



**Peer City Reentry Center Models:
Best Practices**

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Introduction

The purpose of this research is to provide an initial evaluation of various Reentry Center models based on peer cities who have successfully established a Reentry Center, and determine best practices for Travis County's consideration. The peer cities included in this evaluation are Albuquerque/Bernalillo County, New Mexico, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Houston, Texas, and Washington D.C. In conducting this research, we are guided by the following considerations of each Reentry Center:

1. The oversight body of the Reentry Center
2. How the Reentry Center is financed
3. How many people are typically served
4. Accessibility of services
5. What services are included
6. Community or contracted partnerships

Each peer city has helped inform the best way to frame a model for approaching the implementation of a Reentry Center. This is largely informed by certain trends depicted in our summary page below. An overview of the three models are also cross-compared in a matrix to differentiate key features of each Reentry Center. Each model is further specified in our peer city examples for consideration of how Travis County and the City of Austin should approach their own implementation of a Reentry Center that best meets the needs of our community.

This initial research is based on public information as available in publications and online materials for each peer city or county of focus. Some specific data was gathered from outreach to each peer city, however not all cities responded to the requests for information. This draft is subject to change.

Summary

The following section demonstrates common themes across the successful Reentry Centers gathered in this research:

1. **Multiple Reentry Entities:** Most of the peer cities evaluated have several different active agencies or organizations that provided reentry services, meaning that there is not always one designated Reentry Center entity for the city or county post release.
2. **Last Stop:** Some Reentry Centers are connected to (or a short distance away from) the physical jail infrastructure. Having this close proximity of a Reentry Center serves as a one-way path of consolidated community resources accessible right before or immediately after individuals are released. This can be helpful for direct case management and transitional services such as obtaining an ID, accessing clothing as needed, and more.
3. **Health Umbrella:** Some Reentry Centers operate under larger city health centers or county health initiatives. This structure highlights the importance of health outcomes for individuals experiencing reentry.
4. **Reentry as a Process:** Successful Reentry Centers build on the internal reentry programming offered while individuals are in-custody; having a reentry-focused jail system with the soft handoff being made to the Reentry Center at the time of release.
5. **Coalitions:** Existing city and county-wide coalitions help build community collaboration and access across siloed service providers to advance reentry advocacy. Cities or counties that do not have a designated Reentry Center infrastructure from our research highly rely on these coalitions and community networks for reentry services.

While the peer cities evaluated are based on nonprofit, county, or corrections agency oversight, private contracting options are also available to set up reentry services in the city or county in partnership with correctional facilities.

Overview Comparison of Reentry Center Models

| | <u>Oversight Entity</u> | <u>Peer City examples</u> | <u>Physically connected to jail?</u> | <u>Pre-release engagement? Continuity of reentry planning</u> | <u>Accessibility post release (one-time vs. regular services)</u> | <u>Are there partners providing on-sight services?</u> | <u>Are partners contracted for services?</u> | <u>Key Distinction in services offered/connection to services</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Model 1: Community Comprehensive Reentry Health Center | Healthcare system/local government | Albuquerque/ Bernalillo County, NM Philadelphia, PA | No | Yes (upon booking) | Only serves populations upon release one time | Yes | Yes | Rooted in values of community health; safe place to wait for a ride or stay overnight at any time post release |
| Model 2: Extension of the Jail | County Jail | Houston, TX | Yes | Yes (for vulnerable populations) | Only serves populations upon release one time | No (Due to COVID) | Yes | Transitional services such as creating new IDs on the spot are a valued service prior to walking out of the jail |
| Model 3: Intergovernmental Model: Consolidation of Public Benefits | Department of Corrections | Washington, D.C. | No | Yes (30 days before release but not always clear) | Only serves populations upon release one time | Yes | Yes | Public benefits such as the DMV and the DHS are located on-sight for services |

Model 1: Community Comprehensive Reentry Health Center


Model 1 is labeled under the umbrella of a community comprehensive approach to reentry that simultaneously focuses on health outcomes for individuals that are released. The oversight body for this type of model is either directly managed by community health agencies or county-wide behavioral health oversight bodies. This partnership helps focus on the overlap between poor physical/mental health outcomes and histories of substance abuse, while connecting individuals to supportive community services such as housing, employment, and temporary transitional services. This model also thrives with the strong partnerships of reentry advocacy networks to further connect siloed service providers with clients upon release and stay connected in best meeting the needs of individuals experiencing reentry.

Peer City Example #1: Albuquerque/Bernalillo County, NM

Reentry Center Model: Bernalillo County Resource Reentry Center (RRC)¹

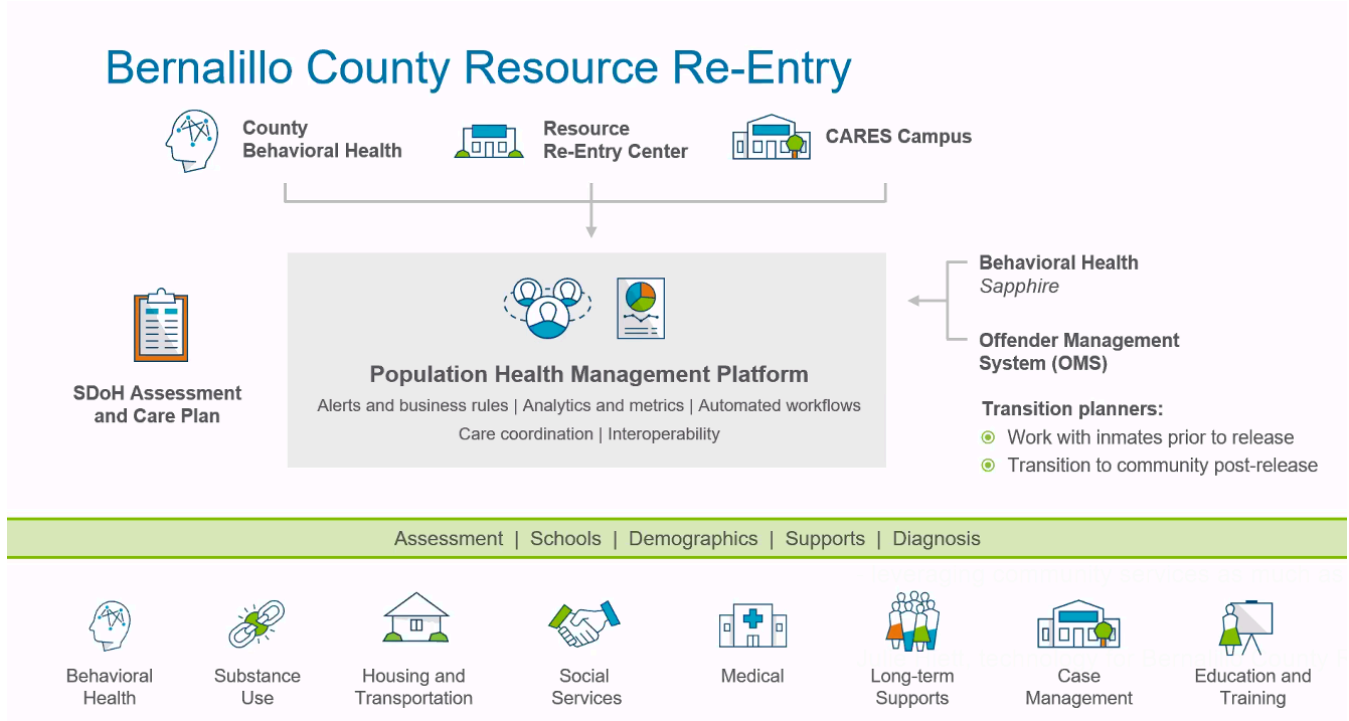
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| <u>Oversight Entity:</u> | Bernalillo County Department of Behavioral Health Services. Product of joint city and county initiative for addressing behavioral health in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County |
| <u>How many people are served/utilize the Reentry Center Services each year?</u> | Average of 16,961 individuals access the Resource Reentry Center services each year |
| <u>Dedicated revenue source</u> | \$20 million collected each year from local taxes towards county-wide behavioral health initiatives. RRC is only one product of Behavioral Health initiative, others examples also include a mobile crisis team |
| <u>Approximate annual allocation of funding:</u> | \$1,041,188 towards RRC |
| <u>Physically Connected to Jail Infrastructure:</u> | No, located 23 minutes from the jail. A shuttle drives individuals who are released to the RRC downtown |
| <u>Pre-release engagement:</u> | RRC links with the jail system's "Transition Planners" to map out individual case management and reentry plans upon initial booking at the jail. Transition Planners use a needs assessment tool for those at greater risk for recidivism to determine short & long-term goals |
| <u>Accessibility post release:</u> | Open 24/7, however they only serve individuals being dropped off at RRC from Metropolitan Detention Center. Anyone who has left the RRC but wants returning services can call a phone number to get reconnected |

¹ Pulled from Webinar: "Bernalillo County Resource Re-Entry Center: Improving Health and Leveraging Community Partners" February 11th 2021

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| <p><u>On-sight service partners:</u></p> | <p>On-sight service providers labeled as 7 county case managers who conduct case management, reentry assessments, and transition plans</p> |
| <p><u>Contracted partners:</u></p> | <p>University of NM Hospital provides 6 case managers who are housed inside of the detention center. Currently in negotiations with First Nations HealthSource to manage a motel voucher program for individuals accessing RRC services. Community partners who are not contracted but offer services as a warm hand-off in collaboration with RRC are members of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council's Division and Reentry Subcommittee</p> |
| <p><u>Services offered are:</u></p>  | <p>Resources include: transportation, shelter, clothing, case management, behavioral health/substance use services, veteran services, pretrial services, narcotics education and access, vocational services, SNAP/Medicaid enrollment, prescription access, etc.</p> <p>RRC individuals have access to: phone calls, charging phones, using a private bathroom, free Wi-Fi, using the computer, free food, waiting for a ride, free bus pass, and having a place to stay until morning</p> |

The Bernalillo County Resource Reentry Center also uses other community partners and local government buy-in in order to make operations successful. The Albuquerque Bernalillo County Governing Commission (ABCGC) was created as a joint city-county commission with local school systems to discuss and implement behavioral health projects. The ABCGC sub committees (Crisis Services, Community Supports, Supportive Housing, and Prevention/Intervention/Harm Reduction) were formed to implement important change to meet the behavioral health needs of the most vulnerable residents in this particular community.

Bernalillo County also utilizes a data-sharing system through Netsmart Technology specific to privately sharing client information for a smooth reentry transition. Various assessments conducted upon bookings at the jail are sent into the Netsmart platform, where Transition Planners can take a look at the assessments made prior to meeting with clients. Transition Planners then create a reentry plan to provide a hand-off to community based organizations for additional services. The following graph shows how the Bernalillo County Resource Reentry Center has laid out a safe and effective platform to work with various parties at every step of an individual’s reentry process.



Although this peer city does not list a highly active reentry advocacy network, local city and county government has played a key role in this successful implementation of a Reentry Center underneath the high community need to provide effective behavioral health services.

Model 1: Community Comprehensive Reentry Health Center

Peer City Example #2: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Reentry Center Model: Philadelphia FIGHT Community Health Centers - Reentry Center²

Philadelphia has an expansive network of service providers that work with individuals experiencing reentry. The following example shows the operations of one Reentry Center under a Community Health Center:

Disclaimer: Several attempts of outreach have been made but we're still waiting on responses to complete the table below

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Oversight Entity:</u> | Philadelphia FIGHT's Institute for Community Justice program |
| <u>How many people are served/utilize the Reentry Center Services each year?</u> | 710 individuals served last year (potentially skewed due to COVID, not confirmed) |
| <u>Dedicated revenue source:</u> | Financed through the Community Health Centers, and other state and local grants |
| <u>Approximate annual allocation of funding:</u> | Data not available |
| <u>Physically Connected to Jail Infrastructure:</u> | No, operates from downtown location |
| <u>Pre-release engagement:</u> | Does have pre-release engagement with local criminal justice agencies (details not provided) |
| <u>Accessibility post release</u> | Data not available |
| <u>On-sight service partners:</u> | Data not available |
| <u>Contracted partners:</u> | Data not available |
| <u>Services offered are:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive services providing health linkages and advocacy to individuals and communities impacted by mass incarceration - Educational programming - Workforce Development - MANN Up Peer Support and Empowerment: Partners with MANN Up Association at SCI Phoenix, working with 300+ men for reentry support |

² <https://fight.org/reentry-center/>

In addition to this designated Reentry Center, the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition serves as the key advocacy network in connecting service providers and advancing reentry work for the city.³ This coalition is comprised of 115 member organizations including community-based organizations, researchers, advocates, returning citizens, faith based groups, and federal government agencies. According to a 2019 performance evaluation of reentry services in Philadelphia, the Reentry Coalition had five key findings for their city:

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

Finding 2: There is a clear need for continued alignment of fragmented and siloed efforts in reentry across the city. The ecosystem of reentry services is made up of many small programs and organizations, with 65% of orgs serving fewer than 1,000 people. Many programs are not formally partnered with criminal justice agencies, and no single funder drives program alignment; reentry services are supported by multiple funding sources.

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

Finding 4: There are significant gaps in Philadelphia's reentry services, which need to be addressed and continuously assessed. Programs have mixed eligibility requirements, many programs do not have specialized services or flexible hours, almost none have child care, varied case management accessibility.

Finding 5: They see many opportunities available through collaboration of resources.

The Philadelphia Reentry Coalition also developed the "Home for Good" five-year countywide action plan to improve reentry in Philadelphia from 2015 – 2020.⁴ The results of initiative as of 2020 have shown that the City of Philadelphia recognizes June as Reentry Awareness Month to raise awareness about reentry in Philadelphia as of 2017. A variety of activities and event organizations by coalition members are celebrated in June, such as the annual Reentry Celebration and Award Ceremony that honors organizations and hundreds of Philadelphians who have overcome reentry barriers for their individual accomplishments. The Coalition also launched the City of Philadelphia's Office of Reentry Partnerships in 2019.

The City of Philadelphia's Office of Reentry Partnership (ORP) works with both the coalition advocacy network and formal Reentry Center under this community health umbrella.⁵ Formed in 2019 to elevate/organize city wide reentry efforts, initiatives managed by this office include the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition, as well as Neighborhood Resource Centers which will serve as satellite one-stop shops for reentry services. Although there are several approaches to connecting individuals experiencing reentry with services, this is Philadelphia's approach in forming multiple Centers managed under this city government entity.

³ <https://www.phila.gov/media/20190819093622/Philadelphias-Reentry-Services-Landscape-Full-Report-August-2019.pdf>

⁴ https://f3b6325d-8a43-4b94-9f1d-fef14534c1b4.filesusr.com/ugd/d6678c_3a465f6b63e74c43becb9d928399973a.pdf

⁵ <https://www.phila.gov/departments/office-of-reentry-partnerships/>

Model 2: Extension of the Jail

Model 2 serves to show how reentry services are approached as an extension of the criminal justice system. Physically connected to the jail, this model highlights the convenience of accessing immediate transitional services, case management, and community referrals upon being released from the jail.

Peer City Example #3: Houston, Texas

Reentry Center Model: Harris County Sheriff's Office Reentry Program⁶

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Oversight Entity:</u> | Harris County Sheriff's Office |
| <u>How many people are served/utilize the Reentry Center Services each year?</u> | Average of 3,699 individuals access Reentry Center services each year |
| <u>Dedicated revenue source:</u> | Harris County Sherriff's Office, as well as grant funding |
| <u>Approximate annual allocation of funding:</u> | \$315,000 annually from HCSO to pay for seven full-time staff, and four grant funded staff members |
| <u>Physically Connected to Jail Infrastructure?</u> | Yes, the exit to the jail for those being released is through the Reentry Center |
| <u>Pre-release engagement:</u> | Internal reentry planning, programming, and services are available for four key vulnerable populations: veterans, victims of human trafficking, pregnant or post-partum women, and individuals with histories of substance abuse |
| <u>Accessibility post release:</u> | Only one-way through upon release |
| <u>On-sight service partners:</u> | On-sight service partners are no longer housed in the Reentry Center due to COVID-19. The Harris Center is a service partner that helps divert individuals with low risk at booking, but they are not housed on-sight |
| <u>Contracted partners:</u> | SER jobs, MHA Veterans, and the City of Houston Reentry Program |
| <u>Services offered are:</u> | Case Management - Social workers and counselors work as navigators and coordinators Transitional Services - IDs, accessing clothing, shoes Connection to homeless services, substance abuse counseling, veteran services, employment services |

⁶ Informed by Jennifer Herring, Director of the Reentry Center at Harris County Jail

The Houston Health Department also manages a Community Reentry Network Program external to Harris County Jail services. Client based services include case management, counseling, family reunifications, job readiness, life skills courses, peer support groups, and additional community resources, referrals & linkages. Transitional services apart of this health program include access to computer labs, transportation assistance, social service information, and access to healthcare/ACA enrollment. Community partners of this program are listed in the image below:

| Community Partners | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>COMMUNITY PARTNERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Gear • Dress for Success Houston • Gulf Coast Community Services Association • Harris County Area Agency on Aging • Harris Health • Houston Health Department • Houston Food Bank • Houston Public Library • Mayor’s Citizens Assistance Office • SERJobs • Target Hunger • The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD • Volunteers of America | <p>PARTNER SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After-school programs • Community events • Crisis services for basic needs such as utility, rental assistance, and transportation • Daycare centers • Drug, alcohol recovery services • Food pantries and food distribution • Information and referral services • Legal assistance • Parenting classes • Summer meals programs • Youth services |

Houston serving as a peer city model highlights both a correction’s approach to Reentry, as well as a city health initiative to approaching reentry services.

Model 3: Intergovernmental Model: Consolidation of Public Benefits

This model may be unique to this peer city, but is important highlight the potential array of public benefits housed in a Reentry Center. Also managed by the Department of Corrections, this model provides individuals with government-run public benefits in house that contrasts from other reentry center models reviewed. The active DC-Reentry Action Network connects various service providers in the public sector that serve the reentry population in many ways outside of this formal Center.

Peer City Example #4: Washington, D.C.

Reentry Center Model: The Resources to Empower and Develop You (READY) Center⁷

****Disclaimer: Several attempts of outreach have been made but we're still waiting on responses to complete the table below****

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Oversight Entity:</u> | D.C. Department of Corrections |
| <u>How many people are served/utilize the Reentry Center Services each year?</u> | Data not available |
| <u>Dedicated revenue source:</u> | Data not available |
| <u>Approximate annual allocation of funding:</u> | Data not available |
| <u>Physically Connected to Jail Infrastructure</u> | No, physical infrastructure is a short walk from the jail upon release. A READY Center representative meets participants at the door of the jail upon release to lead them to the one-stop shop of services at the READY Center |
| <u>Pre-release engagement:</u> | DOC conducts screenings of DOC participants 30 days prior to release from custody and assesses participant needs to provide links to community resources/services |
| <u>Accessibility post release</u> | Must visit the READY center within first 24 hours of release to access services. |
| <u>On-sight service partners:</u> | Service connection to: ⁸ Community Based Organizations (CBOs) Dept of Corrections (DOC) Dept of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Dept of Employment Services (DOES) Dept of Human Services (DHS) |

⁷ <https://doc.dc.gov/node/1434721>

⁸ <https://doc.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/doc/publication/attachments/ReadyBrochureDesign.pdf>

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|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Dept of Behavioral Services (DBH) The Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (MORCA) Also Partners with DC-RAN and Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants |
| <u>Contracted partners:</u> | Data not available |
| <u>Services offered are:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource referrals for clothing, food, educational & work readiness, and family reunification programs - Applying for ID cars, renewing/replacing driver's license, arranging payment plans to resolve any outstanding parking/traffic tickets - Participants can receive information about work readiness programs - Applying for Medicaid, SNAP, employment & educational programs, and family support services - Provides links/referrals to emergency psychiatric care or residential services <p>Provides case management & referrals for resources such as Birth Certificates, SS cards, ticket adjustments, and various training programs</p> |

In addition to the READY Center services, the Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (MORCA) serves as D.C.'s coordinating and advisory agency for reentry. This entity collaborates with the D.C. Housing Authority in helping returning citizens navigate low-income housing. They receive 20 Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) per year that provide low-barrier screenings to help select individuals with backgrounds attain low-income housing, as well as provide navigation services family reunification, healthcare, and employment.⁹

Strong reentry advocacy networks in the D.C. area support efforts for connected reentry services among isolated nonprofit service providers. Washington D.C. Reentry Action Network (DC-RAN) serves as a coalition of nonprofit organizations that provide direct reentry services to justice involved D.C. residents.¹⁰ This network gives providers the opportunity to connect and share information, as well as advocate and serve as a voice for reentry and returning citizens in D.C. DC-RAN also provides training opportunities such as trauma-informed care, comprehensive communications, housing-first models, and trainings on D.C.'s legislative and budgetary processes to its network members.

⁹ <https://communityaffairs.dc.gov/content/resident-resources>

¹⁰ <https://dc-ran.org/>

An additional example of a community organization approach to reentry that partners with D.C. Gov and MORCA is the HOPE Foundation Reentry Network. This network seems to have hands-on community transition services from in-custody programming such as a mentorship program that starts 4-6 months prior to release with bio-psychosocial assessment and life-skills programming. This also includes workforce development and job training programs for adults.¹¹

Ultimately, Washington D.C. provides strong governmental oversight in their reentry programs, but has an advocacy network that connects community based organization that do not have any pre-release engagement with corrections agencies to still be involved and connected to the larger conversations on reentry.

¹¹ <https://hopereentrynetworkdc.org/adult-programs/>

Best Practices

This initial research serves as a starting point to the larger conversation of envisioning a Reentry Center that best meets the needs of the Austin/Travis County reentry population. This review of peer cities models is meant to offer a variety of ways to approach implementing a Reentry Center in Travis County. One of the models presented does not fit all of the specific needs of our community, and we recommend picking and choosing parts of each model to determine the best methods.

Some recommended best practices for Travis County to approach implementing a Reentry Center are to focus on:

1. The strength of invested grassroots advocacy networks and reentry coalitions that connect various service providers together and deliver cohesive information about reentry in the community.
2. Working with jail and prison staff to develop needs assessments for reentry upon being booked, as well as reentry programming offered while individuals are in-custody. This allows for a smoother transition into the Reentry Center services and clear communication of needs at the time of release.