and technical programs tied to labor market needs; include work-release and partnerships with colleges and employers to build real career pathways.
- **Strengthen Behavioral Health Services:** Enhance in-prison treatment for mental health and substance abuse, use cognitive-behavioral therapy, and ensure care continues after release through community coordination.
- **Improve Reentry Planning Before Release:** Begin personalized reentry planning at least a year in advance, covering housing, employment, health care, and family reunification, along with securing vital documents like IDs.

- **Support Housing Stability:** Develop partnerships to expand transitional and supportive housing, including sober living facilities; consider subsidies or grants to reduce homelessness post-release.
- **Boost Employment and Career Services:** Promote second-chance hiring, job fairs, and incentives like the Work Opportunity Tax Credit; offer job coaching, skill development, and continued education support post-release.
- **Reduce Legal and Financial Barriers:** Implement reforms; help individuals resolve fines, child support obligations, and access financial education.
- **Mobilize Community Support and Public Awareness:** Build local reentry coalitions with law enforcement, nonprofits, and mentors; reduce stigma through campaigns, success stories, and peer mentorship programs.
- **Use Data to Guide Progress:** Establish a statewide recidivism tracking system to monitor key outcomes; evaluate programs regularly, collect feedback, and adapt based on performance and best practices.
- **Ensure Cross-Sector Collaboration:** A statewide Reentry 2030 task force coordinates agencies from corrections to housing; engage lawmakers to support initiatives and track progress toward Alabama's recidivism goals.

Presentation Videos and Other Items Available by Scanning Below



COMMISSION GOALS

Reentry Alabama is tasked with:

- Strategic planning on ways to reduce recidivism.
- Identifying and implementing proven strategies that support successful reintegration after incarceration.
- Fostering collaboration among state agencies to support reentry.
- Expanding access to education and mental health programs.
- Eliminating barriers to reentry and pursuing partnerships with the private sector to create a workforce/job-opportunity pipeline for those served by our reentry efforts.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Prince	Chestnut	Representative Appointed by Rep. Ledbetter	APPT by HOUSE SPEAKER
Will	Barfoot	Senator Appointed by Sen. Reed	APPT by SEN PRO TEM
Chris	England	Representative Appointed by Rep. Daniels	APPT by HOUSE MIN LEADER
Robert	Stewart	Senator Appointed by Sen. Singleton	APPT BY SEN MIN LEADER
Cam	Ward	ABPP Director & Chairman	CHAIRMAN
John	Ham	ADOC	EX OFF
Kim	Boswell	Mental Health	EX OFF
Stephanie	Azar	Medicaid	EX OFF
Nancy	Buckner	DHR	EX OFF
David	Walters	AL Community College System	EX OFF
Hal	Taylor	ALEA Designee	EX OFF
Marty	Redden	Workforce	EX OFF
Jeffrey	Newton	Veterans Affairs	EX OFF
CJ	Robinson	Prosecution Services/D.A. Assoc.	APPT by DA/PROS SVCS
Patrick	Schmucker	Higher Education/Huntington AT-Large	APPT by Chairman
Jerome	Dees	Southern Poverty Law Center	APPT by Chairman

COMMISSION STAKEHOLDERS

Rebecca	Bensema	ABPP
Griff	Waller	ABPP
Judge	Jordan	Alabama State Bar Designee
Judge	Hairston	Municipal Judges Association
Trisha	Melberg	Prosecution Services/District Attorneys Association
Bennet	Wright	Exec. Director of Ala. Sentencing Commission

MEETINGS OVERVIEW

- August 27
 - Presentation from CSG Justice Center discussing the Alabama Reentry 2030 Initiative and goals, and preview and outline of the reentry system assessment CSG Justice Center engaged in to support Alabama with identifying opportunities to enhance programming and policies.
 - Review of committee’s work over the past year.
 - Plans for 2024/2025 tenure and setting expectations.
- September 17
 - Presentation from Ronald McKeithen, Alabama Appleseed Reentry Coordinator, on assisting Appleseed clients as they transition from incarceration to lives of freedom.
 - Presentation from Eric Anderson, Assistant Attorney General, Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles on Certificate of Eligibility to Register to Vote (CERV).
 - Additional recap on the Commission’s strategy and recommendations for Reentry Framework from Dr. Walters of ACCS (presented under topline findings and recommendations):
- October 29
 - Comments from Associate Board Member Darryl Littleton, joined by Board Chair Leigh Gwathney & Associate Board Member Gabrelle Simmons, to discuss Board processes.
 - Presentation from Jonathan McNair, Communications and Public Relations Specialist, on Alabama Department of Workforce’s work in reentry, including employment programs and potential barriers assessed.
 - Jesse Kelley, Esq., Reentry2030 Program Director for CSG Justice Center provided a preview of its Reentry System Assessment.
- November 12
 - Chief Justice Sarah Stewart discussed her vision for her term as Chief Justice and work in reentry that would take place.
 - Bennet Wright, Executive Director of Alabama Sentencing Commission, shared data on past sentencing reform, new laws and criminal code, prison population trends and the impact of reentry programs. As part of this, he underscored the importance of a standard working definition of recidivism.
 - Beverly Williams, Deputy Attorney General & Director of Intergovernmental Relations for Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, presented information on Veterans Affairs’ reentry work.
- November 25
 - Presentation from the CSG Justice Center on key findings from their reentry system assessment focusing on two key pieces – data and structural barriers to reentry success (including housing, behavioral health, and employment).
- December 8
 - Continuation of presentation from the CSG Justice Center on key findings from their reentry system assessment with a focus on findings related to reentry programs and workforce development.

- December 19
 - Judge K.C. Hairston, Partner – Balch & Bingham and Mountain Brook Municipal Judge & VP, Alabama Municipal Judges Association (AMJA), and Susan Fuqua, President of Alabama Municipal Court Clerks and Magistrates Association, provided insights on municipal courts and their role as court of first impression. They explained caseload, roles and solutions offered to citizens and discussed ideas to enhance reentry efforts:
 - Streamlining unhandled cases through resources and better communication.
 - Prevents new fines and new jailtime.
 - Ways to formalize process to streamline granting of relief for past municipal cases/fees.
 - Need for data integrity – working through AOC. Full compliance by end of 2025.
 - Ways to incorporate data and insights into state agencies’ work – to get fresh start.
 - District Attorney Danny Carr & District Attorney Lynneice Washington joined the Committee to discuss their process of organizing justice-involved job fairs and overall work within the community.
 - 43 employers with 414 interested with 111 given jobs on the spot. Now up to two job fairs per year.
 - ISTC President Annette Funderburk shared extensive partnership points with ABPP and ADOC through the Alabama Community College System – and more specifically the work of Ingram State Technical College. Her report included data on embedded and adjacent career and technical trainings through partnership – high wage and high demand and the Skills for Success Program – Skidsteer, CDL, ServeSafe and other offerings – at PREP.
 - Short and Long Term certificates and partnerships with second-chance employers.
 - 4,555 Fall Enrollment in 2024. Even more with Adult Ed.
 - 83% Retention Rate.
 - AOC Family Court & Court Services Director Mandi Hall met with the Committee to discuss AOC juvenile justice programming and its 272 JO Officers. This included information on non-court action in programming and a significant push for workforce opportunities and programming, including intervention like accountability courts.
 - This includes mentorship and other rehabilitation efforts.
 - Jori Jordan, Program Specialist, Dept. of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention (Children’s Trust Fund), Fatherhood Initiative, gave an overview of the partnership with DHR and Children’s Trust Fund to build exceptional fatherhood programs. She discussed the reimagined model for parent education for those reentering. This work also builds out the workforce ready program to assist fathers and assist families. This includes apprentice programs. Reentry services also include: Child Support Program Assistance, Education, Counseling, Nutrition, Family Law, Health Issues. Safe visitation programs are also essential.
- January 14
 - CSG Justice Center offered a recap of the high-level takeaways from its assessment and gauged any reactions and feedback (and priorities from the Commission members). The

group then released plans for next steps in the formation of four small informal working groups in the following topic areas:

- Data
 - Economic mobility
 - Preparedness/Basic Needs (IDs, housing, benefits, etc.)
 - Behavioral Health
 - CSGJC scheduled time with individual members to talk through findings and possible recommendations
- February 19
 - Members and stakeholders shared ideas and strategies from their areas of expertise that should be included in the report-out and guidelines for Alabama’s Reentry Systems.
- March 20
 - Information on consolidated working groups presented to members. Additionally, long-term/short-term strategies were released for members to review and report back on at the April meeting.
 - Reentry Alabama Working Group Consolidated Recommendations:
 - Create Statewide Infrastructure for Reentry: Establish a cross-system reentry taskforce and issue-specific working groups to oversee and coordinate the implementation of reentry recommendations, with consistent monitoring and updates.
 - Strengthen Workforce Development: Remove legal employment barriers, expand occupational licensing access, increase employer engagement with incentives, improve transportation for rural job access, and develop a state-wide job platform for reentering individuals.
 - Enhance Reentry Preparedness: Set up local reentry councils, increase awareness of available services before release, streamline benefit re-enrollment, and help resolve legal/financial issues like unpaid fines or warrants that hinder successful reentry.
 - Expand Behavioral Health Support: Improve cross-system collaboration for continuity of care, automate Medicaid reactivation, boost peer recovery specialist programs, and increase access to mental health and substance use treatment services.
 - Increase Housing Access: Assess housing needs pre-release, engage housing providers to reduce discrimination, expand transitional and recovery housing (especially in rural areas), and coordinate with housing authorities for supportive options.
 - Improve Data Tracking & Accountability: Standardize reentry outcome definitions (e.g., employment, recidivism), and create a dedicated data working group with technical and policy subcommittees to improve quality, reporting, and cross-agency collaboration.
- April 22
 - Judge KC Hairston presented the Concurrent Sentencing Study Committee Recommendations:

- **Purpose & Background:** The Alabama Justice Information Commission formed the Concurrent Sentencing Study Committee to create a formal process allowing incarcerated individuals to request concurrent sentencing for certain municipal and district court cases while still in prison—aimed at improving re-entry success and reducing recidivism.
- **Problem Identified:** Incarcerated individuals often delay addressing outstanding court cases until after release, which can hinder employment, result in renewed jail time, or prevent driver's license reinstatement—factors that negatively impact re-entry.
- **Recommendation to Build a Database:** A comprehensive database of pending municipal and district court cases should be managed by the Alabama Office of Courts (AOC) or the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) to help identify eligible cases for concurrent sentencing.
- **Three-Part Application Process:** The system includes (1) an Application Form to initiate the request, (2) an Application Results Form showing qualifying cases, and (3) a Request Form for incarcerated individuals to plead guilty and request concurrent sentencing.
- **Process & Timing:** The application should be made at least one year before parole or release, allowing enough time for court processing. Judges must respond within 60 days or the request is considered denied.
- **Support & Implementation:** Inmates will receive assistance to complete forms, and if approved, all fines and fees will be waived. The committee emphasizes the need for funding and staff to support the process, which has backing from Governor Kay Ivey to lower Alabama's 30% recidivism rate.

Presentations from ADOC PARTNERS:

- **UnBound216** – Chris Taunton
- **WorkFaith Birmingham** – Andy Blake
- **Feeding the Gulf Coast** – Adrian Anderson
- **Life Link** – Randy Walker



HIGHLIGHTS of WORKING COMMISSION

WHAT'S WORKING

- Alabama has strong statewide partnerships committed to improving reentry outcomes.
 - ADOC, ALEA, ABPP, DHR and the Alabama Department of Public Health are developing interagency partnerships to provide vital documents and identification to individuals prior to release.
- Pilot programs and partnerships are working to address opioid use disorder and broader health care needs.
 - ADOC piloted a Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) program at Donaldson Correctional Facility, with plans to expand the program to additional facilities across the state.
- The ABPP Day Reporting Centers and Perry PREP Center are models for providing resources and services to high-risk individuals, and several programs adhere to evidence-based curricula.
- ACCS/ISTC partners with Workforce to provide programming relevant to a significant number of the most high-demand/high-wage occupations in the state.
- Agencies have committed staff providing services to individuals that are incarcerated and on community supervision even while understaffed and under resourced.
- Volunteers, faith-based organizations, and community providers fill in gaps and support individuals returning to their communities.
- Continuum of Care – process developed through collaborative effort with ABPP, ADOC and ADMH for a continuum of care model for opioid use disorder treatment from incarceration to the community.
- Phase I Committee Implementations – includes processes that help former inmates receive identification, apply for occupational licensing/jobs and re-enroll in health coverage.

INITIAL FINDINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- Inconsistencies in data quality, efficiency, and integration hinder effective data use for evaluation and decision-making.
- Several structural barriers hinder individuals' ability to achieve successful reentry outcomes and limit the effectiveness of reentry programs.
 - Finding accessible, affordable, and holistic treatment in the community for returning individuals is incredibly challenging, particularly for those that need a higher level of care.
- Alabama has initiated strong partnerships that can be leveraged to further expand behavioral health services to incarcerated and reentering individuals.
 - ABPP partnership with ADMH to provide behavioral health treatment and peer recover support at DRCs.
- Affordable and safe housing is a major challenge for people returning to their communities from incarceration.
 - Transitional housing for people upon reentry is limited and often does not follow best practices regarding service provision.

- Transportation options are also limited across the state, and returning individuals face barriers to getting a driver’s license.
- Obtaining vital documents in a timely and easily accessible manner prior to release is challenging.
- Alabama law imposes hundreds of barriers to work for people with criminal convictions.
- Several challenges exist to better implementing evidence-based policies and practices across state agencies and community reentry providers in Alabama.
- Stronger quality assurance protocols and additional training and support for staff are needed to ensure better alignment with evidence-based practices.
- Job training programming can be more strongly aligned with market demands and opportunities, particularly at the regional level.
- Targeted post-release job-placement services and strategies are limited.
- More robust and coordinated employer engagement and post-release workforce strategies are needed to increase the employment of returning individuals.
- Opportunities
 - Scale up examples of partnerships on a local level that work by adopting in other regions.
 - Continue tailoring job training programming to align with market demands and regional opportunities/needs (i.e. structural iron/steel workers)
 - Remove barriers to reentry workforce hiring for employers and job creators.

NEXT STEPS

- Develop and implement recommendations based on assessment findings, key challenges and opportunities, and feasibility in collaboration with Commission members.
- Transition Commission into Task Force authorized through Senator Stewart’s SJR 80 of the 2025 Regular Legislative Session to implement reentry recommendations.



REENTRY 2030: ALABAMA REVOLUTIONIZES REENTRY

In October 2023, the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles became the second state to sign on to Reentry 2030.

Reentry 2030 is a national initiative to dramatically improve reentry success for people exiting prison and those under community supervision. Reentry 2030 calls upon state leaders to establish bold, transformative goals and bring together cross-system leadership to foster collaboration and coordination among state agencies to scale reentry efforts statewide.

Alabama's Reentry 2030 Goals:

1. Reduce the state's recidivism rate by 50 percent by 2030.
2. Strengthen the workforce participation of formerly incarcerated Alabamians by 50 percent. The state aims to expand educational services and create employment opportunities to bolster the workforce. This includes providing access to high-demand skill sets, such as welding, forklift operations, electrical work, and tree trimming.

The Reentry 2030 Strategy

1. Scale up what works, including access to employment, skills training, behavioral health treatment, health care, stable housing, and other supports for people with criminal records.
2. Clear away unnecessary barriers to opportunities and economic mobility that are unnecessary for public safety.
3. Use data to understand and address gaps in access to services, quality of services, and outcomes.



ABPP | WORKFORCE REENTRY



UTILITY TREE TRIMMING

“ We prepped up and prepped out. We got everything from fiber optics, to heavy equipment to CDL... They helped us look in the mirror and confront ourselves.

I’m excited to use the tools, training and education I received.”

- PREP CENTER GRADUATE CLAUDE CAMPBELL

QUICK FACTS

PREP and DRC participants are required to develop an employment and home plan by completion of program.

ABPP partners with J.F. Ingram State Technical College, GEO Group, and many others to develop effective employment skills.

Mental health and substance use treatment services are provided in addition to employment skills to craft high-quality employees.

Quality employment fuels a public-private partnership with the state agencies, private treatment providers and J.F. Ingram State Technical College to reduce recidivism.

QUALITY EMPLOYMENT DIVERTS INCARCERATION.

CERTIFICATES OFFERED TO OUR DRC, DRC LITE & PREP PARTICIPANTS

CARPENTRY

ELECTRICAL TECHNOLOGY

FORKLIFT OPERATION

FOOD & BEVERAGE

SKID STEER

EXCAVATOR

OSHA 10 GENERAL SAFETY

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

UTILITY TREE TRIMMING

TRANSFR VR

AZTEC GED PROGRAM

& MANY MORE

VARIES BY LOCATION



ALL EMPLOYED PARTICIPANTS VS. ADD VALUE TO ECONOMY

\$184 PER ALABAMA RESIDENT YEARLY COST OF INCARCERATION

ACCORDING TO CSG JUSTICE CENTER

ABPP | PERRY COUNTY PREP CENTER

0%
**RECIDIVISM
RATE**

339
**TOTAL GRADUATES
SINCE OPENING ON
APRIL 21, 2022**

ALL
GRADUATES
RELEASED WITH VALID
HOME AND
EMPLOYMENT PLAN

THREE KEYS FOR
RECIDIVISM REDUCTION
**MENTAL HEALTH
TREATMENT**
JOB TRAINING
**SUBSTANCE USE
TREATMENT**

ON-SITE

**ADULT &
TECHNICAL
EDUCATION**
FOR HIGHLY
EMPLOYABLE
PARTICIPANTS



PROVIDED BY
J.F. INGRAM STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

QUICK FACTS:

Repurposes a former prison for innovative reentry services.

Combines evidence-based treatment, mental health services, substance use treatment, and technical training.

Fosters a public-private partnership with the state agencies, private treatment providers and J.F. Ingram State Technical College.

Fuels a statewide effort to reduce costly recidivism. Uses professional assessments for substance use disorder and mental health.

Uses proven cognitive restructuring techniques.

Assists with work document preparation and obtaining identification.

Provides a physical intake assessment.

Provides care for chronic conditions using an on-site medical doctor and psychiatric nurse practitioner.

Requires community service hours.

Incorporates family reunification and parenting skills into programming.

Provides clothing closet, giving participants access to life's necessities.



COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed through working groups with members from the Reentry Commission and/or their designees, as well as additional system stakeholders.

Reentry Alabama Recommendations

Implementation Infrastructure

1. **Establish a statewide infrastructure to oversee implementation of the Reentry Commission recommendations.**
 - a. Create a statewide reentry taskforce that consists of representatives from cross-system state agencies, community-based providers, and individuals with lived experience. The task force will meet regularly and oversee and monitor implementation across issue areas.
 - b. Create issue-specific implementation working groups, as part of the statewide taskforce, to develop action plans with specific timelines and roles/responsibilities to translate recommendations into policy and practice changes. These working groups (economic mobility, data, behavioral health) will share action plans and status of the recommendations on a regular basis with the statewide taskforce.

Reentry Workforce Development

2. **Address potential legal barriers to employment & occupational licensure through education, collaboration, and policy reform.**
 - a. Conduct a survey of state laws and regulations to identify and summarize potential legal barriers to employment and occupational licensure.
 - b. Develop resources that allow workers to make educated decisions about the viability of specific career pathways relevant to training and programming areas based on the presence or absence of legal barriers. Resources should include information about mechanisms that may provide relief from legal barriers to work and how to address criminal history in the hiring and occupational licensing processes.
 - c. Establish and maintain formal connections with boards and agencies that license occupations along career pathways relevant to correctional training to 1) provide license exams inside facilities; 2) ensure that accurate information about license eligibility and processes are being communicated to program participants; and 3) create opportunities for incarcerated licensees to maintain licensure.
3. **Increase the number of employers hiring reentering workers through expanded employer engagement efforts, education, and policy change.**
 - a. Develop and implement a coordinated formal state-wide workforce-led employer engagement strategy to (1) identify and cultivate new reentry employers and support existing employers; (2) educate all employers about the benefits of hiring reentering workers, the availability of state and federal incentives (including WOTC, federal bonding, OTJ subsidy opportunities), and state policies regarding employer liability and barriers to hiring; and (3) promote best practices for hiring and supporting reentering workers. Engagement strategies should focus on high-growth fields and industries with low barriers to entry, high wage potential, and opportunities for career growth.

- b. Develop employer-facing resources on issues including the benefits of hiring, available incentives and supports, employer liability facts and myths, the scope and value of correctional education, and best practices for hiring and supporting reentering workers.
 - c. Convene existing employer partners to identify the benefits of being a reentry employer, supports needed, and associated successes and challenges. Leverage input to inform engagement and cultivation strategies and identify employer champions. Conduct and publish state-wide survey of existing second-chance employment partners to leverage in cultivating new employers.
- 4. Expand access to transportation, especially in rural areas, to increase access to employment.**
- a. Establish and fund a pilot program to transport workers to sites of major employers who are willing to hire reentering workers and to economic centers where jobs are available, and support services can be obtained. Leverage this program to incentivize hiring by other employers.
- 5. Increase cooperation and information sharing state-wide among agencies preparing and supporting the reentering workforce.**
- a. Establish and regularly convene a formal state-wide economic mobility strategy group consisting of representatives from DOC, BPP, ISTC, Labor, Commerce, workforce, community service providers, and other relevant entities to develop and implement an ongoing coordinated strategy to effectively support the success of reentering workers from training within the correctional system to job placement and ongoing support upon reentering the community.
- 6. Expand reentry case-planning and job support services to equip reentering workers with relevant information and strategies on day-one of release.**
- a. Work with regional partners to provide workers preparing for reentry with accessible and actionable information on employment, education & training resources & programs available state-wide and within the specific communities to which they will return. This can be done through the local reentry councils being proposed (see preparedness recommendations), or separately by funding a regional network of reentry employment “navigators” available to assist reentering workers with identifying employment, training, and educational opportunities and provide essential supports, including application/resume building, interview preparation, and general job coaching.
 - b. Develop and fund, in partnership with employers, a state-wide job search platform exclusively for reentering workers that allows them to identify job opportunities with employers willing to hire from the reentering population. Ensure that postings are clear about what criminal histories employers may consider disqualifying and how employers evaluate criminal history (if relevant).

Reentry Preparedness

- 7. Ensure individuals that are reentering, and the larger reentry community, are aware of available services, benefits, and eligibility/enrollment processes.**
- a. Establish local reentry councils (start with a pilot in a few localities where DRCs/DRC lites exist) that bring together local reentry providers, nonprofit organizations, local/state agencies, etc. and provide state funding for these local reentry councils. Establish consistent processes and protocols for the operation of these councils. These reentry

councils can conduct community needs assessments and provide individuals with assistance in accessing services and benefits, addressing transportation barriers, employment, and other basic needs, including medical care, as well as employ peer support specialists or housing navigators that can work with individuals upon release. Local reentry councils will share community needs, data, and implementation status to the statewide reentry taskforce.

- b. Expand awareness of available services and benefits (such as crisis services, recovery housing, SNAP benefits, health insurance, etc.) to individuals pre-release. Develop and maintain cross-agency and organizational resource materials/inventory/eligibility criteria that can be shared with reentry coordinators, parole officers, and individuals – streamline the process of getting this information to people that need it.
 - c. Enhance continuity of care by creating an automatic process for updating treatment information and alleviating the burden of reapplying for benefits for individuals reentering from DOC custody.
- 8. Address unresolved legal barriers and financial obligations that impact an individual's reentry success and can inhibit individuals' ability to obtain a driver's license and lead to potentially unnecessary rearrests.**
- a. Develop a standardized process for identifying and evaluating outstanding fines and fees prior to an individual's release. Require reentry coordinators at a certain point in time prior to release to either coordinate with ALEA or use driver's license stations in facilities (where applicable) to check for unpaid citations and provide incarcerated individual with contact information for court and reinstatement fees.
 - b. Establish a formalized process/documentation for reentry coordinators to identify and help facilitate the resolution of outstanding warrants in municipal courts prior to release.
 - i. Explore opportunities for municipal courts to share data (possibly through the work of the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Services).
 - ii. Expand the current pilot project between ABPP and county judges in Birmingham to review outstanding cases for individuals being released on mandatory supervised release prior to release to community in additional counties.
 - c. Eliminate fees for probation and parole community supervision. Increase education to incarcerated individuals, reentry coordinators, community providers, and other reentry stakeholders around hardship licenses that allow individuals to drive to work, school, health appointments, and voting while their Alabama license is revoked or suspended to take care of outstanding fines and fees. Examine opportunities to eliminate additional fines and fees by determining the cost/benefit of collection, how much agencies need from state appropriations to fund programs, etc.
 - d. Identify partnership between ADOC and DHR to support incarcerated individuals with understanding their child support obligations and amending child support orders during incarceration. Create an information sharing agreement to help identify individuals with open child support orders and connect them with the county the order is active in.

Behavioral Health and Housing

9. **Formalize cross system collaboration and information sharing among behavioral health, corrections, and reentry partners.**
 - a. Create formal procedures, including roles and responsibilities, for sharing information related to release date and behavioral health needs so that partners can connect people who are incarcerated to mental health and substance use treatment prior to release, apply for health insurance, and ensure continuity of care and medication. Ensure the collection and sharing of data has safeguards around consent and privacy.
 - i. Ensure consent for treatment at time of incarceration of ADOC with an authorization to share their health record and/or a continuity of care document, with ABPP, or a community-based provider upon release from incarceration, along with a release of information policy that allows individuals access to obtain a copy of their records upon release.
 - ii. If applicable, partner with state or regional health information exchanges.
 - b. Provide for the continuity of care for individuals with long-term needs by implementing automated, real-time Medicaid benefit reactivation through seamless data transmission between ADOC and Medicaid and exploring financial incentives for private long-term care facilities to accept individuals upon release from ADOC.
 - c. Expand training opportunities and support to mental health and substance use treatment providers, particularly for increasing the number of certified peer recovery specialists hired by providers, building upon capacity building work already underway by ADMH.
10. **Expand Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) or Medications for Opioid Use Disorders (MOUD) in corrections and support continuity of care upon reentry into the community.**
 - a. Continue to expand MAT/MOUD treatment in additional correctional settings by identifying space, staff, training, and other resources needed to implement these services.
 - b. Release an RFP for community-based providers to ensure continuity of MAT/MOUD services post-release and strengthen partnerships with existing community providers to ensure continuity of care.
 - c. Expand partnership between corrections and mental health to train incarcerated individuals to act as peer mentors inside of correctional facilities to provide peer support services to individuals in recovery, particularly those who successfully complete treatment. Create additional pathway to certification for peer support specialist for these individuals upon release.
 - d. Explore applying for a Medicaid Section 1115 demonstration project to pilot projects to support case management for individuals receiving MAT/MOUD pre and post release.
 - e. Address stigma toward medication through targeted education by partnering with certified peer support specialists for training with criminal justice stakeholders and local and state levels about substance use disorder and MAT.
 - f. Increase access to Naloxone to ensure widespread access to reducing overdose deaths upon release for all individuals leaving state prisons.
11. **Expand availability to safe, supportive, and quality housing for the reentry population.**

- a. Conduct a pre-release housing screening and assessment to better understand individuals' housing risk and needs before they leave prison and to understand the full scale of the state's need for reentry housing to make the case for additional resources. Partner with community organizations to conduct in-reach services to help ensure a warm handoff upon reentry.
- b. Conduct targeted outreach to public housing authorities, private landlords, and other housing providers to educate them on the needs of the reentry population and mitigate concerns. Engage in regional roundtable discussions to determine if there are opportunities to mitigate discretionary barriers to housing. Explore creative funding and partnership and contracting strategies to expand transitional housing and rapid rehousing with developers and other state agencies, with a focus on intersectional populations (behavioral health, substance use disorder, veterans, families, etc.).
- c. In coordination with developers and the Housing Finance Authority, review and discuss opportunities through the state's Housing Credit Qualified Allocation Plan for housing tax credits in giving preference or carving out set asides in tax credit developments.
- d. Expand the availability of recovery housing, particularly in more rural jurisdictions, and strengthen the certification and quality assurance process to ensure that all recovery housing services are meeting quality standards. Explore the possibility of providing statewide training and technical assistance through the Alabama alliance to recovery housing providers and develop mechanisms to educate drug courts, corrections, community supervision, employers and other criminal justice partners about why recovery housing is important, the standards of recovery housing, and the quality recovery housing options available.
- e. Strengthen Coordinated Entry access points for people returning in coordination with the state's Continuums of Care programs. Identify a Continuum of Care interested in leveraging local Emergency Solutions Grant funding for rapid rehousing to quickly connect individuals with housing and employment supports.

Data Collection and Tracking

12. Establish clear, consistent definitions for reentry data outcomes.

- a. Establish clear, consistent definitions for reentry measures including recidivism, employment, health, and housing to improve data comparability, enable meaningful outcome tracking, and enhance decision-making. This effort should involve collaboration across ADOC, ABPP, ACCS, ISTC, Workforce Development Cabinet, behavioral health, and housing, and other relevant reentry service providers to align definitions with national standards and best practices.

13. Convene a stakeholder data working group to support ongoing data improvements.

- a. With representation from ADOC, ABPP, ACCS, ISTC, Workforce Development Cabinet, behavioral health, and housing, convene an ongoing data working group focused on improving data standardization and expanding data infrastructure for collecting, reporting, and sharing reentry data.
- b. Establish technical subcommittee to work on data documentation and quality assurance goals.
- c. Establish policy subcommittee to work on data definitions.



Questions about this report?
Email: questions@paroles.alabama.gov