

# Collaboration, Local Efforts to Implement an Evidence-Based Reentry Program

**Nancy L. Butts, President Judge, Lycoming County Court of Common Pleas**

**Ryan Gardner, District Attorney, Lycoming County**

**Michael Boughton, Program Manager, GEO Reentry Services**

**Christopher Ebner, Deputy Warden, Lycoming County Prison**

**John Stahl, Deputy Chief Probation Officer, Lycoming County**

**John Hogan, Moderator, GEO Reentry Services**



# Presentation overview



**The challenge:** Overcrowding and increased transfers were negatively impacting offenders and Lycoming County



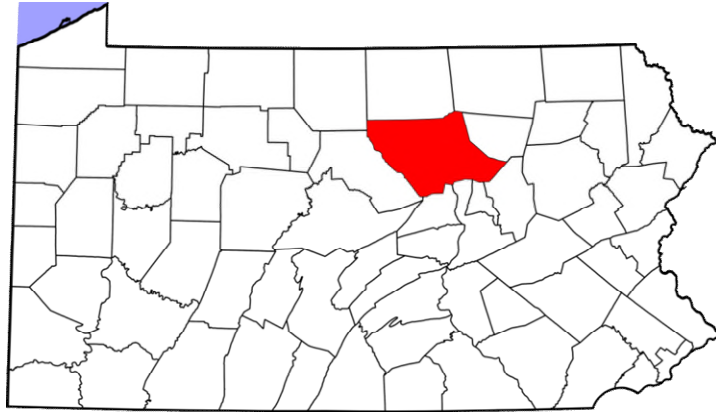
**Our solution:** Community-based reentry services to reduce risk of recidivating



**The results:** Reduced jail crowding, lowered LSI-R scores, fewer rearrests, increased employment rates



# Challenges Lycoming County faced



# Opioid crisis hit county hard

NEWS WEATHER SPORTS COMMUNITY PA LIVE LIFESTYLE FOR PARENTS CONTEST

News

## 51 overdoses in 48 hours in Lycoming County

Officials are now speaking out about the crisis.

By: Chelsea Titlow  | Cody Butler 



Posted: Jun 30, 2017 03:53 PM EDT

Updated: Jun 30, 2017 05:54 PM EDT



# Our timeline

2012

Prison population was at capacity – Lycoming County needed to make a plan to accommodate offenders

2014

After researching several options, including building a \$45 million prison, Lycoming County decided to implement reentry services

2018

Community-based reentry services are achieving many of the desired results

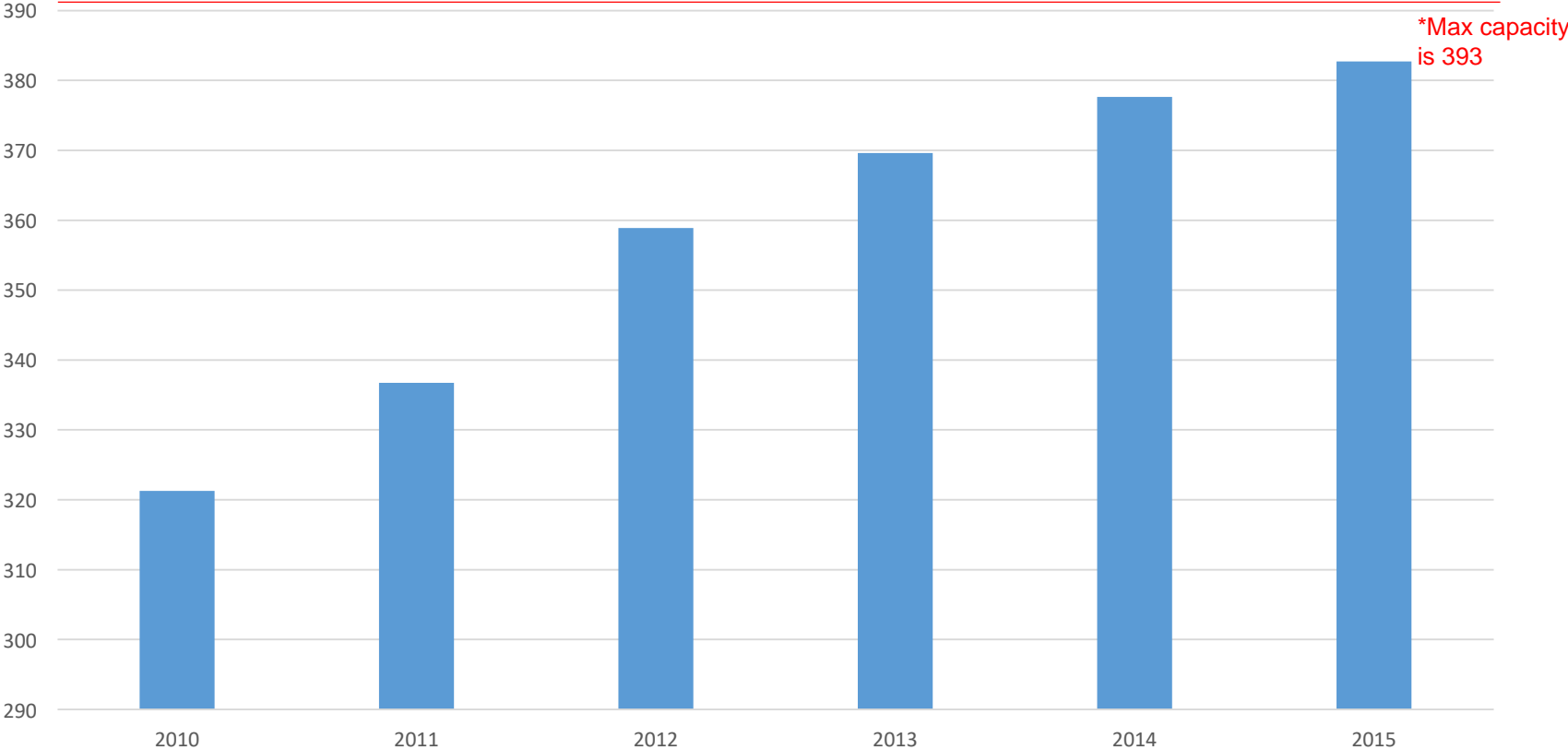
2021

Added Reentry Coordinator and Reentry Coalition

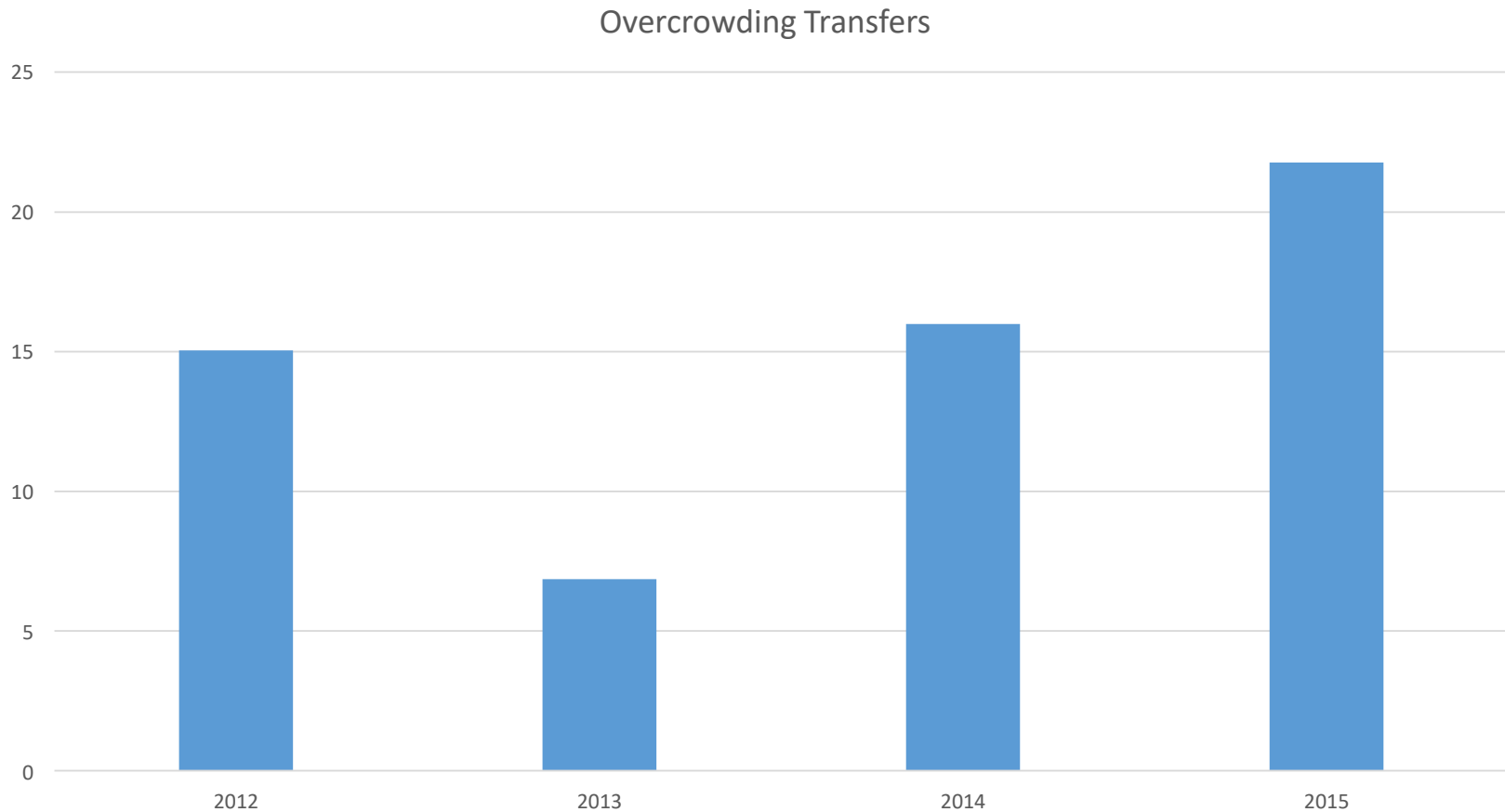


# Prison population was growing

Average Daily Population



# Costly inmate transfers were rising



# County lacked reentry resources \*

- Housing
- Transportation
- Employment assistance
- Food
- Medical
- Drug and alcohol resources inundated by other counties
- Clothing
- Programming

*\*Inmate survey data, Aug. 2015*





# Exploring our options



# Seek solutions to reentry issues\*

- Lack of risk/needs assessment tools
- Drug/alcohol treatment options inundated
- Lack of mentors, peer supports, other natural supports
- Lack of coordination between services
- Individual behavior, readiness to change
- Reentry planning for individual risk/needs
- Need for step-down approach to services

*\*Lycoming County Strategic Plan*



# Initial options explored

## **Option 1:** Add jail capacity

- Cost \$45 million

## **Option 2:** Alternatives to detention

- Enhanced supervision
- Pretrial diversion
- Reentry services



# Goal: Keeping people from prison

*How can we be more selective about who will be incarcerated?*

## Add alternatives to incarceration

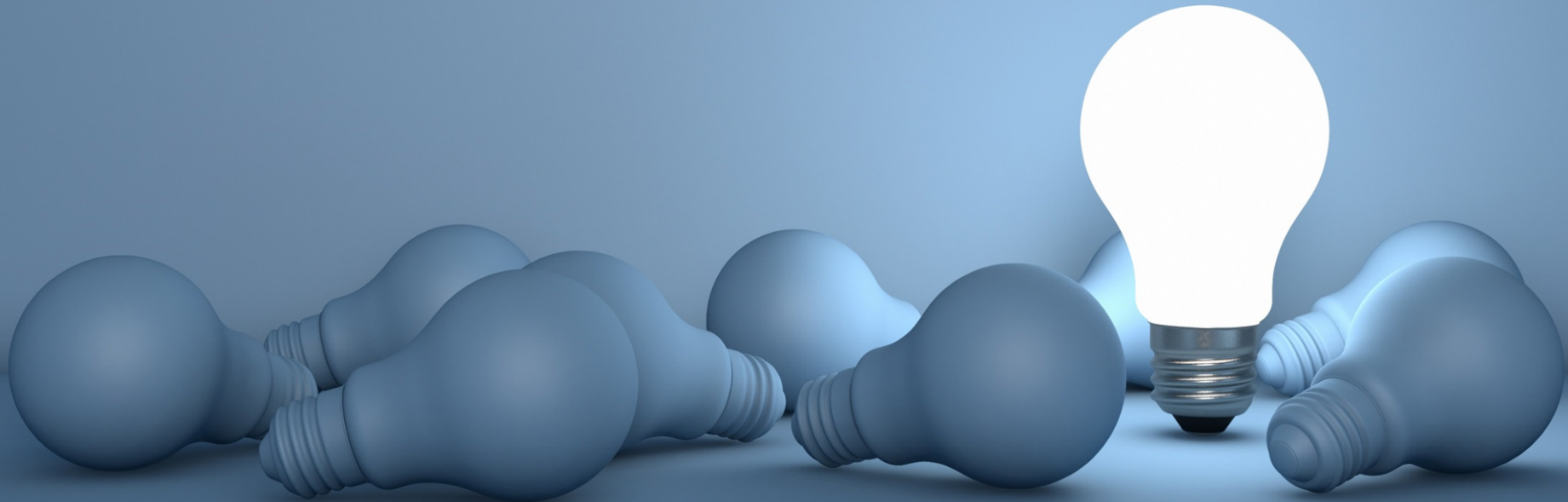
- Day Reporting
- EM
- Treatment

## Next steps

- Improve EM and Global Monitoring practices
- Develop alternative sanctions for technical violators



# Arriving at solutions



# Solution: A continuum of alternatives to incarceration

- GPS/ Electronic monitoring
- Increasing office visits to probation officer
- Mental health evaluation
- Use of Drug, Mental Health, and DUI Courts
- Use of bail program
- Use of pre-release center
- **Adding Day Reporting Program**



# Spotlight: Lycoming Reentry Service Center

- Day Reporting program to:
  - Directly addresses the needs of the offender population
  - Manage moderate- and high-risk offenders at risk to recidivate
  - Incorporate evidence-based practices



# Lycoming County Reentry Service Center

## Key Services

- Assessments
- Case management
- Behavior change plan
- Supervision support

## Groups/Treatment

- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Drug & alcohol treatment
- Problem-solving
- Conflict resolution
- Employment readiness
- GED preparation
- Life skills
- Anger management
- Parenting
- Aftercare





# Key: Apply evidence-based practices



(Bogue, et al., 2004)



# Key: Hold participants accountable

- Frequent reporting
- Drug testing
- Itinerary management and validation
- Monitoring transition to community
  - Graduated reward and sanction
- Scheduled community and social activities
- Community service assignments
- Location monitoring



# Key: Behavior change programming

- Risk/need assessment
- Individual treatment plan and programming with appropriate dosage
- Cognitive behavioral treatment
- Substance abuse treatment
- Life skills programming
- Anger management classes
- Aftercare



# Key: Focus on self-sufficiency

- Job skills training and placement
- Community connections
- Release planning
- Housing plans
- Educational and vocational services
- Mental health assessments and referrals
- Parenting and family services



# Key: Establishing program metrics

- Attendance rates
- Assessment scores
- Employment rates
- Drug screening results
- GED attainment
- Number and types of programs
- Number of participants in each phase, days in phases, phase changes
- Completion rates
- Discharge rates and reasons



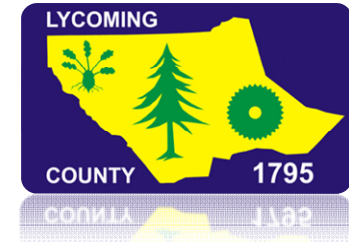
# Key: Establish community partnerships

- Lycoming College (student projects, presentations on reentry by GEO Reentry and county APO staff)
- Relationships with County Drug and Alcohol Providers (West Branch Drug and Alcohol, Crossroads Counseling)
- Kiwanis Club presentations
- Community Connection events on community resources
- Relationship with County Landfill Creating Work Program for participants in reentry



# Key: Focus on job skills/partnerships

- Participants are employed at the County Landfill
  - Opportunities to develop job skills
  - Opportunities to gain experience
  - Opportunity to strengthen relationship with community
- Employment Readiness classes help prepare participants
  - Practice resume building & interviewing skills
- Employment assessments measure skills and competencies



# Community integration

## Form Alumni Network for Volunteer Services

### Annual Holiday Dinner

- Alumni, staff organize
- Open to participants and alumni
- Lycoming County Adult Probation



### Food & Clothing Drive

- Alumni, staff organize
- Featured in local news



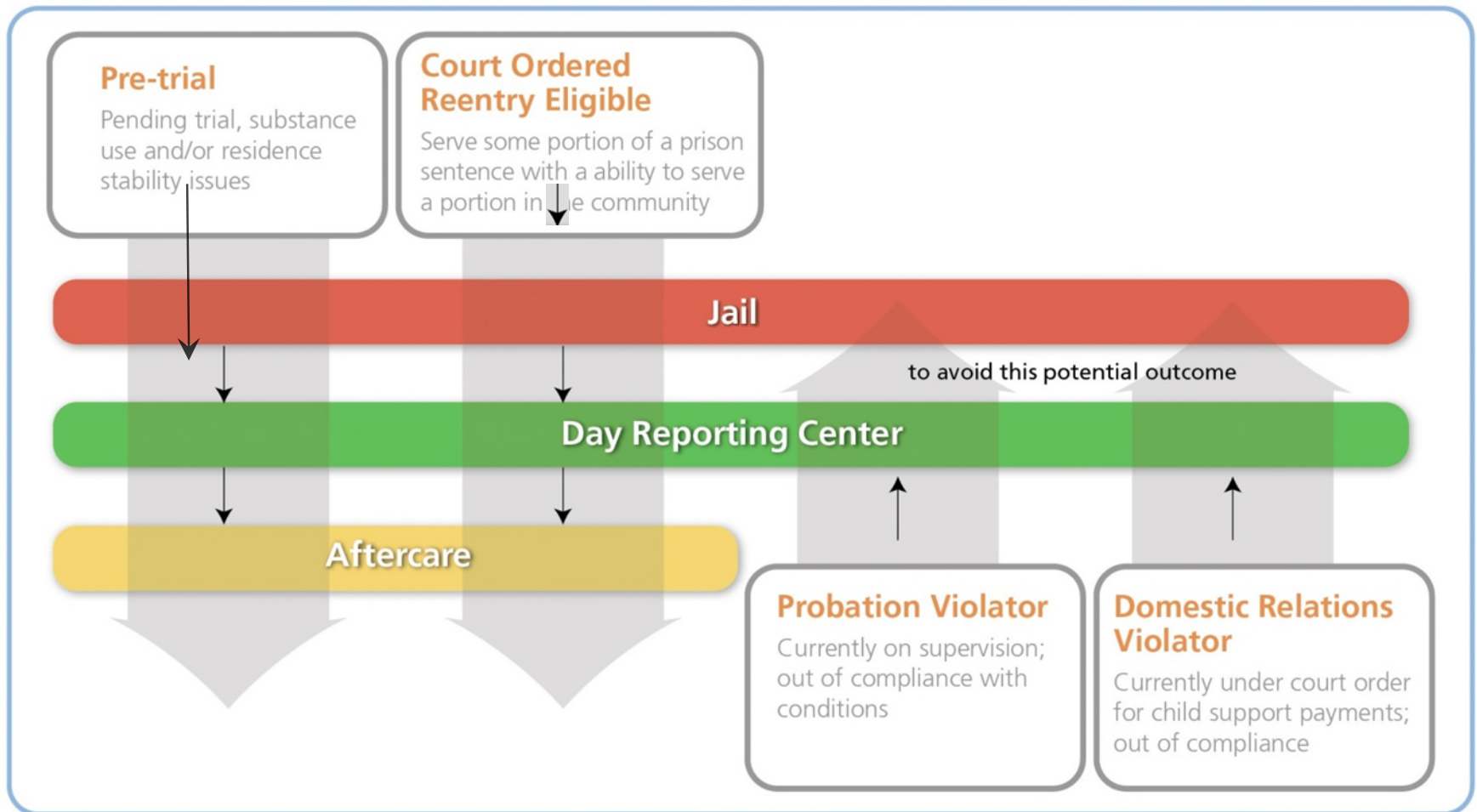
# Who is eligible for Reentry Center?

- Moderate- to high-risk offenders
- Probation and parole violators
- Court-ordered reentry eligible offenders
- Pretrial defendants

The **higher** the risk, the **greater** the change



# Referrals to the Reentry Center



# Results



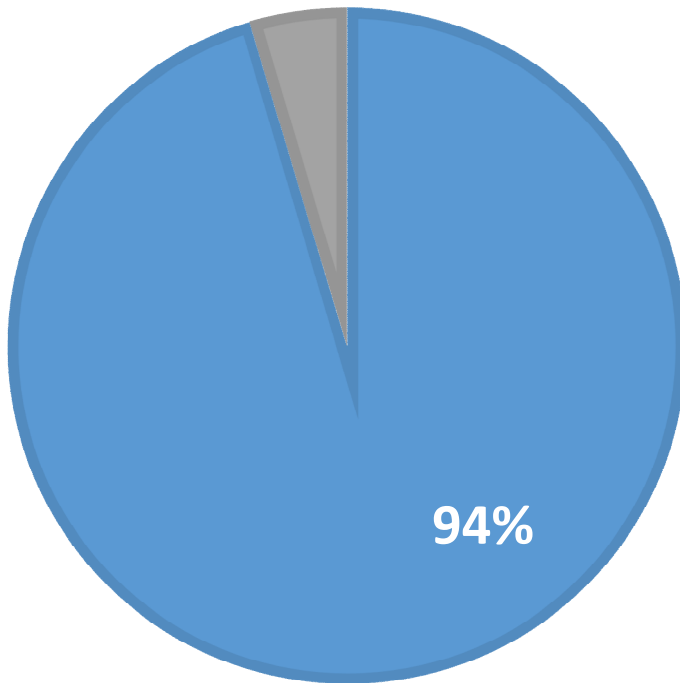
# Key reentry program metrics

- Attendance rates
- Risk assessment scores
- Employment rates
- Drug screening results
- GED attainment
- Number and types of programs
- Number of participants in each phase, days in phases, phase changes
- Completion rates
- Discharge rates and reasons

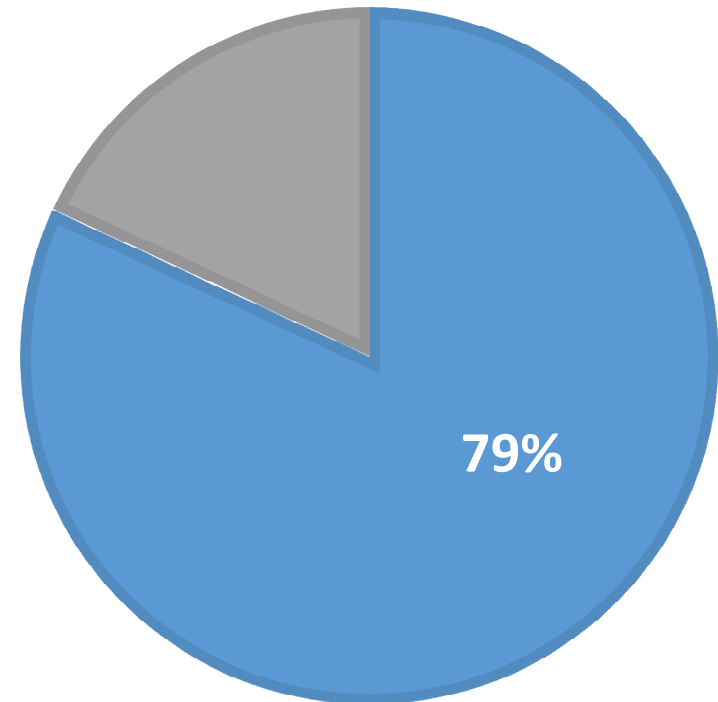


# Reentry center attendance

2021 Check-in Percentage



2021 Program Service Attendance (Group/Individual)



# Reentry Center risk reduction

Avg. Intake Score

**23**

Avg. Discharge Score

**17**

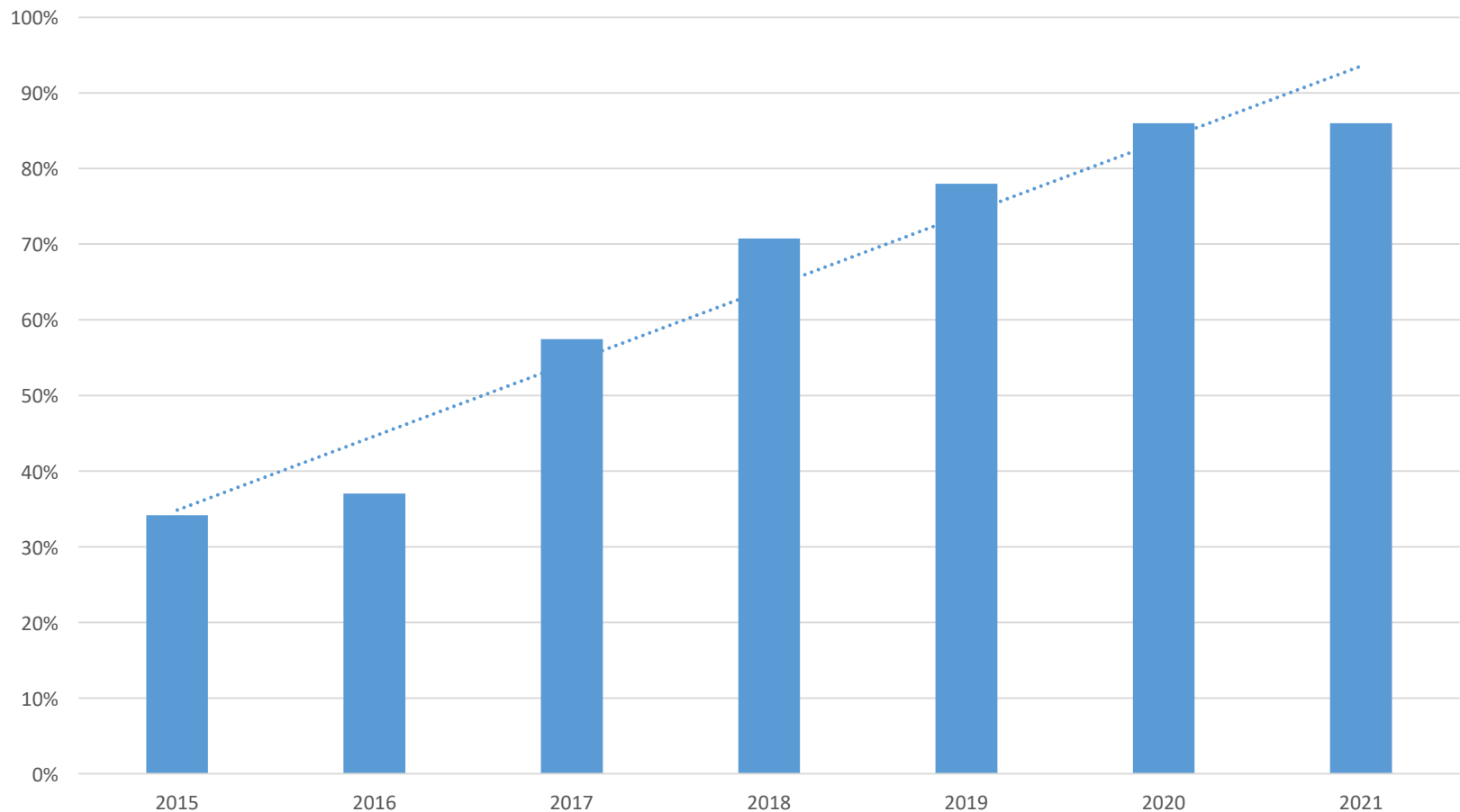
A reduction in risk of recidivating from

**63% to 37%\***

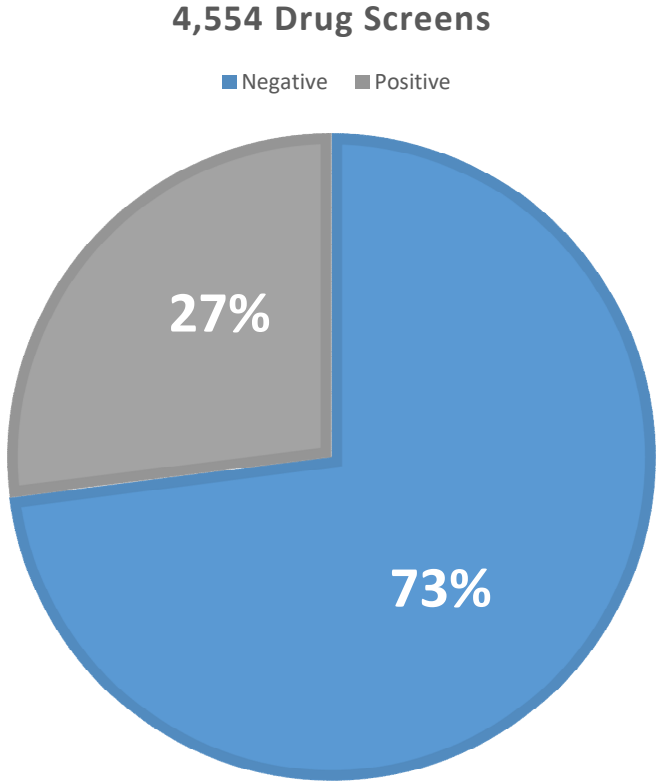
*\*LSI-R, Andrews & Bonta 2021*



# Employment rates for graduates

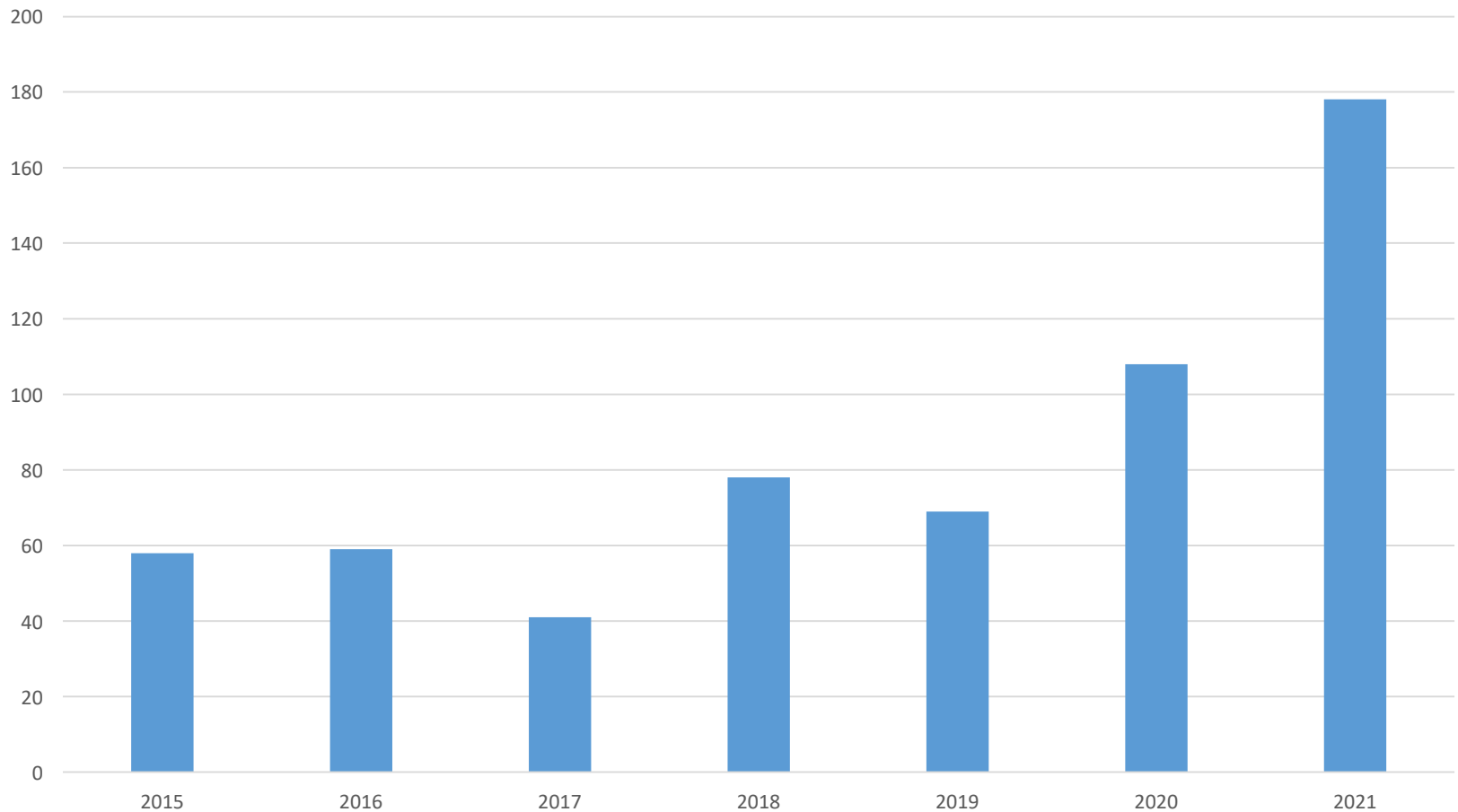


# Reentry Center: 2021 drug screens





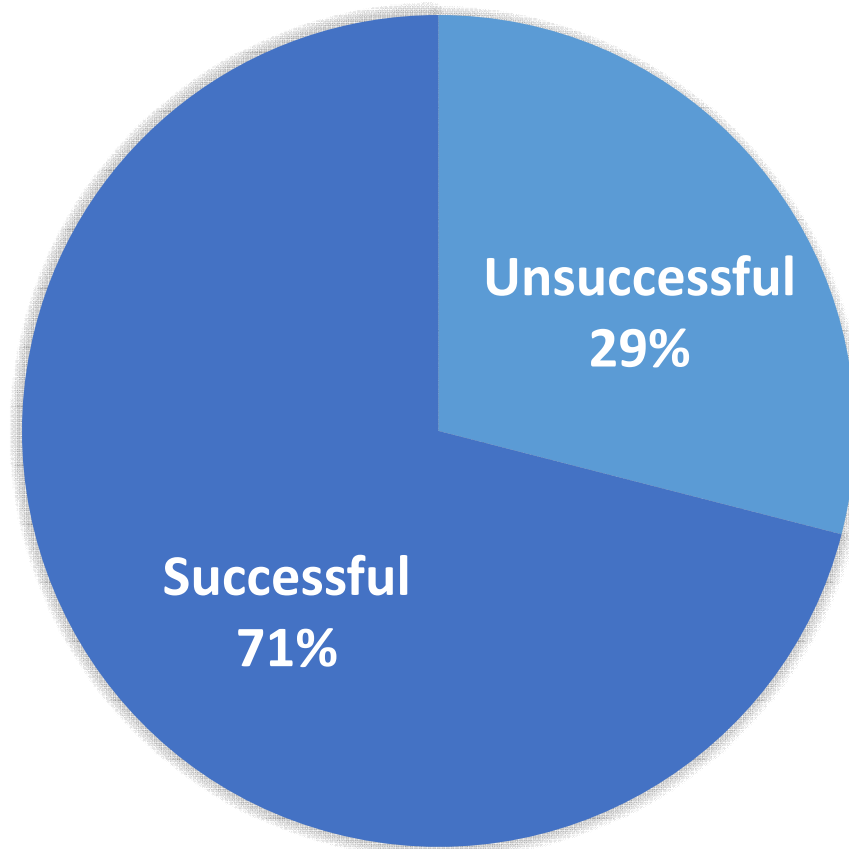
# Reentry Center completions



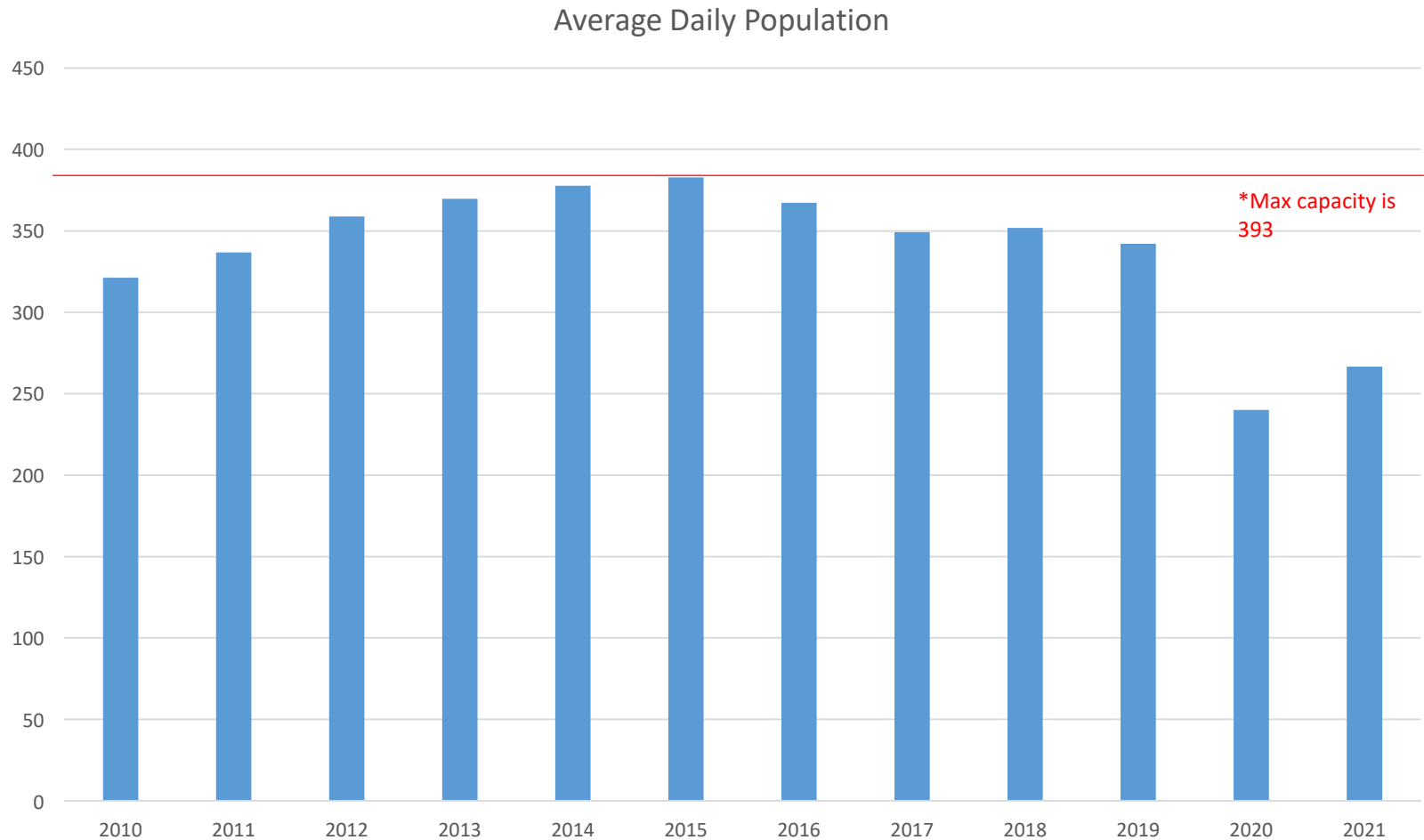
# Reentry Center discharge rates

7 in 10  
completed the  
program in 2021

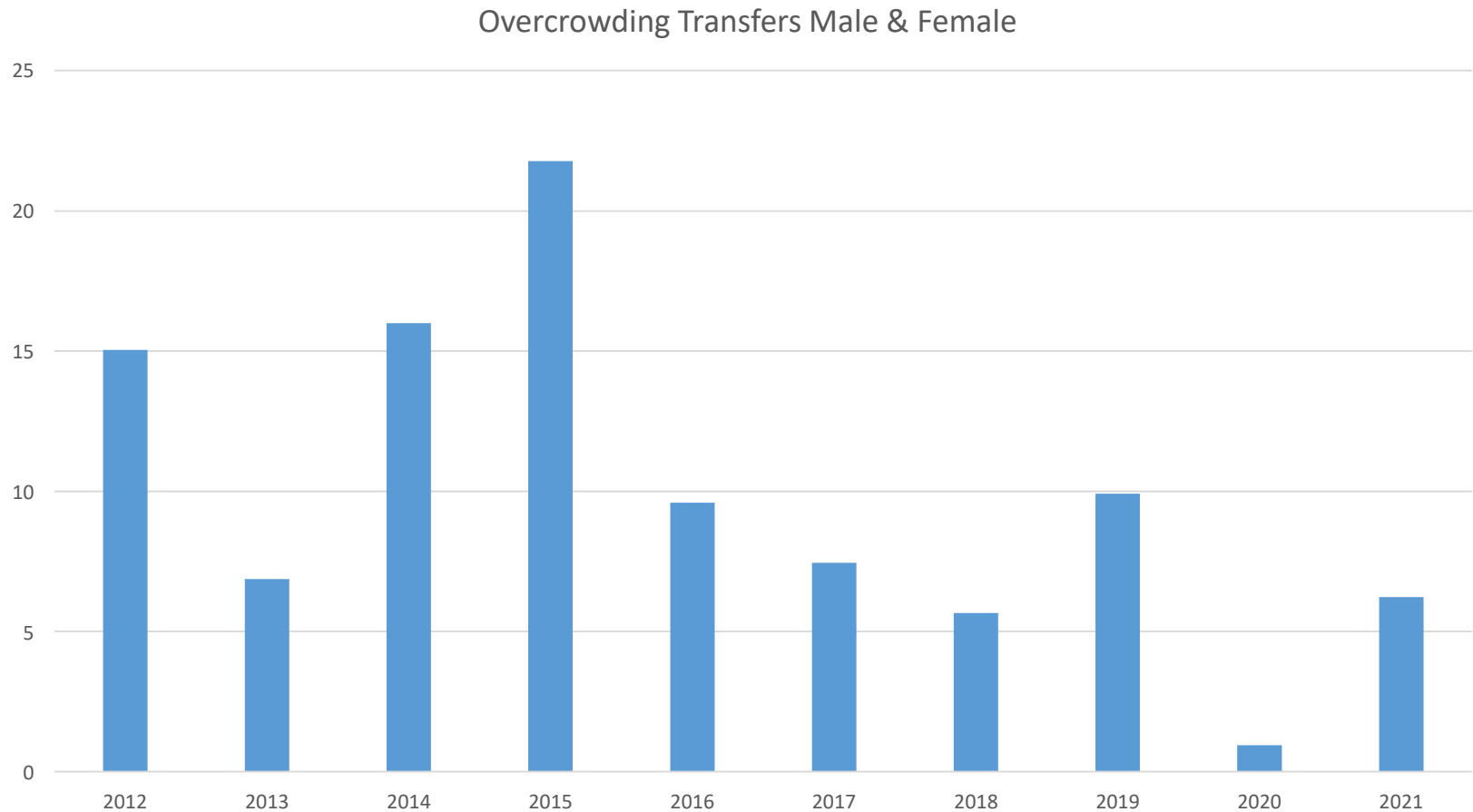
From 2018-2020,  
92% of graduates  
avoided jail for  
new charges



# Effect on prison crowding



# Effect on inmate transfers



# Reentry Coordinator

Understands the commitment of the county and GEO Reentry in addressing the needs of returning citizens with initiatives to reduce recidivism and increase public safety. Provides support through addressing criminogenic and basic need, developing a plan with the returning citizen, and supporting a successful transition into the community.

## Transition Planning

- Assess criminogenic risk/needs ID transition goals
- Highlight areas of strength and growth
- Create a TAP (Transition Action Plan)
- Make referrals and appointments, and track for accountability
- Provide resources

## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- One-on-one sessions with participants
- Carey Guides & Motivational Interviewing

## Most Common Referrals and Resources

Childcare, Clothing, D&A, Dental, Education, Employment/Disability, Food, Housing, Identification, Legal, Medical, Mental Health, Transportation, Utilities, Other



# Reentry Coalition & Outreach

*“The mission of the Lycoming County Reentry Coalition is to facilitate and support the successful return of incarcerated individuals to the community. In partnership with government entities, faith and community-based organizations, and other stakeholders, the Reentry Coalition will utilize a holistic approach that includes an emphasis on education, families, health services, treatment, employment, mentorship and housing. In pursuing this mission, we shall improve lives, reduce recidivism, and enhance public safety.”*

- The Reentry Coordinator is responsible for organizing and running the Quarterly Meeting and being the main point of contact for the coalition.
  - Keeps track of subcommittees and attends their meetings when available. (Employment, Mental Health/ Substance Abuse)
  - Tracks all data relating to position and reports data to CJAB, GEO, LCP, and The County Prison Board.
  - Attends CJAB, CJAB subcommittee, Prison Board, weekly prison meetings, Forensics Meeting, and other community/county meetings/events as needed.
- Current goal is to grow Coalition and develop more subcommittees, bring in more community members, and attend more community events. (ex. First Fridays on Pine Street)



# County Hall Corner: A Solution that Works: GEO Day Reporting System

In [Local News](#) February 27, 2019 by [Larry Stout](#) 55 Views 0 comments



Prison overcrowding in Lycoming County has been around so long, it is almost seemed like “prison” and “problem” were two words joined together in marriage. Five years ago, GEO Services began the process of removing that word “problem.” Today prison overcrowding has not just been removed as a problem, the prison has vacancies! What it took to get to this point is quite a story.

“Five years ago the county was wrestling with an insurmountable prison problem, and through a tremendous amount of hard work and dedication of some outstanding people, the county today has an invaluable tool for criminal correction...”





**Thank you!**