



Performance-*based*
Standards



Reentry Standards

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Introduction

Most young people who become entangled in the juvenile justice system have faced discrimination, poverty, violence, homelessness and trauma. They have struggled to stay in school and lacked the relationships, opportunities and resources necessary for healthy adolescent development. Their involvement in the justice system adds barriers to their future success and without appropriate and meaningful assistance, increases the likelihood they will become one of the 2 million incarcerated adults in the United States.

Reentry—a term used broadly to identify the transition from placement in a secure facility to the community and from community supervision to the termination of system involvement—is the key to changing that trajectory. Reentry is based on the belief that applying initial resources for effective treatment services and using an assessment-driven referral process will decrease the likelihood of recidivism and will support employment, education and other positive outcomes.¹ Reentry includes planning for the young person’s transition to the community, connecting their strengths to opportunities, matching their individual needs to services and supporting healthy and nurturing relationships within their families and communities.

The keys to making reentry successful require many of the same things all young people need to become purposeful, responsible adults: education, employment, safe and stable housing, healthy relationships, physical, emotional and psychological health and a sense of hope, purpose and wellbeing. The goal of successful reentry is for a young person to end their involvement with a juvenile agency and enjoy a meaningful, prosperous life.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice launched a project in 2015 to develop Juvenile Reentry Measurement Standards. The project’s goal was to develop standards to guide effective reentry programs and services and to identify performance measures to aid in the understanding of what works and what doesn’t work in juvenile reentry.

OJJDP selected the Performance-based Standards Learning Institute (PbS) to lead the project based on experience developing, implementing and directing its national performance standards and data collection program for state and community residential placements. PbS and the Vera Institute of Justice and Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (now Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators) reviewed existing reentry research, programs, and practices across the country, leading to the identification of 11 key domains that constitute a comprehensive reentry system. Because reentry services and activities span multiple agencies, locations and purposes, PbS developed a framework to present an ideal reentry continuum for a jurisdiction. (See Figure 1.)

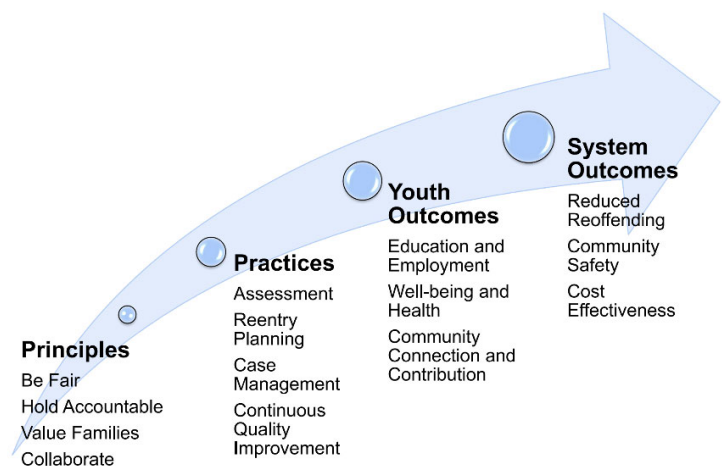


Figure 1: Reentry Framework featuring Principles, Practices, Youth Outcomes, System Outcomes

¹ Integrated Reentry Employment Strategies: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/the-reentry-and-employment-project/integrated-reentry-and-employment/>



The Framework

The goals for reentry programs and services are to reduce reoffending, increase public safety and be a cost-effective investment of tax dollars. While included in the framework, the outcomes were addressed in a parallel OJJDP data project, the Juvenile Justice Model Data Project (MDP), that developed model system-level measures. To achieve those outcomes, agencies must adopt overarching principles, implement research-based and best practices and measure the reentry services for their impact on the young people. PbS defines each of the components as follows:

Principles are overarching beliefs that guide agencies and organizations in all circumstances. They are interwoven into the practices and youth outcomes.

Practices are the processes, approaches and protocols used by reentry programs and providers. They are measured at the program level to determine the extent and quality of implementation. The practice domains are assessment, reentry planning, case management and continuous quality improvement.

Youth Outcomes reflect the impact of reentry services on young people. They include research-based concepts, competencies and experiences identified as variables impacting long-term outcomes, such as employment and earning a living wage. Youth outcomes indicate how ready and prepared young people are in the areas of education, employment, well-being and health, and community connection and contribution.

The framework represents the entirety of a young person's experience with juvenile justice, encompassing the services, skills, connections and opportunities that will give each young person the best chance for success when they exit the system. The framework does not suggest a single agency alone should provide all the services, but rather multiple agencies collaborate to ensure they have been provided before the young person exits the system.

The Measures

PbS identified measures to better understand the impact and implementation of the principles, practices, services and youth outcomes using two kinds of data: administrative record data and perception survey responses. Together, the data provide a robust and holistic picture of the system's performance as a whole and the resulting effect on young people.

Administrative Data comes from the administrative records or information systems and describes basic information about the participating agency or office, as well as information regarding the staff and the young people served. The information is used to shed light on current reentry practices and to give context for the perception survey data. For instance, if 70% of staff say they are well trained, then it would be important to know how many staff were employed.

Perception Survey Responses come from surveys of the young people, their families and staff. The surveys for young people are intended to be administered shortly before they are released to the community or before they exit community supervision. Responses are collected just prior to the end of their placement or supervision so they can reflect on their total experience, describe their preparation to exit, their relationship with their case manager and their habits and beliefs. The survey for families is similarly administered close to the end of placement or end of supervision, and focuses on the quality of orientation, welcoming by the agency, work with the agency staff and preparedness for supervision to end. The survey of staff is intended to be distributed more regularly (twice a year) to provide a current snapshot of the work environment, staff safety, training, job satisfaction and overall case management.





The Standards

The standards set an aspirational level of quality of performance – how well and to what extent are evidence-based and best practices being implemented? They are intentionally written to encourage improvement over time rather than as a one-time pass-fail indicator. They identify activities and operations that research has shown are most likely to achieve positive outcomes for young people.

The PbS Reentry Standards were developed based on research, expert and practitioner feedback and review and intensive field testing. The standards are presented by domain beginning with the principles.

Guiding Principles

Be Fair

Promote respect for the law and prosocial values by treating all young people fairly.

1. Ensure all young people are treated fairly.
2. Promote racial, ethnic, and gender equity.

Hold young people accountable without criminalizing normal adolescent behavior

Protect public safety by holding young people accountable with developmentally appropriate responses to misbehavior.

1. Use a system of graduated responses that are age-appropriate and flexible to meet the unique needs of young people.
2. Promote positive behavior changes through incentives and positive reinforcement.

Value families

Treat families as valued partners and key contributors to well-being and success of each young person.

1. Engage families as valued partners in development and implementation of all planning.
2. Strengthen family/young person relationships.

Collaborate

Establish cross-agency collaborations for reentry planning, access to services and measuring outcomes.

1. Establish a state-level multi-agency entity to ensure young people have access to services.
2. Ensure a multi-disciplinary team develops, implements and continually monitors reentry plans for all young people.





Practices

Assessment

1. Assess all young people using empirically validated tools that are guided by the principles of risk-need-responsivity, are appropriate for young people and administered by trained and qualified staff.
2. Complete additional assessments to gather information relevant to young peoples' successful reentry planning.
3. Use risk-need-responsivity assessments to match young people with the appropriate level of supervision and types and dosage of services and how to intervene effectively.

Reentry/Exit Planning

1. Begin reentry/exit planning as soon as all young people arrive in placement. (Applies to young people coming to the community from residential placement.)
2. Establish a multi-disciplinary/agency team to develop, implement and continually monitor all youths' case management and reentry/exit plans.
3. Use assessments, prior history, progress reports, and collateral contacts to inform case management and reentry/exit planning.
4. Identify and prioritize youths' needs and set clear goals, objectives and action steps that can be measured and adjusted.
5. Ensure young people and families participate in reentry/exit planning meetings and understand the expectations and responses to non-compliance.

Case Management

1. Assign a reentry case manager as soon as every young person arrives in placement. (Applies to young people who have been in residential placement.)
2. Ensure the case manager engages young people in a developmental relationship.
3. Ensure the case manager develops a real and sustainable connection with families.
4. Ensure all services indicated as needed by the multi-disciplinary/agency team have been provided.
5. Ensure all young people and families have meaningful, prompt access to the services and supports needed to make the youth's reentry/exit successful.

Continuous Quality Improvement

1. Ensure fidelity of youths' assessment and their seamless transition to services, school and employment in the community.
2. Match young people appropriately to the program's target population.
3. Ensure staff are qualified, well-trained and well-supervised.
4. Provide appropriate treatment dosage and duration.
5. Collect and use data regularly to assess, monitor and adjust practices to adhere to the program model.





Youth Outcomes

Education and Employment

1. Ensure all young people have a clear plan for their long-term education and employment.
2. Ensure all young people complete their academic goals including higher education.
3. Ensure all young people complete their career technical education or skills goals.
4. Ensure all young people master employability skills necessary to obtain and sustain employment.
5. Connect all young people to meaningful employment.
6. Ensure all young people have access to all documents necessary to obtain and sustain employment.

Well-being and Health

1. Ensure all young people feel safe physically, emotionally and psychologically.
2. Ensure all young people are healthy physically, emotionally and psychologically.
3. Ensure all young people cultivate a sense of hope and purpose.
4. Ensure all young people have mastered social competencies and resiliency skills.
5. Teach young people lifelong healthy habits.

Community Connection and Contribution

1. Ensure all young people develop trusting, reciprocal relationships with prosocial adults and peers.
2. Ensure young people develop strategies to negotiate with negative peers and gang relationships.
3. Ensure all young people develop civic awareness and promote positive values.

