

# Corrections Reentry and Supervision Programming



December 10, 2024

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December 10, 2024

Alisha Tafoya-Lucero, Cabinet Secretary  
New Mexico Corrections Department  
4337 NM 14  
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Secretary Tafoya-Lucero:

The Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) is pleased to transmit the evaluation *Corrections Reentry and Supervision Programming*. The program evaluation examined the operations and effectiveness of NMCD in facilitating the reentry of incarcerated individuals back into their communities and the programming and efforts aimed at ensuring their success and minimizing recidivism. An exit conference was held with you and your staff on November 21, 2024 to discuss the report's contents.

The report will be presented to the LFC on December 10, 2024. LFC would like plans to address the recommendations within this report from the General Services Department within 30 days of the hearing.

I believe this report addresses issues the LFC asked us to review, and hope the department will benefit from our efforts. We appreciate the cooperation and assistance we received from you and your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Sallee".

Charles Sallee, Director

Cc: Senator George K. Muñoz, Chair, Legislative Finance Committee  
Representative Nathan Small, Vice-Chair, Legislative Finance Committee  
Daniel Schlegel, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor  
Teresa Casados, Chief Operations Officer, Office of the Governor  
Wayne Probst, Cabinet Secretary, Department of Finance and Administration  
Joseph M. Maestas, State Auditor

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## Summary

The New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD) operates eight prison facilities and oversees two private prisons with an FY24 average population of 5,864 incarcerated individuals. The agency includes the Probation and Parole division, which supervises an additional 13.5 thousand offenders. Incarcerated individuals have access to a variety of programs focused on education, career training, substance abuse, anger management, reentry, recreation, and more. Similar versions of many of these programs are available to those in community supervision outside of prison. These programs, in conjunction with the work of correctional officers and probation and parole officers, help offenders complete their sentences and meet the conditions of their probation and parole.

Despite these efforts, around 40 percent of those released from prison will return within three years. For inmates released in FY19, that number was closer to 50 percent. Although recidivism rates have improved following this recent spike, the state has seen an increase from FY23 (36 percent) to FY24 (39 percent)—rates well above the national average (27 percent in 2019). Though national best practices to address recidivism are well-studied, New Mexico falls short of implementing those best practices upon intake, in the reentry process, and in community supervision. Offender classification is inconsistent and is not always based on the assessed risks and needs of the offender. Further, NMCD does not leverage assessment tools and the data they produce to fine-tune the reentry process. Caseloads for probation and parole officers remain higher than in peer states despite recent progress in fully staffing those positions.

Programming aimed at improving outcomes among incarcerated and recently incarcerated individuals is increasingly guided by evidence-based practice, though program capacity is sometimes limited in prison and in communities. Among these programs, those with the greatest participation are in education, addiction recovery, cognitive and life skills, and reentry services. However, recidivism remains high, indicating that skills-building and substance-use recovery programs in prison, as well as programs in the community, are falling short. Capacity for substance use treatment programs remains, and this report finds that New Mexico-specific evidence of program effectiveness is lacking. In addition, the state must directly address substance use as a leading cause of recidivism. Those released after serving time for drug-related offenses recidivate at higher rates than those serving time for non-drug-related offenses. Reducing recidivism will require a holistic approach that utilizes data and evidence to improve programming in prison, the reentry process, as well as in community supervision and post-incarceration programming.

<b>Recidivism Rates</b>	
Recidivism rates reported by NMCD:	
<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>
<b>35.9%</b>	<b>39.2%</b>

Source: NMCD and LFC analysis of NMCD data

## Key Findings

- The Health Care Authority and Corrections Department are implementing medication-assisted treatment, but other drug treatment programs lack capacity or face increasing costs.
- Issues within the Corrections Department hinder its ability to assess inmate needs, assign programming, and track outcomes.
- Although NMCD provides 25 evidence- and research-based recidivism reduction programs, program capacity, participation, and impacts are limited.

## Key Recommendations

The Legislature should consider:

- Funding the Correction Department's request to set up an opioid treatment program as a phased-in pilot program through the state Government Results and Opportunity (GRO) program fund over a three-year timeframe; and
- Ensuring that every released person has access to identification and work with providers to clarify how or why many are reentering without these documents.

The New Mexico Corrections Department should:

- Provide the Legislative Finance Committee with its quarterly reports on medication-assisted treatment screening and programming, as required by the *Disability Rights New Mexico v. New Mexico Corrections Department* legal settlement;
- Establishing appropriate benchmarks for reentry program completion;
- Report to the Legislature a date on which the transition from Criminal Management Information System (CMIS) to Offender Management Network Information (OMNI) will be completed;
- Fully complete the transition from Criminal Management Information System (CMIS) to Offender Management Network Information (OMNI); and
- Amend their evidence-based programming policy to require outcome tracking at the program level.

The Department of Finance and Administration and Legislative Finance Committee staff should:

- Lower its Accountability in Government Act target for standard supervision probation and parole officer caseloads from 88 to 70.

The New Mexico Corrections Department and the Health Care Authority should:

- Implement medication-assisted treatment screening and programming in all state correctional facilities according to the

requirements and timelines of Laws 2023, Chapter 49 (Senate Bill 425); and

- Amend its evidence-based programming policy to require outcome tracking at the program level.

The Health Care Authority should:

- Provide the Legislative Finance Committee with its finalized implementation plan for Medicaid waiver reentry initiatives in January 2025.

## Background

New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD) runs correctional facilities across the state, which currently house 5,864 offenders across 10 prisons. NMCD also supervises over 13 thousand individuals on probation and parole. NMCD works with community providers to ensure the justice-involved population has access to education, job training, healthcare, employment assistance, housing assistance, and life skills. Effective provision of these key building blocks discourages offenders from re-offending and thus directly affects the rate of recidivism.

### Recidivism rates slightly increased from FY23 to FY24 and remain well above the national rate.

The NMCD’s Reentry program calculates recidivism rates by tracking the percentage of incarcerated individuals who return to prison within three years (36 months) after release. Recidivism rates declined from FY19 through FY23 but increased slightly in FY24. There is no national consensus on calculating recidivism rates. States may choose to exclude groups in their calculations or may send re-offenders to non-prison facilities. However, the three-year reincarceration rate used by New Mexico is the most common method of calculating recidivism. Using this method, the Council of State Governments and U.S. Department of Justice calculated a 2019 national recidivism rate of 27 percent. While this figure was built on data gathered with minor variations in methodology, it is based on three-year reincarceration in state prisons, like the method employed by NMCD. With that caveat, the 2019 national rate of 27 percent is substantially lower than New Mexico’s rate in any year since 2019.

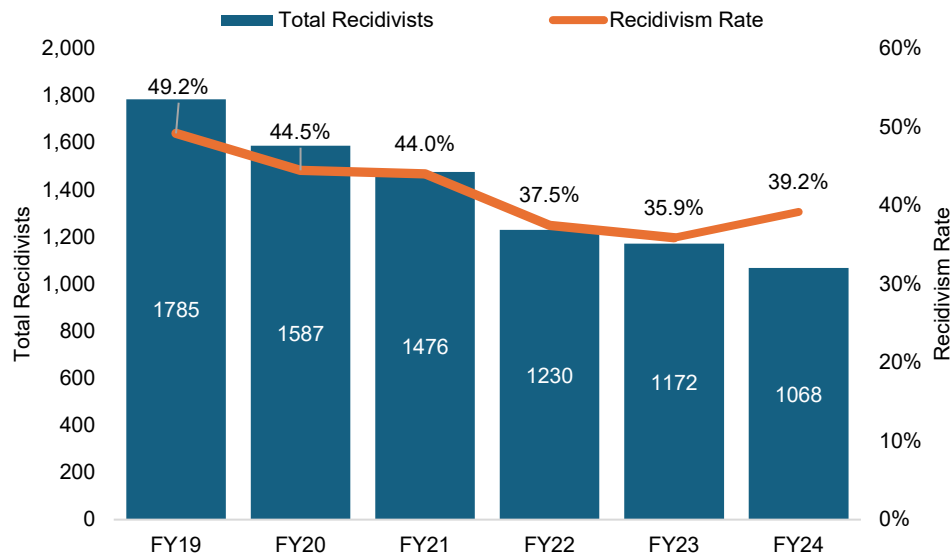
***New Mexico's recidivism rate increased in FY24 to 39.2 percent, reversing the trend of declining recidivism since FY19.*** In 2019, the state faced an alarming situation where nearly 50 percent of individuals released from New Mexico correctional facilities returned to prison within three years—a rate significantly higher than the national average of 27 percent for the same period. While the state progressed in reducing these rates over the following four years, New Mexico's recidivism levels substantially exceeded national benchmarks. This progress was interrupted in 2024 when NMCD reported an increase to 39.2 percent. The importance of tracking and reducing recidivism is underscored by findings from a 2024 LFC Policy Spotlight study on crime in New Mexico and Bernalillo County, which revealed a concentrated pattern of repeat offending: just 25 percent of criminal defendants were responsible for approximately half of all felony offenses. This concentration of criminal activity among a relatively small group of repeat offenders highlights the critical importance of accurately measuring and effectively addressing recidivism in the state's criminal justice system.

Recidivism Rates	
Recidivism rates reported by NMCD:	
FY23	FY24
35.9%	39.2%

Source: NMCD and LFC analysis of NMCD data



**Chart 1. Recidivism Trends**

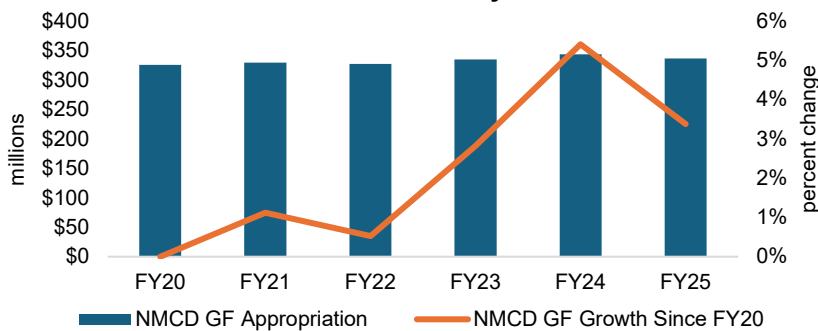


Source: NMCD

**NMCD’s budget increased 5.4 percent (\$17.7 million) from FY20 to FY24 or about \$4.4 million per year.**

NMCD budgets grew 5.4 percent from 2020 to 2024 compared with 35.3 percent budget growth for the state over the same period. However, NMCD’s modest budget growth coincided with a shrinking prison population. From 2020 to 2024, the total prison population in New Mexico declined from 7,073 to 5,864, a 20.6 percent decrease. The result is the budget per prisoner has increased from \$46.1 thousand to \$58.6 thousand, a 27.2 percent increase. While growth in the overall NMCD budget has not matched the rapidly growing total state budget, the amount budgeted per prisoner has outpaced the growth in the state budget.

**Chart 2. NMCD General Fund Appropriations 5-Year History**



Source: LFC Files

**Among the individual programs within NMCD, Program Support has shown the greatest growth since FY20 and the Reentry Program was first funded in FY23.** The budget for NMCD grew 5.4 percent, while budgets for Inmate Management and Control, Corrections Industries, and Community Offender Management declined between FY20 and FY24. Corrections Industries is the smallest of the major programs and has shrunk by 36 percent. Notably, the state funded the Reentry Program for the first time in FY23 with \$22.9 million in general fund transfers. While that funding decreased slightly in FY24 and FY25, NMCD is requesting \$24.8 million for Reentry in FY26, a 12.7 percent increase over FY25.

**Table 1. NMCD Total Sources by Program (in thousands)**

	NMCD	Inmate Management and Control	Corrections Industries	Community Offender Management	Reentry	Program Support
FY20	360,117.8	300,517.9	8,162.8	38,123.3	-	13,313.8
FY21	356,832.0	297,640.0	6,903.3	39,117.2	-	13,171.3
FY22	354,942.5	297,390.6	4,014.4	40,631.2	-	12,906.2
FY23	362,351.2	285,948.5	4,234.6	33,916.1	23,278.8	14,973.2
FY24	383,592.7	292,538.7	5,874.4	37,748.5	22,970.2	15,817.9
FY25	368,869.3	282,250.3	5,874.4	40,871.5	22,970.2	17,527.6

Source: LFC Files

**Funding for Inmate Management and Control (IMAC), Corrections Industries, Community Offender Management, and Reentry are crucial to facilitating reentry.** It is often repeated in the literature and by NMCD officials that reentry begins upon intake, meaning preparing a person for life outside of prison begins when they first arrive. Their arrival, or “intake,” is managed by IMAC. IMAC conducts assessments leading to classification or placement in a facility and appropriate programs. Classifying incarcerated individuals appropriately is important for their chances of successful reentry. While in prison, individuals are likely to have a job, potentially with Corrections Industries. For many, these jobs are practice for the types of employment that will be key to their success in their communities. Finally, Reentry and Community Offender Management transition incarcerated individuals into members of their communities and supervise their probation or parole. Effective reentry services and post-release programming increase the chances of successful reentry to the community.

## Community offender management provides supervision and programming for offenders on probation and parole.

Community Offender Management, which includes the Probation and Parole Department (PPD), is managed regionally. There are four physical regions (I, II, III, and IV) and Region II Special Programs, Community Corrections, and Interstate Compact.

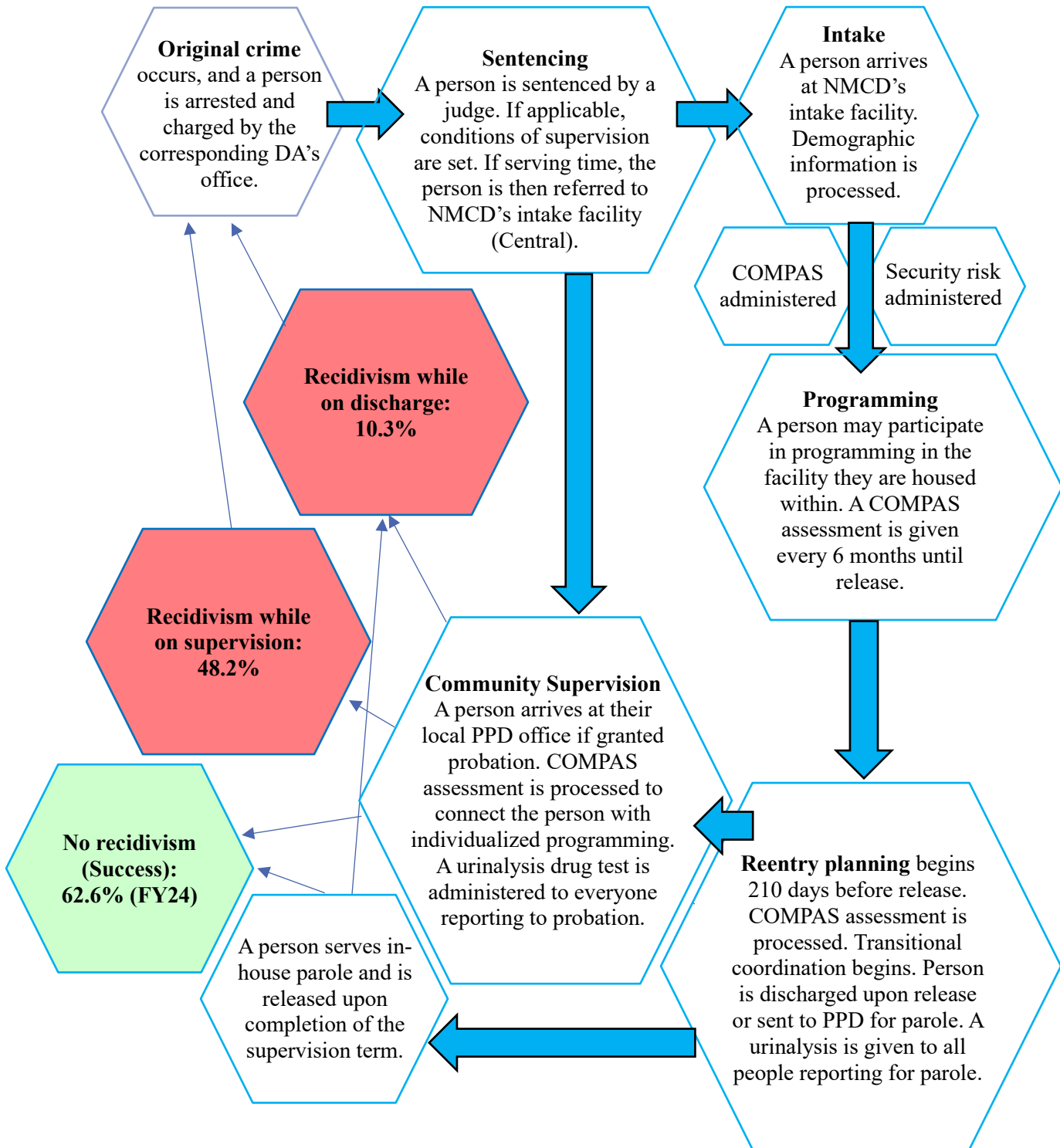
***In addition to regular field offices, PPD includes Region II Special Programs, Community Corrections, and Interstate Compacts, which handle special cases of released individuals.*** Region II Special Programs manages high-risk offenders requiring enhanced supervision in Bernalillo and Sandoval counties. This includes high-ranking gang members, sex offenders, and others with specific needs. Community Corrections carries out similar functions across the state, including managing high-risk offenders and those with chronic substance use, homelessness, or a history of mental health challenges. Community Corrections employs eight transitional coordinators and specialized probation officers trained at managing high-risk individuals and connecting those individuals with the appropriate community providers. In addition, Community Corrections operates two “Recovery Academies,” which are voluntary, in-patient, and post-release programs for high-risk individuals. These Recovery Academies enrolled 280 total participants (196 men and 84 women) in FY24. Finally, Interstate Compacts includes a commissioner and administrator who manages the probationers and parolees seeking an out-of-state relocation or those from out-of-state seeking to come to New Mexico. That work falls under the April 2001 interstate compact governed by NMSA 1978 Section 31-5-20.

**Table 2. PPD Field Offices**

Region	Offices	Locations	Employees
I	10	Santa Fe (2), Espanola, Las Vegas, Raton, Taos, Gallup, Grants, Farmington (2)	N/A
II	6	Albuquerque (5), Los Lunas	N/A
III	12	Las Cruces (3), Anthony, Silver City, Deming, Lordsburg, Socorro, T or C, Moriarty, Alamogordo, Ruidoso	73
IV	7	Roswell, Carlsbad/Artesia, Artesia, Hobbs, Clovis, Portales, Tucumcari	51

Source: NMCD

**Figure 1. Corrections Process Map: From Crime to Release.**



Note: This process map shows the potential pathways offenders may take through the corrections system. It begins with a crime, sentencing and intake at top. The COMPAS assessment, programming, and reentry planning (along the right) take place in a facility. The red hexagons on the left are cases where the offender recidivates, while the green is a successful case in which the offender is released and does not return to prison.

Source: LFC analysis.

**NMCD policy includes a graduated face-to-face meeting schedule for those on probation and parole.** All offenders must report to their PPD field office within five business days of being placed on community supervision or released from incarceration. A face-to-face intake meeting is required, in which the assigned probation and parole officer (PPO) will conduct assessments, collect DNA, and inform the offender of supervision logistics. Following the intake meeting, the frequency of face-to-face meetings varies by level of supervision.

**Table 3. PPD Required face-to-face meetings**

Level of Supervision	Phase	Phase Duration, Required Meetings per month
<i>Special Programs</i>		
Intensive	I	4 months, 4 face-to-face contacts
	II	4 months, 3 face-to-face contacts
	III	4 months, 2 face-to-face contacts
Community Corrections	I	2 months, 4 face-to-face contacts
	II	2 months, 3 face-to-face contacts
	III	2 months, 2 face-to-face contacts
<i>Caseload Supervision</i>		
High Risk	I	6 months, 2 office contacts
	II	6 months, 1 office contact
	III	Duration to last until offender assesses at medium, 1 field contact, 1 office contact
Medium Risk	N/A	1 office contact (field visits as needed)
Minimum	N/A	Varies

Source: NMCD

In addition to regular contact either in a PPD office or elsewhere, those on supervision consent to drug testing, which may be random or regular as defined in their reentry plan or at the discretion of the PPO.

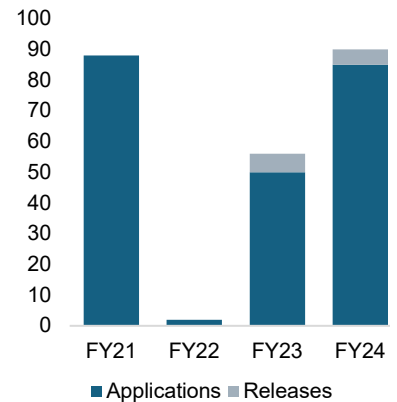
**Previous LFC evaluations found that NMCD needs more programming, better monitoring of programming impacts, and greater utilization of a validated risk and needs assessment like COMPAS.** LFC's evaluations of NMCD in 2007, 2012, and 2018, as well as an inquiry in 2019, found many of the same issues that persist today. These evaluations identified areas needing improvement, including better programming and monitoring of outcomes, more effective use of the COMPAS assessment tool, and better substance use treatment and capacity. While some progress has been made, such as reducing private prison contracts, decreasing technical violations as a cause of recidivism, and improving pay to reduce staff turnover, several challenges persist. These ongoing issues include insufficient capacity for recidivism-reducing programs, inadequate community resources for those with substance use disorders, and continued underutilization of the COMPAS both for classification purposes in prison and for matching offenders with appropriate programming in the community, despite its more comprehensive implementation. Although NMCD has made strides in adopting more evidence-based programs and

The Correctional Offender Management Profilng for Alternative Sanctions (**COMPAS**) is a risk assessment tool used to evaluate an individual's needs and risk of reoffending, to determine eligibility for programs and inform case plans.

reducing in-house parole, the stubbornly high recidivism rates suggest more comprehensive improvements are still needed.

**Legislation passed in 2023 increased the number of people eligible for medical and geriatric parole.** In 2023, Senate Bill 29 (SB29) repealed the existing statute governing New Mexico’s medical and geriatric parole system, transferring significant authority from the Parole Board to the Corrections Department. The bill established eligibility criteria for geriatric, permanently incapacitated, and terminally ill inmates, lowering the minimum age for geriatric consideration from age 65 to 55. Incarcerated people can apply for this parole even if they have not completed their minimum sentence, except for those convicted of first-degree murder. NMCD will assess applications based on age, illness severity, and institutional behavior before forwarding all applications to the Parole Board. The bill created a rebuttable presumption that eligible incarcerated people do not pose a danger to society, requiring the board to release them unless there is clear evidence against their release. It set specific timelines for recommendations and decisions, mandated the possibility of reapplication for denied inmates, and allowed for appeals to district court. Additionally, NMCD was required to implement rules for the new program and inform eligible inmates about their application opportunities.

**Chart 3. Geriatric Parole, Applications and Releases**



Source: LFC Files

**Since 2021, only 11 people have been released for medical and geriatric parole out of 225 applications, an approval rate of 4.9 percent.** However, in 2024, after the law increased the number of eligible offenders, the approval rate increased to 5.9 percent with five approvals. For context, in 2019, Alabama granted four medical parole applications out of 19 referrals, a rate of 21 percent; in 2022, Texas granted releases to 58 out of 2,600 screenings, a rate of 2.2 percent. So, while the law has not drastically increased geriatric parole releases, it has increased over the zero released in 2021 and 2022. The Parole Board states that most application rejections were because the applicant was not permanently incapacitated or terminally ill (with reasonable medical judgment, expecting death within six months).

In 2008, the Pew Center on the States’ Public Safety Performance Project estimated the cost of incarcerating geriatric inmates at \$70 thousand per year. While few, the releases likely saved the state from those incarceration costs. Trends in geriatric parole should be monitored for effectiveness in releasing those who pose no threat to public safety and saving the state the high cost of incarcerating geriatric people.

**Most recidivism is the result of new charges or absconding, while only around 20 percent of offenders returning to prison after release do so because of technical violations.** Technical violations are violations of probation or parole conditions that are not a threat to self or others and do not constitute a new criminal offense. This could include failing or refusing to attend treatment or programming along with continued substance use, removal from a housing program due to behavior, violations of sex offender-specific conditions, or failing to seek or maintain employment. While HB263 in 2020 and SB84 in 2023 attempted to define technical violations further to limit reincarceration for violations that fall well short of the initial crime, neither became law: HB263 died in committee, and the governor vetoed SB84. Technical violations represent only a small share of all cases and thus are not the major driver of recidivism. New Mexico’s FY22 technical violation recidivism figure of 22 percent is lower than the 25 percent reported in 2022 as the national average. However, even without having clarified the definition, the data show that most recidivism cases result from clear instances of offenders absconding or committing new crimes.

**Local PPOs have discretion in reporting minor violations to the parole board.** In cases of non-repetitive failure to submit written monthly reports, failure to notify PPO of change in employment or residence, or delinquency of less than 90 days on payment of fees, the PPO must discuss the violation with the offender and make a note in the case file. However, unless required by the parole board, the PPO may choose to file a violation report or may choose not to. Discussions reveal that PPOs would make this judgment based on their ongoing relationship with the offender and their recent history. The result of this policy is that minor infractions are unlikely to become violations that will send an offender back to prison. A missed appointment or payment on court-imposed fees would only send an offender back to prison if the infraction were made in the context of other failures to meet parole conditions or other infractions.

## Nationwide best practices for reentry involve risk assessment, collaborative planning, and targeted programming.

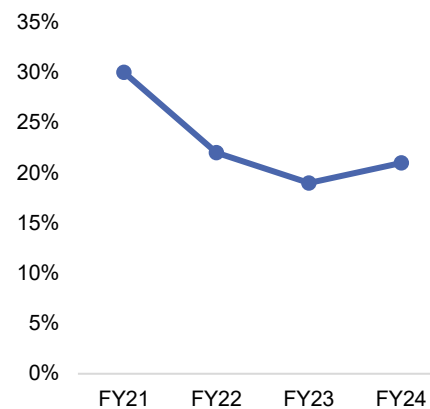
Successful reentry and supervision of formerly incarcerated individuals depend on personalized reentry plans addressing housing, employment, education, healthcare, and substance use treatment, supported by effective collaboration among correctional facilities, probation offices, and community organizations.

**Successful recidivism reduction begins with a validated, comprehensive risk and needs assessment, such as PATTERN, used in federal facilities, or COMPAS, which NMCD uses.** A risk assessment is an algorithmic decision-making tool used to assess an individual’s risk and needs. As required by the federal First Step Act (2018), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) utilizes a recidivism risk assessment tool

**Technical violations** are violations of probation or parole conditions that do not threaten self or others and are not new criminal offenses. They represent only a small share of all cases and thus are not the major driver of recidivism.

**Absconders:** Any probationer or parolee who, while under the supervision of the PPD, changes residence or leaves the jurisdiction without permission and/or ceases reporting or is otherwise not available for supervision and lacks a valid and/or legal excuse for not being available.

**Chart 4. Recidivism due to Technical Violations**



Note. FY20 technical violation data did not include absconders, and thus cannot be compared with later years in which absconders were included.

Source: NMCD, LFC Files

The Prisoner Assessment Tool Targeting Estimated Risk and Needs (PATTERN) is a tool used by federal prisons to assess a prisoner’s risk of violence or severe misconduct and classifies inmates into four risk levels: minimum, low, medium, and high.

called the Prisoner Assessment Tool Targeting Estimated Risk and Needs (PATTERN 1.3). PATTERN is used upon inmate entry to better understand each incarcerated individual's risk of recidivism. NMCD uses the Correctional Officer Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS), a statistically based client assessment, classification, and case management system developed by the Northpointe Institute for Public Management. COMPAS is used to predict a variety of outcomes and provides separate estimates for violence, recidivism, failure to appear, and community failure. COMPAS is composed of 22 different scales that empirical research has identified as predictive behavior: criminal involvement, relationships/lifestyle, personality/attitudes, family, and social exclusion. COMPAS requires self-assessment from the offender and the “screener” or interviewer completing the assessment.

According to the DOJ, successful recidivism-reducing services follow three principles: risk, need, and responsibility. Risk and needs are captured through NMCD’s use of the COMPAS and their security assessment tool. Responsibility is assessed through continuous COMPAS assessment throughout a person’s sentence.

Source: LFC Files

***The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration have all identified various best practices to reduce recidivism.*** Improving the chances that an individual released from custody does not recidivate begins upon intake. Best intake practices include assessing incarcerated individuals’ risks and needs. Effective assessment can then guide the delivery of services and appropriate programming geared toward their risks and needs. Finally, successful reentry is more likely with pre-release planning informed by risks, needs, and program experience. DOJ summarizes these practices in five principles, listed on the right.

**Principles for Improved Bureau of Prisons Reentry Practices**

- **Principle I:** Upon incarceration, every inmate should be provided an individualized reentry plan tailored to his or her risk of recidivism and programmatic needs.
- **Principle II:** While incarcerated, each inmate should be provided education, employment training, life skills, substance abuse, mental health, and other programs that target their criminogenic needs and maximize their likelihood of success upon release.
- **Principle III:** While incarcerated, each inmate should be provided the resources and opportunity to build and maintain family relationships, strengthening the support system available to them upon release.
- **Principle IV:** Before leaving custody, every person should be provided comprehensive reentry-related information and access to resources necessary to succeed in the community.
- **Principle V:** During the transition back to the community, halfway houses and supervised release programs should ensure individualized continuity of care for returning citizens.

Source: US Department of Justice

Prior LFC evaluations noted issues with aligning best practices in reentry programming with the needs of incarcerated individuals. According to agency policy, incarcerated individuals should be assessed with the COMPAS. NMCD employed 43 programs in FY24 targeting a variety of constituencies within the corrections system, including those in the reentry process. However, a 2018 LFC evaluation noted that factors beyond the results of the COMPAS assessment, such as security risk assessment, may determine programming availability. This means offenders may be incarcerated in places based on the security risk they pose rather than their needs. These placements may prevent offenders from connecting with opportunities not available in higher security environments to address their needs.

In New Mexico, NMCD begins planning for reentry 210 days before an offender’s planned release day. At that time, a classification officer and an institutional probation parole officer complete a Progress Report/Reentry Plan. By policy, NMCD conducts this process for every individual up for release, whether under that release will be into community supervision or full discharge. The Reentry Plan covers substance use treatment, mental health issues, education and job training, financial needs, life maintenance, family support, victim notification, program participation, and social service needs. While NMCD did not provide individual-level data on those released from custody, and specifically how closely they followed their reentry plans or in which community programs they enrolled, reentry



coordinators at site visits confirmed to LFC staff that plans are completed for every individual released from NMCD custody.

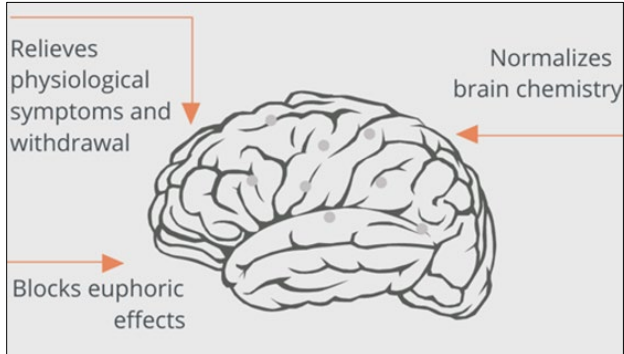
Although post-release programming also exists, the 2018 LFC evaluation noted limited or incomplete resources available to released offenders. Since recidivism remains high relative to the national rate, the current evaluation seeks to evaluate the prisoner release and supervision process, identify adherence to best practices related to prisoner reentry and supervision programming, and make recommendations for NMCD to improve successful reentry and supervision programming.

## **HCA and NMCD are Implementing Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), but Other Drug Treatment Programs Lack Capacity or Face Increasing Costs**

One-third of incarcerated individuals had a drug or alcohol-related charge. The state can reduce recidivism by treating substance use disorder in prisons, being attentive to the treatment needs of offenders upon release and connecting parolees to treatment and resources while under supervision. Though many of New Mexico's justice-involved people have substance use issues, access to programming both in prison and during supervision is inconsistent. Additionally, the biggest driver of recidivism is substance use—a fact supported by data showing most drug tests administered by NMCD's Probation and Parole Division returned positive results. Finally, PPO caseloads remain higher than in peer states and particularly high in some parts of New Mexico. Lower caseloads would make closer relationships between officers and offenders possible and provide a potential lever to lower recidivism.

### **NMCD is proceeding with MAT in prisons following the 2023 legislation and the 2024 lawsuit settlement.**

Research indicates MAT is uniquely valuable in countering the neurological effects of substance abuse and breaking addiction cycles. Addiction changes peoples' brain chemistry, affecting pleasure, impulse control, and decision-making. MAT combines medication (such as methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone) with counseling and other support services. MAT helps to restore healthy brain functioning, relieve withdrawal symptoms, and reduce addiction behaviors. Research shows that MAT patients are less likely to use illicit opioids, overdose, or have contact with the criminal justice system. MAT is the standard of care for opioid disorders. Ensuring the standard of care is delivered to inmates will require a system including screenings, access to MAT while in custody, and reentry services that effectively support ongoing recovery as offenders reintegrate into society.

**Figure 2. Medication for Substance Use Disorders**

Source: UNM Health Sciences Center.

**The Legislature recently amended state law to require NMCD to deliver MAT services to all inmates with substance use disorders by the end of FY26.** Until recently, MAT was generally unavailable to inmates in state correctional facilities, with limited exceptions for pregnant inmates in certain settings. In 2023, the Legislature amended state law to require NMCD to provide MAT to all inmates needing MAT by the end of FY26 (Laws 2023, Chapter 49; Senate Bill 425). Bill analysis estimated the cost to treat all incarcerated individuals requiring MAT to be \$11.3 million. The legislation also created a fund within the Health Care Authority (HCA) specifically for MAT in correctional facilities. It required the department to set rules for the operation of MAT programs in correctional facilities. The HCA recently published regulations governing the delivery of MAT in correctional facilities in September 2024 (Section 8.325.12.1 NMAC). NMCD and HCA should implement MAT screening and programming in all state correctional facilities according to the requirements and timelines of Laws 2023, Chapter 49 (Senate Bill 425).

**Although state law requires NMCD to provide addiction medications by 2025, a recent legal settlement requires inmates to receive access to medications for opioid use in the meantime.** In 2024, a federal court approved a settlement of the lawsuit *Disability Rights New Mexico v. New Mexico Corrections Department*, allowing incarcerated individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD) in NMCD custody to continue taking buprenorphine, a medication for OUD, on entering custody. The settlement mandates NMCD to provide buprenorphine to those currently receiving it and lifts prohibitions for individuals residing in halfway houses. This is likely to increase the number of recipients of MAT. Before the settlement, in FY23, four individuals received MAT services, and in FY24, two received MAT services. All six of those receiving MAT services were pregnant women. The settlement also requires NMCD to provide plaintiffs with a quarterly report on MAT screenings and programming. LFC staff have requested but have not yet received NMCD's quarterly reports on MAT screenings and programming. NMCD should provide LFC with quarterly reports related to MAT screening and programming required by

the *Disability Rights New Mexico v. New Mexico Corrections Department* legal settlement.

**Past NMCD programming for drug use in prisons like RDAP and therapeutic communities has had relatively low participation and limited outcomes tracking until program inventory initiatives.**

Prior to the 2012 evaluation, NMCD was not tracking whether the programs they implemented had previously been shown to work. In part due to the 2012 evaluation, NMCD committed to increasing the percentage of programming grounded in evidence. As of FY24, 100 percent of NMCD programming is evidence-based or research-based. However, while the use of these programs increased, NMCD still needs to track outcomes, ensure programs are implemented as intended, and ensure adequate capacity and participation. The program inventory process began in 2019 and has led to NMCD reporting on program expenditures, completion rates, and enrollment. This process also added data on outcome monitoring for the first time in 2024. Continually monitoring programs, once established, can help determine if they are working.

***RDAP serves 633 individuals or 11 percent of the incarcerated population.***

**Availability of Substance Use Treatment Services within Prisons**

- **Residential drug abuse program (RDAP): Therapeutic Community - Inpatient RDAP and co-occurring disorder treatment:** Lea County Correctional Facility, Northeast New Mexico Correctional Facility, Penitentiary of New Mexico, Roswell Correctional Center, Southern New Mexico Correctional Facility, Springer Correctional Facility, Western New Mexico Correctional Facility
- **Intensive outpatient program (IOP): Living in Balance:** Central New Mexico Correctional Facility, Guadalupe County Correctional Facility, Lea County Correctional Facility, Northeast New Mexico Correctional Facility, Otero County Prison Facility, Penitentiary of New Mexico, Roswell Correctional Center, Southern New Mexico Correctional Facility, Springer Correctional Center.

Note. If an inmate needs a specific behavioral health or substance use treatment service (e.g. RDAP), they are placed or moved to a facility where it is occurring.

Source: NMCD

**The 2012 evaluation found Therapeutic Communities was not run as intended, leading to increased recidivism, resulting in NMCD replacing it with the Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP) but had recent enrollment declines.** Specifically, those completing therapeutic communities recidivated at a higher rate than those who were not participating in the program (52 percent versus 44 percent, respectively). This increased recidivism was likely due to those participating in the program not graduating and not using formal aftercare services. Furthermore, NMCD had open beds for the program, even as many people in prison had a history of drug addiction. At least partly because of this 2012 evaluation, the department replaced Therapeutic Communities with RDAP, another evidence-based program that NMCD has used since.

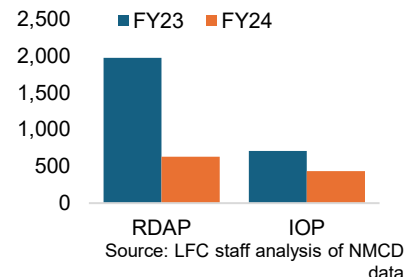
RDAP served 633 people in FY24, down from 1,979 people in FY23. Capacity issues are likely due to a limited number of providers, with NMCD reporting ending its RDAP program in Gallup due to insufficient providers. Additionally, intensive outpatient treatment provided in prison (IOP), another program that has been shown to work nationally, has also seen similar capacity decreases. In FY24, 436 people were enrolled in this in-prison program compared to 711 in FY23.

**Beyond enrollment, while completion rates increased for both RDAP and IOP from FY23 to FY24, outcomes are less uncertain.** In FY24, 51 percent of people eligible to complete RDAP completed the program, while 60 percent of those eligible to complete IOP completed it. This is around double the completion rates in FY23; of those eligible, 24 percent completed RDAP, and 38 percent completed IOP. NMCD does not track outcomes for each program separately, hindering understanding of which programs work as expected. However, NMCD does report recidivism rates for RDAP, which found that 26 percent of those completing RDAP recidivated, which is lower than the overall recidivism rate of 39 percent. Notably, LFC staff could not verify the recidivism rate for individuals who participated in RDAP. However, LFC staff had concerns with the data provided because it was not representative of the incarcerated population and lacked key outcome information.

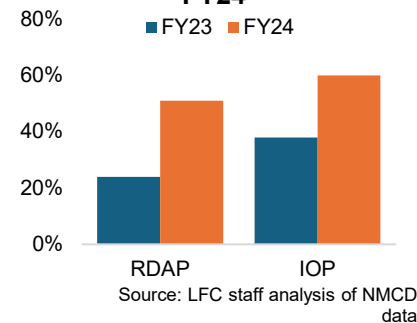
## The state’s new Medicaid waiver will cover MAT and other health services for substance abuse in corrections facilities starting July 2025.

The federal government recently approved New Mexico’s application to provide Medicaid coverage to incarcerated individuals in tribal, state, or local correctional facilities and youth correctional facilities within 90 days of release. The Medicaid waiver covers MAT for all types of substance use disorders, case management, 30-day supplies of medication on release, and other health services. This Medicaid coverage aims to help address inmates’ physical and behavioral health needs in prison and promote continued treatment after release. According to HCA documentation, the state is expected to implement its Medicaid waiver by July 2025.

**Chart 5. RDAP and IOP Enrollment Declined from FY23 to FY24**



**Chart 6. RDAP and IOP Completion Rates Increased from FY23 to FY24**



**NMCD reported recidivism rates for RDAP participants in FY24: 26% (n = 633)** Note. LFC staff could not verify the recidivism rate for individuals who participated in RDAP, since the data sample provided by NMCD was found to be unrepresentative of the prison.

Source: NMCD

**HCA is required to submit an implementation plan for Medicaid waiver reentry initiatives to the federal government by January 1, 2025.** In the federally required implementation plan, HCA must detail how it will manage pre-release services and use federal matching funds. Workgroups comprised of staff from HCA, NMCD, Department of Health, and Children, Youth and Families Department are meeting weekly to work on the Medicaid waiver implementation plan. HCA estimates roughly 4,333 individuals per month will be eligible for Medicaid-covered re-entry services, and around 52 thousand will be served each year. The *2023 LFC Progress Report: Substance Use Disorder Treatment* noted several factors limiting the availability of MAT services in the state, including behavioral health workforce shortages, federal regulations on pharmacy wholesalers, limited pharmacy stock of MAT medications, and pharmacists declining to fill MAT prescriptions. HCA’s implementation plan must include information on how state agencies will address issues limiting MAT availability. HCA should provide its finalized implementation plan for Medicaid waiver reentry initiatives to LFC in January 2025.

**NMCD recently requested a \$36 million special appropriation for FY26 to establish its own in-house opioid treatment MAT program.** Specifically, NMCD requested this special appropriation to hire staff (a medical director, a pharmacist, and a psychiatric nurse practitioner), purchase start-up medical equipment and consultation services, and acquire MAT medications. Rather than funding this request from NMCD as a special appropriation, the Legislature should consider funding NMCD’s request to set up an opioid treatment program as a pilot program through the state government results and opportunity program fund over three years. It is also notable that, upon full implementation, the 1115 Medicaid Waiver coverage may reduce funding needed from the state.

### **NMCD provides 16 community-based substance use treatment services for individuals released on supervision.**

NMCD provides 16 community-based substance use treatment services through five providers. NMCD reports all services are at capacity; however, they serve only a small percentage of all released individuals in FY24. NMCD could not provide LFC staff with individual-level data regarding individuals who had utilized substance use treatment while incarcerated and which of those individuals were required to seek substance use treatment as a condition of their probation and parole. While these individuals would be required to meet with their parole officers who oversee their compliance with their conditions for probation and parole, NMCD is not adequately monitoring the population to ensure that service capacity meets the needs of the population released from incarceration.

#### **Figure 3. Medicaid Waiver for Prison Reentry Services**

**July 2024:** Medicaid waiver approved.

**December 2024:** Health Care Authority develops rates, protocols, policies, and contract language.

**January 2025:** Health Care Authority submits implementation plan.

**Jan-June 2025:** Health Care Authority provides technical assistance to stakeholders preparing for implementation.

**July 2025:** Implementation of Medicaid waiver for prison reentry services “goes live.”

Source: Health Care Authority

**Community-Based Substance Use Treatment Services**

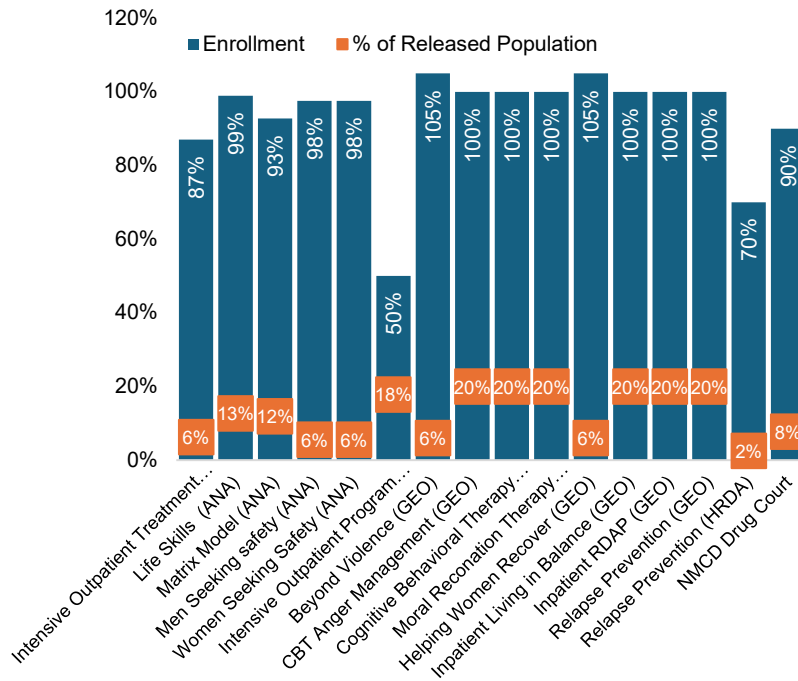
- **A New Awakening:** Intensive Outpatient Treatment – IOP, Life Skills, Matrix Model, Men Seeking safety, Women Seeking Safety
- **Albuquerque Behavioral Health:** Intensive Outpatient Program
- **GEO Reentry Services – Recovery Academies:** Beyond Violence: A Prevention Program for Criminal Justice-Involved Women
- **Human Resources Development Association:** Substance Abuse - Relapse Prevention
- **NMCD Drug Court**

Note. All services are designated as either evidence- or research-based.

Source: NMCD

***Community-based substance use treatment services are at capacity, indicating a greater need for providers and services.*** NMCD reported that in FY24, community-based substance use treatment services were at or close to full capacity. However, this participation represented at most 20 percent of the released individuals in FY24. Given that almost half of the incarcerated population had a drug or alcohol-related charge, the current service capacity may not meet the needs of the individuals who are released. NMCD could not provide LFC staff with individual-level data regarding individuals who had utilized substance use treatment while incarcerated, which of those individuals were required to seek substance use treatment as a condition of their probation and parole, and their recidivism outcomes. NMCD should report to the LFC the number of individuals released who have as a condition of their probation and parole to seek substance use treatment, the percentage who participate in some form of substance use treatment, and recidivism rates for those who participate and complete treatment and those who do not.

**Chart 7. Enrollment and Completion in Community-Based Substance Use Treatment Services in FY24**



Note. ANA = A New Awakening; ABH = Albuquerque Behavioral Health; GEO = Geo Reentry Services; HRDA = Human Resources Development Association. Enrollment is calculated based on the number of participants served divided by the capacity. The percentage of the released population is calculated based on the number of participants for each service and the number of released individuals in FY24.

Source: LFC staff analysis of NMCD data.

**GEO Reentry Services  
Recovery Academies**

**Completion Percentage:**  
FY23: 47%      FY24: 91%

**Recidivism Rates:**  
Men: 19%      Women: 23%

**Expenditures:**  
FY23: \$3.6 million  
FY24: \$6.3 million

Source: NMCD

**Completion rates for GEO Reentry Services Recovery Academies have improved, but costs doubled from FY23 to FY24.** Completion percentages improved for individuals participating in GEO Reentry Services Recovery Academies from 47 percent in FY23 to 91 percent in FY24. Men in the recovery academies recidivated at 19 percent and women recidivated at 23 percent in FY24, lower than the average recidivism rate of 39 percent. However, expenditures for those services also doubled from FY23 to FY24 while capacity dropped slightly. For example, services in FY23 that cost about \$2,000 per participant cost \$4,000 per participant in FY24. NMCD indicated this was due to a new contract with GEO Reentry Services. NMCD reports that costs across the board have increased for all providers due to inflation and staffing expenses. Nonetheless, substance use treatment services can have a positive return on investment in terms of reduced crime. For example, some intensive outpatient substance use programs in New Mexico have a \$16 to \$30 return on investment in reduced criminal activity for every \$1 spent.



**Table 4. Community-based substance use treatment programs: Results First clearinghouse cost-benefit analysis**

Results First Clearinghouse Program	Provider	People Served	Total Expenditures	Cost Per Participant	NM ROI	Chance of Positive Return	ROI using WSIPP Cost info
Drug courts	Corrections	108	\$486,644.22	\$4,505.97	\$3.13	100%	\$2.82
Inpatient/intensive outpatient drug treatment	Albuquerque Behavioral Health	250	\$134,380.50	\$537.52	\$16.21	99%	\$10.13
	A New Awakening	87	\$24,496.00	\$281.56	\$30.61	99%	\$10.13

Note. Only programs that have been classified by WSIPP in their Results First Clearinghouse are presented in this table. NM ROI highlighted in **dark green** indicate local programs with a positive return on investment that were higher compared to Washington state, those highlighted in **light green** indicate local programs with a positive return on investment that were lower compared to Washington state, and those highlighted in **red** indicate programs with a negative return on investment.

Source: LFC analysis of NMCD data; Washington State Institute of Public Policy.

## Recommendations

The Legislature should consider:

- Funding the Corrections Department’s request to set up an opioid treatment program as a phased-in pilot program through the state government results and opportunity program fund.

The New Mexico Corrections Department should:

- Provide the Legislative Finance Committee with its quarterly reports on medication-assisted treatment screening and programming, as required by the *Disability Rights New Mexico v. New Mexico Corrections Department* legal settlement.

The New Mexico Corrections Department and the Health Care Authority should:

- Implement medication-assisted treatment screening and programming in all state correctional facilities according to the requirements and timelines of Laws 2023, Chapter 49 (Senate Bill 425).

The Health Care Authority should:

- Provide the Legislative Finance Committee with its finalized implementation plan for Medicaid waiver reentry initiatives in January 2025.

## Issues within NMCD Hinder Ability to Assess Inmate Needs, Assign Programming, and Track Outcomes

Assessing recidivism and applying solutions requires both systems that provide a clear view of the problem and efforts to address it, as well as personnel with sufficient time to manage caseloads and connect offenders with the resources they require. NMCD's data systems are unable to track reentry outcomes. Caseloads for probation and parole officers have decreased in recent years but are still below recommended benchmarks.

### **Despite significant investments in data systems since FY16, NMCD has not been able to produce data on key indicators of reentry success.**

Though NMCD has received \$16 million in appropriations to upgrade data systems since beginning a major overhaul of its offender management system in FY16, the agency still does not track and cannot produce data on key indicators of reentry success.

***NMCD runs two separate offender management systems: Criminal Management Information System (CMIS) and Offender Management Network Information (OMNI).*** While PPD has successfully implemented OMNI, Adult Prisons has yet to do so. At Central New Mexico Correctional Facility, classification officers preparing for reentry planning must double-enter the relevant data into CMIS and OMNI. Probation and parole officers working in the Fugitive Apprehension Unit work primarily in OMNI but are often required to pull data from CMIS, adding time and effort to their investigations. Given the extra staff labor required to run the two offender management systems and the potential for errors in double-entry or confusion in pulling data from multiple sources, NMCD should prioritize implementing OMNI and the phasing out of CMIS.

In December of 2023, at a Project Certification Committee presentation, NMCD noted the new offender management system would allow for an improved ability to measure program completion's impact on recidivism. They further argued that the sentencing and good time data migration would be complete by the end of 2023. Neither of these goals has been accomplished.

**Offender Management Systems** are database systems used by NMCD to track and monitor offenders in all stages of the corrections system. The newest and main application is Offender Management Network Information (OMNI). Upon implementation, it will fully replace the Criminal Management Information System (CMIS) and will carry out the following functions:

- Release inmates timely and accurately.
- Track offenders on probation and parole.
- Send and receive court data.
- Notify district attorneys and victims of inmate releases.
- Report on program success and inmate recidivism.
- Reduce overhead by consolidating functions into a single system environment.
- Implement industry best practices for segregation.
- Improve inter-agency data sharing.

CMIS is currently used to manage incarcerated individuals in the Adult Prisons Division and was scheduled to be phased out by 2024.

**Table 5. Appropriations to NMCD to Replace its Offender Management System**

Fiscal Year	Funding Source	Amount
FY16	Laws of 2015, Chapter 101, Section 7(22)	\$500,000
FY17	Laws of 2016, Chapter 101, Section 7(19) (This was originally funded at \$7,300,000; however, in the FY17 special session, \$2,400,000 was redirected to severance tax bond, as listed below.)	\$4,900,000
FY17	State of New Mexico Severance Tax Bonds, Series 2016-A	\$35,000
FY17 Special	Laws of 2016 Section 3/B, Project A2652	\$2,400,000
FY18	Laws of 2018, Chapter 73, Section 7 (29)	\$2,290,000
FY19	Laws of 2019, Chapter 271, Section 7 (29)	\$4,105,200
FY21-FY23	NMCD Operating Budget	\$2,340,508
<b>Appropriation:</b>		\$16,570,708
<b>To be reverted to the state:</b>		(\$10,847)
<b>Total Appropriation</b>		\$16,559,861

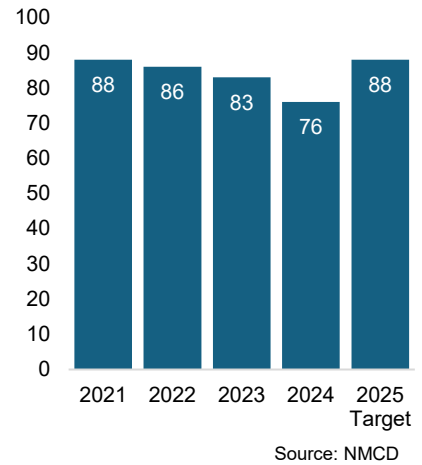
Source: NMCD

***In FY16, NMCD’s business case for replacing CMIS highlighted various issues with its legacy system, including accurate and timely releases, interfacing with court system data, and reporting on program success and recidivism.*** The document argued, “the difficulty of supporting two environments cannot be overstated.” And yet, seven years later, NMCD continues to support two environments. More specifically, the documents point out that good time calculations and projected release times rely heavily on manual calculations. Sentencing data from the Administrative Office of the Courts is entered manually. Also, CMIS cannot flag beds for bed segregation, a security measure for vulnerable incarcerated individuals. Notably, the document points out the benefits of implementing a system that is fully integrated with COMPAS to improve classification and security in prison and more effectively support reentry processes. NMCD argues that this functionality will free up agency resources to equip offenders for release and effectively support recidivism reduction. NMCD’s 2019 annual report made the point, consistent with the above, that the “antiquated” legacy system (CMIS) cannot support business intelligence and data analytics. UNM’s 2024 External Classification Study discusses the manual process of entering mandatory classification overrides into CMIS, as the system cannot carry out this function automatically. This could lead to the misclassification of incarcerated people, with those incorrectly placed at lower levels posing a security risk and those incorrectly placed at higher levels at a higher risk of recidivism.

**Caseloads for probation parole officers are declining due to low vacancy rates and decreasing releases, but they remain above national benchmarks.**

The number of cases managed by each probation and parole officer has decreased in recent years from 88 cases per officer in FY21 to 76 in FY24. Per PPD officials, assuming standard cases, a caseload of approximately 60 is ideal for a single officer. For reference, Texas parole officers managed caseloads of 61.5 on average between 2010 and 2019, and the National Institute of Justice suggests that “under the best conditions, a community corrections officer’s caseload is about 50.” This trend generally makes greater relationship-building opportunities between officers and offenders possible. However, while caseloads are generally down across the state, in some rural areas, particularly those in the Farmington area and the Permian Basin, competition from other industries or cities has led to caseloads of over 100 per officer. Note that these figures are for standard caseloads. PPOs with intensive supervision or community corrections caseloads are bound by policy to supervise only 35 offenders. PPOs tasked with high-risk supervision caseloads are bound by policy to supervise 45 offenders. Because these offenders require more frequent contact and intrusive supervision, PPD officials contend that this policy (CD-050200) is strictly adhered to.

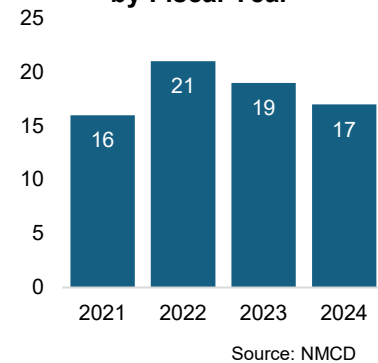
**Chart 8. Probation and Parole Officer Average Standard Caseload by Fiscal Year**



Based on the Texas and the National Institute of Justice benchmark evidence, NMCD should lower the FY25 target for the average standard caseload from 88 to 70. PPD averaged 76 (actual) in FY24, a value lower than the target for FY25, meaning that meeting the target in FY25 would increase caseloads. Instead, to reduce recidivism, NMCD should aim to continue the positive trend of reducing caseloads for PPOs on the front lines of supporting the released population.

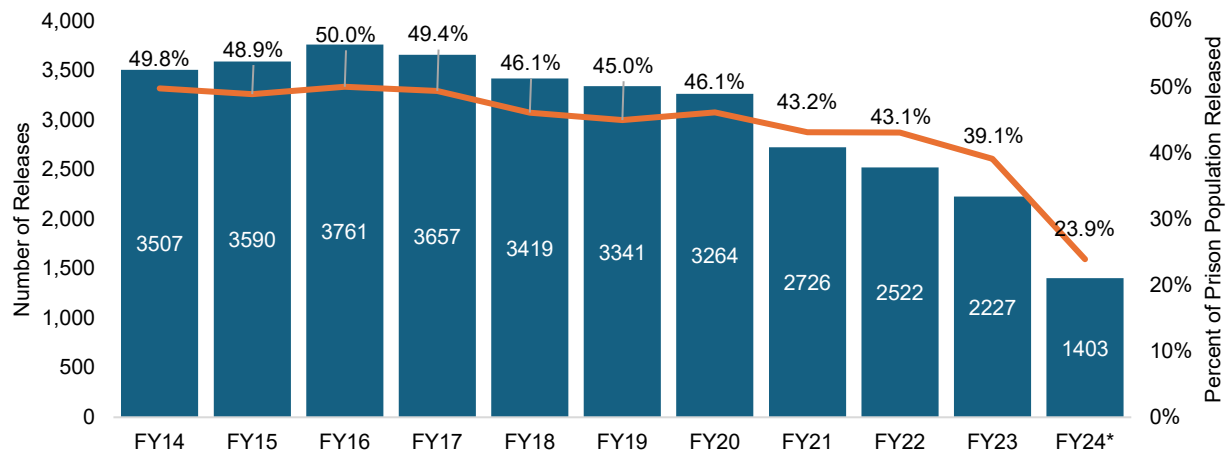
**Caseloads have fallen partly due to decreasing and historically low vacancy rates among probation and parole officers.** While vacancy rates in FY24 were higher than the target for the first three quarters of the year, the rate fell to 15 percent in the fourth quarter, matching the target. The recent decline in vacancy rates comes in part as a response to recruitment efforts. These successful recruitment efforts have led to more manageable caseloads and an increase in the target for FY25 to 18 percent.

**Chart 9. Vacancy Rates of Probation and Parole Officers by Fiscal Year**



**The New Mexico Sentencing Commission reports steadily declining releases, which have eased reentry service caseloads.** NMSC projects that 1,403 individuals will be released after incarceration in state correctional facilities in FY24. This data emphasizes the timeline for reintegration into society for a substantial portion of the prison population, reflecting sentencing and parole eligibility trends. If this trend holds, NMCD may be able to leverage existing reentry, probation, and parole resources to target the needs of the declining population of cases more effectively.

**Chart 10. Number of Prison Releases per Fiscal Year, FY14-FY23**



Note. FY24 total is projected by NMSC

Source: CJI, NMSC, NMCD

## Recommendations

The Corrections Department should:

- Report to the legislature a date on which the transition from Criminal Management Information System (CMIS) to Offender Management Network Information (OMNI) will be completed; and
- Fully complete the transition from Criminal Management Information System (CMIS) to Offender Management Network Information (OMNI).

The Department of Finance and Administration and Legislative Finance Committee staff should:

- Lower its Accountability in Government Act target for standard supervision probation and parole officer caseloads from 88 to 70.

## Although NMCD Provides 25 Evidence- and Research-Based Recidivism Reduction Programs, Program Capacity, Participation, and Impacts Are Limited

Research indicates that education programming while in prison and connections to supportive services upon release can help reduce recidivism. NMCD oversees a suite of programs that provide education and vocational training, behavioral health services, and transitional housing. NMCD has made concerted efforts to administer only evidence- or research-based programs. Analysis of expenditures indicates mixed return on investments in these programs. Little is known about the effectiveness of these programs because NMCD could not provide complete data on incarcerated individuals' service needs, participation, completion, and recidivism.

**NMCD provides a suite of programming to prepare individuals for successful reentry, but little is known about the impacts on recidivism.**

In FY24, NMCD reported providing 25 evidence- and research-based programs unrelated to substance use. Seven programs are administered inside correctional facilities, mostly education-related; six are halfway, and transitional housing programs and twelve are community-based behavioral health services.

### Availability of Programming Services within Prisons

- **Adult basic education:** All prisons
- **Adult post-secondary education:** All prisons
- **Project ECHO peer mentorship:** All prisons
- **Reentry program:** All prisons
- **Moral reconnection therapy (MRT)\*:** Lea County, Otero County, and Southern.
- **Women in Leadership reentry program:** Central, Springer, Western
- **Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP):** Otero County Prison Facility

Note. \*If an inmate needs a specific behavioral health or substance use treatment service (e.g., RDAP, cognitive behavioral therapy), they are placed or moved to a facility where it is occurring.

Other cognitive programs, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, are occurring at other prison facilities, but costs did not exceed \$100,000.

Note. Vocational opportunities also exist at all prison facilities, but costs did not exceed \$100,000.

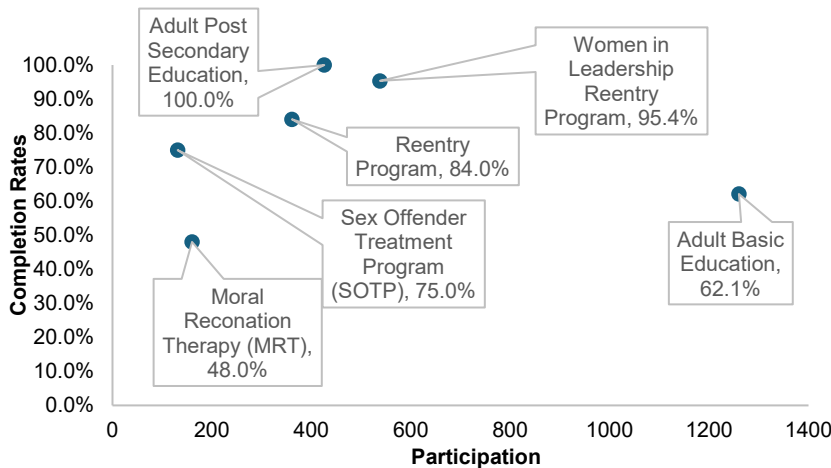
Types of vocational education may vary between locations and security levels.

Source: NMCD

**Reentry program services inside prisons saw increased program completion but experienced some decreases in participation and decreased capacity due to a lack of providers.** In FY24, NMCD reported providing seven programs for individuals within the prisons. Educational programs include adult basic education, adult post-secondary

education, Project ECHO peer mentorship, women in leadership reentry program, and reentry programming. Behavioral health services administered include moral reconnection therapy (MRT) and sex offender treatment program (SOTP). Completion rates in FY24 were 62 percent for adult basic education, 100 percent for adult post-secondary education, and 48 percent for MRT. Completion rates for education programs and MRT have steadily improved since NMCD began reporting in FY21. NMCD should aim to set target benchmarks for program completion and monitor outcomes for participants who complete the programs and those who do not to assess the effect of program completion on recidivism rates. While completion rates have improved, participation in these programs has declined along with capacity, particularly for behavioral health. For example, capacity for MRT dropped by over 50 percent from 284 in FY23 to 134 in FY24.

**Chart 11. Completion Rates by Participation Among Corrections Programs in FY24**



Source: LFC staff analysis of NMCD data.

**Education is the most popular type of programming in prison, with Adult Basic Education enrolling the highest percentage; outside of prison, housing programs are the most utilized.** In FY24, adult basic education enrolled 1,260 incarcerated individuals, or 40 percent of the eligible prison population who did not have a diploma or equivalency. Post-secondary education enrolled 426 participants, or 16 percent of the eligible population. Combining those two categories shows that 53.7 percent of incarcerated individuals who are eligible are enrolled in educational programs. Moral reconnection therapy enrolls 160 or 2.7 percent of the population. While evidence shows that these programs help offenders stay out of prison after release, even the most popular programs enroll only 21.5 percent of the prison population, meaning that 78.5 percent of offenders are not benefiting. Other programs are even smaller, meaning that most offenders are missing out on one of the state’s most effective in-prison tools for reducing recidivism.

To determine the effects of these programs on recidivism, LFC staff requested data on whether incarcerated individuals participated in and completed the programs. NMCD could not provide program completion data and provided LFC staff with program participation data for a sample of 19 percent of all incarcerated individuals released in FY20 and FY21. LFC staff had concerns with the data provided because it was not representative of the incarcerated population and lacked key outcome information. Research indicates that those who participate in adult basic education should recidivate at a five percent lower rate than those who do not participate. NMCD should track program participation for all incarcerated individuals to monitor programmatic effects on successful reentry.

***Cost-benefit analysis indicates that educational and vocational training expenditures are likely too high.*** There is increasing interest in models for accurately assessing the comparative costs and benefits of evidence-based community corrections programs. The Results First initiative and Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) have developed a model to “calculate the return on investment to taxpayers from evidence-based prevention and intervention programs and policies.” By better understanding program effectiveness and the cost-benefit of investments, policymakers can reinvest scarce criminal justice funds toward strategies that reduce recidivism and increase public safety. Utilizing the Results First clearinghouse, LFC staff analyzed program cost information provided by NMCD and found that adult basic education, post-secondary education, and vocational training are falling short of return on investment compared to WSIPP benchmarks. NMCD should continue monitoring program costs and begin tracking recidivism outcomes to assess program impacts.



**Table 6. Corrections Program Services in Prisons: Results First Clearinghouse Cost-Benefit Analysis**

Results First Clearinghouse Program	People Served	Total Expenditures	Cost Per Participant	NM ROI	Chance of Positive Return	ROI using WSIPP Cost info
Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) (for individuals classified as high- or moderate-risk)	127	\$108,321.00	\$852.92	\$9.25	99%	\$6.31
Correctional education (basic skills)	1260	\$2,944,265.00	\$2,336.72	\$4.16	96%	\$9.64
Correctional education (post-secondary education)	426	\$466,695.00	\$1,095.53	\$13.47	100%	\$19.74
Therapeutic communities (during incarceration) for individuals with substance use disorders	633	\$719,196.74	\$1,136.17	\$22.50	54%	\$5.09
Treatment during incarceration for individuals convicted of sex offenses	131	\$78,636.13	\$600.28	\$3.15	91%	\$1.29
Vocational education in prison	29	\$112,437.00	\$3,877.14	\$2.99	93%	\$11.94

Note. Only programs that have been classified by WSIPP in their Results First Clearinghouse are presented in this table. NM ROI highlighted in **dark green** indicate local programs with a positive return on investment that were higher compared to Washington state, those highlighted in **light green** indicate local programs with a positive return on investment that were lower compared to Washington state, and those highlighted in **red** indicate programs with a negative return on investment.  
Source: LFC analysis of NMCD data; Washington State Institute of Public Policy.

**Project ECHO provides reentry services and peer education for incarcerated and recently released individuals. Their programs have not been proven to reduce recidivism and should be closely monitored for effectiveness.** Project ECHO focuses on a variety of issues and areas but works with NMCD primarily on hepatitis-C virus (HCV) elimination and education and peer mentorship. This program enrolls 5,530, which roughly equals the total prison population in New Mexico. For FY25, the state has a contract with Project ECHO for one year to support the treatment of HCV-infected individuals, train NMCD personnel on the treatment and care of HCV-infected individuals, support infected individuals upon release from NMCD incarceration, and track and evaluate activities around HCV treatment. In return, NMCD will pay for medical treatment for HCV patients and \$432.6 thousand for Project ECHO’s services. This total is in addition to \$9.8 million in funding for “hepatitis community health outcomes” through UNM Health Sciences Center’s research and public service projects.

**NMCD Programs with the largest participant enrollments in FY24**

- Project ECHO: 5,530
- Adult Basic Education: 1,230
- Eagles: Service Enriched Housing: 677

In addition, NMCD contracts with Project ECHO on the New Mexico Peer Education Project. The first component serves the incarcerated population: Prisoner Health is Community Health and Reentry Program. The project trains peer mentors in prison who, in turn, provide training to fellow incarcerated individuals on the risks posed by HCV, among other health conditions common in prisons. Upon release, Project ECHO may hire peer mentors to serve as community peer mentors for the second component, the Community Peer Education Project (CPEP). CPEP trains mentors to support other recently released individuals. The contract is for 10 years at a cost to NMCD of \$372 thousand per year for the Reentry ECHO program and \$522 thousand per year for CPEP.

Project ECHO’s work on HCV should be monitored closely. FY24 performance measures show the percentage of incarcerated individuals

treated for HCV with undetectable viral loads 12 weeks after treatment fell short of the 95 percent target at only 77 percent. Project ECHO's visible presence inside these facilities and targeted efforts to treat HCV and educate the population on its impact make this shortfall surprising and need oversight going forward. In addition, their contract for CPEP is 10 years long, expiring in June 2033. During this time, their work should be monitored for success in outcomes. However, the contract only requires Project ECHO to track processes such as connections to peer educators, the number of interventions, and the number of peer educators trained. NMCD should also closely monitor how this program improves outcomes such as employment and recidivism. Further, a process should be planned in case, sometime within the 10-year timeframe, Project ECHO fails to continue to meet its own goals or NMCD finds evidence that these programs are ineffective.

***Among programs outside of prison, those that connect people with housing are widely used, with over 90 percent taking advantage of one of the housing programs.*** Eagles: Service Enriched Housing is the largest by enrollment, serving 677 or 48.3 percent of those released last year. The other five housing providers roughly match the number served by Eagles, with a total receiving housing services of 1,286 or 91.7 percent of the population released in the last year. While most are taking advantage of housing services, they run the risk of recidivism if they are not taking advantage of other services they may need. Ultimately, the data show that despite the availability of these programs, few individuals are participating in behavioral health or substance use treatment services while 39.2 percent of those released in FY21 had recidivated by FY24.

***The high cost of transitional halfway housing in New Mexico provides a negative return on investment, and the impact on recidivism is unknown.*** NMCD reported six different types of transitional or halfway housing programs, including RAMP halfway house, Eagles service-enriched housing, Steelbridge (housing and treatment for those who are experiencing homelessness), La Pasada (sex offender-specific transitional living residence), Crossroads for Women (modified therapeutic community for persons with co-occurring disorders), and the Mountain Center (transitional living therapeutic community). LFC staff analyzed program cost information provided by NMCD utilizing the Results First clearinghouse. Of the three programs that could be matched to the clearinghouse, all three had a negative return on investment. Despite the negative return on investment, services like transitional housing may still be necessary given the high utilization rates and reflect the high cost of the programs rather than negative outcomes. Furthermore, NMCD does not track program impacts on outcomes, such as recidivism. NMCD should continue to monitor program costs of transitional living facilities and begin tracking recidivism outcomes to assess program effectiveness and effects.

**Table 7. Transitional Living and Halfway Houses: Results First Clearinghouse Cost-Benefit Analysis**

Results First Clearinghouse Program	Provider	People Served	Total Expenditures	Cost Per Participant	NM ROI	Chance of Positive Return	ROI using WSIPP Cost info
Community-based correctional facilities (halfway houses)	Ramp	301	\$525,580.00	\$1,746.11	-\$0.92	0%	\$0.72
	Eagles	677	\$627,371.41	\$926.69	-\$1.03	0%	\$0.72
	Steelbridge	44	\$310,250.00	\$7,051.14	-\$0.17	0%	\$0.72

Note. Only programs that have been classified by WSIPP in their Results First Clearinghouse are presented in this table. NM ROI highlighted in dark green indicate local programs with a positive return on investment that were higher compared to Washington state, those highlighted in light green indicate local programs with a positive return on investment that were lower compared to Washington state, and those highlighted in red indicate programs with a negative return on investment.  
Source: LFC analysis of NMCD data; Washington State Institute of Public Policy.

**NMCD provides 12 community-based behavioral health services but does not track their impact on recidivism.** NMCD contracts with seven providers to provide community behavioral health services, including anger management, MRT, cognitive behavioral therapy, and therapeutic communities for persons with co-occurring disorders. LFC staff analyzed program cost information provided by NMCD utilizing the Results First clearinghouse. Of the five programs that could be matched to the clearinghouse, all but one had a return on investment better than comparison to similar programs tracked by Washington state. However, the impacts of these services are unknown since NMCD does not track recidivism and other outcomes among individuals who utilize these services. NMCD should continue to monitor program costs of community-based behavioral health services and begin tracking recidivism outcomes to assess program effectiveness and impacts.

**Table 8. Community-based Behavioral Health Services: Results First Clearinghouse Cost-Benefit Analysis**

Results First Clearinghouse Program	Provider	People Served	Total Expenditures	Cost Per Participant	NM ROI	Chance of Positive Return	ROI using WSIPP Cost info
Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) (for individuals classified as high- or moderate-risk)	Journey's Counseling Service	225	\$332,400.00	\$1,477.33	\$6.51	99%	\$6.31
	Project Fernando	85	\$193,582.82	\$2,277.44	\$3.47	98%	\$6.31
	VIIBE	184	\$142,936.00	\$776.83	\$10.19	99%	\$6.31
	Human Resources Development Association	177	\$90,020.00	\$508.59	\$15.53	100%	\$6.31
Therapeutic communities for offenders with co-occurring disorders	Hopeworks	68	\$192,147.93	\$2,825.70	\$8.77	82%	\$3.25

Note. Only programs that have been classified by WSIPP in their Results First Clearinghouse are presented in this table. NM ROI highlighted in dark green indicate local programs with a positive return on investment that were higher compared to Washington state, those highlighted in light green indicate local programs with a positive return on investment that were lower compared to Washington state, and those highlighted in red indicate programs with a negative return on investment.  
Source: LFC analysis of NMCD data; Washington State Institute of Public Policy.

***NMCD has policies that detail how to implement 38 percent of their evidence-based- and research-based programming operated by NMCD and should require outcome tracking.*** Policy and procedures provide standard operating guidelines for NMCD staff; however, of the 13 evidence- and research-based programs that NMCD runs directly, only five (RDAP, Adult Basic Education, Post Secondary Education, NMCD Drug Court, and Sex Offender Treatment) had policies and procedures associated with them. Without specifying how to run a program, staff may inadvertently not run the program as intended.

To ensure programs are run as intended and achieve the expected results, outcomes should be tracked at the program level. However, NMCD currently does not collect outcomes for most of its programs. Currently, NMCD has a policy that specifies the department reviews the programs offered and the cost-effectiveness and research base of these programs at least annually. Tracking this information is crucial to ensuring the department uses the most appropriate programs; however, if NMCD also monitored the impact of their programs, they could better determine if they are working as expected.

### **Reentry service providers help address the released population's important health and social service needs and collect data showing shortcomings in NMCD's reentry processes.**

At the federal level, the First Step Act requires assisting incarcerated individuals in federal custody with obtaining identification documents consistent with recidivism-reducing best practices. Consistent with that goal, the Bureau of Prisons must assist those released from custody in securing a driver's license, social security card, photo identification, and birth certificate. These documents are essential to securing residency and employment, which are fundamental to successful reentry. However, those released from NMCD often arrive at community providers without these documents. These providers work closely with the released population, assisting with medical care, residency, employment, and case management. In closely working with this population, they have accumulated data showing that NMCD is not assisting all those in reentry to obtain identification documents. In some cases, also contrary to their policy, individuals are released without discharge money.

***Eagles Unlimited provides housing assistance, job placement, and assistance with identification for ex-offenders referred by their parole officers. In FY23 and FY24 Eagles Unlimited routinely invoiced NMCD for identification services.*** NMCD has made progress in connecting those in the reentry process with identification, including driver's licenses, social security cards, and birth certificates. The Motor Vehicle Division of New Mexico now has a presence in NMCD facilities to carry out these specific functions. In addition, reentry paperwork includes a question as to whether the incarcerated person has identification. In practice, though, Eagles

***Evidence from service providers show that many formerly incarcerated individuals are reentering society without the documents they need for employment.***

Unlimited has found that recently incarcerated people often do not have identification or all the potential identification they will require for employment or residency. Invoices from Eagles Unlimited from FY23 and FY24 show the state is paying the provider to assist participants in obtaining identification documents. Though NMCD is connecting more people with identification than in the past, the evidence from providers shows that many are reentering without the documents they need. NMCD should ensure that every released person has access to identification and work with providers to clarify how or why many are reentering without these documents.

**Data from the New Mexico Goodwill NextSteps Program show common reentry challenges and shortfalls in NMCD's support to released individuals.** The NextSteps program provides reentry services for those who have been institutionally referred. These services include assistance with identification, transportation, employment, healthcare, housing, life skills, and more. As of November 1, 2024, 141 individuals have been served by case management services. Data on those released individuals reveals both the challenges they confront and gaps in the reentry services provided by NMCD. Among the findings, 44 percent of those in the NextSteps were not released with gate money, called “discharge money” by NMCD, and 100 percent needed employment support. Those released from NMCD are provided with the money they have earned from their work in prison. If their account total is less than \$50, NMCD will supplement it with discharge money of up to \$50. While this is written in NMCD policy, the data from Goodwill show that 56 percent of the 141 participants they served in 2024 reported being released without any gate money. The Brennan Center for Justice argues that gate money would reduce recidivism and help bridge the gap between release and successful reintegration.

Notably, 26 percent did not arrive at providers with all their work-ready documents. This is despite NMCD requiring in policy that the institutional probation parole officer assist the offender in securing birth certificates and social security cards. The remaining data underscores the need for sustained attention to substance use issues and healthcare for the recently released population. Failure to address these needs exacerbates the risk of recidivism. Ultimately, though, the small number of participants (141) and single year of data should be interpreted as preliminary. NMCD should continue monitoring the needs of the released population and work with community providers like Goodwill to address additional shortfalls in service needs.

**26 percent** of formerly incarcerated individuals served by Goodwill NextSteps Program did not have necessary identification documents for employment.

**Gate Money:** Funding to cover transportation, housing, or food costs provided to people upon release from prison.

Source: The Marshall Project

### Goodwill NextSteps 2024 Participant Data

#### Employment and Income

56% released with some amount of gate money

100% in need of employment support

#### Housing

30% released to their own house or living with family

41% released to transitional housing

6% released to sober living/group home

13% not reported/undecided

#### "Work ready" documents (identification, birth certificate, social security card)

74% had work-ready documents upon release

26% needed additional assistance with one or more documents

#### Substance use and healthcare coverage

46% required assistance accessing Medicaid benefits post-release

89% reported challenges with substance abuse and/or mental health concerns

62% are dependent on public transportation

57% needed support accessing SNAP benefits

36% needed support accessing a phone

Note: n = 141

Source: Goodwill Industries of New Mexico

## Recommendations

The Legislature should consider:

- Establishing appropriate benchmarks for reentry program completion; and
- Ensuring that every released person has access to identification and work with providers to clarify how or why many are reentering without these documents.

The New Mexico Corrections Department should:

- Amend their evidence-based programming policy to require outcome tracking at the program level.

## Agency Response



December 7, 2024

Charles Sallee, Director  
New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee  
325 Don Gaspar Avenue, Suite 101  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Director Sallee,

The New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD) Team appreciated the opportunity to showcase the significant progress we have made in supporting our clients' success post-incarceration and throughout their lives to the Legislative Finance Committee's (LFC) Program Evaluation Team. We deeply appreciate your team's professionalism, curiosity, and dedication throughout the comprehensive three-month evaluation process. We extend our gratitude for their efforts and look forward to our continued partnership to ensure that New Mexicans receive the highest levels of service and performance.

This response to Program Evaluation No. 24-05, *Corrections Reentry and Supervision Programming*, will address recommendations, findings, and narratives outlined in the report. This response will provide insights into the areas of inquiry discussed along with information on services and providers available but not covered in the report. Additionally, this response includes information about the locations and events observed during the LFC Program Evaluation Team's visits to five facilities, a probation and parole district office, and a ride-along with the Fugitive Apprehension Unit as well as staff observations of the visits.

The establishment of the Reentry Division in 2019, along with the creation of a dedicated budget program code in FY23 through its inclusion in HB2 during the 2022 Legislative Session, underscores the Corrections Department's ongoing commitment to reentry. Through the creation of this dedicated program code, the fundamental importance of continuous focus on reentry within a correctional system was safeguarded for years ahead. NMCD's sustained focus on supporting individuals as they transition from incarceration to community life, with the goal of helping them achieve long-term success, will be among the top considerations for the agency well into the future. In recent years, the Corrections Department has worked diligently to expand this division.

Since 2019, NMCD has seen notable improvements, particularly in reducing rates of recidivism. National standards for reporting recidivism vary. As noted in the report, while the majority of states do use a three-year benchmark for tracking recidivism, some states may send recidivists to institutions not formally identified as prisons while others may choose to count only certain types of returns as recidivists. NMCD follows one of the most stringent reporting protocols. By tracking all individuals who return to institutions for any reason and for any duration over a three-year period, the Department has achieved a 10% reduction in recidivism, with rates steadily declining from FY19 to FY23.

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For several programs, including RDAP and the Recovery Academies, NMCD calculates recidivism on a quarterly and annual basis. These figures were provided to the LFC in the FY24 SB58 report and are part of our quarterly performance measures. In studying complete program participant lists, NMCD has found that recidivism rates are lower for clients who participate and complete RDAP and the Recovery Academies as compared to NMCD's general recidivism rates. Several factors can influence a person's decision not fully engage in substance use treatment programs from personal readiness to short sentence lengths. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) data, less than 50% of individuals who enroll in substance abuse programs complete them.

With the recent introduction of tablets in facilities, inmates now have more opportunities to directly access self-help resources. This includes materials addressing substance use disorders. Understanding that more individuals than are currently being served could benefit from substance abuse treatment and knowing that some individuals may not be ready to fully engage or do not have enough time to complete a full program, NMCD is exploring incorporating interactive self-help journaling to its suite of electronic services. These options will be tailored to meet the individual needs of incarcerated people.

NMCD has made significant progress in adopting evidence-based and research-driven curricula across its facilities. Programming focused on improving outcomes for incarcerated individuals has expanded, with more opportunities in career and technical education. Over the past two years, the New Mexico Corrections Department has been recognized by the Higher Education Department as the top-performing agency in awarding High School Equivalency diplomas. Additionally, the Department has implemented a variety of meaningful activities for incarcerated individuals.

Programs and services costing less than \$100,000 were not included in the report and it was noted that such programs do not impact enough incarcerated persons to be of import. While such programs were not included, it is important to recognize that in addition to fundamental services like Adult Basic Education, technical vocational programs have been established across the state. Through internal collaborations between the Adult Prisons and Reentry Divisions and Corrections Industries and often incorporating the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, NMCD has brought heavy equipment, CDL training, welding, auto mechanics, HVAC, metal fabrication, upholstery, culinary arts and safe serve, and carpentry and woodworking into facilities. Internal collaborations have also seen the growth and introduction for activities including weaving, crochet, quilting, baking, hobby crafts, painting, and fly-tying. As interest and engagement in these offerings grow, we continually identify strategies to support capacity expansion.

Since the enactment of SB58 in 2019, the New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD) has actively participated in the program inventory process, consistently providing data on program services, participant numbers, completion rates, and associated costs. This reflects our commitment to transparency and continuous improvement. During the FY24 SB58 inventory process, the LFC introduced a new requirement for outcomes to be reported for each individual program. NMCD is fully committed to meeting this new requirement, as it will establish a uniform reporting mechanism and help assess program effectiveness. These reporting changes align with valuable feedback and recommendations from the evaluation team, and they will further strengthen our reentry efforts. Ultimately, our goal is to improve outcomes for individuals transitioning from incarceration to the community, ensuring they receive the necessary services and resources to succeed.

Since 2019, the Corrections Department has significantly reduced in-house parole. With support from the Executive, the Legislative Finance Committee, and the Legislature, NMCD has been able to expand housing services and provide individuals being released with essential living resources. The report questions cost and return on investment for housing and supportive services. It is important to recognize that the entire state and country have experienced dramatic rises in housing costs, a trend that also tends to impact NMCD. The importance of these resources cannot be understated as many justice-involved individuals do not have access to

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private housing or family residences. Service providers not mentioned in the report serve many of these individuals as our Reentry and Probation and Parole Divisions have strengthened partnerships across New Mexico, working with nearly 200 community behavioral health and housing organizations to increase service capacity and extend support to areas where services have traditionally been limited. Expanding supportive housing resources and essential services reduces the number of people incarcerated into their parole terms by making available safe and viable housing options.

Technical parole violations have decreased and are no longer a major driver of recidivism. Supporting parolees to succeed after release and helping probationers prevent incarceration are the primary duties for probation and parole officers (PPO's). The Probation and Parole Division (PPD) exceeds identified best practices of supervision by maintaining smaller caseloads for specialty offender populations including high risk and high needs offenders in community corrections, intensive supervision, and units for overseeing sex offenders. These specialized units enable the Department to place new officers in standard supervision learning to work with lower risk and needs offenders while pairing more experienced officers with offenders in need of higher levels of supervision. PPD has successfully reduced vacancy rates through targeted recruitment efforts, leading to lower caseloads for standard supervision in most districts. As a result of supervision structures, PPO training, and vacancy decreases, technical parole violations have decreased and are no longer a major driver of recidivism.

NMCD partners with a number of community-based substance use treatment services and behavioral health service providers. Providers meeting the fiscal threshold of the report and discussed in the evaluation represent a fraction of provider services available to the probation and parole population. Furthermore, the list does not include the additional 94 behavioral health providers statewide who receive funding solely through Medicaid. As an additional clarification, it is important to note that community provider services are available to all clients under supervision, including those on probation. Deterring incarceration and diverting clients from entering prisons is among the primary goals of PPD.

The Corrections Department is connecting more people with identification than in the past. As noted in the report, the Department has made progress in connecting individuals in the reentry process with identification including driver licenses, state issued identification cards, social security cards, and birth certificates. These seemingly small things can be of monumental importance to people leaving incarceration and to people on probation seeking employment and enrolling in school and treatment. Recognizing this need, NMCD contracts with organizations like those cited in the report, Goodwill and Eagles Unlimited, to fill gaps when probationers need helping to gather these documents and serve as a failsafe in the event that people exit facilities before obtaining these vital documents still have access to assistance.

During the evaluation period the LFC evaluation team visited five prison institutions, one Probation and Parole Division (PPD) district office, and participated in a ride-along with the Fugitive Apprehension Unit (FAU). During the prison site visits the evaluation team had the opportunity to tour each location, visit education and vocational training classrooms, program treatment areas, and see living units and recreation spaces. Each facility warden participated on the tour and made themselves and their staff available for any questions presented. Throughout the tours the team was able to engage directly with classes in session, equipment available to participants, and spend time visiting with inmates and staff in all areas. In Hobbs, I was pleased to see members of the evaluation team give the CDL simulator a try.

The facilities visited during the evaluation period included: the Lea County Correctional Facility (LCCF) in Hobbs. With a capacity of 1,266, this facility is privately operated and houses medium custody male inmates; the Roswell Correctional Center (RCC) in Hagerman, opening as a correctional facility in 1978, has a capacity of 340 beds and houses minimum and minimum restrict male inmates; the Central New Mexico Correctional Facility (CNMCF) in Los Lunas is a multi-facility complex with a capacity of 1,246, housing a fully operational

long term care unit and a specialized mental health treatment center. CNMCF also holds minimum and minimum restrict inmates, a geriatric unit, and is home to the intake center for all male inmates entering the state correctional system; the Western New Mexico Correctional Facility (WNMCF) in Grants is a dual facility campus with a total capacity of 1,016, housing minimum restriction and medium custody level males in the South facility and varied female populations at the North. WNMCF North serves as the intake center for all incoming females, maintains medium and close custody units, and serves populations with elevated medical and mental health needs for the female population. The evaluation team concentrated their visit at WNMCF North; the Penitentiary of New Mexico (PNM) in Santa Fe is a multi-facility campus with a total capacity of 864. Two of three facilities are currently operational. PNM South currently houses male special management units including the Predatory Behavior Management Program (PBMP) for individuals separated from general populations due to committing violent and dangerous acts while incarcerated, the Special Management Population (SMP) for inmates with predatory tendencies and protective custody needs, and the last remaining members of the notoriously violent prison gang, Sindicato Nuevo Mexico (SNM). PNM's level 2 houses minimum restriction male inmates, many of whom, work outside the gates on community work details.

During the PPD field visits the team visited District Office 13B in Grants, 13B is part of PPD Region I which covers all of Northern New Mexico. During this site visit the team was able to meet with individual probation and parole officers (PPO) and see client engagement. Finally, the team spent a day on the field with the PPD Fugitive Apprehension Unit (FAU). The FAU is a specialized team of PPO's responsible for tracking absconders and apprehending offenders posing potential threats to community safety. This team often works alongside members of state and local law enforcement agencies and conducts specialized operations with the U.S. Marshal's and public safety task forces. During the ride-along with FAU, the team apprehended an absconder in a stolen vehicle, and a sex offender who had used false identification to purchase a vehicle.

These in-depth visits and experiences gave the LFC Evaluation Team direct experience engaging with NMCD's client base where they were able to see first-hand the important role the Department serves in contributing to public safety in New Mexico. Staff members participating in the tours and site visits were pleased to have the opportunity to share the hard work they do to help inmates gain skills and credentials for success after incarceration. One warden expressed gratitude at the amount of time the team spent with her staff and the individuals in her care, saying she was so happy to host a team of people that seemed genuinely interested in their efforts to change people's lives.

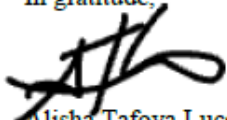
At the onset of the evaluation period from our first engagement, the NMCD team shared some of our known concerns with the evaluation team, the most significant, our limitations in pulling raw data from our information systems. Throughout the report these limitations are noted, and important recommendations were made by the evaluation team. As noted in the report, NMCD is currently operating with two offender management systems, the years old legacy system CMIS and the web-based OMNI. It is important to inform the committee that when OMNI rolled out, data migration did not take place as expected. To ensure data integrity, the decision was made to operate with both systems until data integrity could be assured and associated bugs could be addressed.

NMCD's Offender Management Services (OMS) office worked tirelessly to ensure that sentencing data for all offenders was entered accurately, and IT teams have been working diligently on developing patches to remedy outstanding concerns. NMCD anticipated that the latest patch taking place in December 2024 would remedy outstanding concerns. While the patch did correct some areas, a complex and significant aspect of the system did not function as expected. Moving forward, and in alignment with recommendations made by the LFC Evaluation Team, IT teams in collaboration with OMS staff are identifying and correcting these complex areas and expect that all concerns will be mitigated enabling the agency to go live fully following the next scheduled patch.

The New Mexico Corrections Department continues to make progress in all areas of facility management, programming, quality of life for justice-involved populations, probation and parole supervision, and community and public safety. Moving forward we will work to better leverage technology both to serve our populations and to track their progress through the justice system. Through our ongoing partnership we look forward to seeing continuous progress towards our vision of a safer New Mexico.

We sincerely appreciate your attention to the New Mexico Corrections Department's modification request for consideration in this program evaluation. We look forward to our continued partnership.

In gratitude,



Alisha Tafoya Lucero, Cabinet Secretary  
New Mexico Corrections Department

## Appendix A. Evaluation Scope and Methodology

### Evaluation Objectives

- Evaluate the characteristics of individuals who recidivate after being incarcerated.
- Evaluate the process of prisoner release and supervision.
- Evaluate services NMCD offers to facilitate the reentry process.

### Scope and Methodology

- Reviewed academic studies, policy research, and NMCD documentation.
- Analyzed NMCD data on recidivism, programming, and reentry services.
- Conducted five site visits of correctional facilities: Lea County Correctional Facility, Roswell Correctional Center, Central New Mexico Correctional Facility, Western New Mexico Correctional Facility, and Penitentiary of New Mexico.
- Conducted site visit of probation and parole field office: Grants District Office 13B.
- Participated in ride along with PPD Fugitive Apprehension Unit in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
- Examined applicable laws, administrative rules, regulations, and policies.

### Evaluation Team

Dr. John Valdez, Project Lead, Program Evaluator

Dr. Ryan Tolman, Program Evaluator

#### Authority for Evaluation

LFC is authorized under the provisions of Section 2-5-3 NMSA 1978 to examine laws governing the finances and operations of departments, agencies, and institutions of New Mexico and all of its political subdivisions; the effects of laws on the proper functioning of these governmental units; and the policies and costs. LFC is also authorized to make recommendations for change to the Legislature. In furtherance of its statutory responsibility, LFC may conduct inquiries into specific transactions affecting the operating policies and cost of governmental units and their compliance with state laws.

#### Exit Conferences

The contents of this report were discussed with Alisha Tafoya Lucero, NMCD Cabinet Secretary; Melanie Martinez, NMCD Deputy Secretary; Gary Maciel, NMCD Deputy Secretary; Lupe Sanchez, Director Probation and Parole; Byron Brown, Director, Reentry; and Haven Scogin, Deputy Director, Reentry, on November 21, 2024.

#### Report Distribution

This report is intended for the information of the Office of the Governor, Department of Finance and Administration, Office of the State Auditor, and the Legislative Finance Committee. This restriction is not intended to limit distribution of this report, which is a matter of public record.



Micaela Fischer, CFE  
Deputy Director for Program Evaluation