SOUTH DAKOTA CORRECTIONAL REHABILITATION TASK FORCE

# Programs in South Dakota Prisons: What the Data Show

CSG Justice Center Programming Assessment Data Analysis, June and August 2026

**44%**
of all people in prison participated in programming in 2025, up from 27% in 2023.[1]

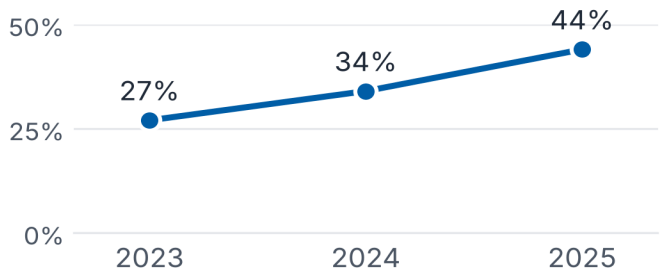
**43%–68%**
of people staying more than 6 months received programming in 2025, depending on their facility.[1]

**64%**
of high-risk people released in 2025 received some programming during their prison stay, up from 45% in 2023.[1]

**59%**
of people released in 2025 earned discharge credits, averaging nearly 7 months off their stay.[1]

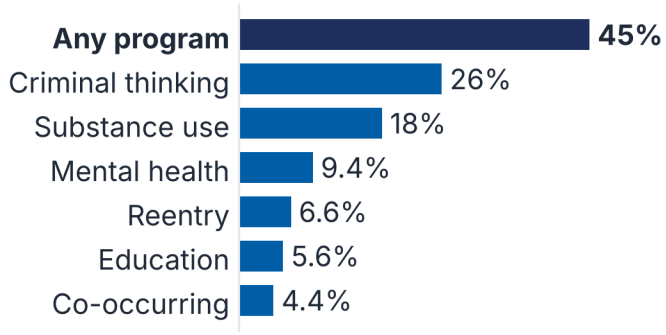
## Access to programming is growing.

Share of People in Prison Who Received Any DOC Program That Year[1]

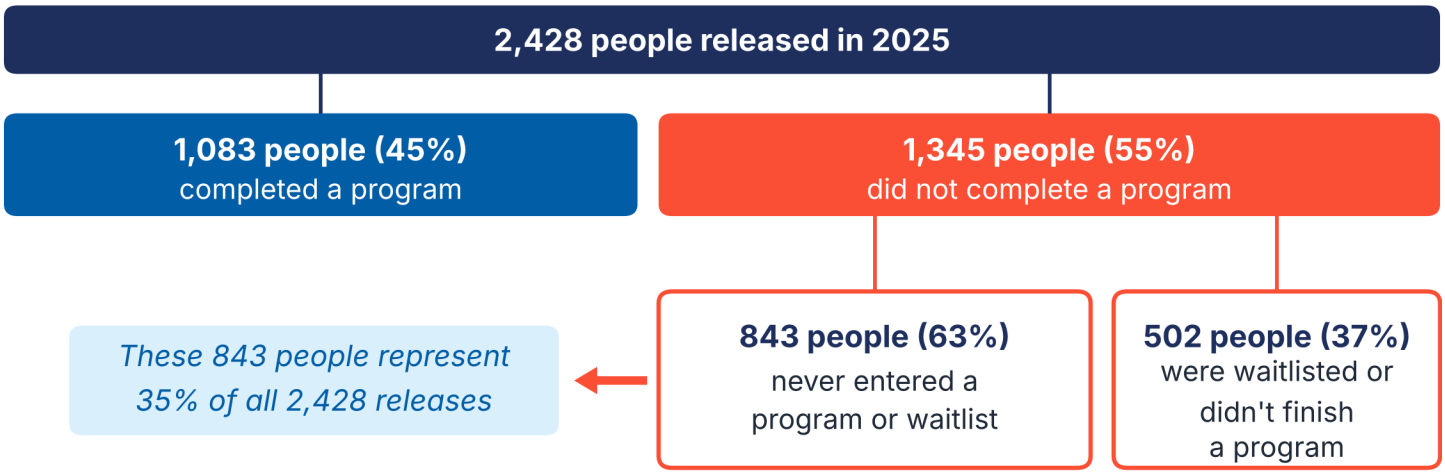



## Programs addressing criminal thinking were most common.

Share of People Released in 2025 Who Completed Each Type of Program[1]




## More than half of people released in 2025 did not complete a program.




**Most of the 843 had short stays:** A typical (median) stay of 6.5 months, and 80% stayed one year or less.

**For the 502, 1 in 5 program status changes were refusals or terminations;** most others were removals from a waitlist, often because of release or transfer.[2]

**How well programs are delivered is the linchpin to successfully reducing recidivism. This takes enough program and security staff, consistent training, and ongoing quality assurance.**

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# Coming Home: Reentry in South Dakota

CSG Justice Center Reentry Assessment Data Analysis, August 2026

**80%**
of men and 91% of women leaving prison are released to parole.[3]

**80%+**
of men served 2 years or less before release, and over 75% of women served 1 year or less.[3]

**46%**
of people released to parole go to the Sioux Falls field office.[4]

## Half of people released in 2021 returned to prison within 3 years.

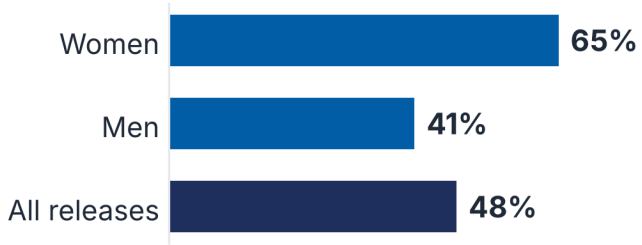
Three-Year Success Rate for People Released from Prison in 2021[3]




**Of the people who returned, about 7 in 10 went back for a technical violation, not a new crime.**

## Nearly half of people leaving prison are Native American.

Share of People Released in FY 2025 Who Were Native American[3]




**Nearly 2 in 3 women released were Native American.**

**What is a technical violation?** Breaking the rules of parole, rather than being sentenced for a new crime. The most common are not keeping a parole agent informed of activities or whereabouts, not completing required treatment or programs, and positive drug tests.[3]

## People encounter multiple barriers after release.

### Behavioral health

- **91% of men and 97% of women** entering prison were assessed as having a substance use disorder.[3]
- **109,000 South Dakota adults** needed treatment for substance use at a specialized facility in 2024 but did not receive it.[5]

### Employment

- **Nearly 450 provisions of** state laws and regulations restrict people with convictions, and **67%** of them limit access to work.[6]
- **South Dakota is one of fewer than 15 states** with no fair chance hiring laws for public or private employers.[4]

### Housing

- **57 hours a week** at minimum wage is what it takes to afford a one-bedroom rental at Fair Market Rent.[8]
- **Emergency shelter beds for adults fell 13%** in 2026 compared with 2024.[8]

### Workforce demand

- **84%** of South Dakota employers say their biggest workforce challenge is finding candidates with the right skills or filling open positions.[7]
- **But only 40%** say they are willing to hire people with prior justice involvement.[7]

1. Analysis of South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) data by The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, May 2026, presented to the task force June 23, 2026. DOC programs are those facilitated by DOC staff (education, vocational, evidence-based, and behavioral health), excluding work release, Pheasantland Industries, work assignments, and volunteer and religious programs.
2. Analysis of DOC data by the CSG Justice Center, July 2026, presented to the task force August 19, 2026. The 502 people had 794 recorded program status changes. Percentages are rounded.
3. South Dakota Department of Corrections, Fiscal Year 2025 Statistical Report (Pierre, 2025). Fiscal year figures are not directly comparable to the calendar year 2025 figures on the front.
4. CSG Justice Center reentry assessment, presented to the task force August 19, 2026, including analysis of DOC data conducted August 2026.
5. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2024.
6. CSG Justice Center, National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction, accessed July 27, 2026.
7. South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR), 2025 Employer Survey.
8. National Low Income Housing Coalition, South Dakota 2026 State Housing Profile; South Dakota Housing, 2026 Housing Inventory Count Report.