

Emerging Adult Reentry Initiative

2023 Final Report: Reach, Engagement, Outcomes, and Key Takeaways



This report summarizes the reach, engagement, outcomes, and takeaways of reentry programming funded through the Emerging Adult Reentry Initiative in calendar year 2023. This report was prepared by the Training Center for Excellence (TC4E), the technical assistance provider for this initiative, with Hisa Streim, an impact evaluation consultant.

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Background

About the Training Center for Excellence (TC4E)

As a part of a multi-pronged approach to address the needs of the emerging adult reentry population, UTEC was funded by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security to launch the Training Center for Excellence (TC4E) in 2020. Since 2020, TC4E has been delivering training, technical assistance, and network-building to EOPSS Emerging Adult Reentry Initiative (EARI) grantees, with the goal of building staff and organizational capacity and strengthening the sustainability of the violence prevention field.

Using a public health approach grounded in racial equity, the TC4E equips organizations to align best practices in emerging adult science-based approaches to intervention, workforce development and mentorship, mental health, comprehensive needs assessment, and community mobilization.

In 2023, the Emerging Adult Reentry Initiative (EARI) funded four community-based reentry programs that deliver a continuum of comprehensive pre and post release reentry support. Roca and UTEC have been EARI grantees since 2020, while Mission Inc and Uncornered are new grantees. TC4E has continued to lead training and strategic guidance as the lead technical assistant for EARI since 2020.

About the 2023 Emerging Adult Reentry Programs

[Mission Inc.](#) (1990- Present) Based in Springfield (Hampden County), Mission Inc leads street outreach, conflict resolution, workforce development, health and nutrition support.

In early 2023, Mission Inc founded the first residential program for emerging adults in Hampden County, Elijah House. Since opening its doors in February 2023, the team has reached several milestones such as creating partnerships with Hampden and Worcester Houses of Correction, recruiting returning citizens, and educating judicial and health systems officials about their approach to restorative residential programming. During this period, the team highlighted successes in recruiting and sustaining engagement of their residents, all of whom secured and retained employment and engaged in 1:1 counseling.

[Roca](#) (1988- Present) With Massachusetts hubs in Boston and Chelsea in Suffolk County and Springfield and Holyoke in Hampden County, Roca has led street outreach since 1988. Based in a cognitive behavioral education framework and intervention model, they provide case management to young adults grounded in 'relentless outreach'.

Throughout 2023, Roca expanded its violence intervention work, directly serving both emerging adults and correctional systems partners. Providing training to 436 correctional staff as well as engaging a total of 936 young people in 2023, Roca continued delivery of its intervention model

guided by a modular CBT curriculum. They aim to halt escalation via skills-based cognitive behavioral education and a continuum of reentry resources. In addition to using detailed needs, risk, and engagement data by county to inform their work, Roca highlighted retaining 85% of its intensively served participants.

[Uncornered](#) (College Bound Dorchester) (2009- Present) leads college readiness advising, stipends, and mentorship to gang-involved youth in Boston (Suffolk County).

In early 2023, Uncornered became the only community-based program engaging returning citizens in Plymouth County Correctional Facility (PCCF) in Suffolk County. Their outreach is guided by the expertise of Core Influencers to reach gang-involved emerging adults before release. Uncornered experienced significant successes in establishing access for Core Influencers to PCCF as well as identifying participants and conducting comprehensive needs assessments.

[UTECH](#) (1998- Present) With hubs in Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill, UTECH leads street outreach, behind-the-walls programming, transitional coaching, workforce development, education, and mental health services to young adults in Middlesex and Essex counties with a focus on intensive engagement in skills-based and restorative programming.

Throughout 2023, UTECH strengthened the connection between incarcerated returning citizens and their home communities. UTECH led 702 outreach contacts during this period, 145 of which were behind the walls. In addition to facilitating an average of 20 group sessions per month in Essex and Middlesex counties, UTECH's reentry team created new partnerships and coordinated resources to significantly expand restorative pre-release programming. New events started in 2023 include entrepreneurship through hip-hop workshops, creative writing and painting workshops, and creating messages and winter blankets for unhoused community residents. This team also carried forward monthly behind-the-wall family meals, maintaining a focus on restoring social connections while providing a continuum of reentry resources.

Report Approach

As each program engages different community and partner site needs (and some are decades old while others recently expanded), each one gathers unique information to guide their work. To summarize trends across this newly expanded coalition, we developed the following framework to sort and summarize information the programs provided. **This report aims to capture emerging trends in reach, engagement, and outcomes by focusing on what is shared**, acknowledging differences in approach may not be fully captured. To learn more about the unique histories, strategies of change, and success measures that distinguish them, please visit their websites hyperlinked above.



Reach

Where do emerging adults have access to reentry support?



Engagement

Who is engaged?
Where are resources meeting reentry needs?



Outcomes

When is successful reentry visible?

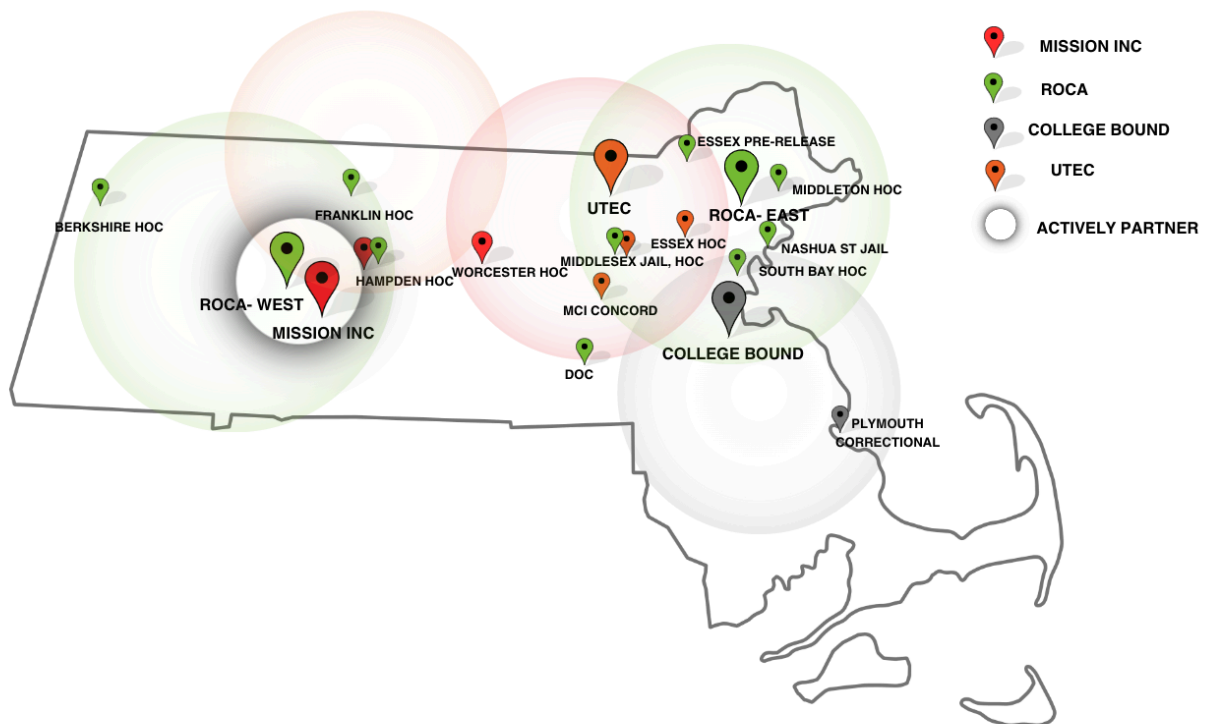
Reach, Engagement, Outcomes

Reach

To reach incarcerated emerging adults, these programs have established partnerships with 13 correctional facilities listed below and pictured on the map. Out of a total of 19 jails (House of Corrections) Massachusetts, EARL reentry programs have established partnerships in 10.

In the following correctional facilities across Massachusetts, emerging adults can currently access a continuum of reentry support to meet their needs for essentials, social support, mental health care and wellbeing, and employment:

Berkshire House of Corrections, Franklin House of Corrections, Hampden House of Corrections, Worcester House of Corrections, Department of Corrections, MCI Concord, Middlesex House of Corrections and Jail, Essex House of Corrections, Essex Pre-Release Center, Middleton House of Corrections, Nashua Street Jail, South Bay House of Correction, Plymouth County Correctional Facility.



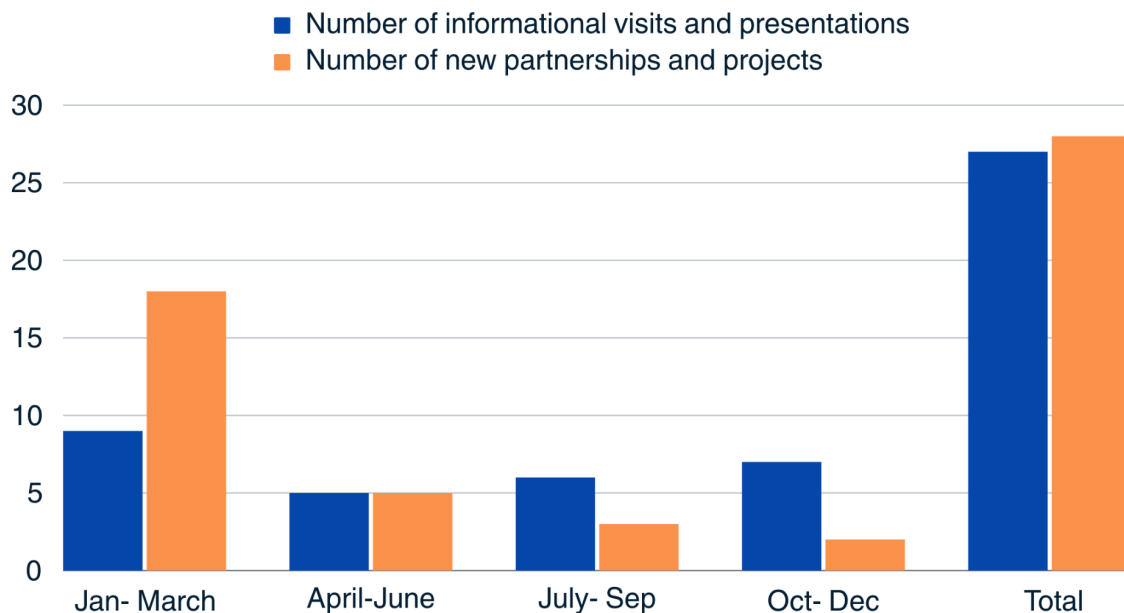
How programs establish partnerships

In their narrative summaries of this reporting period, each program highlighted their ongoing investment in sustaining and growing their partnerships to be able to access emerging adults prior to release.

In addition to the 13 facilities above where partnerships are sustained, these grantees saw significant success in their work to expand access. The chart below summarizes two types of milestones in creating new partnerships: 1. hosting informational visits and presentations to share information about their model and resources 2. Collaborating with new partners for the first time by co-hosting an event.

These outreach efforts to new and future partners included lawmakers, probation officers, housing officials, health commissioners, local employers, community service providers. Each program highlighted the critical importance of these relationships- the value of being recognized in court by a judge or being called for guidance by another community provider.


PARTNERSHIPS



Roughly half of the informational visits and new partnerships and projects took place in quarter one, January- March 2023, reflecting Uncorned and Mission Inc's efforts as newly expanded programs to share their resources with partners.

Engagement

Once these programs have created access to reach emerging adults where they are, Mission Inc, Roca, Uncornd, and UTEC provide several kinds of resources to respond to their needs. Since emerging adult needs are layered and change throughout reentry, each program provides a continuum of resources, which are grouped below by type. Following the table is a comprehensive list of all four programs' engagement activities in 2023. While all programs do not provide the same exact set of services, they all meet needs in these four key categories.

Needs	Resources
Essentials	 Housing, food, clothing, transportation, toiletries
Connection	Relationships and resources for healing
Health care + Mental Well being	Care, assessment, and treatment
Employment	Job-related resources and opportunities

Essentials:

- Create housing as a residential program
- Purchase and deliver food, clothes and hygiene essentials for participants
- Purchase and deliver food, clothes and hygiene essentials for families
- Drive and coordinate safe transportation to programming events, court dates, and healthcare appointments.
- Help complete license reinstatement.
- Provide technology for participants (desktop computers, tablets, phones, internet) to complete computer courses

Connection:

- Cultivate young adult leadership, including recruiting 'core Influencers' and conducting 'network analysis' of connections between participants to strategically do outreach
- Mentor and educate participants from outreach through sustained program engagement
- Facilitate peacekeeping and restorative circles behind the walls

- Fund and host 'family dinners' behind the walls for loved ones visiting young adults
- Host writing and poetry workshops in collaboration with community-based artists
- Coordinate family reunification, including hiring interpreters as needed
- Lead parenting and healthy habits programming
- Host substance abuse recovery groups (NA, AA)
- Advocate for reduced sentencing and increased support in court
- Build relationships with justice stakeholders including, DOC and HOC leadership and staff, and courts (attorneys, judges, probation, parole, district attorneys) to create more opportunities for advocacy
- Build relationships with elected officials and representatives, including hosting site visits for police commissioners, district attorneys, DOJ officials, city councilors, health departments, and community-based organizations

Mental healthcare and wellbeing:

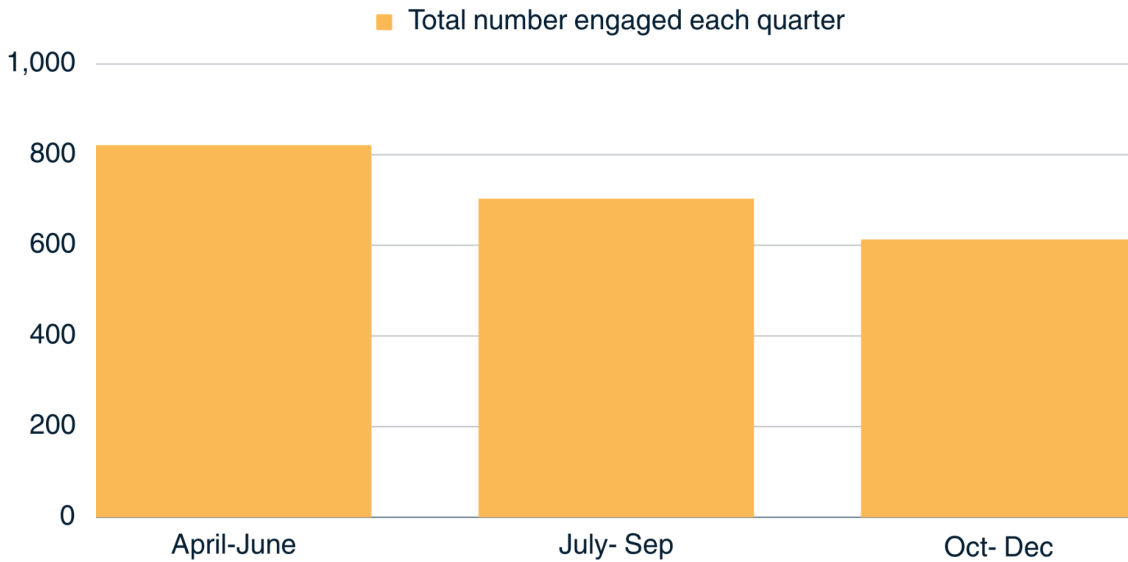
- Partner with mental health clinicians to provide assessment, referrals, and individual counseling
- Foster open engagement with mental health clinicians to coordinate appropriate care (e.g. getting release of records to understand clinical history)
- Teach cognitive behavioral therapy practices and coach in real time practice
- Teach social emotional learning practices and collaborative problem solving
- Coordinate comprehensive reentry planning

Employment:

- Organize job fairs and facilitate job placement with local businesses, including apprenticeship and internships
- Be a transitional employer for participants
- Fund stipends and universal basic income to participants
- Build career search skills and prepare for interviews, including interview attire
- Create network of local employers (Yankee candle, CNS, mass hire, Home Depot)
- Lead record expungement workshops

ENGAGEMENT

The bars below count the number of emerging adults engaged within each quarter. The same young adult, if engaged throughout the year, appears in each quarterly count.

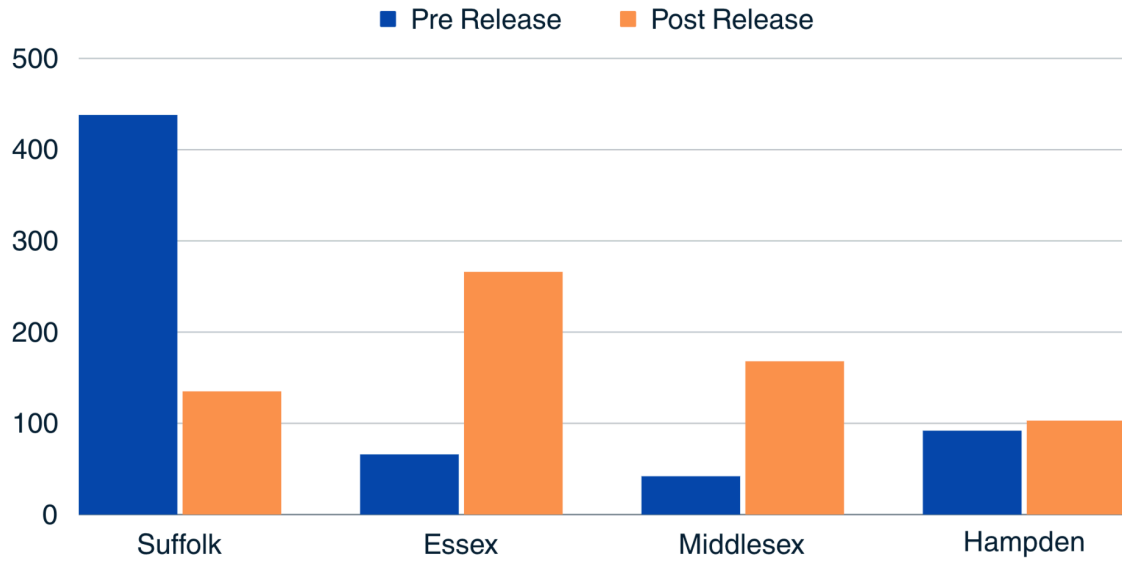


On average, these four reentry programs visited their partner facilities twice weekly, or 32 sessions monthly, 352 sessions annually.

Since Uncornered and Mission Inc established their reentry work in Jan 2023 (Q1), cumulative engagement data is displayed here starting in Q2, after the opportunity to hire staff, recruit participants, and develop initial systems.

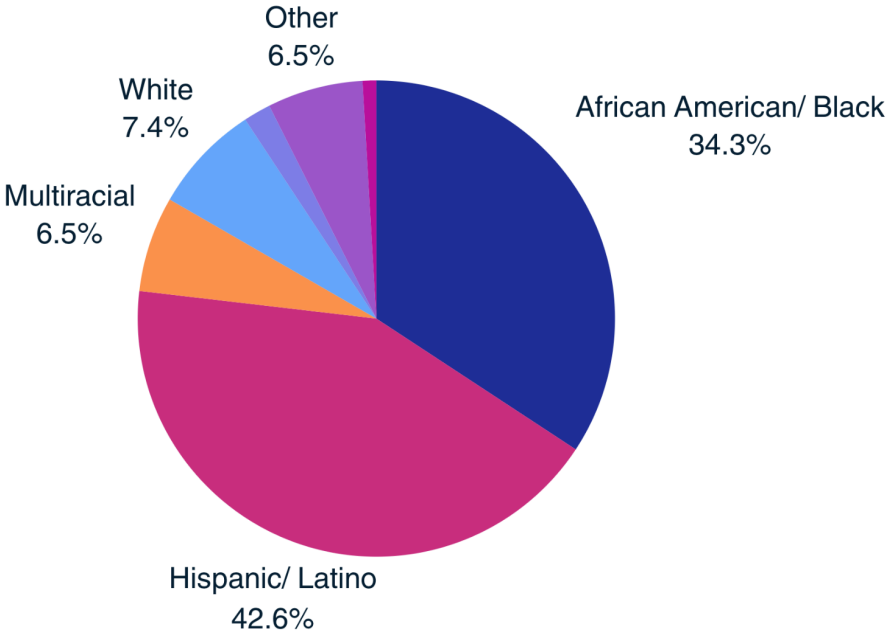
COUNTIES ENGAGED

Count of emerging adults engaged throughout 2023 by county.



RACE OF PARTICIPANTS

Out of 1200 participants who self-reported race information. While Latino is not considered a census race category, it is included here as reported.



Barriers to Engagement

While successfully engaging participants through all the ways described above, these programs identified and responded to several barriers.

Barriers

- Partner facility lockdowns
- Continued COVID protocols restricting access to facilities
- Delayed or denied facility clearance for reentry staff
- Shortage of safe and affordable post-release housing
- Local employers reluctance to hire returning citizens
- Lengthy approval process for implementing new programming behind the walls
- Identifying eligible participants within each partner facilities' designations
- Emerging adults sustaining sobriety in post-release programming

Responses

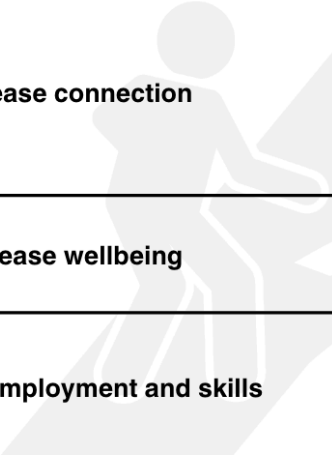
- Building partnerships with decision-makers in the reentry community, including site visits, networking, and informational presentations
- Coordinating weekly and monthly meetings with partner facilities to identify possible barriers to access and ways to sustain engagement
- Building a network of local employers
- Partnering with clinicians and mental health providers to expand type and intensity recovery services

Resources Requested

- Reentry support tailored to prevent domestic violence and help reduce instance of trafficking
- Streamlining the process for clearance and approval of new programming ideas

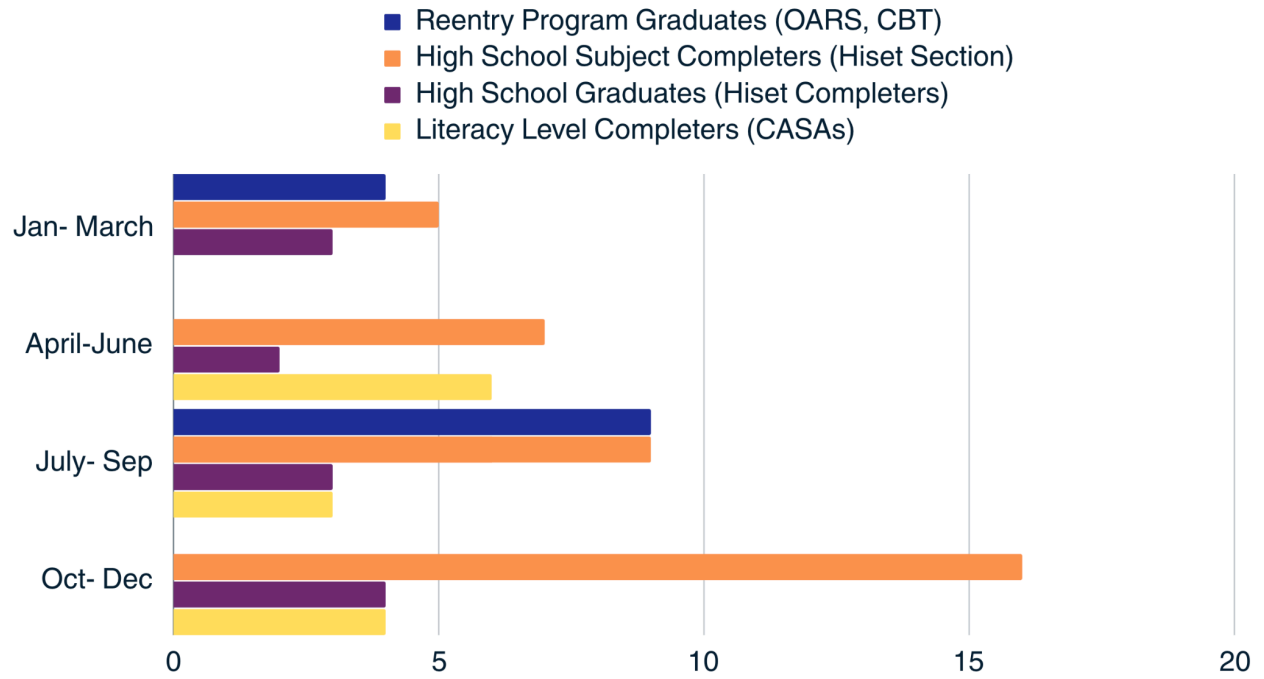
Outcomes

Throughout the process of engagement, Mission Inc, Roca, Uncorred, and UTEC each recognize diverse milestones of success, which have been grouped into four main areas:

Success measures	Milestones recognized
Reduce community violence	Rate of recidivism reduced Charge severity reduced Number of shootings reduced
 Increase connection	Families reunified Participants remained in the program Programs provided training to violence intervention colleagues Programs created network of partnerships Participants graduated from course
Increase wellbeing	Completed CBT curriculum Remained drug and alcohol free
Increase employment and skills	Programs created network of local businesses Participants found and sustained employment Participants increased literacy skills and earned diplomas

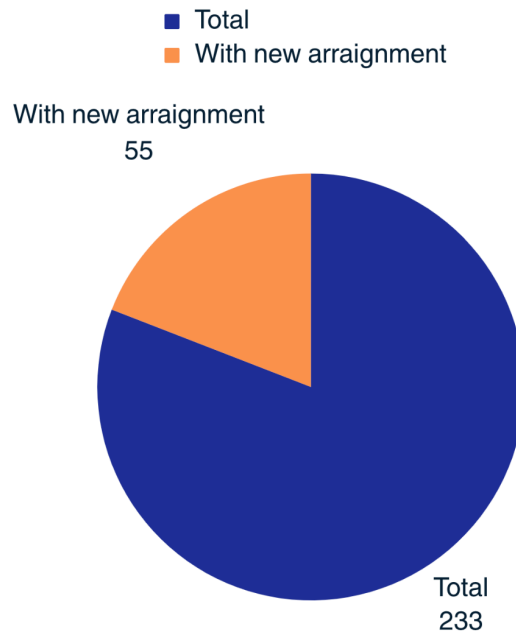
In line with their program models, each site collects unique impact data at different time points. In an effort to display overall impact, the following groups similar information where available.

PROGRAM COMPLETION



ONE YEAR RECIDIVISM

Out of 233 reentering participants who attended intensive daily programming, 24% had a new arraignment within one year of entering the program.



This chart reflects UTEC and Roca’s work to track new arraignments in the year(s) following emerging adult program enrollment. The time period, of one year or more, offers a window to see whether or not participants intensively engaged in programming have new arrests. Since Mission Inc and Uncornered both began collecting participant info in early 2023, their recidivism count isn’t yet available.

Importantly, there is not currently an up to date emerging adult-specific re arraignment or re-in incarceration rate. The Massachusetts Department of Corrections and some county House of Corrections publish recidivism averages across all ages.

Takeaways and Recommendations

1. Since these programs create new reentry resources and alternatives, they are often required to also make new operational pathways in the process. This takes ongoing investment in several areas, including accessing secure facilities, designating eligible participants, identifying spaces appropriate for programming, and clearing learning materials and programs.
 - **Recommendation:** Consider where processes might be streamlined on the statewide level to remove barriers to reentry resources being consistently accessible behind the walls.

2. As reentry programs engage unique needs and navigate constraints across settings, they all rely on trusting relationships as a foundation of reaching, engaging, and coordinating resources for returning citizens.
 - **Recommendation:** Continue investing in training and support designed for and by peacekeeping professionals, who meet the unique challenges of developing a sustainable reentry ecosystem.

3. The reach of preventive and community-change work remains hard to count because of its complexity. For example, while these programs name referrals as key successes, those young people may not be counted as participants since they were referred out of their service area.
 - **Recommendation:** Continue embracing many sources of information to inform decision-making. Since existing frameworks are tailored to capture individual-level change, important systems-change work will be missed if not also relying on stories of how resources interacted to make a difference.

In the News

- <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/organizations-get-state-funding-for-gun-violence-intervention-prevention-programs/3158469/>
- <https://www.ojp.gov/files/archives/pressreleases/2023/readout-office-justice-programs-leadership-visit-lowell-massachusetts>
- <https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/ideas-we-should-steal-reduce-gun-violence-with-cognitive-behavior-therapy/>
- <https://www.wgbh.org/news/local/2022-05-05/a-walk-down-the-block-boston-uncornered-works-to-end-gang-violence-by-getting-young-people-to-college>
- <https://commonwealthbeacon.org/criminal-justice/how-boston-escaped-the-national-spike-in-homicides/>
- <https://www.bostonherald.com/2019/08/13/boston-common-host-uncornered-photo-documentary-project/>
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- <https://www.sentinelandenterprise.com/2023/09/30/editorial-utecs-reach-goes-national-with-d-c-invite/>
- https://www.eagletribune.com/news/utec-leaders-visit-dc-for-unveiling-of-office-on-gun-violence-prevention/article_0f7b2390-5c7a-11ee-a90c-038b8081c558.html
- <https://www.lowellsun.com/2023/09/29/doj-officials-come-to-lowell-to-announce-grant-funding-for-community-violence-intervention/>
- <https://foxbaltimore.com/news/local/rocas-relentless-commitment-to-disrupting-gun-violence-shows-signs-of-success>