

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

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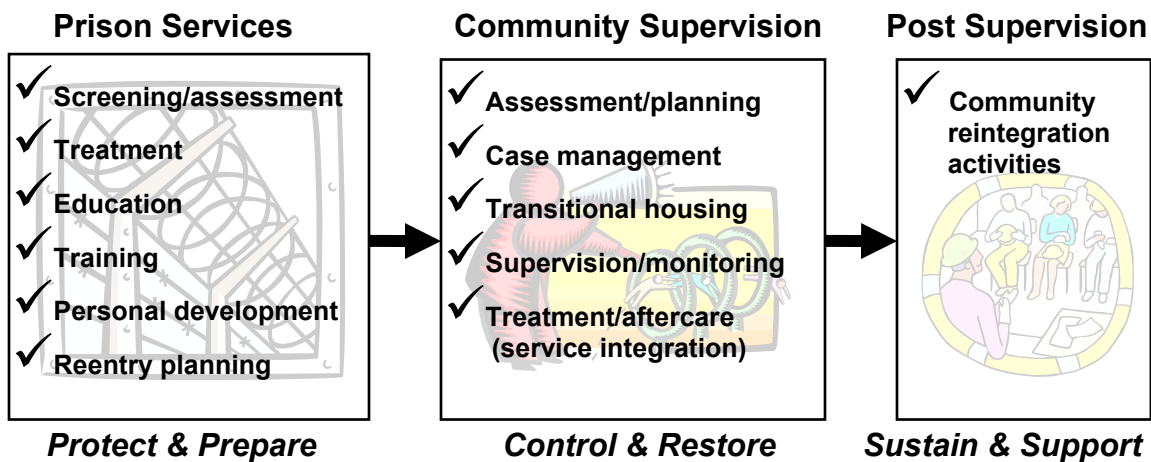
The Serious Violent Offender Reentry Initiative

The Serious Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) is a collaborative Federal effort to improve reentry outcomes in the areas of criminal justice, employment, education, health, and housing. The Initiative is funded by the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor.

SVORI supports reentry efforts by offering Federal funding to initiate or supplement integrated programs and services and encouraging partnerships between state and local agencies to provide comprehensive services to prisoners returning to the community.

Sixty-nine applicants (state and local collaboratives) were selected to receive more than \$100 million to develop or expand programs offering integrated supervision and services to offenders. SVORI programs target supervised populations, including adult and juvenile offenders, substance abusers, and offenders with mental illness or dual diagnoses. Perhaps most significant is that “serious” and “violent” offenders—offenders often excluded from previous programming efforts—are specifically targeted in SVORI. The diagram below illustrates the stages of reentry targeted by the Initiative.

Stages of Reentry



SVORI Multi-site Evaluation

Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and the Urban Institute (UI) were selected by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to conduct a Multi-site Evaluation of SVORI. The evaluation is charged with determining the effectiveness of the SVORI in accomplishing its goal of increasing public safety by

reducing recidivism among the populations served by the program. The SVORI Multi-site Evaluation includes the following components:

- An **implementation assessment**, which will document the SVORI programs, including target populations, program elements, the timing of services and programming; and agencies involved/systems integration. The implementation assessment includes all 69 SVORI sites. Findings from the implementation assessment will be used to develop a *National Portrait of SVORI Sites*, documenting the Initiative and specific program characteristics across all the funded sites. This document is expected to be released for public dissemination in summer 2004.
- An **impact evaluation**, which will determine the extent to which SVORI:
 - Improved access to appropriate, comprehensive, integrated services
 - Improved employment, health, and personal functioning of returning prisoners
 - Reduced criminal activity

The impact evaluation will be based on data gathered through offender interviews and from administrative agencies in a subset of the 69 SVORI sites. Interviews will be conducted with SVORI participants and with other offenders who are not participating in SVORI programs. Multiple interviews with each offender are planned, including one prior to release and three post-release. Administrative data will be requested from juvenile, criminal justice, and other agencies participating in SVORI programs. In addition, annual site visits to impact evaluation sites will be conducted in order to gather more comprehensive information on program implementation.

- A **cost-benefit analysis**, which will include the subset of impact evaluation sites
- **Dissemination** of findings to the field, including documents describing reentry programs and activities across the country. The aim is to engage and inform practitioners, policy makers, and researchers early and often.
 - **Strategies:**
 - Work with practitioner membership organizations and associations
 - Collaborate with the Reentry Policy Council to identify issues and dissemination strategies for constituencies
 - Present findings at professional conferences and meetings
 - Develop public website
 - Generate the SVORI National Portrait in Phase I
 - Generate several reentry research reports and other products in Phase II; topics may include public safety, employment, substance abuse, mental health, physical health, education, housing, family, community, domestic violence, and innovations

The SVORI Multi-site Evaluation is designed to further what we know about reentry of prisoners and identify ways to improve outcomes. To further discuss the SVORI Multi-site Evaluation, please contact Pamela Lattimore (803-754-5965) or Christy Visher (202-261-5593).