



2024 Annual Report

Illinois Reentry Council

Acknowledging and celebrating progress made by Council members and partners towards the IRC mission of creating an equitable and effective process to support successful reentry for people leaving prisons and jails across Illinois.

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Introduction: 2024 IRC Annual Report

Throughout 2024, reentry efforts in Illinois continued to advance ensuring that individuals who have returned for incarceration and who are preparing to return home from incarceration are equipped with comprehensive resources and supports to support their transition from out of incarceration. Among these efforts included a \$588 million allocation in Illinois' FY2024 state budget, of which \$373 million was spent by the close of the fiscal year, as well as an approved appropriation of \$247 million toward reentry for FY2025.

In 2024, the Illinois Reentry Council (IRC), convening over 200 partners in reentry across the state, continued working on policies and practices to establish a statewide reentry system Illinois by sharing insights and bridging the gaps in communication and advocacy among reentry stakeholders. Membership includes formerly incarcerated individuals, public agency representatives, researchers, advocates, policymakers, and more, all of whom are subject matter experts and bring a unique perspective to the Council. IRC will continue to collaboratively advocate for policy and practices that support and enable reentry success for people with arrest and conviction records.

In 2024, the Illinois Reentry Council was Chaired by: Executive Director Marlon Chamberlain, Coalition to End Permanent Punishments; Director Ahmadou Dramé, Illinois Justice Project; Director Yaacov Delaney, Justice, Equity, and Opportunity Initiative; Board Chairman King Harris, Illinois Housing Development Authority; Director Latoya Hughes, Illinois Department of Corrections; Secretary Dulce Quintero, Illinois Department of Human Services.

The Illinois Reentry Council also continued to operate six workgroups aimed at addressing reentry in Illinois through a targeted lens. Quarterly, members of these workgroups gather to collaborate and stay up to date on the climate and progress of reentry.

- Economic Opportunity and Upward Mobility Workgroup, chaired by Michael Cannon of Got Jobs America and Melissa O'Dell of Defy Ventures Illinois
- Financing for Reentry Workgroup, chaired by Mark Angelini of Mercy Housing Lakefront, Michael Goldberg of the Illinois Facilities Fund, and Floyd Stafford of the Coalition to End Permanent Punishments
- Support Services Workgroup, chaired by Delrice Adams of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and Orlando Mayorga of the Polk Brothers Foundation
- Special Considerations Workgroup, chaired by Willette Benford of the Office of the First Lady, Colette Payne of the Women's Justice Institute, and Alyssa Williams of the Illinois Department of Corrections
- Public Agencies' Practices, Policies, and Programming Workgroup, chaired by Reality Allah of the Corporation for Supportive Housing and Jennifer Parrack of the Illinois Department of Corrections
- Housing Workgroup, chaired by Gianna Baker of the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, Richard Rowe of the Illinois Department of Corrections, and Alan Zais of NIREach

2024 Milestones & Achievements in Reentry in Illinois

In 2024, members of the Illinois Reentry Council and many dedicated partners have made significant advancements in providing supports that help people leaving incarceration achieve successes in their reentry journey. Below is a non-exhaustive list of the milestones achieved this year.

Programming and Implementation

Public Agencies

- The **Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority** distributed \$20.2 million to community reentry programs in FY2024 through the R3 program. Grantees used funding to support organizational capacity building, program monitoring, evaluation, and services.
- The **Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority** in partnership with the **Illinois Justice Project** hosted Illinois' first statewide Reentry Service Providers Summit, hosting over 50 reentry providers from across Illinois. The Summit, hosted in Bloomington, provided opportunities for providers to connect, collected data on gaps in services by region, and presented information on state funding opportunities to attendees.
- The **Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity** enrolled 1,845 formerly incarcerated people in WIOA funded programs in Program Year 2023 and over 650 individuals in Job Training & Economic Development programming.
- The **Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity** created and published an Illinois [workNet reentry guide](#) providing access to workforce development resources aimed at individuals who have been incarcerated, employers, and workforce/education partners.
- The **Illinois Department of Corrections**, the **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity**, and the **Illinois Department of Employment Security** collaborated to begin hosting Quarterly Southern Region Re-Entry Virtual Job Fairs, acknowledging the dispersed resources available for people who return to southern Illinois. The February event connected 107 participants in custody with 9 employers; the April event connected 52 participants in custody with 10 employers; the June event connected 119 participants with 11 employers; and the October event served 60 participants.
- The **Illinois Department of Corrections** continued hosting Re-Entry Summits twice a year in every facility. A total of 2,324 individuals in custody and 75 community vendors participated in Spring 2024 Re-Entry Summits. In the Fall 2024 Re-Entry Summit season, 2,243 individuals in custody and 78 different community vendors participated.
- As part of the **Illinois Department of Corrections'** "Wednesday Webinar" series, the staff have continued to partner with the **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity** to connect people in custody with the local workforce areas (LWAs) in the person's anticipated parole district.
- The **Illinois Department of Corrections** is installing the infrastructure necessary to provide wireless connectivity within all facilities. They are proceeding with a contract that will provide tablets to people in custody, who can use the tablets to access educational materials, resources, and strengthen their digital literacy skills.

- The **Illinois Department of Corrections** is using grant money to move to a digital classroom format and provide more resources for people with developmental and learning disabilities, including expanded access to TABE tests. The goal is for the program to be fully piloted in 6 facilities while infrastructure for expansion is implemented in all facilities.
- Following new [regulations](#) included in legislation passed by the Illinois legislature in August, the **Illinois Department of Corrections**, in partnership with the **Illinois Secretary of State**, has tripled the number of State IDs provided pre-release to people preparing to leave custody. Prior to implementing the new regulations in November, an average of 78 State IDs were issued per month. In November, IDOC and the Secretary of State issued 183 IDs, and 120 IDs in December.
- The **Illinois Department of Corrections** collaborated with New York University to develop a resume and job-matching platform called OnBoard. IDOC plans to slowly implement this platform across facilities, while also recruiting employers. This initiative will begin at the Fox Valley and Peoria Adult Transition Centers.
- The **Illinois Department of Corrections**, alongside IDHS's Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery and the federal government, began providing medication-assisted treatment. Their effort starts with ensuring that people who enter custody on treatment can continue receiving medication. IDOC is now preparing to expand services to people nearing release who benefit from medication with funding allocated through 2027.
- The **Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation** (IDFPR) updated the letters they send to people applying for an occupational license who are flagged in the background check process. Previously called "Intent to Deny" letters, the new letters use less intimidating/more encouraging language and provide information on how recipients can move forward in the process. IDFPR partnered with Westside Justice Center to provide a community-based resource hub for any applicants reluctant to contact a government agency. As of June 2024, IDFPR was receiving responses from 50% of people who received this letter. Response metrics were not previously tracked, but anecdotal data shows that this is a higher response rate than before.
- The **Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services** received approval from the federal government on their Medicaid 1115 waiver application. This waiver allows the state of Illinois to cover more services under Medicaid, which they plan to include social determinants of health like housing, transportation, and more. It includes a focus on reentry and can cover some medical services up to 90 days pre-release. HFS is building their implementation plan and hopes to launch this expanded coverage in 2025.
- The **Illinois Housing Development Authority's** Housing for Justice-Involved Individuals Program (HJIIP) continued to support Round 1 grant recipients while launching Round 2 of the program. 18 of the 25 Round 1 grantees have completed their projects, creating or rehabilitating 240 transitional beds for returning residents so far. The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) estimates the remaining 7 contracts to complete by July 2025, creating another 110 beds.
- In May 2024, the **Illinois Housing Development Authority** opened applications for Round 2 of HJIIP, and received Board approval for 22 new HJIIP-funded projects in December 2024. Round 2 funding totals approximately \$10,450,000, and will preserve or create approximately 190 transitional housing beds for returning residents across the state. HJIIP grant recipients received up to \$475,000 of Build Illinois Bond Program Funds and were either social service providers themselves or demonstrated existing partnerships with social service providers.

- The **Illinois Housing Development Authority** continued operating the Rental Housing Reentry Program, launched by the General Assembly in 2019. The Program provides rental subsidies to people leaving state prisons, as well as wraparound reentry support services.
- In April 2024, **Governor JB Pritzker** announced \$900 million in state capital funds would be allocated to close and rebuild two state prisons – Logan and Stateville Correctional Centers. Since the announcement, IDOC has transferred almost everyone out of Stateville, conducted environmental tests of the site for new construction, and is finalizing bargained contracts with labor partners.
- The **Governor’s Office on Management and Budget** (GOMB) identified \$247 million allocated for reentry programming in the FY25 Illinois state budget. Of the \$588 million for reentry in FY2024, GOMB calculated that \$373 million was spent by the close of the fiscal year.
- The **Cook County Department of Human Rights and Ethics** (CCDHRE) continued enforcement measures for the Justice Housing Ordinance, which regulates how and when landlords can screen a tenant applicant’s criminal record. From November 2023 to October 2024, CCDHRE opened 8 new cases, all of which are ongoing.
- The **Cook County Justice Advisory Council** continued operating the **Cook County Reconnect** program, providing rental assistance and support services to people who have left IDOC within the last 2 years. The program relaunched in November with four new housing partners. A total of 31 people have secured a lease in their own name under this program.
- The **Cook County Justice Advisory Council** has partnered with **Cook County Health**, the **Illinois Department of Public Health**, and the **Bureau of Economic Development** to build collaborative infrastructure and break down silos among service providers.
- The **Cook County Sheriff’s Office** continued to operate the **Cook County Community Resource Center**, a hub to link people with resources for housing, legal assistance, food, transportation, and more. The team’s case managers target assistance to people released from Cook County Jail, staffing a “discharge lobby” in the jail for 11 hours on weekdays and 8 hours on weekends. The resources are available to support any Cook County resident.
- The **City of Chicago** hired their second ever Director of Reentry, Joseph Mapp. In the Chicago FY2024 City Budget, the Office of Reentry received an allocation of \$5 million, with \$4.5 million designated for community-level support services.
- The SPRING Forward Program, funded by the **Chicago Department of Family & Support Services** and implemented by **Lawndale Christian Legal Center** and **Cara Collective**, reached its enrollment goals and provided housing navigation support and rental subsidies to 200 households (263 people) and employment supports to 400 people, with 101 participants having found permanent employment positions. Funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, SPRING Forward allocated \$20 million for housing and employment support services for people leaving IDOC and Cook County Jail.
- The **Chicago Department of Family & Support Services** continued funding five Community Reentry Support Centers across the city. From January 1 to September 30, 2024, these centers provided reentry navigation services to 2216 clients, workforce programming to 921 clients, and placed 169 clients in employment.

- The **Chicago Department of Family & Support Services'** workforce training services, provided by 50 delegate agencies across Chicago, served 1,786 people who self-identified as formerly incarcerated, representing 46% of all program participants. Services included substance use treatment, education and GED programs, interview skills, and transportation support.
- The **Chicago Continuum of Care** launched a Reentry Line of Action, bringing homelessness system experts and reentry advocates together to identify and address barriers within the Chicago Continuum of Care that impede formerly incarcerated people from accessing housing.
- The **All Inside Initiative**, managed in Chicago by Michele Kay Smith from the **US Department of Housing and Urban Development**, collaborated with the **Chicago Continuum of Care** to inventory housing units across Chicago available exclusively, or with highest priority, for people leaving prison. This project identified approximately 2,700 beds available for returning residents in Chicago. A mapping component of the project is ongoing.

Community Based Organizations

- **Chicago CRED** has launched an entrepreneurship initiative—CREDWorks—as part of their new workforce development program for returning residents and people involved in other community violence intervention (CVI) programming.
- **Challenge II Change** completed construction on their new transitional housing facility in Aurora, Illinois. Funded by the Housing for Justice-Involved Individuals Program, this building provides 8 transitional housing beds.
- **Challenge II Change** was awarded three grants under IHDA's Housing for Justice-Involved Individuals Program and will provide 20 additional transitional housing units in Aurora, IL.
- The **Corporate Coalition**, in partnership with **Cara Plus**, launched their second Fair Chance Hiring Cohort, with six participating businesses—including 32 organizational leaders in human resources, legal, compliance, risk, etc.—working over 9 months to learn about best practices for fair chance hiring, and work to implement changes in their hiring practices to align with said best practices. Among the cohort member organizations, some have reported successful hiring pilots that have already reached 500-700 people.
- On October 7-8, the **Corporate Coalition**, in partnership with the Harris School of Public Policy and NORC at the University of Chicago, hosted the [2024 National Fair Chance Hiring Conference](#), a first-of-its-kind convening. Nearly 200 employers, non-profit leaders, researchers, and funders from across the country, and the globe, gathered for 2 days to work with one another to identify new research that has potential to both advance fair chance hiring policy and practice and to grow the fair chance hiring community of practice.
- **Defy Ventures Illinois** graduated 79 men and women from their CEO of Your New Life (CEO YNL) programs at the Kewanee Life Skills Reentry Center, Pontiac Correctional Center, and Logan Correctional Center. Defy also graduated the 9th cohort of their virtual Entrepreneurship Bootcamp. Defy welcomed home their graduates with career and reentry services supports, including gifting them Chromebooks and connecting them to meaningful employment. In 2024, Defy also launched new CEO YNL cohorts at Pontiac and Kewanee—to graduate in 2025—and began preparations to launch their 10th Entrepreneurship Bootcamp cohort.
- **Defy Ventures Illinois** launched their first youth program at the Department of Juvenile Justice's PEACE Center at St. Charles, graduating 4 young men.

- **Equity and Transformation (EAT) Chicago** launched Round 2 of their Chicago Future Fund's guaranteed income program, providing 12 months of \$500 cash to 100 system-impacted participants. Program evaluation showed that participants saved money, paid down debts, were not less likely to search for employment, and confirmed that a record is a major barrier for securing stable employment.
- The **Education Justice Project** currently has 53 students enrolled in their higher education program, and 36 individuals involved in CAVE (Community Anti-Violence Education). Both programs are hosted at Danville Correctional Center.
- In Spring 2024, **Education Justice Project** offered a blended course, bringing together students in custody at Danville Correctional Center with students enrolled at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.
- The **Education Justice Project** released the 2024 edition of their Illinois Reentry Guide, "[Mapping Your Future](#)." The guide is distributed within IDOC reentry rooms and is available for organizations to share with clients. Their guide "[A New Path: A Guide to the Challenges and Opportunities After Deportation](#)" is also available on their website.
- The **Federal Problem-Solving Courts Foundation** raised over \$50,000 to support people leaving federal prisons on supervised release, and made grants for housing, utility bills, medical bills, and a life coach for program participants.
- **First Followers**, in partnership with the **Housing Authority of Champaign County**, continued to operate their First Steps Community House, a transitional house for people returning home from men's prisons.
- **First Followers** completed an evaluation of the first group served under their Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Pilot Program. The program, launched in 2023, served 10 clients in its first year, 6 of whom went on to successfully renew their lease.
- The **Flexible Housing Pool** continues to operate their reentry housing pilot program, receiving referrals directly from IDOC. The program provides permanent housing and wraparound support services. The 33-bed program is funded through ICJIA.
- **Got Jobs America** partnered with **Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center** to provide small and midsize manufacturers with services, training, and tools in the areas of leadership, strategy, customer engagement, and results for returning residents.
- The **Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF)** continues to provide technical assistance to the Illinois Housing Development Authority's Housing for Justice-Involved Individuals Program. In addition to supporting Round 1 grantees, IFF provided pre-application support to applicants for HJIIP's Round 2, resulting in stronger applications submitted for IHDA's review.
- The **Illinois Justice Project** hosted its sesquiannual event, the Collaborative on Reentry, in April 2024 in Chicago. Titled "Maximizing the Moment: What are the next steps for Illinois Reentry?", this event discussed the current reentry landscape, what people need to thrive, and heard from formerly incarcerated people now serving as leaders in reentry public policy. Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx, and the Coalition to End Permanent Punishments' Executive Director Marlon Chamberlain provided insights throughout the day.
- **Live Free Illinois** graduated 12 Decarceration Fellows. The Fellowship began while fellows were still in IDOC custody, and Live Free provided trainings, support services, and a \$500 monthly stipend to fellows upon release. 11 of the graduating fellows are on track for permanent

employment, and 5 are continuing their engagement with Live Free. Currently concentrated in the Chicago area, Live Free is planning to expand to Rockford and East St. Louis.

- The **Metropolitan Peace Initiative** launched a reentry housing initiative called MPIRE (Metropolitan Peace Initiative Reentry Project).
- The **Safer Foundation** was awarded two housing development grants under Round 2 of IHDA's Housing for Justice-Involved Individuals Program. They will build 12 new transitional housing units in Chicago for returning residents.
- **Saint Leonard's Ministries** celebrated 70 years of dedicated and holistic re-entry housing programming and celebrated the 30th anniversary of their women's re-entry housing program at Grace House, serving 192 individuals last year alone in its housing continuum. The holistic housing programs continue to see very low recidivism rates: 11% of men (compared to a 38% state average) and 0 women for the second year in a row (compared to a 23% state average). St. Leonard's staff served an additional 145 justice-impacted individuals from the broader community in its education and workforce programs.
- **WIN Recovery** was awarded two housing development grants in Round 2 of IHDA's Housing for Justice-Involved Individuals Program. The program will create 10 new transitional housing beds for returning residents, split evenly between their Peoria and Chicago locations.

Legislation

- The **Higher Education in Prison Act** (Public Act 103-0541; [House Bill 3648](#) in the 103rd General Assembly) enacted new regulations on data collection for Higher Education in Prison programs. Each college and university that provides academic programs inside IDOC must report enrollment, retention, completion, and student demographics to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. And the Illinois Department of Corrections must publish certain information pertaining to higher education within IDOC facilities. The Act went into effect on January 1, 2024, and the first report will be due by September 1, 2025.
- The **Higher Education Student Assistance Law** (Public Act 87-997; [House Bill 3740](#) in the 103rd General Assembly) "removes provisions specifically excluding academic programs for incarcerated students from the definitions of 'institution of higher learning', 'qualified institution', and 'institution'[and;] in provisions concerning the AIM HIGH Grant Pilot Program, removes the restriction that the applicant must not be incarcerated," went into effect July 1, 2024.
- [House Bill 3818](#) in the 103rd General Assembly (Public Act 86-1324) amended the **Board of Higher Education Act** and required the Board of Higher Education to establish the Commission on Higher Education in Prison.
- [House Bill 4409](#) in the 103rd General Assembly (Public Act 96-761/110 ILCS 205) amended the **Illinois Crime Reduction Act of 2009**. It required that: 1) two positions on the Adult Redeploy Illinois Oversight Board be reserved for individuals who participated in programs funded by Adult Redeploy Illinois; and 2) the Adult Redeploy Illinois Oversight Board establish a grant program to local jurisdictions for community-based services "in lieu of commitment to the Department of Corrections." The law will take effect on January 1, 2025.

Research and Reports

- **Chicago Beyond** released the second edition of its Holistic Safety best practices guide, “[Do I Have the Right to Feel Safe?](#)”
- The **Cook County Department of Human Rights** released their [2024 Annual Report](#), detailing the reports filed by people who have faced discrimination from landlords due to their criminal record.
- **Dr. David Olsen of the Loyola University Center for Criminal Justice** released “[Recidivism Patterns Among Those Released from Prison in Illinois](#).” Among the findings is that the shortened lengths of Mandatory Supervised Release (MSR) resulting from Illinois’ Safety, Accountability, Fairness and Equity-Today (SAFE-T) Act will reduce the proportion of individuals at risk of being returned to prison for a technical violation related to a new arrest for a violent crime.
- **Dr. Vickii Coffey** and 8 colleagues published “[Barriers and Facilitators to Quality Healthcare for African Americans with Incarceration Histories](#)”. This study highlights the need to address barriers to accessing healthcare during and after incarceration, particularly given racial disparities in healthcare treatment and outcomes.
- **Equity and Transformation (EAT) Chicago** released their “[CHICAGO FUTURE FUND: The Impact of Guaranteed Basic Income on the Lives of Post-incarceration Individual](#)” report. This report details seven key findings that substantiate the effectiveness of Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) programming, including participants saving money and paying down debts, showing no decrease in motivation to find employment, experiencing housing stability, displaying decreased stress levels, and more.
- The **Healing Centered Task Force** released their [Healing-Centered Illinois Task Force Report](#), detailing the Task Forces’ process, findings, and 17 recommendations. Each recommendation is supplemented with specific action steps that are grounded in equity, inclusion, and trauma-informed and healing-centered best practices. The trauma experienced by formerly incarcerated people is explicitly addressed in the report.

Conclusion

The Illinois Reentry Council members have continued to work together in 2024 to establish a network of organizations and individuals dedicated to creating an effective, well-funded, and efficient reentry system for the people leaving incarceration in Illinois. In the few years of its existence, the Council has grown to over 200 members who partner to implement the achievements listed above—and there are many more in progress. The Council membership represents an unusual combination of people from various aspects of the reentry community, all committed to making Illinois a state which leads the nation in its reentry support system. As this report documents, the Council members are well on their way to achieving this goal.