

# SECOND CHANCES, SAFER COUNTIES

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & REENTRY



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Counties have a key responsibility in maintaining safe, secure and economically resilient communities. Counties operate 91 percent of all local jails in the United States, which admitted 11.4 million individuals in 2014. Jails also release more than 135,000 inmates each day. In addition, individuals released from federal and state prisons may

turn to county social services for assistance upon returning home. Employment is one of the best ways to reintegrate formerly incarcerated individuals, as it reduces recidivism and allows them to contribute to their families and communities.

**90 PERCENT OF LOCAL WDBs ARE SUPPORTED BY COUNTIES**

**47 PERCENT OF LOCAL WDBs OPERATE A REENTRY PROGRAM**

**66 PERCENT OF LOCAL WDBs' REENTRY PROGRAMS RECEIVE THE MAJORITY OF THEIR FUNDING FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

Counties and local workforce development boards (local WDBs) cooperate to provide workforce training services and assistance to residents, including formerly incarcerated adult and youth populations. Reentry programs provide assistance and services to individuals who have been released from jail or prison or who are preparing to be released. Federal resources devoted to workforce development through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) play a major role in supporting reentry programs at the local level. With support from the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB), NACo surveyed 550 local WDB directors between October

and November 2015 to better understand how county governments, including county jails, work with local WDBs on reentry programs and workforce development. The results of the 2015 NACo survey show that:

- 1 COUNTY GOVERNMENTS COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL WDBs IN REENTRY PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO CORRECTIONAL POPULATIONS.** County governments play an active role in the operation of the 550 local WDBs across the country and are involved in 90 percent of local WDBs. Almost half (47 percent) of respondent local WDBs operated reentry programs for adults (44 percent) or youth (30 percent), as of November

**REENTRY PROGRAMS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF COUNTIES' STRATEGY TO KEEP COMMUNITIES SAFE AND SECURE.**

To read the full report and the companion case studies, visit the [Second Chances, Safer Counties](http://SecondChances.SaferCounties.org) website at: [www.NACo.org/WorkforceAndReentry](http://www.NACo.org/WorkforceAndReentry)



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2015. Local WDBs join forces with county governments to deliver reentry programs that provide workforce training and services to individuals who are currently or were formerly incarcerated. This partnership includes different county departments, from social and human services to the sheriff and probation departments. County governments benefit directly from reentry programs; 92 percent of respondent local WDBs with reentry programs reported that individuals who are incarcerated or released from county jails or county juvenile detention centers receive program services. Responding local WDBs with reentry programs report many successes; 44 percent place formerly incarcerated individuals into jobs, another 39 percent indicate formerly incarcerated individuals are employed in non-subsidized jobs and an additional 29 percent reduce recidivism, including new

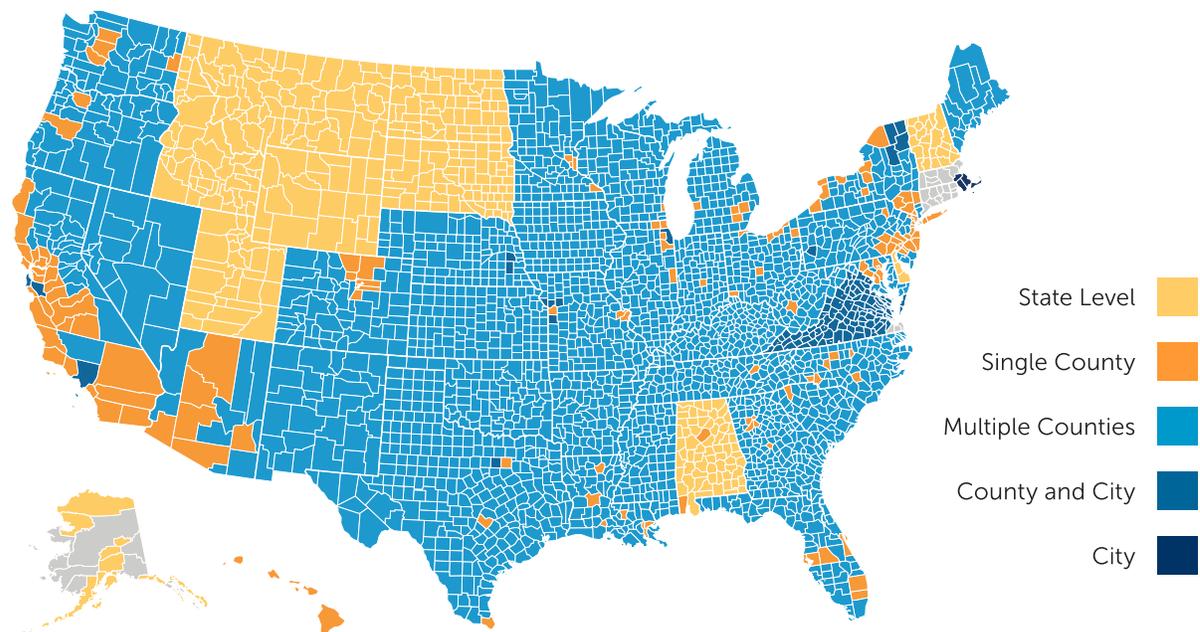
### 54 PERCENT OF LOCAL WDBs IDENTIFY FUNDING AS THE TOP CHALLENGE TO MAINTAINING OR CREATING REENTRY PROGRAMS

arrests and incarceration. To learn more about reentry programs and the services they provide, see the [Region VI Workforce Investment Board](#) and [Clackamas County](#) case studies accompanying this report.

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## COUNTIES ARE INVOLVED IN 90 PERCENT OF THE NATION'S 557 LOCAL WDBs

LOCAL WDBs BY TYPE OF SERVICE AREA, AS OF OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2015



Source: NACo analysis of U.S. Department of Labor data, 2015.

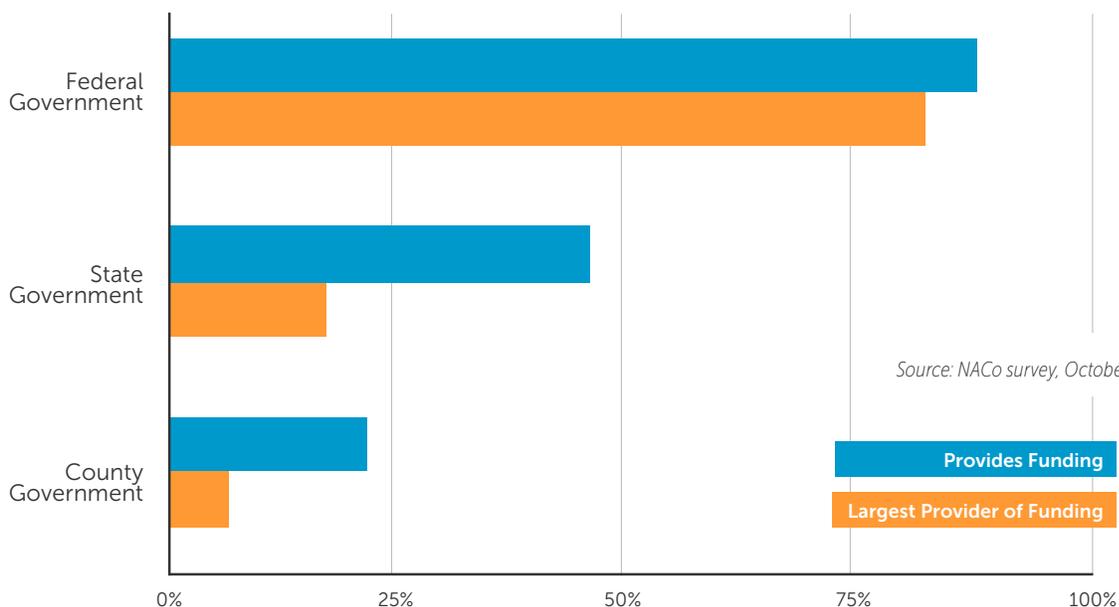
Notes: Counties are classified into one of the following five categories based on the type of local workforce development board (local WDB) serving the county: State Level, Single County, Multiple Counties, County and City or City. State Level means a county is in the service area of a state-run workforce board that fulfills the responsibilities of a local WDB under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Single County indicates the local WDB serves only the area of one county. Multiple Counties indicates the local WDB serves the area of two or more counties. County and City means a county and one or more cities, including independent cities, are in the service area of a local WDB. A City local WDB serves only some cities within the county so that the entire county is served by multiple local WDBs. The Alabama Governor's Office of Workforce Development, which is a state-run board, serves 65 counties in Alabama. This map reflects only the service areas of local WDBs that cover counties with county governments. The dark grey areas in Conn., R.I., parts of Alaska, Mass. and Va. are counties or county-equivalents without county governments.

**2 FEDERAL FUNDING, SUCH AS WIOA'S ADULTS AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES PROGRAMS, PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN SUPPORTING LOCAL REENTRY PROGRAMS.** Eighty-one (81) percent of respondent local WDBs with reentry programs receive the largest share of their funding from federal agencies, including the Labor, Education and Justice Departments. Two thirds (66 percent) of local WDBs with reentry programs receive the majority 50 percent or more of their program funding from the federal government. Funding from the Department of Labor's (DOL) Adult WIOA program is the federal source tapped most by respondent local WDBs (77 percent) for adult reentry programs followed by Dislocated Worker funding (44 percent). Most respondent local WDBs (85 percent) with reentry programs for youth use federal Youth WIOA program funding from DOL. Besides federal funding, local WDBs access other government funding sources to maintain their reentry services, including county funding (21 percent of respondent local WDBs with reentry services) and state funding (45 percent). To learn how the federal government helps counties reduce recidivism through reentry programs, see the [Ventura County](#) case study accompanying this report.

**3 REENTRY PROGRAMS ARE A HIGH PRIORITY FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENTS AND LOCAL WDBs, BUT PRESENT CHALLENGES.** The successes and challenges of the reentry programs developed by local WDBs affect counties and their residents. Tackling the challenges of delivering reentry programs contributes to a stronger workforce and safer counties. Maintaining reentry programs is a high priority for 77 percent of local WDBs. In the areas in which local WDBs do not currently have reentry programs, there is a significant interest in establishing such programs. Sufficient funding for reentry programs is a concern for a majority of respondent local WDBs, regardless

## THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS THE LARGEST PROVIDER OF FUNDING FOR REENTRY PROGRAMS

PROVIDERS OF REENTRY PROGRAM FUNDING, PERCENT OF RESPONDING LOCAL WDBs, OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2015



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of whether they are trying to maintain or create reentry programs. However, challenges extend beyond the local WDBs. For example, background checks hinder the success of integrating formerly incarcerated individuals into the workforce, as indicated by 34 percent of responding local WDBs. Often, individuals involved in the justice system who receive program services cannot pass background checks and, therefore, remain unemployed. Another recurrent issue is family stability, as reported by 42 percent of local WDBs. Family is an important source of social support for formerly incarcerated individuals who are trying to find and hold jobs. Previous research shows that formerly incarcerated individuals with strong family ties are less likely to recidivate.

### 4 COUNTY GOVERNMENTS AND LOCAL WDBs WORK WITH A WIDE NETWORK OF PARTNERS TO IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.

Counties and local WDBs partner most often with non-government organizations to deliver reentry programs. Seventy-nine (79) percent of local WDBs with reentry programs work with non-profits to provide services to

reintegrate formerly incarcerated individuals into their families and communities. Other partners include faith based and philanthropic organizations as well as the private sector. In addition to WIOA, federal programs such as the Second Chance Act, can support services provided through non-profits that are partners of local WDBs. Nearly half (47 percent) of local WDBs with reentry programs have education partners, including schools and colleges. These partnerships demonstrate the efforts of counties to capitalize on resources that will reduce recidivism and protect public safety. To learn more about how reentry programs work with non-profits, see the [Dane County](#) case study accompanying this report.

**79 PERCENT OF LOCAL WDBs WITH REENTRY PROGRAMS HAVE PARTNERED WITH NON-PROFITS**

**92 PERCENT OF REENTRY PROGRAMS PROVIDE SERVICES TO COUNTY JAIL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE POPULATIONS**

**EMPLOYMENT IS ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO REINTEGRATE FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.**

Counties play an active role in criminal justice and workforce development efforts. These endeavors focus on the labor market success of formerly incarcerated individuals and their reintegration into the local economy. Counties are in the position to work alongside local WDBs to implement and deliver reentry programs that reintegrate individuals into the workforce and reduce recidivism. Reentry programs are part of larger county efforts to maintain public safety while reducing the jail population and jail costs, including preventing jail inmates from cycling in and out of county jails. As criminal justice reform efforts progress around the country, reentry programs are increasingly part of the solution that addresses the changing needs of the county justice system.

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