

# Preparing Young People for Reentry

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In youth justice, data is the proof that our promises to improve the lives of system-impacted young people are more than words. It shows us what works and what doesn't. Systems don't change by chance – they change when we gather information, look at what it is telling us and use it to make strategic decisions.

Over the past 30 years, the Center for Improving Youth Justice (CIYJ) has been working with youth justice agencies across the country to collect and use data so young people placed in their care leave with the relationships, opportunities, supports and connections they need to be successful and overcome the disadvantages and barriers that likely led to their system-involvement. Through research, federal grants, technical assistance projects and partnerships with more than 50 state and local agencies, CIYJ identified data that measures reentry programs and services and set standards for the implementation of best reentry practices. We learned there are many indicators in addition to recidivism for how well a program has set a young person up for success that are more immediate, accessible and meaningful.

This brief shares some results from the CIYJ Reentry Survey, a 78-question tool administered near the time a young person leaves residential placement or exits community supervision. The data comes from 1,215 surveys reported from Nov. 1, 2024 – April 30, 2025, most of which were administered using a hand-held tablet. If you are one of our partner agencies, please review and use your data! If you are not yet a partner, you can find information to join us at [improvingyouthjustice.org/standards](https://improvingyouthjustice.org/standards).

<b>55%</b>	Strongly agreed they are ready to get a job/continue their current employment; 37% agreed
<b>52%</b>	Strongly agreed they are confident they will achieve their reentry goals; 41% agreed
<b>51%</b>	Participated in any political or organized community activities that were important to them; 59% had done volunteer work in the community that made them feel good
<b>47%</b>	Strongly agreed they have the supports they need for successful reentry; 45% agreed
<b>39%</b>	Strongly agreed they had enough money to buy food and clothing; 48% agreed
<b>32%</b>	Strongly agreed that overall they had a positive experience; 47% agreed
<b>29%</b>	Strongly agreed that it will be easy to pay their rent/ living expenses; 53% agreed

The CIYJ Reentry Survey asks young people to list the programs and services that helped them most to be ready for reentry. They can choose as many of the options as they like. Their feedback provides essential information about which programs and services were most and least useful, which helps agencies invest wisely in strategies that work. Additionally the data provides accountability to ensure programs are delivering on their promises.

### What helped you most to be ready for reentry?



CIYJ is dedicated to improving youth justice outcomes. We work with agencies to improve system outcomes through the implementation of the Performance-based Standards continuous improvement program and we support individual young people directly with scholarships, mentoring, reentry and employment assistance. For more information about CIYJ, our Performance-based Standards continuous improvement program, reentry technical assistance or Education and Employment Foundation directly supporting young people, please visit our website.

CIYJ's data comes from 56 state and county youth justice agencies and more than 100 correction, detention, community residential and community supervision programs. The agencies voluntarily collect data and use it to improve system and individual outcomes through the Performance-based Standards program. The program was launched in 1995 by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice and developed by the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (now Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators). CIYJ (formerly the PbS Learning Institute, Inc.) was incorporated in 2004 to transition the federal program to a self-sustaining nonprofit organization.

This brief was written by Kim Godfrey Lovett, CIYJ Executive Director.