



The Multi-site Evaluation of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative

Overview of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative

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The Serious and Violent Offender Initiative (SVORI) multi-site evaluation team provides frequent, brief, and practical information on SVORI programs and interim evaluation findings through our Reentry Research in Action (RRIA) series of topical briefs. This RRIA provides an overview of the Initiative and describes its components and grantees.

The Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) is a comprehensive collaborative effort that focuses on serious and violent juvenile and adult offenders. This unprecedented national response is intended to help states better use their correctional resources to reduce recidivism. Developed in 2003, SVORI is funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, in conjunction with other Federal partners (primarily the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Labor).

SVORI funding supports the creation of a three-phase continuum of services (shown in Exhibit 1) that begins in prison, moves to a structured reentry phase before and during the early months of release, and continues for several years as released prisoners take on increasingly productive roles in the community. A fully implemented SVORI program incorporates assessment, services, and programming for offenders while incarcerated, under supervision in the community, and once released from supervision. The individual SVORI programs share the common goals of improving employment, education, health, housing, and criminal justice outcomes. Each program, however, is unique in the approach taken and array of services implemented to address these common goals.

Exhibit 1. The SVORI Program Model



The SVORI program funds are intended to be used at the state and local levels to (1) develop a reentry system that includes the key components (assessment, a reentry plan, and a transition team); (2) create linkages to extant services; and (3) provide services to fill identified gaps. The programs are encouraged to include the following components:

- ❖ Diagnostic and risk assessments
- ❖ Individual reentry plans
- ❖ Transitions teams
- ❖ Community resources
- ❖ Graduated levels of supervision and sanctions

Although conceptually straightforward, this model is far from "business as usual." It requires state and local agencies to collaborate in ways that have been rare in the past. The Federal partners designed SVORI so that agencies would access extant resources and redeploy them to support all components of a comprehensive reentry program. The discretionary funding available through this Initiative was provided primarily to fill any gaps in existing federal, state, and local resources rather than initiate any new programming.

SVORI Goals

- To improve quality of life and self-sufficiency through employment, housing, family, and community involvement
- To improve health by addressing substance use (sobriety and relapse prevention) and physical and mental health
- To reduce criminality through supervision and by monitoring noncompliance, re-offending, rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration
- To achieve systems change through multi-agency collaboration and case management strategies

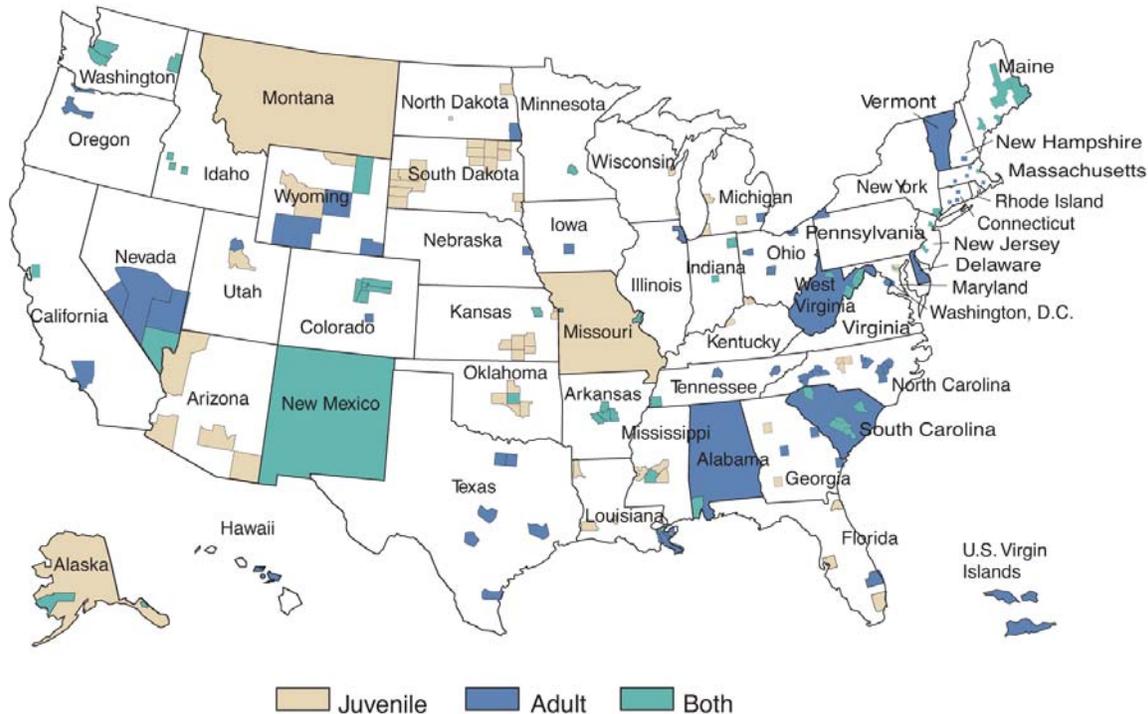
Unlike most other grant programs (e.g., the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program) that targeted less-serious prisoners and specifically excluded those convicted of violent offenses, SVORI has encouraged states to focus on some of their most serious offenders. The primary restrictions placed on local SVORI programs by the Federal government were an age limit—the programs are required to target prisoners younger than 35—and that participants be under post-release community supervision. These restrictions were relaxed for a few programs.

All grantees were required to establish and support a partnership between institutional and community agencies. For grantees targeting adult populations, these partnerships include the state Department of Corrections and at least one local community agency. For grantees targeting juvenile populations, the partnerships include the state agency responsible for juvenile correctional placements and a community agency involved in providing services to and/or supervising juveniles.

Sixty-nine grantees at the state and local levels received a total of approximately \$110 million to develop or expand programs offering integrated supervision and reentry services. All 50 States, plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands received SVORI funds (see Exhibit 2). Individually, grantees received between \$500,000 and \$2 million in single 3-year

awards. Some states have two grants—one adult and one juvenile—and some grantees have multiple programs, for a total of 89 SVORI programs. Forty-five of the grantees are adult correctional agencies, 13 are juvenile justice agencies, and the remaining 11 are other state agencies such as public health departments. *Additional details on individual SVORI grantees and programs are available at the evaluation web site: www.svori-evaluation.org.*

Exhibit 2. Post-release SVORI Program Areas



Multi-site Evaluation of SVORI Principal Investigators

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