

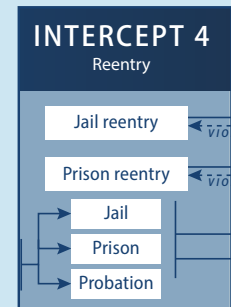
Veterans Justice Outreach Toolkit: The Sequential Intercept Model

Intercept 4: Reentry

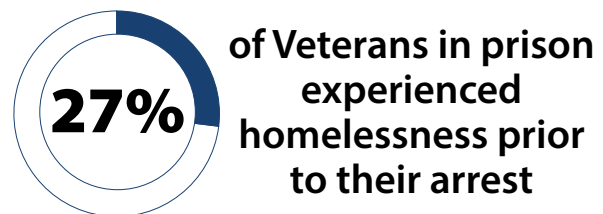
Introduction: Intercept 4 focuses on supporting Veterans transitioning back into the community after incarceration. Key actors at this stage include discharge planners, case managers, correctional staff, Veterans Justice Outreach (VJO) specialists, Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) specialists, and community-based service providers, all collaborating to ensure a smooth reintegration process. HCRV specialists play a crucial role, particularly for Veterans exiting state and federal prisons. They provide pre-release outreach, assessment, and linkage to services, including arranging transportation and coordinating access to community or VA resources.

A key component of reentry planning is helping Veterans initiate or reinstate benefits such as SSI/SSDI, VA disability compensation, pensions, and Medicaid. Case managers and HCRV specialists play a critical role in navigating these systems, particularly for individuals whose benefits were suspended or terminated during incarceration.

Effective reentry planning requires comprehensive discharge coordination; case management; and access to Veteran-specific resources such as health care, housing assistance, and employment programs. Ongoing screenings during incarceration allow for tailored reentry services that address each Veteran's unique needs. Discharge planners and case managers coordinate with support services to mitigate risks such as homelessness, unemployment, and untreated mental health or substance use disorders. At Intercept 4, structured reentry that prioritizes social connections, economic independence, and access to essential health services helps promote long-term stability for justice-involved Veterans.



A Bureau of Justice Statistics report found that 33% of individuals released from federal prison had not secured employment within four years of release, highlighting significant barriers to workforce reintegration for formerly incarcerated populations.¹



Research shows that 27% of Veterans incarcerated in prison reported homelessness in the year prior to their arrest. Among those receiving VJO services, 19% of women and 24% of men were homeless or received homeless services within one year of their contact with the program.^{2,3}



Suicide Prevention Opportunities Related to Intercept 4

- Discharge planners and case managers should connect Veterans with HCRV specialists; VJO specialists; and vetted community resources, peer mentorship programs, and behavioral health services to ensure a smooth reentry and to reduce crisis risk.
- Establishing warm handoffs between correctional facilities and VA or community-based mental health providers ensures continuity of care and minimizes service gaps.
- Correctional facilities should conduct prerelease suicide risk screenings to identify and link high-risk Veterans to crisis intervention and support services before discharge.
- VJO specialists and HCRV staff play a critical role in suicide prevention during the reentry period. By engaging with incarcerated Veterans prior to release, they facilitate access to essential services, coordinate transportation, and provide continuous support, thereby reducing the risk factors of suicide during this vulnerable transition phase.

Strengths and Protective Factors for Suicide Prevention

- Veteran peer support programs provide meaningful guidance and advocacy during reentry.
- Access to VA health care upon release and transitional housing programs reduces the risk of homelessness and housing instability.
- Structured employment and vocational training initiatives increase economic independence.

Spotlight: Veterans Healing Veterans, San Quentin State Prison (CA)

In 2012, a Veteran incarcerated in San Quentin State Prison founded the Veterans Healing Veterans (VHV) program to provide mutual support to incarcerated Veterans. VHV facilitates peer-support groups using narration therapy, allowing Veterans to gain insight into their experiences, process trauma, and rebuild critical relationships for recovery.⁴ The program incorporates structured group discussions, one-on-one mentorship, and trauma-sensitive yoga and meditation practices, creating a supportive environment for Veterans to heal and reintegrate.

Facilitators for VHV include both incarcerated and community Veterans who share a common goal of guiding justice-involved Veterans through successful transitions. By fostering behavioral change and reinforcing social connections, VHV has significantly improved reentry outcomes. Its mentorship model ensures continuity of support post-release, helping Veterans maintain stability and reducing the likelihood of recidivism.



Recommendations



Policymakers

- Fund specialized reentry programs tailored to Veterans, including transitional housing and employment services.
- Support policies that allow for seamless transition from incarceration to community-based VA and behavioral health services.



Criminal Justice System Professionals

- Implement systematic Veteran identification at intake and throughout incarceration using identification tools like the Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS) and the Status Query and Response Exchange System (SQUARES).
- Strengthen partnerships with VA HCRV and VJO specialists.

Community Members



- Advocate for increased funding and accessibility of Veteran-specific reentry support programs.
- Engage in mentorship and support networks to assist returning Veterans in building a stable life post-incarceration.

Related Resources

- [Health Care for Re-entry Veterans \(HCRV\)](#) | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- [VA Benefits for Incarcerated Veterans](#)
- [Veteran Reentry MythBusters Fact Sheet](#)

References

- 1 E. Ann Carson, Danielle H. Sandler, Renuka Bhaskar, Leticia E. Fernandez, and Sonya R. Porter, "Employment of Persons Released from Federal Prison In 2010," U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021.
- 2 Eric B. Elbogen, Chase M. DuBois, Andrea K. Finlay, et al., "How Often Does Homelessness Precede Criminal Arrest in Veterans? Results from the US Survey of Prison Inmates," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 93, no. 6 (2023), 486.
- 3 Andrea K. Finlay, Ingrid A. Binswanger, David Smelson, et al., "Sex Differences in Mental Health And Substance Use Disorders and Treatment Entry Among Justice-Involved Veterans in the Veterans Health Administration," *Medical Care* 53, S105-S111: (2015).
- 4 Veterans Healing Veterans, "Veterans Healing Veterans from the Inside Out," 2025, <https://veteranshealingveterans.com/index.html>.