

Reentry: A Bridge to Success



The Department's reentry initiative is a change in philosophy and a change in how we do business.

It means that for most inmates, we start focusing on their return to the community not just before they leave prison, but the day they enter prison.

The reentry initiative is a crime prevention strategy designed to increase the number of prisoners who live productive, law-abiding lives after their return to the community from prison.

Rick Raemisch

Secretary

State of Wisconsin
Department of Corrections



REENTRY A BRIDGE TO SUCCESS

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***To promote public safety and offender success
from admission to custody through reentry
and supervision in the community***

22,797

Adult offenders incarcerated in Wisconsin's prisons on July 18, 2008

97%

Percent of inmates who will one day complete their court-ordered prison time and be released to the community

71,425

Adult offenders under DOC community supervision on Feb. 29, 2008

\$29,600

Average annual cost of incarceration for each inmate in the Wisconsin adult prison system



Focus on Reentry

Violent offenders who pose a risk to public safety need to be locked up for a very long time, some for life. Holding offenders accountable is at the very heart of the criminal justice and corrections systems.

The reality, however is that the vast majority of prisoners will one day return to communities across Wisconsin. This is what we call prisoner reentry.

The public is best served if offenders are not only held accountable for their actions, but also have the opportunity to become law abiding and successful members of the community when they are released.

By improving prisoner reentry, our goal is crime reduction, fewer new crime victims, reduced state and local criminal justice costs, and most importantly, safer families and communities.

To accomplish these goals, reentry programs are being set up within state prisons and in the community. In addition, the DOC Office of the Secretary has a full-time Reentry Director to oversee efforts Department-wide.

RECIDIVISM

38.7%

Percentage of offenders who committed a new crime resulting in a new conviction, within three years of release from prison. (1980 - 2003)

Challenges and Risk Factors

Research shows there are core areas of need that, if met, help increase the chances of offender success and reduce recidivism in the long run.

Education and Employment

In our adult prisons, 47 percent of inmates lack either a high school diploma or its equivalent. 49 percent read below the ninth grade level and 74 percent perform math below a ninth grade level. DOC educators are working hard to address these needs and increase the chances of productivity and employment following release.

Mental Health and AODA Needs

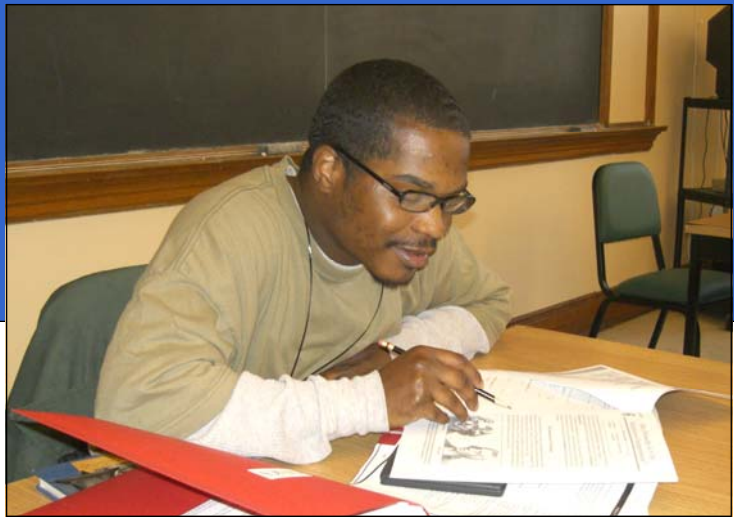
70 percent of inmates entering our adult prison system have alcohol or drug abuse (AODA) treatment needs. 8 to 10 percent are seriously mentally ill, with conditions such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and major depression. 24 percent of inmates are on clinical monitoring for mental health needs. Because these problems do not disappear when inmates return to the community, DOC works to ensure that a continuum of treatment is available for offenders.

Housing and Transportation

Finding stable housing is a challenge for offenders who lack financial resources and family support. Another obstacle for many offenders is transportation. Thousands of offenders either lack a drivers license or have unpaid fines causing their licenses to remain suspended. While holding offenders accountable, the Department is working with other community and government agencies to increase access to housing and transport.

Addressing Educational Needs

- ◆ There is a positive correlation between the educational gains of offenders while incarcerated and their success upon returning to the community. Conversely, recidivism is higher among inmates who have not completed educational and vocational programs while in prison.
- ◆ To improve chances of success, both adult and juvenile offenders are encouraged to complete educational and vocational programs, as well as institution work assignments prior to reentry.
- ◆ High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) completions have been on the rise, as seen below. In addition, a 10.6% increase in school enrolments has been seen since 2002.
- ◆ DOC educators like Rick Bunnell (pictured below) help inmates acquire the knowledge and skills that are critical for their success. Despite progress being made, there remains much work to be done and many challenges to overcome.

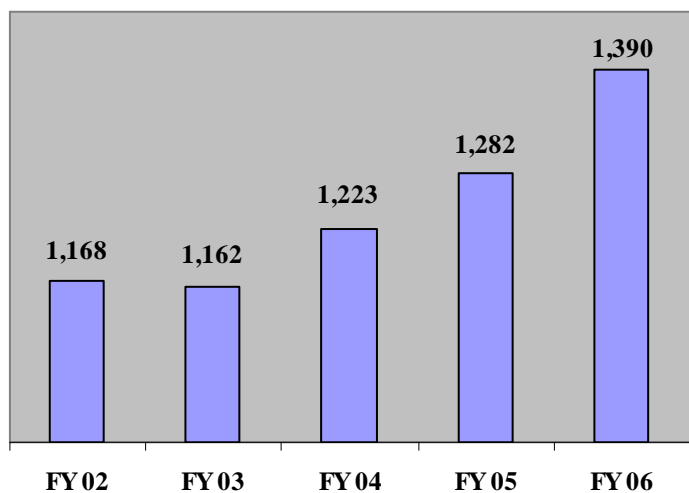


47%

Percent of inmates who lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.



Increases in HSED Graduations



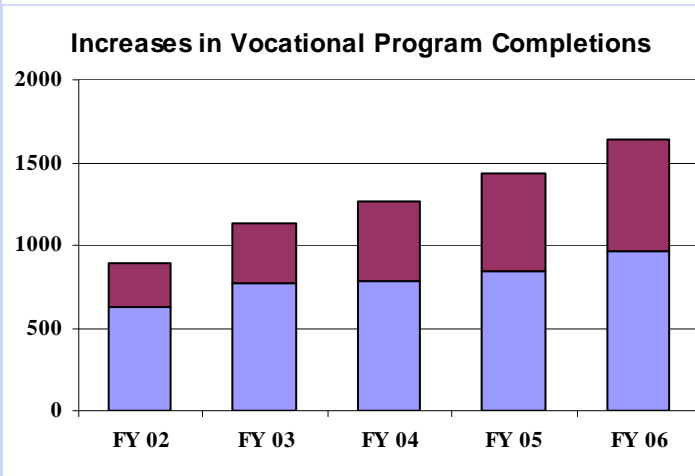
SKILLS & JOBS

DOC Work Release Programs

Work release programs are offered in 16 of the Department's prisons. In Fiscal Year 2006, more than **3,000** minimum security inmates participated in community work release programs, earning wages to pay taxes, child support, restitution and debt.

Badger State Industries (BSI)

BSI is the Department's vocational training and work skills development program, operating within 11 correctional facilities. While teaching manufacturing and production techniques, BSI employed an average of **653** inmates in FY 2006.



BSI offers employment in signage manufacturing, printing, textile, laundry and furnishing operations (pictured below, left). In addition, inmates can become employed through DOC's Computer Recycling Program and in the Correctional Farms program.

Vocational Training

Through the College of the Air program, inmates can receive certificates in Milwaukee Area Technical College vocational courses. The number of

graduations from Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) certified courses have been steadily rising, as seen in blue on the above chart. Following completion, staff can help offenders create portfolios of these vocational and work achievements to jump start their search for employment prior to reentry.



Success Following Community Reentry

Companies like Poynette Iron Works and Fond du Lac Stone have benefited from hiring skilled ex-inmate employees. Craig Kissner, of Fond du Lac Stone, has been employing work-release inmates and ex-inmates for 15 years, and calls them some of his "most reliable" workers. These are just a few of the many valuable relationships DOC has with employers across the state to promote reentry opportunities.

WOMEN OFFENDERS

- ◆ Through the Female Offender Reentry Program, the Department works to address the gender-specific needs of women offenders in prison and in the community.
- ◆ In prison, parenting education programs help promote the importance of parent/child relationships.
- ◆ A prenatal class is offered for incarcerated expectant mothers, covering fetal development, stages of labor, delivery and postpartum depression.
- ◆ Extended visits give mothers a chance to visit with their children for up to six hours, sharing activities such as cooking, reading and gardening.
- ◆ Child support workshops help women understand the financial conditions of child support orders.
- ◆ The Center for Self-Sufficiency works with DOC to provide counseling for women in prison who have been victims of abusive relationships.
- ◆ In the community, support continues as women offenders are connected with family reunification and custody programs.



Unique Needs of Women Offenders

55% of women incarcerated with DOC report having custody of a minor child.

Nearly 6 in 10 women in prison have a history of being physically or sexually abused.

30% of inmates in DOC's prison for women, Taycheedah Correctional Institution (TCI), have a serious mental illness.

Building Career Skills

The Dental Lab Technician program at TCI provides training in an on-site lab (pictured below). Incarcerated women can learn to produce dentures while earning apprenticeship hours and certification through Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC).



Through the MPTC Fundamentals of Building Maintenance and Construction program, TCI inmates learn carpentry, electrical, plumbing, and painting skills. Through the Office Software Applications program, students learn Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

Following release from TCI, students can continue training on work release, or begin a career when hired in the community.

FAMILIES & SUPPORT SYSTEMS

- ◆ Maintaining positive family relationships is essential to assist inmates with reentry. The reentry initiative seeks to foster family relationships to help break the intergenerational cycle of crime and incarceration.
- ◆ To further improve family ties, DOC is enhancing parenting education for male and female inmates and expanding fatherhood programs. Maintaining these connections is important for kids, and also can give incarcerated mothers and fathers hope, and a reason to be successful upon their return to the community.
- ◆ DOC also works to engage a number of community partners to promote successful families.
- ◆ As a partner in Governor Doyle's KidsFirst Agenda, we are working with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys & Girls Clubs, Madison-area Urban Ministry, Girl Scouts and other organizations to connect kids of incarcerated parents with adult mentors and other support systems.
- ◆ Circles of Support in Winnebago, Outagamie and Brown Counties, comprised of community members, individuals released from prison, and their families, meet monthly to provide positive support to the released person.
- ◆ To help reintegrate Native Americans into their tribal communities, DOC refers offenders to Healing Circles with tribes such as Red Cliff, Bad River and Lac Courte Oreilles. In Healing Circles, tribal members use spiritual healing to assist offenders and help change behaviors.



Expanding Capacity for Treatment

70% of inmates entering DOC adult prisons have identified alcohol or drug abuse (AODA) treatment needs.

- ◆ To increase the number of offenders who receive AODA treatment prior to leaving prison, in 2004 the Department opened the **Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility** (pictured right), the first state prison dedicated primarily to AODA treatment.
- ◆ To provide another sentencing option for judges, the **Earned Release Program** was created for offenders with AODA needs.
- ◆ The Department has expanded the use of **Boot Camps** to allow offenders to earn their release through treatment along with a physical regimen and work programs.
- ◆ Mental health care has also been a major focus in the Department. Our agency is the largest provider of mental health services in an institutional setting in the state.
- ◆ Individual mental health needs are addressed by licensed professionals working within DOC institutions.
- ◆ Additional staff and resources are being added to the Taycheedah prison to target gender-specific needs of women offenders.
- ◆ Suicide prevention initiatives have been launched to identify the signs of suicide and educate all staff on prevention techniques.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment



Coupled with a strong system of community supervision, the continuation of mental health care and alcohol and drug treatment is essential when inmates

return to the community.

Treatment in the community

Since 2002, the Department has significantly increased Purchase of Service (POS) resources to expand community treatment options. In addition, we have more than doubled resources for AODA treatment in our institutions and in the community.

The Department is also working with the Social Security Administration, other state agencies and county governments to connect eligible offenders with critical AODA and mental health services following release.

Progress has been made, but significant challenges still exist. DOC needs the continued support of partners to fully address community treatment needs.

Promoting Accountability in the Community



Offenders under community supervision are required to meet regularly with their agents in DOC community corrections offices.

Supervision Strategies

- ◆ Agents conduct home visits to ensure that offenders meet critical success factors such as stable employment, stable residence and effective treatment.
- ◆ Day Report Centers provide additional options to hold offenders accountable with treatment and programming requirements.
- ◆ Each offender must sign rules of supervision, which can include no contact rules, curfews, and submitting to drug and polygraph tests. Failure to comply can lead to sanctions or revocation.
- ◆ Through electronic monitoring of offenders and GPS tracking of sex offenders, agents have additional tools to monitor offenders and share information with law enforcement.
- ◆ DOC works closely with law enforcement, sharing gang intelligence and other information to increase public safety.



Assisting Crime Victims

DOC is committed to addressing the effects of criminal behavior and restoring a sense of safety to victims.

Through the Department's Office of Victim's Services, crime victims can receive notification regarding changes in an offender's status, and provide input in the parole process.

DOC works with community partners to bring restorative justice groups together in and out of the institutions.

Restitution Payments

More than \$9.8 million in restitution payments for victims was collected by DOC during Fiscal Year 2007.

To hold offenders accountable for other financial obligations, collection of owed court costs, fines, DNA and supervision fees are also enforced.

Stable housing is one of the key success factors for offenders living in the community

HOUSING

- Offenders with stable housing and support systems are more likely to stay gainfully employed, and less likely to commit new crimes. Stable housing, coupled with a strong system of community supervision, helps DOC probation and parole agents hold offenders accountable. Ultimately offenders are expected to support themselves and maintain stable residences.
- Prior to reentry, agents work with law enforcement agencies, local organizations and families to help offenders locate suitable housing locations close to employment, treatment and support systems.
- If a suitable housing placement cannot be identified prior to release, temporary housing options are explored to avert homelessness. Offenders who are homeless are more difficult to monitor, more likely to go underground, and more likely to engage in high-risk or criminal behaviors.
- DOC contracts with treatment and housing organizations to give agents the option of Transitional Living Placements, halfway houses and emergency housing units. These options are temporary arrangements that allow offenders to have a roof over their heads while they work to find a permanent residence.

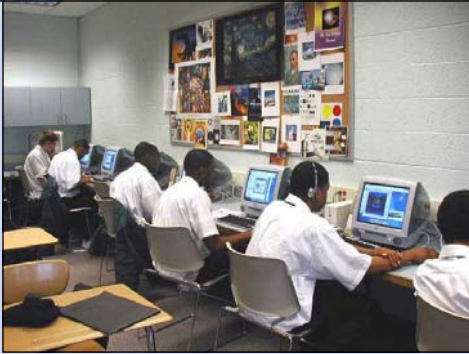


Photo courtesy of Genesis Behavioral Services, Inc.

Transportation

- Lacking a driver's license or state ID is a common barrier to employment for many offenders following release. To address this, DOC has developed programs to remove these barriers, and facilitate the transition back to becoming productive, law-abiding citizens.
- DOC is developing the Inmate ID program, a partnership with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to streamline the process of obtaining a state ID card for inmates nearing release.
- Driver's education courses are offered to minimum-security inmates through a program that takes offenders to the area DMV for tests.
- Offenders who need to get their driver's licenses reinstated can access DOT instruction to help expedite the process of reinstatement, including paying fines and getting insurance up to date.

Juvenile Offender Reentry Success



Going Home Project

The Department's work on reentry first began in the Division of Juvenile Corrections in 2003.

Upon receipt of a \$2 million federal grant, the Division was able to pilot a reentry program called the Wisconsin Going Home Project.

The Going Home Project helped provide additional supervision and support through a structured **90-day Transition Phase**, for high risk youth returning to Milwaukee and Brown County communities.

Individualized Case Plans for each youth served to bridge the institution's work with the work of field supervisors in the community.

Parental Involvement

To get parents more involved, the division added a parental component, called **Families Count**, to expose parents to the skills their child is learning at a juvenile institution and help them prepare for reentry.

Building on Success

- ◆ The success of the pilot Going Home Project produced valuable information for DOC staff and helped forge new community partnerships.
- ◆ These successes enabled DOC to refine, strengthen and implement its Department-wide reentry vision.

Reentry Lessons Learned

- ◆ Planning for return to the community begins at the time of admission.
- ◆ Reach-in services enable staff, families, and community service providers to establish clear release plans.
- ◆ Helping youth continue their education and locate stable employment is critical to their reentry.
- ◆ County aftercare workers have an essential role to ensure youth receive the needed services to overcome barriers to successful reentry.

Juvenile Recidivism - 16.4%

- ◆ Percentage of youth released in 2004 who committed a crime, resulting in a new conviction and return to DOC incarceration within two years.



“One agency cannot accomplish community safety on its own. That’s why the state has enlisted the help of critical partners and built upon these relationships to accomplish reentry goals.”

- Jim Doyle, Governor

Reentry Partners

Law Enforcement Agencies

The Department works closely with law enforcement partners to promote public safety. An example is the Racine Reentry Project, where law enforcement and DOC collaborate to ensure accountability among high-risk offenders returning to the Racine community.

Community and Faith-based Groups

The Department is partnering with community and faith-based groups to provide pre-and post-release assistance in education, mentoring and job services.

Victim Advocacy Organizations

The recently created Crime Victims Advisory Committee brings major victim advocacy organizations to the table with DOC leaders to share ideas on how best to serve victims.

State Legislature

Through the bipartisan support of the Legislature, the DOC has increased its commitment to resources, enhanced programming and implemented innovative strategies to strengthen its reentry initiative.

Treatment Providers

The Department has opened Day Report Centers for men and women, and contracts with community providers to deliver additional programming and oversight for offenders in the community.

State Agencies and Employers

DOC works with the Department of Workforce Development to help connect offenders with employers in the manufacturing and construction trades. DOC also works with Regional Workforce Development Boards, both in institutions and in communities, on employment opportunities for offenders throughout the state.

For More Information

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Web Resources

To read more about the Wisconsin
Department of Corrections, visit:
<http://www.wi-doc.com>

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Department of Corrections