



Innovation:
Supervised Reentry
Program

Background: Alabama's prison population quadrupled between 1977 and 2007, from 5,545 to 28,605,¹ creating crowding in the facilities and costing the state millions each year. In 2002, a lawsuit regarding crowding at the Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women further pressured the Alabama Department of Corrections to reduce the number of women in that facility. Shortly after a 2003 report suggesting a variety of strategies to reduce the number of women in Alabama's facilities, the legislature created a Special Parole Board to review cases of people convicted of nonviolent offenses. Between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004, Alabama's prison population fell by 6.7 percent — more than twice the reduction achieved by the second-leading state. However, while the number of hearings increased significantly during the first year of the Special Parole Board's 2003 to 2006 tenure, it did not sustain an increased number of paroles for the duration of its existence.

Amidst these circumstances, the Alabama Department of Corrections included women in the Supervised Reentry Program (SRP) in July 2007 and men, a few months later, in September 2007. SRP allows for release based on the end of sentence date, not a parole review date, and provides a structured opportunity for people leaving prison to transition to the community by obtaining employment, training, or other services. SRP also gives the Department of Corrections the ability to reduce the number of people in prison, while maintaining public safety.²

How it works: The SRP is a structured reentry program targeting people in prison who meet certain criteria for transferring from a correctional facility to a residential environment under the supervision and sponsorship of an SRP Supervisor.³ Eligible candidates include men within 12 months of the end of their sentence (EOS), women within 18 months of EOS, and all people with a split-sentence (that is, a set period of incarceration followed by a defined period of community supervision), within 6 months of EOS. Some people serving a sentence for a violent offense can also be eligible for SRP if they are within 3 months of EOS. In order to be eligible, candidates must be disciplinary-free for the previous four months, and have no felony detainers or active warrants. Those incarcerated for a sex offense, people who are in treatment for addiction, people who have ever escaped from prison, and people who have been convicted of drug trafficking and have not yet completed the mandatory minimum portion of their sentence are not eligible.⁴

SRP supervisors assist program participants through weekly face-to-face meetings, monthly home visits, and bi-weekly contacts with participants' work or educational facility.⁵ Every person participating in SRP must be employed, participate in educational, employment, and treatment programs, and pay all court-ordered payments, including restitution and child-support.⁶ A wide range of responses are available to handle non-compliance with SRP, with the sanction of last resort being the return of the supervised individual back to a secure facility.⁷ Some intermediary sanctions include verbal reprimands, increased reporting requirements, referrals to treatment/service programs, electronic

monitoring, and restricting facility furloughs and family visits.⁸ SRP is not the same as parole, and a person on SRP can be paroled.

Lovelady Center in Birmingham, Alabama houses women on SRP. At Lovelady, women enter the workforce through contacts that Lovelady has developed and participate in onsite training. Treatment services are also available. After a time, women are also able to live with their children or spend time with family members outside the facility.⁹ Some people who are awaiting placement on SRP are held at transitional facilities, further reducing the number of people in prison.

The SRP will save an average of **\$5.4 million** annually.

Results:

- One year after initiation, 1,586 people participated in SRP; program placement is approximately 100 people per month.¹⁰
- The number of beds saved by community control programs such as SRP increased by 338 percent (1,700 beds), which at 2008 spending levels, saved over \$17 million.¹¹
- In terms of cost effectiveness, each SRP individual placed in the community saves roughly \$30 per day. With 500 individuals placed, the SRP will save ADOC an average of \$5.4 million annually.¹²

Challenges: Although SRP is an innovative way for the Alabama Department of Corrections to reduce the number of people in Alabama's prisons, in some ways it duplicates screening and eligibility determinations for parole, community corrections, and work release. Ideally, SRP would be integrated with these other systems as part of a continuum of community supervision options. In addition, while there are no supervision fees associated with SRP, participants do have to pay for programs and services associated with transitional centers if they are placed there, which can be burdensome for those coming out of prison.

Policy Implications: The SRP initiative is considered a viable, cost-effective alternative to incarceration that creates the potential for freeing up prison beds while maintaining public safety and helping people transition back to the community.¹³ SRP also creates the opportunity to transition more people to the community as soon as possible. For example, SRP has been successful in placing people in the community who are low-risk but due to split sentence rules cannot be released by the Parole Board.

SRP is a particularly useful tool for reducing the number of women in Alabama's prison system. In 2009, approximately two-thirds of women in Alabama's prisons were convicted of nonviolent offenses.¹⁴

Women account for approximately 24 percent of SRP placements, but make up approximately 7 percent of the prison population.¹⁵

The relative success of comparable initiatives in other states suggests potential for expanding such programs nationwide.¹⁶ Although many states claim they do not have the resources to expand supervised release programs, funding increases do not necessarily have to be dramatic to have an impact. An investment that represents a small fraction of a correctional budget can make the difference between a 2 percent recidivism increase and a 2 percent decrease.¹⁷

For more information on the Supervised Reentry Program, please visit:

<http://www.doc.state.al.us/reentry.asp>

¹ Todd D. Minton and William J. Sabol, *Jail Inmates at Midyear 2007* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008).

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1005>; Heather Couture and William J. Sabol, *Prison Inmates at Midyear 2007* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008).

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=840>

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- ² Alabama Department of Corrections, "Supervised Re-Entry Program (SRP)," March 2008.
www.lockegroupprojects.com/CPRReentry031808.pdf
- ³ Alabama Sentencing Commission, "Compliance with the Initial Sentencing Standards," 2009, 6.
<http://sentencingcommission.alacourt.gov/Publications/ASC%202009%20Final%20Report.pdf>
- ⁴ Alabama Department of Corrections, March 2008.
- ⁵ Alabama Department of Corrections, March 2008.
- ⁶ State of Alabama Department of Corrections, *Administrative Regulation, 452: Supervised Reentry Program* (Montgomery, AL: Alabama Department of Corrections, 2008).
www.doc.alabama.gov/docs/AdminRegs/AR452.pdf
- ⁷ Alabama Department of Corrections, March 2008.
- ⁸ National Institute of Corrections, "Supervised Reentry Program," May 2009
<http://nicic.gov/wodp/default.aspx?View=Program&P=44>
- ⁹ National Directory of Programs for Women with Criminal Justice Involvement, "Supervised Reentry Program," April 11, 2011.
www.nicic.gov/wodp/?View=Program&P=44
- ¹⁰ Alabama Department of Corrections, March 2008.
- ¹¹ Alabama Sentencing Commission, "Signs of Progress: 2010 Report," 2010,
http://sentencingcommission.alacourt.gov/Publications/FINAL_2010%20Report.pdf, 9
- ¹² Alabama Department of Corrections, March 2008.
- ¹³ Alabama Sentencing Commission, 2009, 6.
- ¹⁴ Alabama Department of Corrections, "Women's Incarcerated Population," Developed by DOC IT Division, November 15, 2009.
- ¹⁵ Research and Planning Division, *Monthly Statistical Reports, August 2008 – August 2009* (Montgomery, AL: Alabama Department of Corrections, August 2008 – August 2009). www.doc.state.al.us/reports.asp.
- ¹⁶ Joseph S. Reed, "Cell Blocks and Street Blocks: A Three State Analysis of Ex-Offender Reentry," *The Johns Hopkins University* (May 2008): 16-17
- ¹⁷ Joseph S. Reed, May 2008