South Dakota Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force

Recommendations on Rehabilitation and Reentry

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CSG Justice Center



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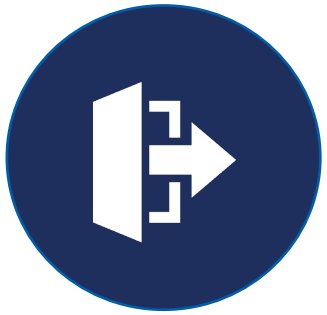
2026 CRTF Roadmap

Institutional Programming



April 2026

Institutional Programming and Reentry Foundations



June 2026

Reentry Supports and Gaps



August 2026

Finalized Programming and Reentry Recommendations



October 2026

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

Agenda

I. Where We've Been

II. Recommendations for Consideration

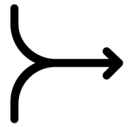
III. Discussion

IV. Pulling it Together

V. Next Steps

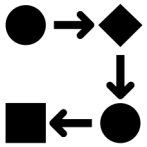
Where We've Been

June: 4 Moves to Improve Programs and Reduce Recidivism



Unify oversight and coordination

Create a Rehabilitation and Reentry Division and program committee accountable for program quality and coordination



Build logical program pathways

Sequence programs by risk and need, with a centralized, transparent waitlist



Invest in capacity and culture

Increase program and security staff and quality assurance; create a rehabilitative culture



Empower DOC to restructure EDCs

Scale credits to program effort and reduce last-minute release date changes

August: Reentry Assessment Recommendations

1. **Statewide coordination**
   Bring more agencies and people with lived experience to the table; share data; set statewide goals
2. **Readiness at release**
   Vital documents, benefits, transportation, and appointments for everyone leaving prison
3. **Employment**
   Training aligned to local jobs, stronger workforce partnerships, and second-chance hiring
4. **Housing**
   More transitional housing, landlord incentives, and a statewide reentry housing strategy
5. **Behavioral health**
   Medicaid enrollment and treatment started before release; more community, rural, and Tribal capacity

This will take time to implement well.

Initiatives like this in other states have taken years of dedicated effort to see improvements in recidivism and reentry success.

Now

Programming: Administrative changes and positions that work in existing space

Reentry: Reentry planning from admission, and documents, benefits, and appointments at release

Medium term

Programming: Additional program staff phased in over several budget cycles

Reentry: Landlord and transportation supports; federal grants, if awarded

Long term

Programming: Expanded programming as new facilities open

Reentry: Cross-system work on employment, housing, behavioral health, and parole

The goal: People in prison make productive use of their time, through programming, work inside the facility, or work release, and return to their communities with the supports they need to succeed.

Recommendations

4 Types of Recommendations

PART 1

DOC Administrative Changes

DOC can act on these now; the CRTF endorses them and DOC reports progress each year

PART 2

Budget Requests

Require an appropriation

PART 3

Legislative Changes

Require statutory change

PART 4

Sustain and Expand Impact

Issues that need continued attention after the task force concludes

1.1 Increase program capacity and quality.

Better programs and better access will not hold without the staff, structure, and oversight needed to deliver programs consistently.

Structure: who is accountable

One accountable division
Program facilitators report to the people responsible for program quality, under the R&R Division

Program committee
A cross-division body for the catalog, pathways, peer-led programs, and earned credits

Quality assurance
A team that ensures programs follow recidivism-reduction research

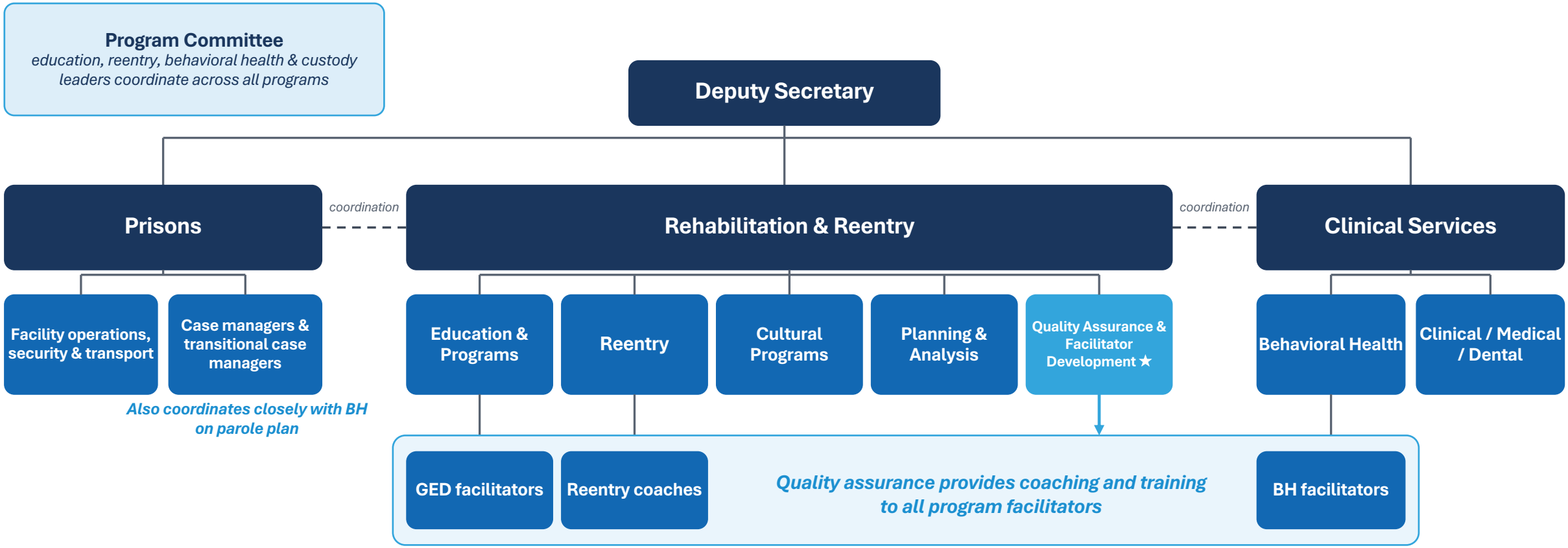
Practice: how programs are delivered

Rehabilitative culture
Custody staff see programming as part of the security mission

Peer-led programming
Continue expanding, with training and oversight, to extend capacity

Shared data standards
Participation and outcomes measured the same way across facilities

Proposed Organizational Chart



Facilitators now report to the leaders responsible for program quality. The director of prisons coordinates operations, security, case management, and transport so programs can run, and the program committee aligns pathways across education, reentry, behavioral health, and custody.

★ Denotes the proposed creation of a new team

1.2 Increase access and standardize the waitlist process.

Access is uneven across facilities and populations, and not enough people receive important rehabilitative programs.

1

Centralized waitlist

Complete the centralized waitlist and placement system, and share written referral criteria with the people on it

2

Streamlined catalog

Reduce the number of programs where several address the same need

3

Fill the gaps

Literacy and education for all levels of learners, domestic violence, tribally responsive programming, structured employment readiness, and options for long sentences

4

Facility audits

Resolve scheduling and operational barriers that cut into program time

1.3 Sequence programming to start earlier in the stay.

Programs reduce reoffending only when people complete them. A sequence set at intake spreads programming across the full stay instead of compressing it into the months before release.

1

Sequence by risk and need

Build program pathways that fit each person's length of stay, moving programming earlier in the stay

2

Coordinate each plan

Across education, behavioral health, and reentry, so programs are not delivered in silos

3

Parole violation track

A dedicated track for people returning on a violation, who often repeat programs they already completed

4

Align earned credits

The program committee adopts and monitors earned-credit changes alongside the pathways

Sequencing Matters: Example of a 5-Year Stay

Profile: high risk for recidivism · substance use treatment need

Today

No core risk reducing programming for years, then several programs stacked together near release.



Proposed

Sequenced consecutively from intake, substance use first, each a realistic length.



1.4 Improve readiness to return to the community.

Almost everyone in a South Dakota prison will come home, most of them on parole.

Starting at admission

- Integrate reentry planning into intake assessments
- Connect work and job training in prison, including work release, to employment after release
- Begin Medicaid enrollment and substance use treatment referrals, including for medication-assisted treatment, before release

At release

- Every person leaves with vital documents, benefits enrollment, a transportation plan, and scheduled appointments
- A formal referral process between DOC, parole, and community providers for warm handoffs

In the community

- Flexible transportation options, especially in rural areas
- Incentives for landlords to rent to people returning from prison
- Use release and service data to target investment where services are thinnest

1.5 Track program and reentry measures to benchmark progress.

DOC should add these measures to its annual statistical report, using 2025 as the baseline, so policymakers and the public can see progress.

Program measures

- People in prison who received any DOC-instructed programming
- People in prison who completed any DOC-instructed programming
- People released who completed at least one DOC-instructed program
- Highest-risk people released with no DOC-instructed programming
- One-year return rate for program completers vs. overall, by program type

Reentry measures

- People released with vital documents
- Housing upon release, by type
- People on parole employed in the first three months of release

Over time: Measure completion and dosage now, use the pre- and post-assessments staff already collect, connect program data to recidivism as the data system matures, and reserve rigorous evaluation for the highest-priority programs.

2.1 Add program, prison security, and parole staff and pay market rate.

Programs do not run without staff to deliver them and correctional officers to get people to them.

In the next budget cycle

- Correctional officers for program posts
- Director of rehabilitation and reentry
- Quality assurance team
- Program facilitators where there is classroom space
- Additional parole agents to strengthen reentry supports

Phase in over several budget cycles

- Market rate pay adjustments for program facilitator and behavioral health staff
- Additional correctional officers as needed
- Additional program staff, including behavioral health clinicians, teachers, and reentry coaches
- Start with positions that fit current program space and add more as new facilities open

2.7 FTE

per new security post to cover all shifts, days off, and absences. These posts need no new classroom space.

$821,720 per year

to raise current program facilitator and behavioral health salaries to market rate

Source: Council of State Governments Justice Center analysis of South Dakota Department of Corrections staffing and salary data, September 2026.

2.2 Fund programming supports.

55%

of people released in 2025 did not complete a DOC-facilitated program

502 people

released in 2025 were waitlisted or didn't finish a program

Item	What it would buy	Amount
Quality assurance training	Trains DOC's new QA team to review programs against a national standard, building permanent internal capacity	$50,000 one-time
Peer support and transitional services contracts	Competitive contracts with community organizations; DOC selects providers consistent with state procurement	$700,000 annual
Total		**$750,000**

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

2.3 Fund supports to increase reentry success.

80% and 91%

of men and women, respectively, leave South Dakota prisons on parole

About 7 in 10

people who return to prison are returned on a technical violation, not a new crime

The reentry assessment found two barriers that a relatively small amount of money can move: (1) finding a landlord willing to rent and (2) getting to work, treatment, and appointments in the first months after release.

Item	What it would buy	Amount
Landlord risk mitigation fund	Covers damages or unpaid rent so more landlords will rent to people leaving prison	$150,000 annual
Transportation support fund	Bus passes in Sioux Falls and Rapid City; gas or ride vouchers elsewhere; focused on the first 90 days	$250,000 annual
Total		**$400,000**

Source: South Dakota Department of Corrections, Fiscal Year 2025 Statistical Report (Pierre, 2025).

3.1 Ensure DOC can adjust EDCs as implementation progresses to boost successful outcomes.

Earned discharge credits (EDCs) are the strongest incentive the system has to encourage rehabilitative behavior in prison.

59%

of people released in 2025 earned EDCs, averaging nearly 7 months off their stay

90 days

the most any program completion can earn under statute, however long the program

Today: fixed in statute

- Up to 90 days per program completion
- 90 days per 360 hours of work
- 180-day annual cap on work credit

Recommended: set by administrative rule

- Credit values scaled to program effort
- Work credit awarded monthly
- Adjustments as programs change, without returning to the legislature

Legislators keep a role: rules go through public comment and legislative rules review.

Source: Analysis of South Dakota Department of Corrections data conducted by The Council of State Governments Justice Center, May 2026; SDCL 24-15A-50.1.

3.2 Consider placing key changes in statute.

Most of our recommendations do not require legislation. The task force may want to recommend placing some of them in statute to protect them over time.

Item	Status today
Rehabilitation and Reentry Division	Created administratively in 2026
Quality assurance and facilitator development function	Proposed, funded through the FY28 request
Annual public reporting	DOC plans to add the Part 1.5 measures to its annual statistical report

Statute

More durable across administrations

Administrative

More flexible as needs change

4.1 Continue cross-system work on parole and reentry.

Under Executive Order 2025-07, the CRTF's final report marks the completion of its work. Several issues it identified reach beyond in-prison rehabilitation and the entities represented on the task force.

35%

of the 2021 release cohort returned on a technical violation, more than twice the new-crime rate

3,150+

people on parole statewide, supervised by 54 agents

What we heard

Housing, workforce, education, behavioral health, and social services serve the same people but operate in silos. No statewide reentry goals exist to benchmark progress.

What should continue

A cross-system effort on parole supervision, housing, education, employment, and behavioral health, including partners not on the CRTF, with clear public goals and reporting on progress. Reentry 2030 could be a trusted framework for this effort, used by other states.

Source: South Dakota Department of Corrections, Fiscal Year 2025 Statistical Report (Pierre, 2025).

4.1 Five areas for continued work.

The continued cross-system effort should take up these five areas, each with a lead, shared goals, and public reporting.

Education and employment

Likely lead: Dept. of Labor and Regulation, with Department of Education, DOC, technical colleges, and Tribal workforce programs

Enhanced literacy; vocational training aligned to regional labor markets; pre-release employment referrals; second-chance hiring; clarity on legal barriers

Housing

Likely lead: South Dakota Housing, with DOC and local and Tribal housing authorities

Transitional housing for higher needs; landlord engagement and incentives; rental assistance models; a statewide reentry housing strategy

Behavioral health

Likely lead: State behavioral health authority, with DOC and community providers

Community capacity for serious mental illness; rural and Tribal access; workforce; outcomes-based models like North Dakota's Free Through Recovery

Parole supervision

Likely lead: DOC, with the Board of Pardons and Paroles

Strengthen supervision practices and the handoff from prison to parole agents for the highest-risk population

Cross-cutting

Likely lead: DOC or a coordinating body

Data-sharing agreements; statewide outcome measures; services co-designed with Tribal partners; people with lived experience at the table

4.2 Pending federal grant applications may sustain this work.

Cross-system parole and reentry work

BJA FY25 Justice Reinvestment Initiative

- Improve parole outcomes and coordinate reentry across housing, treatment, employment, and county partners
- Field technology that helps parole agents prevent and respond to crime

Healthcare career pathways

BJA Second Chance Act Improving Reentry Education and Employment Outcomes (FY25 and FY26)

- In partnership with Sanford Health
- Builds training, employer partnerships, and data capacity to improve reentry outcomes for incarcerated women

DOC has requested federal funding authority in its FY28 budget request, so awards would not require state funding. Regardless of grant outcomes, the state should move forward with statewide reentry coordination and a parole operations and needs assessment.

Discussion

Pulling It Together

What has already been accomplished

Structure and leadership

- ✓ Rehabilitation and Reentry Division created, with a director in place
- ✓ Program facilitators moved under managers with subject matter expertise within the DOC organization structure
- ✓ Program committee restarted

Access and data

- ✓ Centralized scheduling and waitlist pilot underway
- ✓ New data system underway

Programs and partnerships

- ✓ Seminary created, and other faith-based programming expanded
- ✓ Work and training options expanded
- ✓ DOC contracting for new peer and cultural programming
- ✓ Technical college partnerships strengthened, including Southeast Tech's new Diesel Tech program
- ✓ New women's prison designed with dedicated space for programming and a residential treatment community unit

Funding

- ✓ Federal funding applications submitted to support parole and reentry improvements

These changes build momentum for what comes next.

Recommended for adoption now

CSG Justice Center recommendations

- DOC administrative changes on capacity, access, sequencing, and reentry readiness
- Annual public reporting on program and reentry measures
- Immediate budget: first-phase staffing; $750,000 in programming supports; $400,000 in reentry supports
- Longer-term budget: market rate pay for program staff; continued increases in security and program staffing
- Legislation: let DOC set EDC values by administrative rule; member decision on placing other key changes in statute
- Continued work on statewide reentry coordination and parole improvements after CRTF sunsets
- Federal funding authority in FY28

Other recommendations

- Subcommittee recommendations presented today
- CRTF motions handout

Issues that need continued work

Phased staffing

Continuing to add security staffing program posts to ensure people make it to classrooms; add more program staff as space allows and new facilities open

Cross-system parole and reentry work

Education and employment, housing, behavioral health, and parole supervision, with partners not on the CRTF

Linking programs to outcomes

Connect program data to recidivism as DOC's data system matures and enhance transparency and outcomes reporting

How this work continues will be decided in partnership with the governor and legislative leaders.

Next Steps

What happens after today.

1. **Final report:** Drafted from today's discussion and circulated to members
2. **Adoption:** A virtual meeting to adopt the final report in November
3. **Task force concludes:** January 1, 2027, under Executive Order 2025-07
4. **Statewide coordination:** The governor and legislative leaders determine how parole and reentry coordination continues, informed by the task force's final report
5. **Implementation support:** CSG Justice Center continues helping DOC's program committee prioritize and structure implementation through March 31, 2027

Thank You!

For more information, please contact Sara Friedman at sfriedman@csg.org.

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