

Three-Year Post-Release Evaluation Executive Summary

In 2011, the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) reported that 44% of all individuals released from prison were reincarcerated within three years post-release. With reentry services spread across multiple state agencies and the needs of newly released individuals spanning multiple systems, reentry barriers for this vulnerable group were formidable. A group of criminal justice, mental health and community health professionals came together to develop the **Worcester Initiative for Supported Reentry (WISR)** to address these reentry barriers from 2011-2016.

Key Findings

WISR reduced recidivism by 47% three years post-release and saved more than \$375,000 per 100 participants — a 59% return on investment (ROI).

WISR Model

Pre-release services began 30 to 90 days before participants' return to the community and included comprehensive assessments and transitional treatment planning. Upon release from incarceration, WISR provided intensive case management services to support participants with housing, healthcare, employment and other key needs. Participants were required to have Superior Court From and After Probation to be eligible for services.

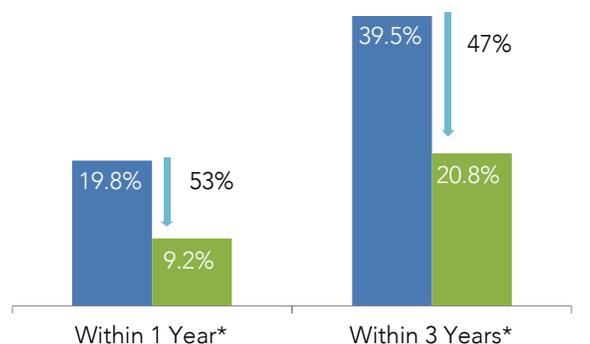
Program Participants

WISR provided post-release reentry services to 152 men over a four-and-a-half-year period. Participants were 19 to 57 years old, with an average age of 30.8 years. More than half (58%) were persons of color, with 27% Hispanic, 20% black and 9% multi-racial. About 70% of participants came from the DOC and 30% from the Worcester County House of Correction.

Client-Centered Approach

WISR created service plans tailored to each individual, which allowed for individual success regardless of race/ethnicity. Three years post-release, WISR participants of color were less likely than white participants to be reincarcerated ($p < 0.05$).

Reincarceration Rates:



$p \leq 0.03$

■ Comparison group N=86 ■ WISR group N=152 (Year1), 48 (Year3)



Recidivism

The recidivism rate among WISR participants three years post-release was 20.8%, a reduction of 47% relative to a historical comparison group. This reduction in recidivism yields a ROI of 59% based on one-year incarceration costs in Massachusetts. Accounting for additional years of averted incarcerations would generate additional cost savings.



Housing

Nearly all participants (96%) were housed immediately upon release, and the remaining 4% were housed within one day of release. The share of participants renting their own apartments increased from 10% immediately post-release to 26% at the end of the evaluation period.



Healthcare

Almost all participants (97%) in need of MassHealth insurance enrolled. Of those who needed a primary care physician, 94% were seen. Almost all participants (93%) referred to substance abuse treatment services accessed the services. Three out of every four participants (75%) referred to mental health services accessed the services.



Employment

Among the 152 participants released, 62% became employed post-release. Of those who became employed post-release, nearly three quarters (71%) were continuously employed for one year or longer.



Systems Change

The WISR model successfully engaged partners in the Executive and Judiciary branches and the Worcester County Sheriff's Office to build a collaborative, cohesive approach to address post-release reentry into the community. The three-year post-release evaluation demonstrates a significant reduction in recidivism and a substantial ROI, thereby supporting widespread implementation of the WISR model throughout Massachusetts to reduce reincarceration, increase public health, and improve public safety.