



**National Association of  
State Alcohol and Drug Abuse  
Directors, Inc.**

808 17th Street, NW, Suite 410  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: (202) 293-0090  
Fax: (202) 293-1250  
Web page: <http://www.nasadad.org>

## KEY NASADAD POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2005

- Strengthen State Substance Abuse Systems and the Office of the Single State Authority (SSA)
- Expand Access to Prevention and Treatment Services
- Implement an Outcome and Performance Measurement Data System
- Ensure Clinically Appropriate Care
- Promote Effective Policies Related to Co-occurring Populations

# POLICY BRIEF: OFFENDER REENTRY

## Overview

Each year over 650,000 people are leaving prison unprepared for their return to society. Many have untreated substance use disorders, lack adequate education and job skills and face homelessness. These factors help explain why, within three years, nearly two-thirds of released prisoners will be rearrested and return to prison.

## Vital Role of State Substance Abuse Directors

State substance abuse directors, also known as Single State Authorities (SSAs), have the front line responsibility for managing our nation's publicly funded substance abuse prevention and treatment system. SSAs have a long history of providing effective and efficient services with the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment (SAPT) Block Grant serving as the foundation of these efforts. SSAs provide leadership to improve the quality of care; improve client outcomes; increase accountability and nurture new and exciting innovations.

SSAs implement and evaluate a State-wide comprehensive system of clinically appropriate care. Every day, SSAs must work with a number of public and private stakeholders given the fact that addiction impacts everything from education, criminal justice, housing, employment and a number of other areas. As a result, Federal initiatives regarding reentry should closely interact and coordinate with SSAs given their unique role in planning, implementing and evaluating State addiction systems.

## Recidivism Rates Drop with Treatment and Aftercare Services

The Council of State Governments' (CSG) Report of the Reentry Policy Council (2005) stated, "substance abuse treatment can reduce both criminal activity and drug use, particularly when in-prison treatment is coupled with community-based aftercare." It is important that corrections administrators work with SSAs in the planning, implementing and evaluating of programs in order to achieve the highest levels of success.

*"America is the land of second chance, and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life."*

*-President George W. Bush, 2004 State of the Union Address*

## State Prison Population

- **80%** report histories of drug or alcohol abuse
- **55%** report using drugs or alcohol when committing the crime that resulted in their incarceration
- **90%** have not received formal substance abuse treatment during incarceration
- **75%** recidivate when no treatment is received while incarcerated
- **27%** recidivate when treatment is received while incarcerated
- **\$1** spent on treatment yields **\$7** in future savings

## Addressing Offender Reentry

- Coordinate with Single State Authorities (SSAs) for Substance Abuse
- Expand Access to Treatment
- Strengthen Prevention Services and Infrastructure
- Support the Development of Addiction Workforce
- Continue to Support Research

## Coordination with Single State Authority (SSA)

Given the high rate of substance use disorders among offenders reentering our communities and positive effect of treatment on reducing recidivism, it is imperative that SSAs are involved in planning, implementing and evaluating any reentry strategy.

The Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program, housed within the Department of Justice (DOJ), acknowledges the importance of collaboration by requiring grantees to coordinate with SSAs when designing and implementing treatment programs.

*As noted by the Council of State Governments' (CSG) Report of the Reentry Policy Council, it is vital to "ensure that individualized, accessible, coordinated, and effective community based substance abuse treatment services are available."*

## Expanding Access to Treatment

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) found that over 20 million Americans needed, but did not receive substance abuse treatment due, in part, to strains on capacity in the publicly funded system. Already, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the criminal justice system represents the principle source of referral for 36 percent of all substance abuse treatment admissions. With 650,000 offenders returning to our cities and towns, many in need of services, every effort must be made to expand prevention and treatment capacity.

Policies that increase access to treatment services are necessary in order for State systems to be able to absorb additional admissions. One example is a strong commitment to the SAPT Block Grant – funding directed to every State and Territory - that represents approximately 40 percent of prevention and treatment expenditures for SSAs. Other support comes out of DOJ through programs such as RSAT and the Reentry Demonstration Grants.

## Strengthen Prevention Services and Infrastructure

Any crime prevention strategy requires a sound alcohol and other drug prevention infrastructure in each State. Infrastructure is needed to provide the capacity and resources for developing effective programs to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug related crimes. SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) has been partnering with SSAs to develop this fundamental infrastructure in a number of States through the State Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPFSIG).

## Support the Development of Addiction Workforce

A key challenge for many States in enhancing prevention and treatment services is recruiting, training, and retaining qualified treatment professionals. Effective addiction counseling is a skill that must be learned and developed. Salaries for counselors average about \$30,000 per year, which is low for such skilled and emotionally challenging work.

There is a shortage of trained counselors and that shortage is likely to grow. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a total of 61,000 individuals were employed as substance abuse and behavioral disorders counselors in 2000; by 2010, the Department of Labor (DOL) projects there will be a need for an additional 21,000 counselors, a 35 percent increase. A similar increase in demand is anticipated for licensed professionals who have received graduate-level educations.

To reverse this trend, initiatives to increase scholarships and offer student loan repayment to those working in the field must be considered on a State and federal level.

## Continue to Support Research

It is essential to conduct research on the impact addiction services have on offender reentry. SSAs strongly urge the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to collaborate with the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), and States as they continue studies regarding prisoner reentry efforts.



*NASADAD's mission is to promote effective and efficient State substance abuse service systems.*

Contact information: Robert Morrison, Director of Public Policy, at (202) 293-0090 x 106 or [rmorrison@nasadad.org](mailto:rmorrison@nasadad.org) or  
Anne Luecke, Public Policy Associate, at (202) 293-0090 x 111 or [aluecke@nasadad.org](mailto:aluecke@nasadad.org).