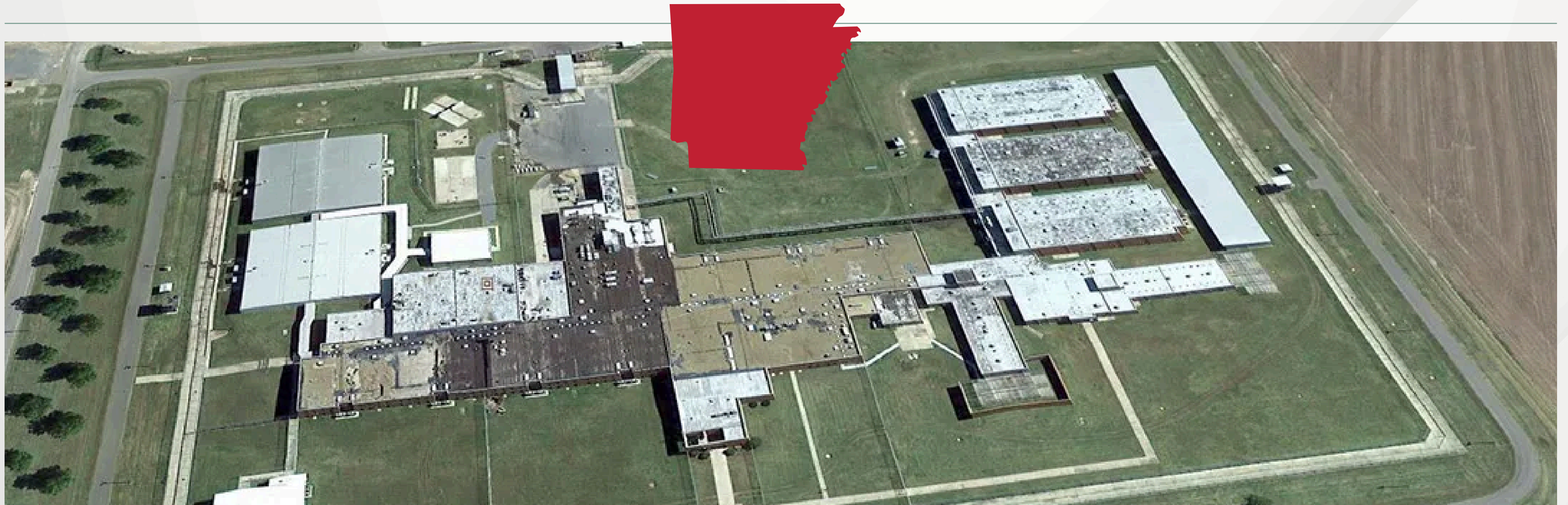


Wed September 30, 2026

Improving Public Safety & Helping Arkansans to Thrive **By Reducing Arkansas Prison Beds**



**Arkansas Justice
Reform Coalition**

Sarah Moore
Co-Founder & Executive Director

Reducing Incarceration Creates a Stronger, Safer Arkansas

Fund diversion & alternative community supports

- Diversions to specialty courts have proven results but are often hampered by a lack of funding and needed supports.
- Evidence based community response providers often face funding uncertainty

Invest in evidence based supports

- Reentry programs show a strong return on investment. For every \$1 invested, studies show a multifold return of \$ 2 to \$41 back to the community

Recognize pre-trial incarceration leads to harsher sentences & higher likelihood of reoffense

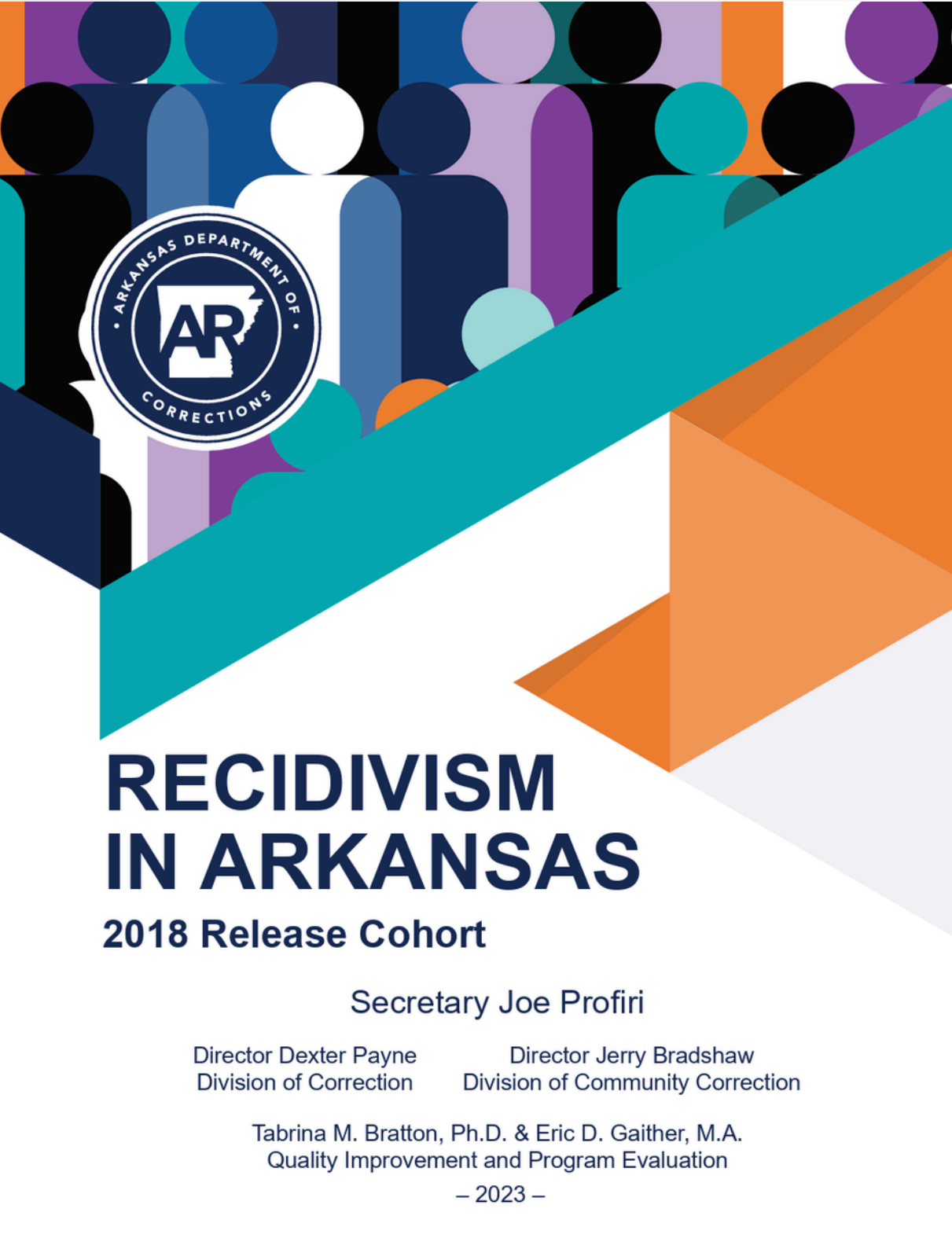
- Even a few days in jail has the ability to disrupt jobs, housing, and loss of children

Recognizing health crisis (drugs & mental health) as driver of top new entry charges. Fund diversion & alternative community supports

Invest in evidence based interventions & supports

*Recognize
Pre-Trial
incarceration
leads to
reoffense*

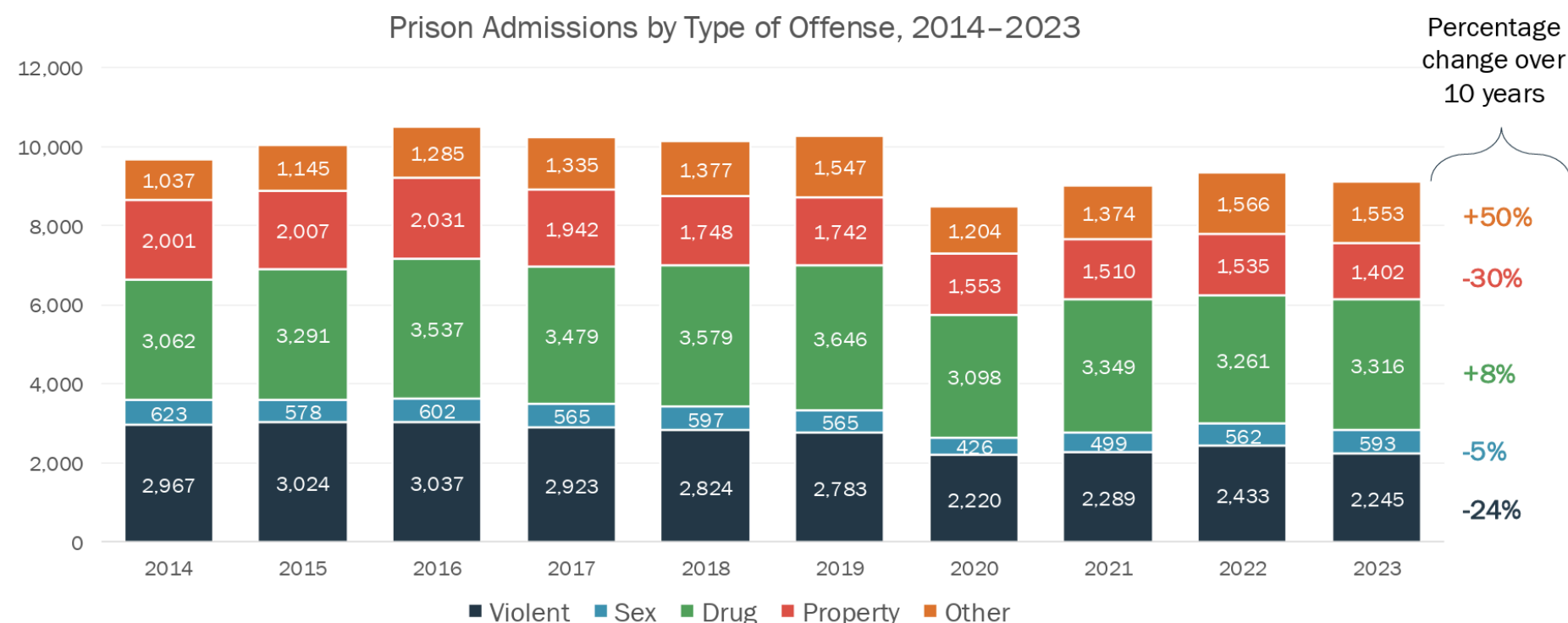
What we know from previous study from the recidivism in Arkansas 2023 report



- For formerly incarcerated individuals, the probability of reoffending is the highest within the first year of release (Caudill, 2010). In line with the recidivism literature, 50% of those who recidivated did so within 12 months of their release. (pg7)
- We also found that past incarceration increases the probability of future incarceration. (pg17)
- The results suggest that programming and behavioral interventions meant to address the factors that increase the risk of criminality should target those between 18 and 24 years of age, STTG affiliates, and those with a history of drug use and prior incarceration(s). (pg17)
- Recidivism and incarceration adversely impact families, the economy, our communities, and crime, as well as delinquency rates.⁷ The far-reaching negative effects warrant an in-depth look at the Arkansas carceral population and the recidivism rates of formerly incarcerated individuals (pg19)
- This is important because the findings can inform the design and implementation of intervention strategies. (pg19)

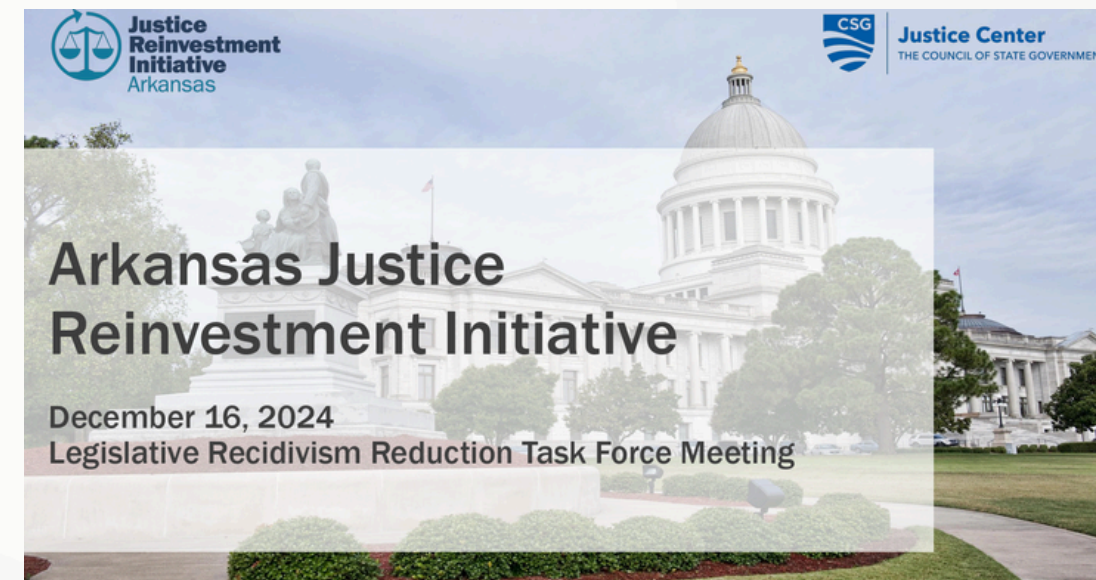
What we know from 2024 study from the reduction recidivism task force

Since 2014, admissions for violent crimes in Arkansas have been decreasing, while those for drug offenses have been increasing.



CSG Justice Center analysis of case-level sentencing data provided by the Arkansas Department of Corrections.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center | 13



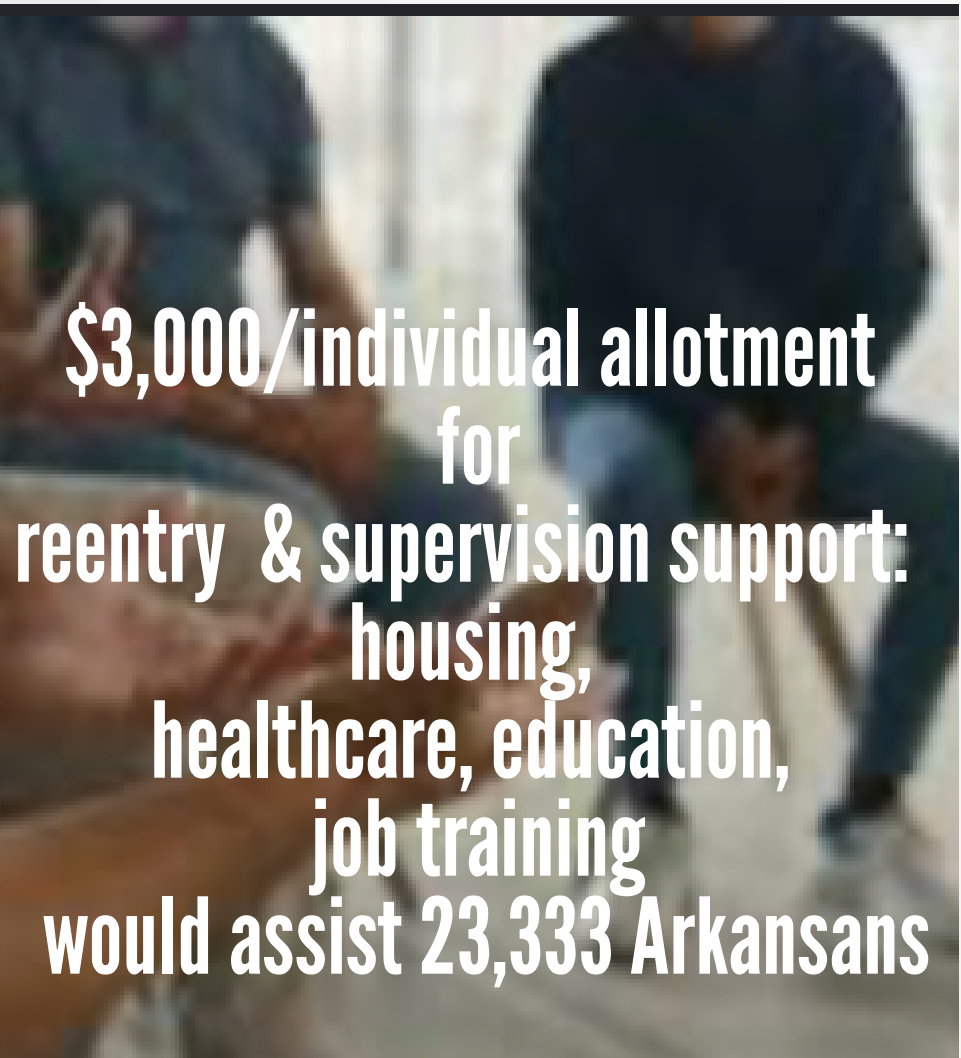
- An estimated 72% of prison admissions over the past 10 years involve people who were revoked for supervision (pg5)
- Since 2014, admissions for violent crimes in Arkansas has been decreasing, while those for drug offenses have been increasing (pg13)
- Investing resources in areas that impact behavior change for the supervised population represents an opportunity to sustainably increase public safety efficiently.(pg13)

Responses to Reduce Incarceration & Prison Beds



What could the \$70 million reallocation from Franklin County prison fund?

\$70 million =



Reentry & Supervision Supports



Residential Recovery Services



Peer Recovery Specialists



Expansion of Specialty Courts



Fund pre-trial services statewide grant program

Investing resources in areas that impact behavior change for the supervised population represents an opportunity to sustainably increase public safety. ¹

- Certain evidence-based community interventions can produce better outcomes than incarceration for appropriately selected people, particularly when treatment addresses the factors associated with reoffending and is paired with meaningful support.

What can this look like?

1. Residential evidence based treatment & recovery support

- 62 beds at \$350,000 = \$5,645 annually* to support this bed vs ADC prison bed @ \$27,178, diff of \$21,532
- Recidivism of treatment programs across nation 20% to 23% vs ADC 49.6% ²
- Hurdles for these models- funding streams can be unstable
- State grant fund consideration of \$22 million aimed at adding 50 residential beds across the 75 counties for 3,750 new residential beds statewide



\$1 invested → less crime + fewer arrests/incarcerations + fewer victims + lower government costs + healthier/more productive participants

Source: 1 The Council of State Governments Recidivism Reduction Task Force Report page 25

2 The Effect of Treatment Completion on Recidivism Among TASC Program Clients <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0306624X18780421>

*Based on currently existing program

Explore state funding structures to expand and enact diversion courts statewide. Explore language of current statutes to allow for wider judicial discretion for participant entry

- As a response to findings in the report findings “Recidivism in Arkansas 2018 Cohort Release”, dated 2023

The results suggest that programming and behavioral interventions meant to address the factors that increase the risk of criminality should target those between 18 and 24 years of age, STTG affiliates, and those with a history of drug use and prior incarceration(s). (pg17)

What can this look like?

- Create a statewide fund that counties can opt in to
 - Best functioning drug courts cap case load at no more than 40/ team of PO, Counselor, & Peer = \$220,000
 - Fund treatment & other stabilizing needs \$5,000/participant
- Drug court programs reduce overall re-arrest and reconviction rates by roughly 38% to 50% compared to traditional probation or incarceration

Of the people entering Arkansas prisons for drug offenses, how many could be safely diverted to evidence-based community treatment instead?

Possible statute considerations

- First time offenders - fully up to judicial discretion for entry into specialty or diversion pathway
- Past violent charges- 1) cap look back period, 5 years back 2) up to judicial discretion

Reduce recidivism by supporting reentry success through jobs program for peer support specialists

release from prison → connect with a person who has lived experience → obtain ID/housing → enter treatment → stay engaged → find employment → navigate probation/parole → respond to relapse or crisis without immediately returning to custody.

- Invest in peer recovery specialists more broadly statewide for inclusion in spaces like:
 - Reentry teams
 - Hospitals
 - Ambulance teams
 - Alternative response
 - Anti-violence teams
 - Community response
- People with lived experience can face high barriers to employment
- Some evidence that peers reduce recidivism.

A randomized pilot involving 76 drug-court participants found that those assigned a peer recovery specialist had fewer rearrests and better drug-court engagement,

9. Reduce recidivism by supporting reentry success.

- Streamline the process by which individuals are paroled out of work release facilities so they can maintain their employment offers after release.
- Increase transitional and permanent housing options.
- Increase investment in peer recovery.
- Expand on the ADC Volunteer Program with Circles of Support and Accountability.

 QUANTITATIVE	 QUALITATIVE	 RESEARCH
• 50 percent of people released from prison return to custody within 3 years. • 46.4 percent of people released from CCCs return to custody within 3 years.	• Individuals on work release sometimes miss out on job opportunities due to bureaucratic hurdles. • DOC has a great network of volunteers; providing consistency and structure could improve results.	• EBP principles include the following: • Sharing identified needs and developing collaborative comprehensive case plans for reentry • Engaging with supports in the community

See slide 36 for sources.

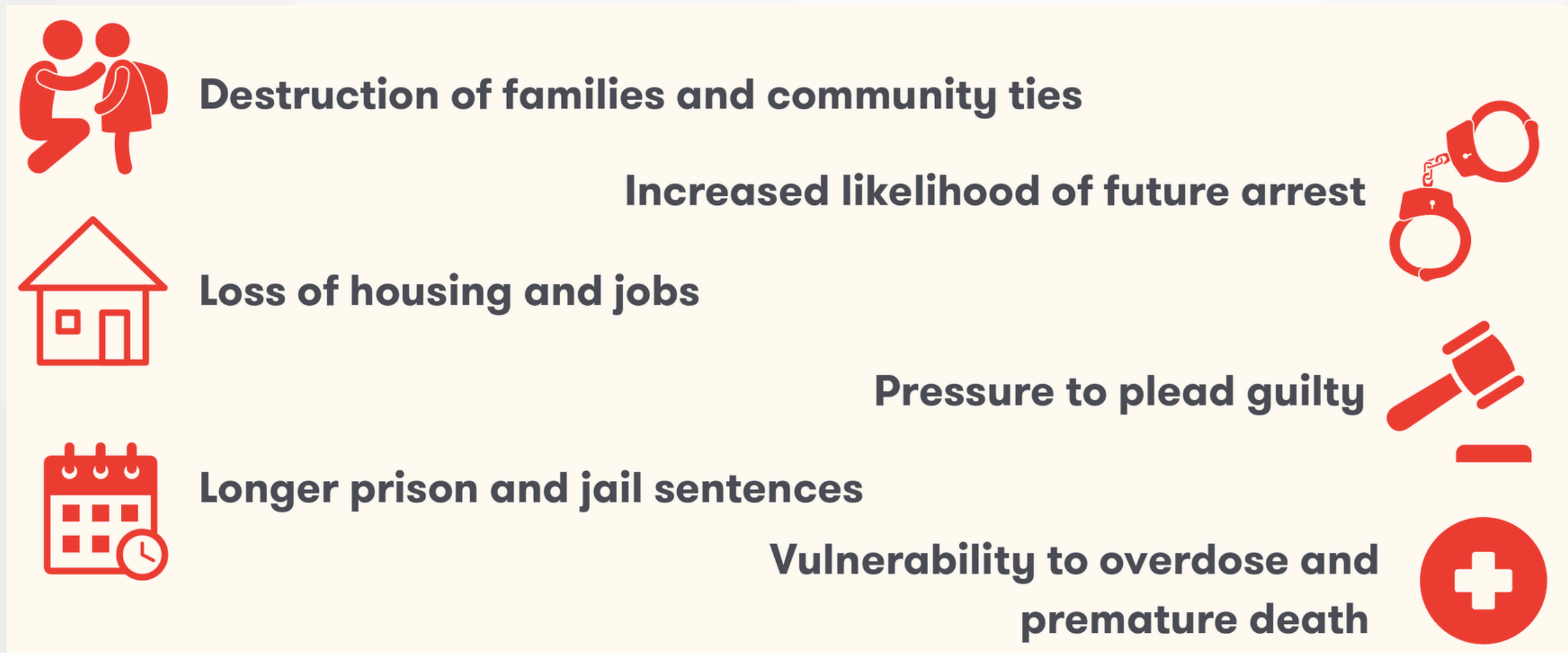
The Council of State Governments Justice Center | 30

What can this look like? \$80,000/ peer grant (salary + benefits) @\$20mm would put 250 peers across state

Conserve resources by stopping the revolving door of people cycling through the justice system. ¹

- Pretrial services programs have the ability to stop the revolving front door.

Local county jail → Arkansas prisons



Pretrial incarceration worsens individual and community-level health outcomes and actually has impoverishing effects, increasing the likelihood that people will be arrested in the future

Pretrial services programs return people back into community to contribute while court case proceeds meaning greater stabilization

What they do:

- Help courts make informed bail decisions, including nonfinancial
- Ensure release options are realistic & unrestrictive as possible
- Promote pretrial release, reappearance, public safety & compliance
- Perform data-based needs assessments

Successful programs

- Arizona - return to jail rate at 1%. No increase in community safety concern
- Lawrence KS - in place since October 2017, named a best practice by NACO
- Salt Lake - A University of Utah validation study of Salt Lake County (Salt Lake City), Utah's pretrial risk assessment found that 85 percent of rearrests were for drug and property charges. In study done by NIC, when rearrest occurs out on pretrial release it is for misdemeanor & nonviolent charges.

What pretrial service teams look like

- Team of case managers, peer specialist, supervisor that perform the following:
 - A pretrial release report, which includes recommended monitoring conditions, is provided to the Judge, public defender or private attorney and the prosecutor during the first appearance in court to create a more meaningful consideration of release.
 - The recommendations for case management needs are made by utilizing a needs assessment tool and scoring calculations developed from evidence based practices. Public safety, as well as a person's appearance rate in court are considered.
 - Case managers would connect individuals to needed resources: housing, job training, education, mental health & recovery supports

How this could work?

- Costing \$400,000 to \$500,000 annually a team/county, could serve each county with a jail with a \$17,000,000 annual grant fund that county's could opt in.

Thank you

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