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Opinion: The transformative work of reentry services in CT is too vital to falter



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For every person in Connecticut that we help avoid reincarceration, the state saves tens of thousands of dollars annually.



By **BETH HINES**

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The human condition binds us all. As science has proven, the [human genome](#) shows we are 99.9% alike. This shared humanity means that the struggles of one can ripple through us all, emphasizing the moral and practical importance of helping one another. Imagine a world where every individual who encounters hardship receives the support needed to rebuild their life—not just for their sake, but for the collective good. At [Community Partners in Action](#), or CPA, we bring this vision to life through our transformative work in reentry services.

Reentry services are critical. They reduce recidivism by providing employment opportunities, housing support, and resources to address drug dependency. These services improve the quality of life for

individuals, their families, and entire neighborhoods. Yet, they also offer a less-discussed benefit: significant cost savings for the state and local municipalities.

Consider the facts. According to the [2024 State of Reentry Report](#) prepared by Career Resources, the CT Reentry Collaborative, and The Charter Oak Group, nationally, an estimated 67% of people incarcerated will be rearrested within three years of prison release. In Connecticut, however, our prison population declined in recent years (from 19,894 in February 2008 to 10,058 in June 2023) “due in part to an expansion of mental health and substance use treatment options and other programs that diverted people from the criminal justice system.”

And while it costs approximately \$249 per day—or nearly \$91,000 annually—to incarcerate a single individual in Connecticut, alternative programs for individuals under community supervision or court mandate, such as those offered by CPA operate at a fraction of the cost.

In FY 2024, 2,332 individuals received assistance in the community that included case management, evidence-based interventions, referrals to substance abuse and mental health counseling, housing, employment, and job training. These services were provided through our Alternative in the Community programs in Hartford, Manchester, and Waterbury, along with our Community Service Program at Hartford Community Court, and Early Screening and Intervention Units (Hartford, New Britain and Waterbury). The programmatic costs break down to \$1,811 per person.

The savings are undeniable.

For every person we help avoid reincarceration, the state saves tens of thousands of dollars annually. The cost of reentry services pales in comparison to the expense of incarceration, not to mention the broader societal costs of unemployment, homelessness, and untreated substance use and mental health. By investing in people, CPA’s work reduces these burdens, promoting healthier communities and more sustainable economies.

However, our ability to continue this transformative work is at risk. With the impending loss of American Rescue Plan Act funding, CPA faces a fiscal cliff starting July 1. This jeopardizes the future of our [Reentry Welcome Centers](#) in Hartford and Waterbury, critical hubs that have supported thousands of returning citizens and their families. If these centers must scale back services, the ripple effects will be profound: higher rates of recidivism and homelessness, fewer employment opportunities, and increased strain on social services and public safety.

The consequences of inaction are stark. Families will suffer as their loved ones struggle to find stability after incarceration. Communities will bear the brunt of increased crime and poverty. And the state will face rising costs as more individuals cycle through the justice system. This is not just a fiscal issue; it’s one of humanity.

As we navigate this critical moment, we call on the state and local leaders, as well as private partners, to step forward and support our mission.

In recent years, Connecticut has shuttered three prisons. A Feb. 21, 2024, investigative piece in the CT Mirror, “CT reentry centers ask: Where is the money from prison closures?” pointed out that redirecting even a portion of the \$26.5 million saved annually through recent prison closures could bolster reentry services and amplify their impact.

Investment in [reentry services](#) is an investment in people, in communities, and in the future of Connecticut. It's a testament to the belief that when one person succeeds, we all benefit.

Our shared humanity demands that we do more than stand by. We must act. The work of Community Partners in Action and our Reentry Welcome Centers is too vital to falter, and the stakes are too high to ignore. Together, we can continue to make a difference—for individuals, for families, and for the betterment of us all.

Beth Hines is executive director of Community Partners in Action.