

South Dakota Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force

Reentry System Assessment Findings

August 19, 2026

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Justice
Center



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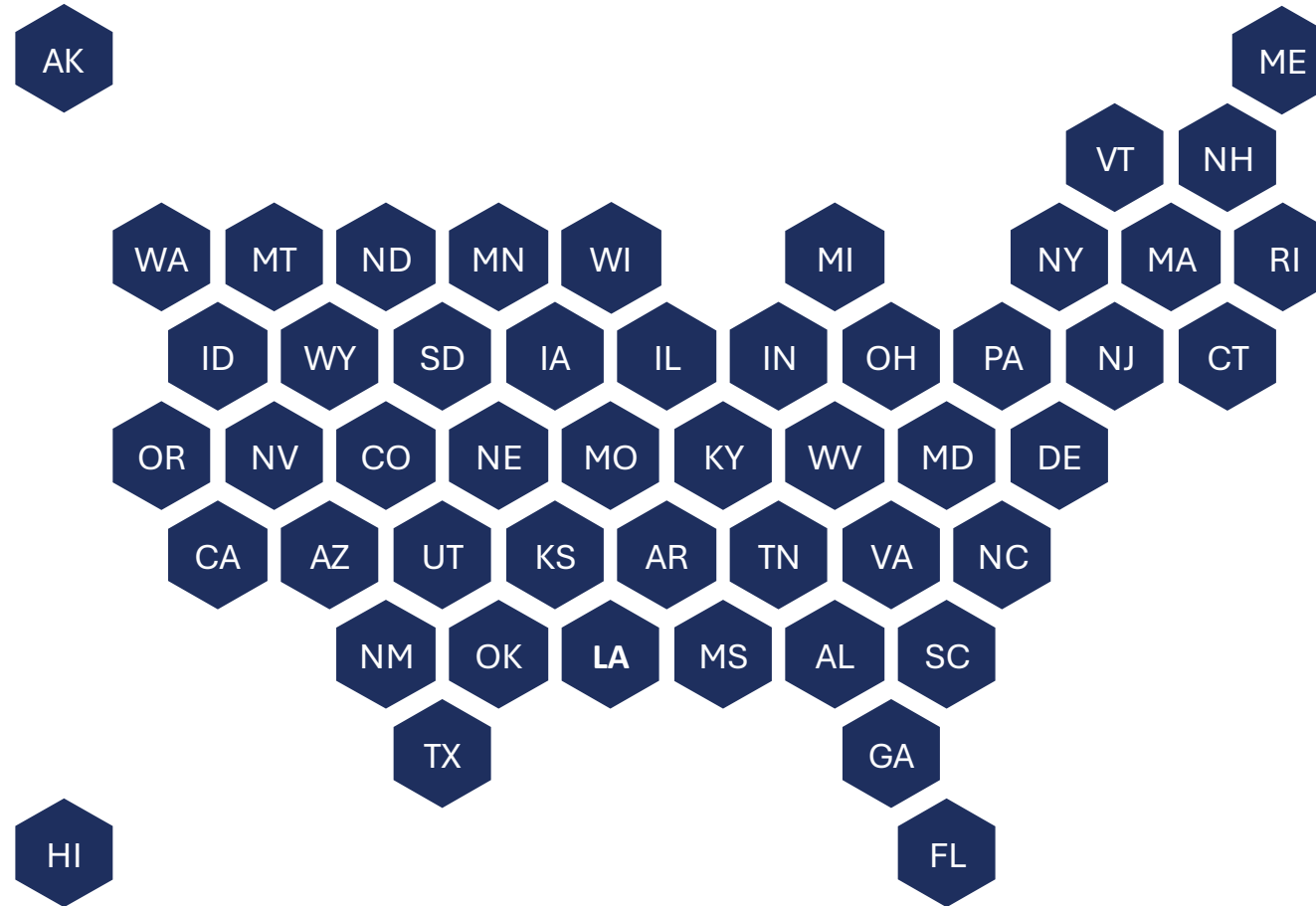
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The CSG Justice Center has helped all 50 states develop tailored improvements to their corrections, reentry, and community supervision systems.



Agenda

- I. Reentry System Assessment Methodology
- II. Data on Releases
- III. Key Findings
- IV. Next Steps

Reentry System Assessment Methodology

Our assessment included a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis.



Conducted interviews and focus groups with agency leaders and staff



Examined program and agency policies and procedures



Facilitated listening sessions with people with lived experience currently reincarcerated and in reentry



Analyzed publicly available data and DOC aggregate data

Key findings presented today are based on interviews and listening sessions with stakeholders across South Dakota.

State Agency
Leaders

Corrections
Reentry and
Rehabilitation
Leadership

Prison Case
Managers and
Reentry Staff

People with Lived
Experience

People
Incarcerated on
Parole Violations

Transitional
Housing Providers

Behavioral Health
Treatment
Providers

Reentry Service
Organizations

Workforce and
Education
Partners

Tribal Reentry
Programs

County Jail
Leadership

Parole Agents

The assessment examined policies, practices, and resources across the reentry system in South Dakota.



Transition from
Prison to
Community



Education and
Employment



Housing



Health and
Behavioral Health

Key findings are also informed by analysis of data from multiple sources, with opportunities to expand and review additional data in the future.

Data Source	Description
DOC publicly available reports	Annual statistical reports
DOC data pull for CSG Justice Center	Releases by county
DLR publicly available reports	2025 employer survey; state minimum wage; occupational employment projections
HUD and South Dakota Housing reports	Point-in-time counts; housing inventories; fair market rents
National Inventory of Collateral Consequence	Statutes and regulations that impose collateral consequences
Qualitative data collection	Semi-structured interviews and listening sessions

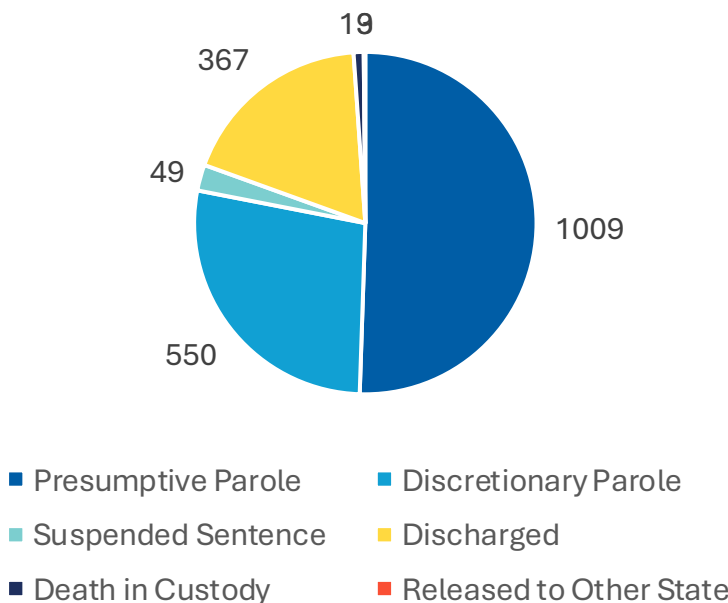
South Dakota's data on people released from prisons identifies where statewide reentry investments will have the greatest impact.

Most people leaving prisons are released to parole.

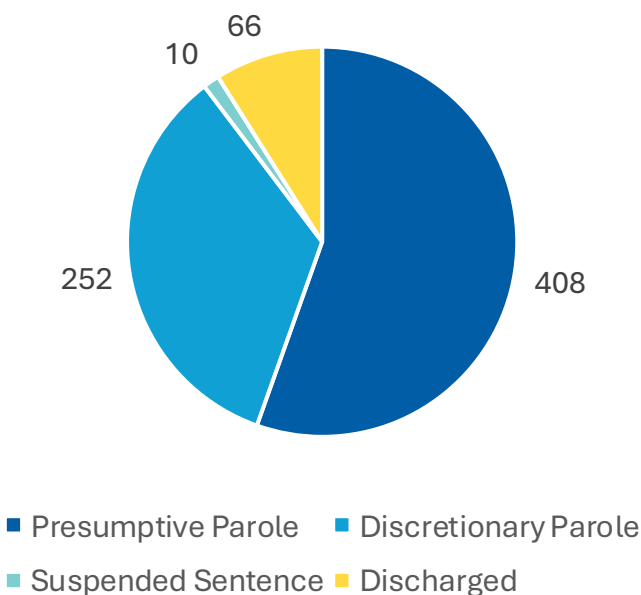
80% of men leaving prisons are released to parole.

91% of women leaving prisons are released to parole.

Male Releases, FY 2025



Female Releases, FY 2025



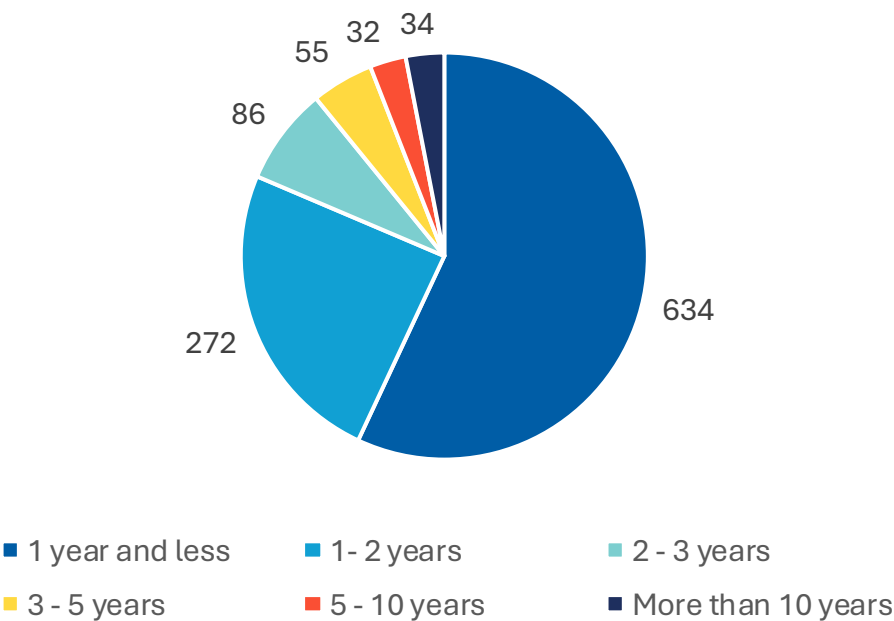
South Dakota Department of Corrections, 2025 Statistical Report (Pierre, 2025), <https://www.doc.sd.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/1820/639015727545730000>.

Most people serve short prison sentences prior to release, providing a narrow window for pre-release planning.

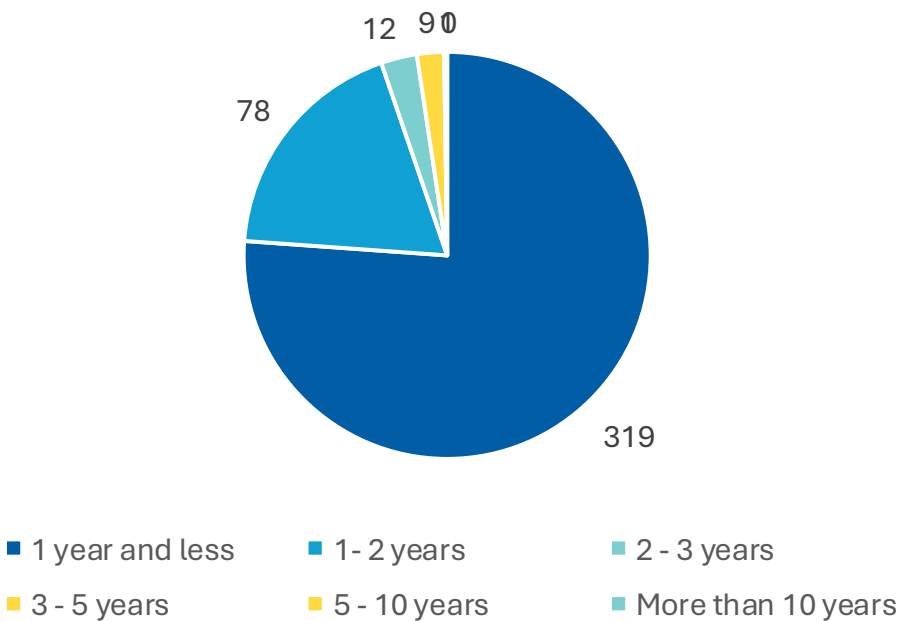
Over 80% of men were released after serving 2 years or less in prison.

Over 75% of women were released after serving 1 year or less in prison.

Male Releases, FY 2025



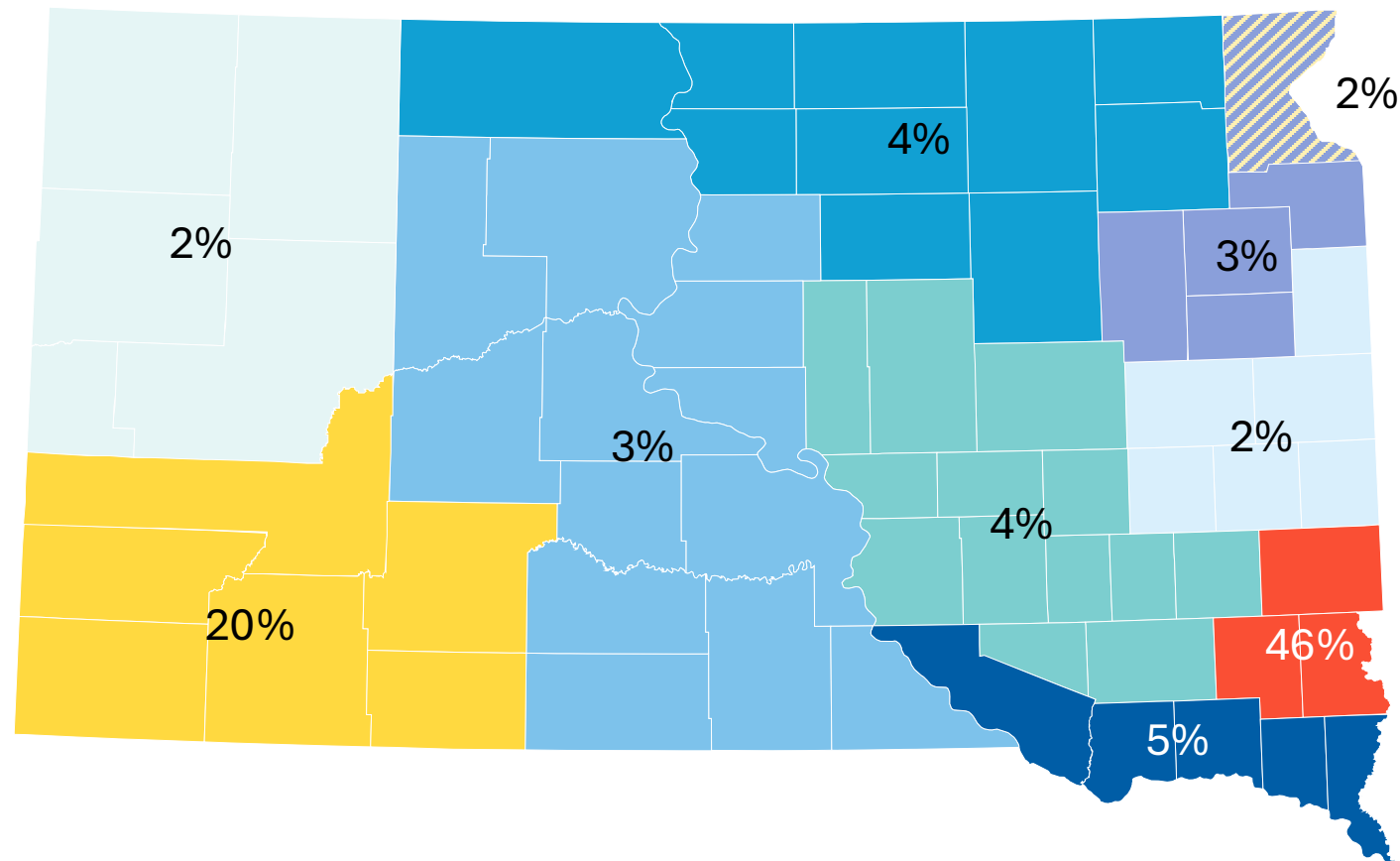
Female Releases, FY 2025



South Dakota Department of Corrections, 2025 Statistical Report (Pierre, 2025), <https://www.doc.sd.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/1820/639015727545730000>.

Almost half of all people released on parole are released to the Sioux Falls field office.

Percent of Individuals Released to Parole Field Office, FY 2025

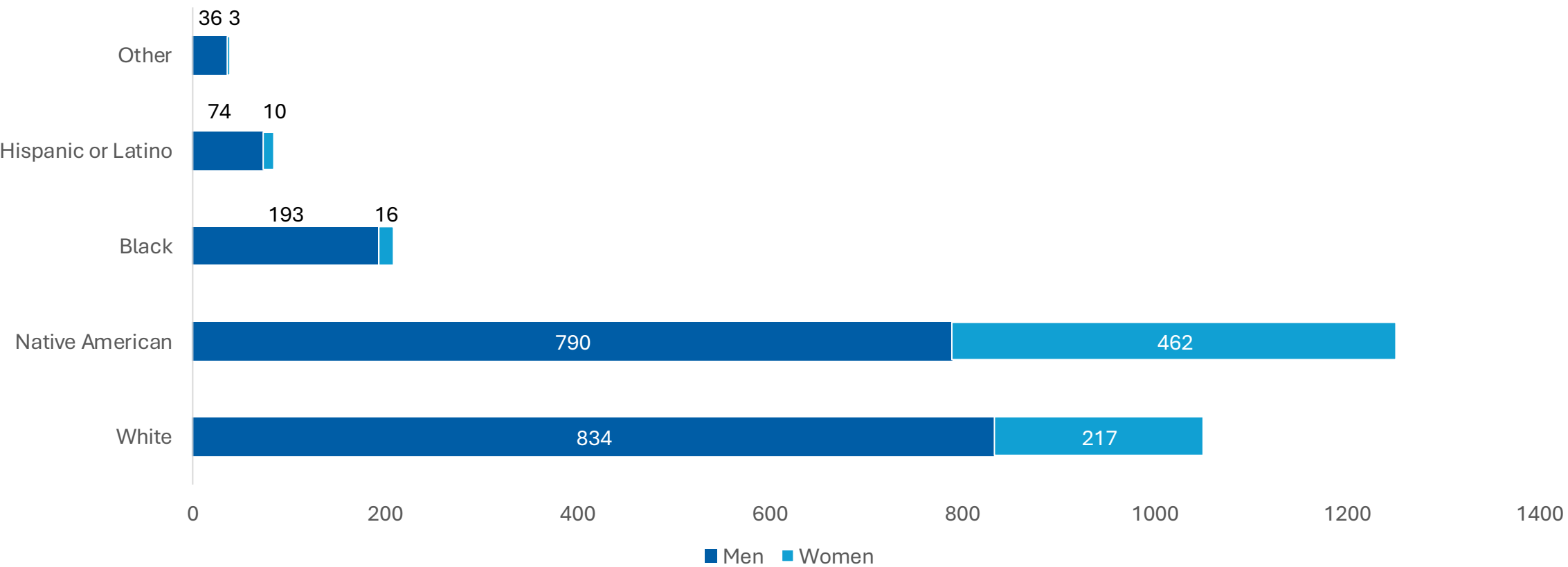


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Analysis of South Dakota Department of Corrections data conducted by The Council of State Governments Justice Center, August 2026.

Native Americans make up a large share of people leaving prison.

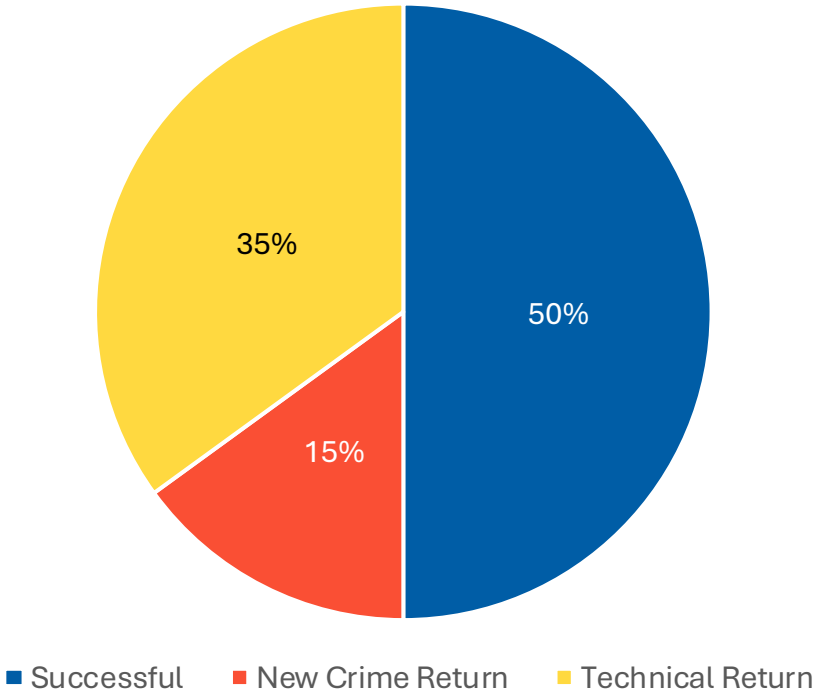
Race/Ethnicity of People Released, FY 2025



South Dakota Department of Corrections, 2025 Statistical Report (Pierre, 2025), <https://www.doc.sd.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/1820/639015727545730000>.

Half of people released in 2021 successfully remained in the community and did not return to prison.

Recidivism Outcomes for CY 2021 Cohort



Recidivism: the percentage of individuals released from state prison in a specific year who were reincarcerated in state prison within the next 3 years.

South Dakota Department of Corrections, 2025 Statistical Report (Pierre, 2025), <https://www.doc.sd.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/1820/639015727545730000>.

The release data suggests multiple implementation priorities.

- Start reentry planning immediately upon admission.
- Invest more in supportive community supervision interventions.
- Expand capacity and funding statewide, particularly in rural communities and in Rapid City.
- Co-design culturally responsive services with Tribal partners.
- Build infrastructure to understand what's driving supervision failures and connect people on supervision to evidence-based interventions that address criminogenic need.

Key Findings

1. South Dakota has some strong reentry collaboration, but inconsistent statewide infrastructure and cross-agency coordination limits reentry success.

South Dakota has established a strong foundation for statewide collaboration and is creating a shared, data-driven vision for reentry.

- The Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force has unified state and local leadership to focus on evidence-based rehabilitation programming and reentry practices to reduce recidivism.
- State agencies share a commitment to improving reentry outcomes.
- DOC developed a reentry data framework to track reentry success beyond recidivism to include employment, housing, health and well-being, social reintegration, and desistance.

Cross-agency coordination breaks down during the transition from prison to the community.

- Coordination across corrections, employment, housing, jails, and behavioral health is inconsistent and highly dependent on individual relationships rather than institutionalized processes.
- The CRTF is time limited; inadequate representation from housing, social services, and people with lived experience; and has a narrow focus without established goals.
- Limited cross-agency data sharing impedes the ability to evaluate long-term outcomes.

South Dakota can strengthen reentry success by institutionalizing statewide governance, formalizing cross-agency collaboration, and improving accountability.

- Create a permanent statewide reentry council with additional representation from state agency leaders across housing, health, and social services, and include people with lived experience.
- Formalize cross-agency data-sharing agreements.
- Establish statewide outcome measures related to employment, housing, health and behavioral health, and reentry preparedness.

2. Basic reentry readiness is not consistently in place at release, limiting the impact of South Dakota's investments in programming and supervision.

South Dakota has strengthened institutional reentry planning and established a solid foundation for preparing people for release.

- DOC SD Reentry Initiative has expanded multidisciplinary case planning and incorporated reentry goals into pre-release plans.
- Facility staff demonstrate a strong commitment to preparing people for release and recognize reentry as a core part of the correctional mission.
- Community-based organizations are actively engaged in supporting reentry.
- DOC provides evidence-based programming to prepare people for successful community reintegration.

People frequently leave prison without the essential supports needed for a successful transition.

- Community handoffs are inconsistent, with no integrated referral system between corrections, supervision, and community partners.
- Missing vital documents remain a persistent barrier to obtaining employment and other supports in the community.
- Lack of transportation limits access to services and employment, and limited supports exist to connect people to transportation options.
- People returning to rural and Tribal communities face compounding reentry barriers.

Strengthening coordination and expanding access to reentry supports would ensure that every person leaves prison with the essential supports they need for successful reintegration.

- Strengthen agency coordination so people leave prison with vital documents, benefits enrollment, transportation plans, and appointments for critical services.
- Expand flexible transportation options, such as vouchers, volunteer driver programs, and local transit partnerships, and coordinate with community-based organizations to support challenges, particularly in rural areas.
- Use release and service use data to identify geographic gaps in reentry services and prioritize investments in communities with the greatest needs.

3. While South Dakota has promising workforce initiatives, system fragmentation and employment barriers make it challenging for individuals to achieve economic mobility.

Promising workforce partnerships demonstrate the potential to expand employment pathways statewide.

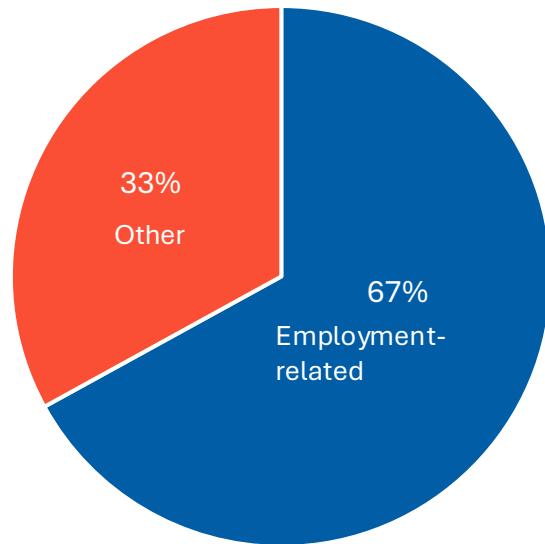
- DOC has built strong partnerships with DLR and technical colleges to provide workforce training during incarceration.
- Existing vocational training and career and technical education programs teach marketable skills in several high-demand occupations.
- Innovative programs, such as the Governor's House Program, provide participants with hands-on work experience and industry-recognized skills that can support employment opportunities after release.

Minimal coordinated supports and systemic barriers limit access to employment after release.

- Limited employer engagement inhibits expansion into higher-demand trades.
- Participation in in-prison vocational programming is low.
- Few supports (such as soft skills training, structured referrals, or job placement services) exist to support people transitioning from incarceration to employment in the community.
- Sparse employment outcome data tracks whether people obtain and maintain jobs and if they are earning sustainable wages.

South Dakota law imposes hundreds of barriers to work for people with criminal convictions.

Collateral Consequences in South Dakota Related to Employment



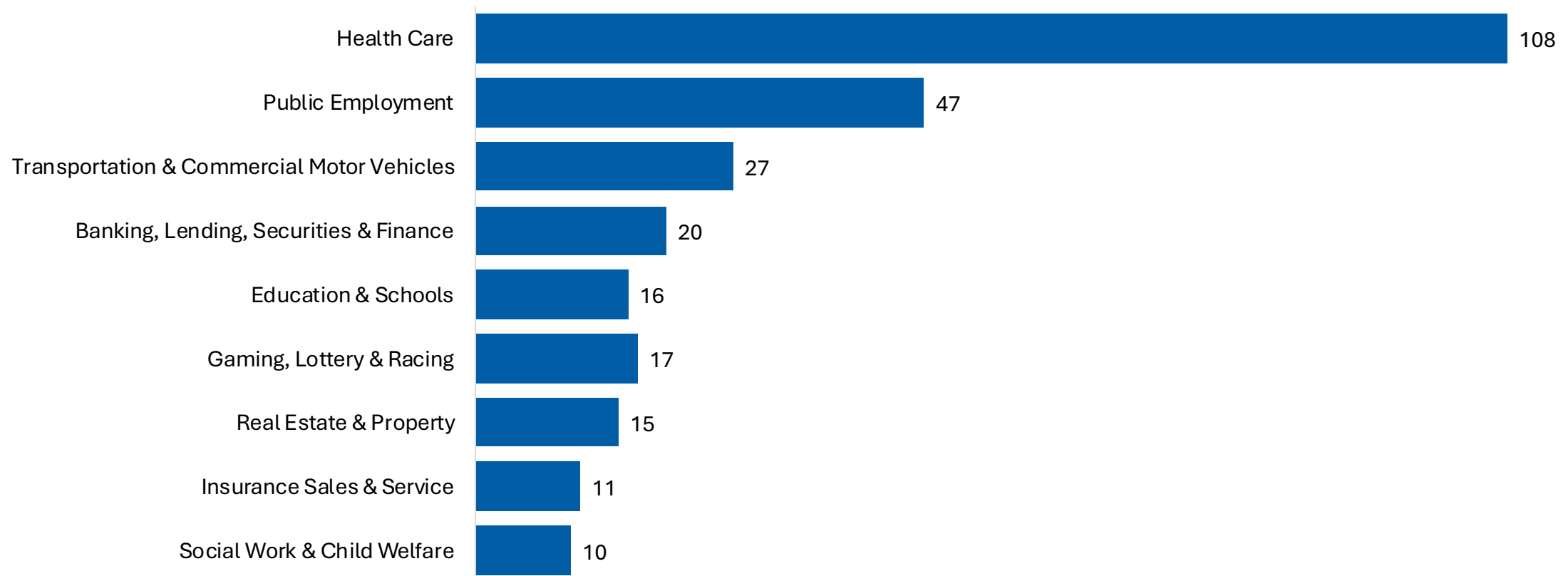
Nearly 450 provisions of state statute and regulation restrict rights, benefits, and opportunities based on a prior criminal conviction.

67% of those collateral consequences limit access to work for people with certain criminal histories.

“The National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction,” The Council of State Governments Justice Center and National Reentry Resource Center, accessed July 27, 2026, <http://niccc.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org>.

Legal barriers to work are concentrated in a few high-opportunity fields and industries.

Number of Employment-Related Barriers in the Most Impacted Fields & Industries

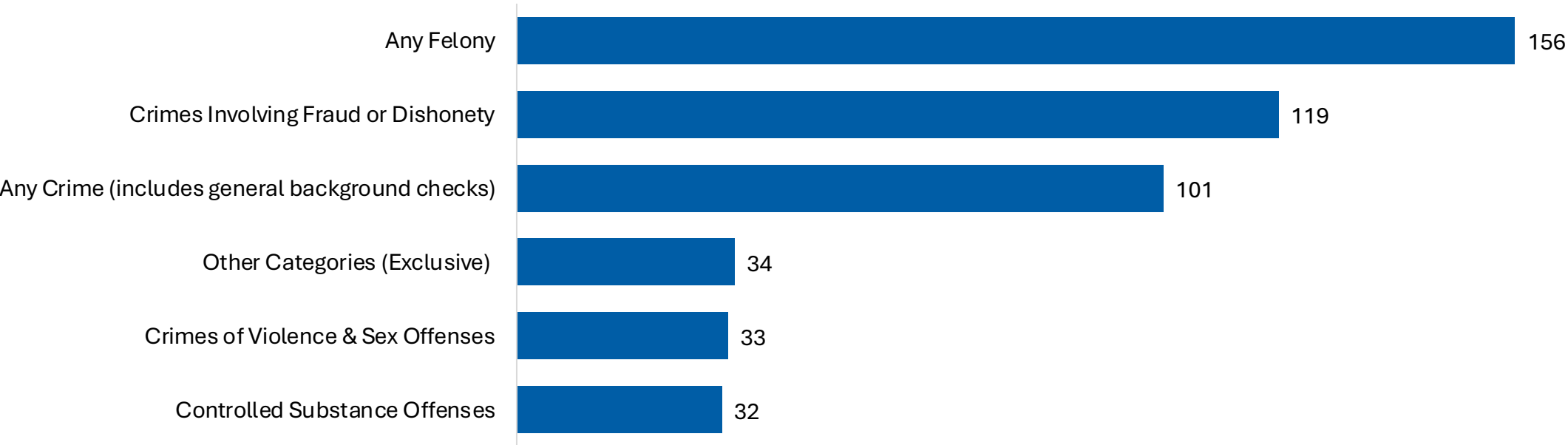


“The National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction,” The Council of State Governments Justice Center and National Reentry Resource Center, accessed July 27, 2026, <http://niccc.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org>.

Employment consequences can be triggered by a broad range of offenses.

In South Dakota, over 250 barriers to work can be triggered by ANY felony.

Number of South Dakota Employment Consequences by Triggering Offense



“The National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction,” The Council of State Governments Justice Center and National Reentry Resource Center, accessed July 27, 2026, <http://niccc.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org>.

Recent legislation expands opportunities to work in licensed occupations that were closed off to many reentering workers.

- **Overrides most mandatory licensing bars:** The law generally prohibits denial of licensure unless the conviction “directly relates ... to the profession or occupation for which the license is sought.”
- **Rehabilitation consideration:** Even when a direct relationship exists, licensing bodies must “consider whether an applicant or licensee has been rehabilitated to the extent that the person no longer poses the kind of risk to the profession or occupation....”
- **Pre-qualification:** Creates a process for applicants to receive a determination from licensing agencies about whether their specific criminal history is disqualifying before investing in education and training required to meet general licensing requirements. This significantly mitigates the risk assumed by people who are interested in pursuing work in licensed fields but are unsure whether their criminal history will ultimately result in denial.
- **Public information requirements:** Requires licensing agencies to publish online information about what criminal histories may be disqualifying, how criminal history is evaluated, and relevant procedures.

Job training aligns with market demands but major sectors remain unserved and there is room to scale up.

DOC PROVIDING DIRECT TRAINING • 8 occupations

Occupation	Annual Openings	FY25 Completions	Share of Openings
Carpenters*	498	0	0%
Welders	422	71	16.8%
Electricians	333	12	3.6%
Auto service techs	244	24	9.8%
Construction laborers**	227	39	17.2%**
Plumbers	188	5	2.7%
Auto body repairers	80	11	13.8%
Machinists	71	14	19.7%
Total	2,063		~9%

* No carpentry program completions were reported in 2025.

** DOT Flagging's 380 completions are **not** included here and would result in 185% share.

Share of openings = FY25 credentials ÷ average annual openings. Sources: South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, Labor Market Information Center, South Dakota Occupational Employment Projections, 2024–2034: Statewide (Aberdeen, SD: South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, 2026); May 2025 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates: South Dakota, "Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed August 6, 2026, <https://www.bls.gov/oes/2025/may/oesrcst.htm>; South Dakota Department of Corrections, "Facilities and Programs Overview" (Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force, Pierre, SD, October 29, 2025).

NO DIRECT DOC TRAINING • Top 10 high opportunity occupations

Occupation	Annual Openings	Entry Wage
Heavy truck drivers	786	\$41,590
Sales reps, wholesale	521	\$49,070
Maintenance & repair	379	\$37,340
Equipment operators	229	\$47,260
Licensed practical nurses	189	\$40,770
Dental assistants	188	\$38,190
Cement masons	176	\$36,640
Industrial mechanics	152	\$48,510
Cosmetologists	133	\$32,090
Farm equipment mechanics	131	\$46,750
Total	2,884	

South Dakota employers report workforce shortages, creating an opportunity to expand second-chance hiring.

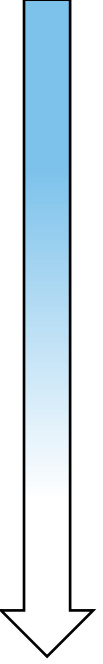
DLR conducted an employer survey in 2025, finding that:

- Across many industries, the most common job titles needed in the next 3 years include **customer service, construction, managers, drivers, accounting/bookkeeping, and sales.**
- 84% reported their greatest workforce challenge is either finding candidates with the required skills or simply filling open positions.
- But only 40% of employers reported they are willing to employ individuals with prior justice involvement.

South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, “2025 Employer Survey” (Pierre, 2025), <https://dlr.sd.gov/publications/documents/Employer-Survey-2025-Report.pdf>

Why are employers reluctant to hire reentering workers?

Employer reluctance to hire workers with convictions—especially those convicted of more serious offenses—is the most significant barrier to economic mobility regardless of “formal” collateral consequences. A 2021 employer survey identified a variety of reasons for employer reluctance, including (in order of importance to employers):

- 
1. Legal **liability**
 2. How **customers** will react
 3. **Legal barriers** to hiring
 4. How **other employees** will react
 5. **Negative behavior** of workers with records
 6. Employee access to **reliable transportation**
 7. General **reliability** (ability to remain with company)
 8. Concern that workers with records **won't have necessary skills**
 9. Concern that workers with records **won't be effective employees**

“2021 Getting Talent Back To Work Report,” Society of Human Resource Management (2021), https://www.gettingtalentbacktowork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-GTBTW_Report.pdf

South Dakota is one of fewer than 15 states nationally that has no fair chance hiring laws for public or private employers.

States across the country have implemented a variety of policies meant to combat employers' reluctance to hire workers with criminal histories. These include the following:

Employer liability protections

Limitations on the extent to which employers can be held liable for harm caused by workers with criminal records on the job



Ban-the-box policies

Prohibit background checks and other criminal history inquiries until the later stages of the hiring process



Fair chance hiring standards

Require employers to determine that an applicant's criminal history is directly related to the job at issue before rejecting an applicant due to that history



Certificates of relief

Official credentials that may provide proof of fitness to work, evidence of rehabilitation, and other benefits



South Dakota state law does not implement any of these policies, leaving employers largely free to reject applicants due to criminal convictions.

South Dakota can improve employment outcomes by creating an employment pathway that begins during incarceration and continues after release.

- Expand vocational training opportunities that align with regional labor market needs and workforce shortages.
- Strengthen DOC, DLR, and Tribal workforce partnerships to standardize pre-release employment referrals and continuity of career services post-release.
- Build statewide employer engagement and second-chance hiring initiatives.
- Ensure people are informed of the extent to which legal barriers impact opportunity in certain fields and the mechanisms to alleviate those barriers.
- Track employment outcomes beyond initial job placement.
- Explore policy opportunities to empower employers to leverage the reentry workforce.

4. Insufficient safe and affordable housing options statewide are one of the greatest barriers to successful community reintegration after incarceration and contribute to ongoing instability after release.

Existing transitional housing initiatives provide a foundation for statewide expansion.

- SDDOC's Community Housing Placement program provides valuable transitional housing support to people who need it through contracted providers in Sioux Falls and Yankton.
- Pilot housing initiatives run through SDDOC (such as master leased units) show early promise.
- Housing providers, community organizations, and corrections staff demonstrate a strong commitment to collaboration despite limited resources.

South Dakota lacks sufficient housing options for people returning from prison, particularly those with higher needs.

- There are insufficient housing options to meet the needs of people returning from incarceration, particularly in communities experiencing broader housing shortages and affordability challenges.
- Individuals with complex behavioral health needs, sex offense convictions, or other higher service needs have especially limited access to appropriate housing options after release.
- Housing challenges are compounded in rural and Tribal areas with limited housing stock, fewer service providers willing to partner, and landlord reluctance to rent to individuals with criminal records.
- There is lack of collaboration and integration of housing into other policy discussions.

The statewide landscape of homelessness and homelessness response services impacts people returning home from prisons.

1,154

Number of South Dakotans experiencing homelessness on a given night

258

Number of South Dakotans experiencing unsheltered homelessness on a given night

671

Total number of **emergency shelter beds for adults**, a 13% decrease in capacity from 2024

423

Total number of **permanent housing beds for adults**

South Dakota Housing, *South Dakota Point in Time, January 27, 2026* (Pierre, SD: South Dakota Housing, 2026), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62043c6fe162bf3ffdc5f475/t/6a554147aaa3a74e79c629df/1783972167541/2026+Statewide.pdf>; South Dakota Housing, *2026 Housing Inventory Count Report* (Pierre, SD: South Dakota Housing, 2026), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62043c6fe162bf3ffdc5f475/t/69e7d64e949631007bc4efa4/1776801358598/2026+HIC+Report.pdf>

There is a shortage of affordable and available rental homes for people returning home from incarceration.

Average Annual Income	
South Dakota minimum wage	\$11.85
Annual income at minimum wage	\$24,648

Annual Income Needed to Afford	
One-bedroom	\$35,347
Two-bedroom	\$43,753
Three-bedroom	\$58,528

To afford a one-bedroom rental home (at FMR) while making minimum wage, a person has to work:

57 hours per week

Equivalent to

1.4 full-time jobs

National Low Income Housing Coalition, *South Dakota 2026 State Housing Profile* (Washington, DC: National Low Income Housing Coalition, June 2026), https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/SHP_SD.pdf

Housing stability should become a core component of the state's reentry strategy through expanded capacity, stronger partnerships, and coordinated planning.

- Expand transitional housing capacity for high-needs populations.
- Increase landlord engagement and incentive programs.
- Explore rental assistance models to support housing stability.
- Partner with Tribal and local housing authorities, particularly in rural communities, to identify geographic gaps in resources and prioritize investments in areas with limited housing capacity.
- Develop a statewide reentry housing strategy aligning corrections, housing, local and Tribal governments, behavioral health providers, and community organizations around shared goals.

5. Behavioral health needs are widespread among people leaving prison, but community capacity and cross-system coordination are insufficient to support successful reentry.

South Dakota has expanded behavioral health infrastructure that can support improved reentry transitions.

- South Dakota has an established network of community behavioral health providers that deliver mental health and substance use treatment services across the state.
- DOC reentry staff coordinate behavioral health referrals pre-release across the state.
- The state's behavioral health crisis response system continues to expand, including implementation of 988, increased crisis stabilization resources, and efforts to strengthen mobile crisis response.

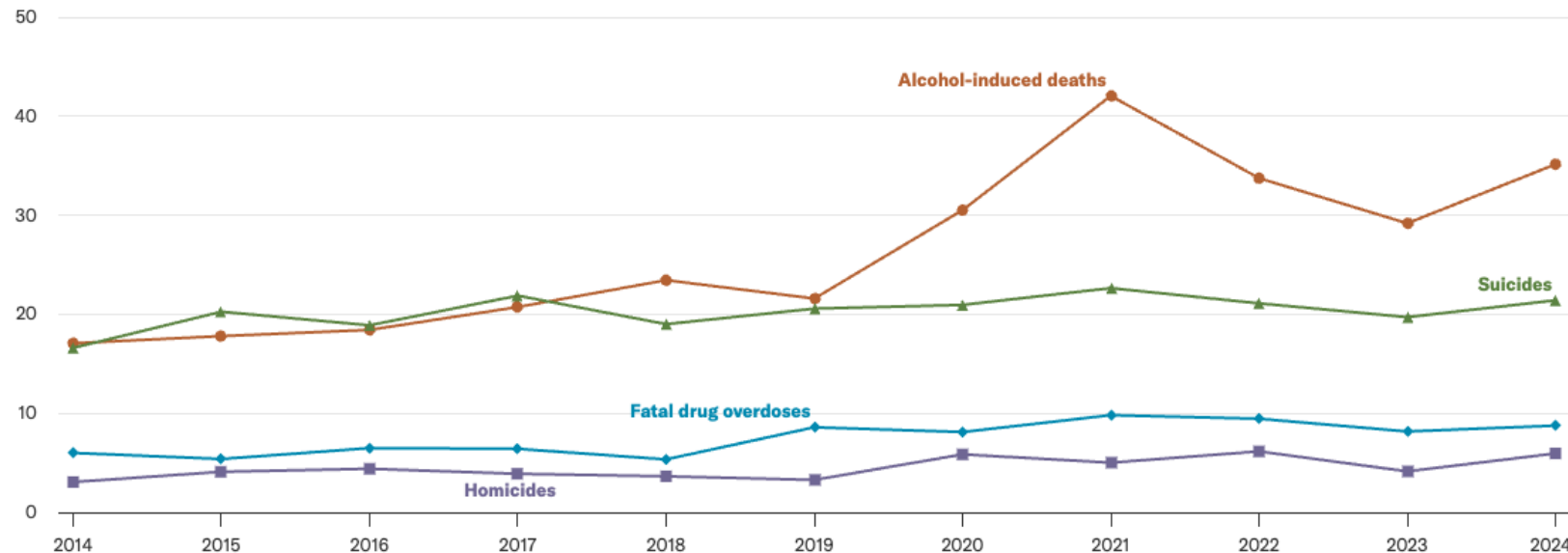
Despite statewide investments, people leaving prison face significant barriers to accessing timely and appropriate behavioral health care.

- Behavioral health provider shortages, transportation barriers, and rural service gaps delay timely access to treatment post-release.
- Inconsistent transitions between prison and community cause treatment delays, medication interruptions, and gaps in continuity of care during a high-risk period.
- There are limited accessible and affordable community treatment options across the continuum of care, particularly residential mental health.
- Limited peer support is integrated into care options.
- Funding restrictions limit individualized treatment planning.

South Dakota has a higher than national average rate of alcohol induced deaths and suicides, highlighting the importance of strong behavioral health systems statewide.

Cause of death

Rate per 100k residents, South Dakota



CDC National Center for Health Statistics

Alcohol-induced deaths, 2024

SD: 35.1 per 100k
Nationally: 13.8 per 100k

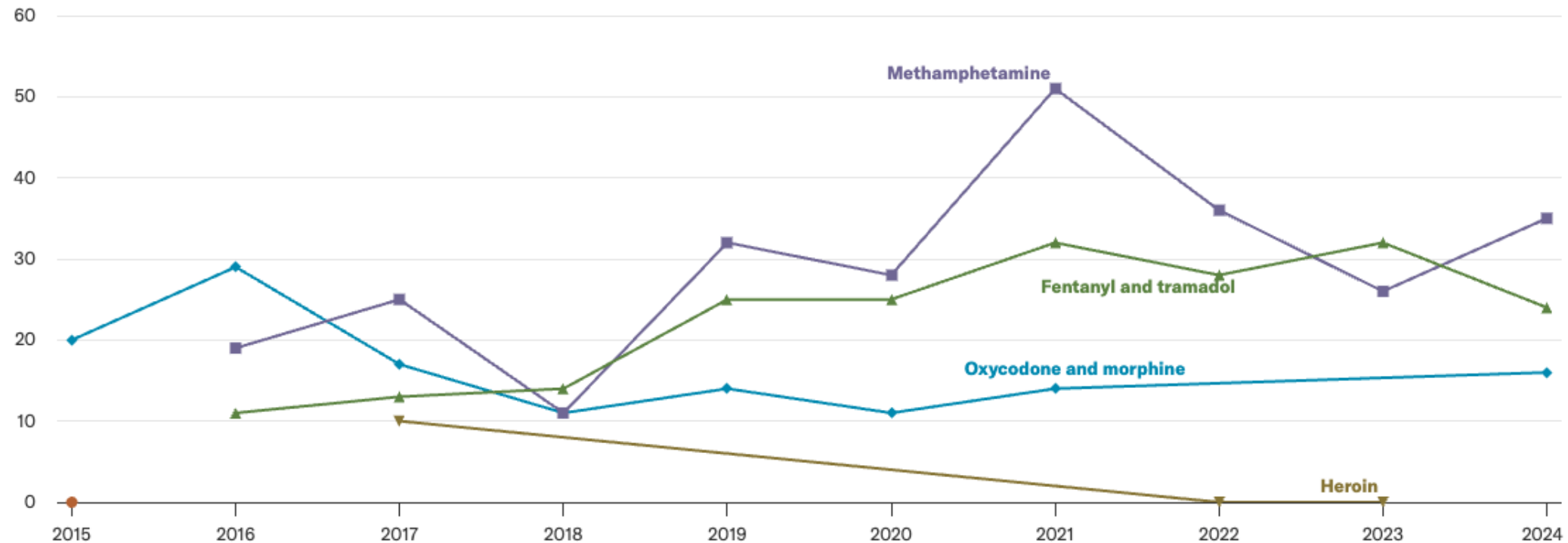
Suicides, 2024

SD: 14.4
Nationally: 13.8

Methamphetamine and fentanyl are the leading causes of overdose deaths in South Dakota.

Deaths due to overdose by drug type

South Dakota



CDC National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System

The demand for behavioral health treatment substantially exceeds provider capacity.

149,000

adults in South Dakota experienced mental illness in 2024.

46,000

adults in South Dakota experienced serious mental illness in 2024.

193,000

adults in South Dakota received mental health treatment of any kind in 2024.

109,000

adults in South Dakota needed, but did not receive, treatment at a specialized facility for substance use in 2024.

SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Nearly everyone entering prison has a behavioral health treatment need requiring coordinated community follow-up.



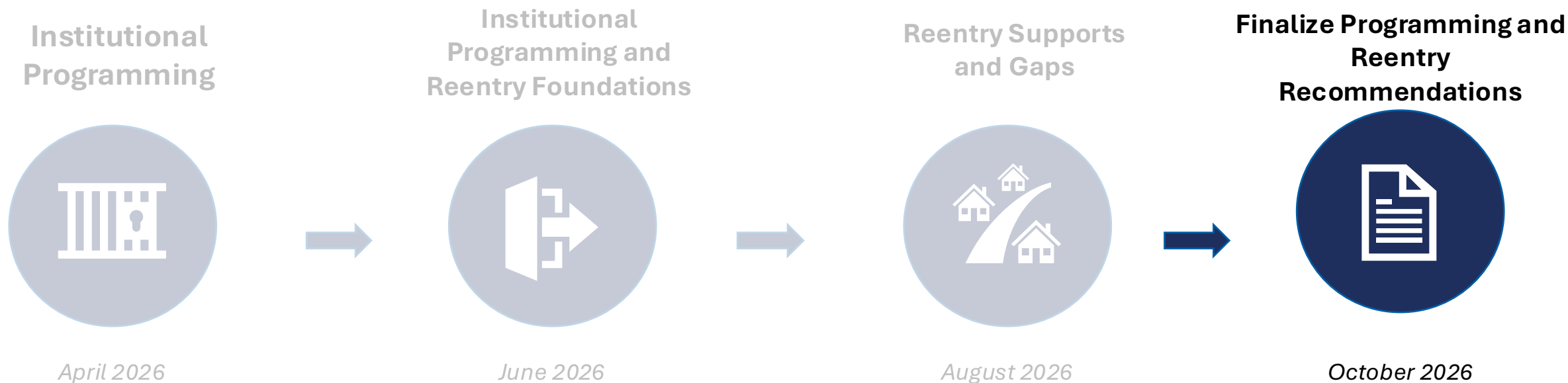
Assessed at intake were identified as having a substance use disorder

Strengthening continuity of care requires expanding community capacity, improving transitions from prison, and aligning funding with need.

- Improve continuity of Medicaid enrollment and SUD treatment, including MAT, before release.
- Expand community treatment capacity for serious mental illness.
- Increase behavioral health and substance use treatment access in rural communities and Tribal areas.
- Align funding with individualized clinical needs.
- Build a dedicated behavioral health workforce trained to serve justice-involved populations.
- Create dedicated forensic, mobile multidisciplinary treatment teams to deliver intensive, in-person care during the reentry transition.

Next Steps

2026 CRTF Roadmap



CSG Justice Center Deliverables:

- Programming assessment: preliminary findings
- Final programming assessment with refined recommendations
- National reentry models overview
- Reentry needs assessment findings
- Suggested policy options and implementation priorities
- All recommendations reviewed and finalized at meeting
- Written summary for implementation

Thank You!

For more information, please contact Megan Pfeiffer at mpfeiffer@csg.org.

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