



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 20, 2018

CONTACT: Paul Guequierre, pguequierre@naco.org

Counties Applaud Reauthorization of Second Chance Act Attached to Criminal Justice Reform Bill

WASHINGTON – The National Association of Counties (NACo) today applauded the bipartisan reauthorization of the Second Chance Act. The First Step Act, with the Second Chance Act, was attached to the Save Our Seas Act and includes resources for substance abuse treatment, vocational training, mentoring and other offender reentry and recidivism initiatives through 2023.

“This legislation includes investments in core criminal justice reform, much of which takes place at the county level,” said NACo Executive Director Matthew Chase. “This legislation strengthens the justice system with resources to reduce offender recidivism while keeping communities safe.”

According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are more than 11 million individuals admitted to jails each year. With only four percent of those admissions resulting in prison sentences, 96 percent of inmates return directly to the community, making the local services supported by the Second Chance Act critical.

Counties operate nine out of every 10 local jails and invest more than \$90 billion each year in justice and public safety services. Since 2009, more than a third of Second Chance Act awards have been distributed directly to county governments, resulting in \$95 million over the past nine years.

The Second Chance Act is particularly important to rural counties with limited resources for reentry programs. Under the Act, the Department of Justice is required to make every effort to ensure equitable geographic distribution of grants while considering the needs of underserved populations, including rural communities.

The reauthorization of the Second Chance Act also contains program improvements, including expanding Career Training Grants to encompass training and employment for all career types, and subsidizing employment and career training programs focused on formerly incarcerated individuals.

“Investments in reentry programs have proven effective in helping individuals successfully reintegrate into communities,” said Chase. “Successful reintegration results in lower rates of recidivism, improving public safety and providing significant cost-savings to county taxpayers.”

Read more about the benefits of Second Chance Act Grants [here](#).

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The [National Association of Counties](http://www.naco.org) (NACo) unites America’s 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public’s understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. More information at: www.naco.org.