



# Multi-Site Evaluation of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI)

RTI International has conducted research on crime, violence, justice systems, and behavioral health for over 30 years. Using rigorous multidisciplinary approaches, RTI research advances knowledge and informs policy, practice, and programs nationally and internationally.

Professional backgrounds of RTI researchers span a wide variety of disciplines including criminology, economics, law, psychology, public health, and sociology. Crime, violence, and justice staff are located in RTI's main office in Research Triangle Park, NC, and in offices throughout the United States. RTI maintains a presence in Washington, DC, for consultation on crime, violence, justice, and behavioral health topics.

## Overview

The **Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI)** is a collaborative federal effort to improve prisoner reentry outcomes along the following dimensions: (1) criminal justice, (2) employment, (3) education, (4) health, and (5) housing. Sixty-nine states/local sites have received a total of over \$100 million to develop or expand programs that offer integrated supervision and services to offenders. The objective is to promote productive social roles and reduce the likelihood of a return to crime and imprisonment. The initiative requires a multi-agency strategy to transition adults successfully from correctional control back into private life.

In 2002, more than 600,000 prisoners—about 1,700 per day—left state and federal prisons. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that two-thirds of released adult prisoners are reincarcerated within 3 years. Such patterns suggest that society pays a high price when individuals returning home from incarceration are poorly reintegrated into society. The goal of SVORI is to change this trend by providing individually tailored services and supervision to improve the odds for a successful transition home. The framework for SVORI envisions a continuum of services that begins in prison, moves to a structured reentry phase prior to and during the early months of release, and continues for several years as former offenders become



increasingly integrated into productive roles. Although conceptually straightforward, this model is far from “business as usual”; it requires state and local agencies to collaborate in ways that have been rare in the past.

To evaluate the overall effectiveness of SVORI, the National Institute of Justice awarded a grant to RTI and its subcontractor, the Urban Institute, to conduct a multi-site evaluation of SVORI across the 69 grantee sites.

## Approach

The goal of the **SVORI Multi-Site Evaluation** is to determine whether the selected programs have accomplished the overall goal of the Initiative—increasing public safety by reducing recidivism among the populations served by the program—and to determine the relative costs and benefits of the program. The evaluation has been designed to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent did SVORI lead to more coordinated and integrated services among partner agencies?
- To what extent did SVORI participants receive more individualized and comprehensive services than comparable non-SVORI offenders?

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- To what extent did reentry participants demonstrate better recidivism, employment, health, and personal functioning outcomes than comparable non-SVORI offenders?
- To what extent did the benefits derived from SVORI programming exceed the costs?

The SVORI evaluation includes (1) an Implementation Assessment, which characterizes all 89 SVORI programs (69 grantees) and addresses the extent to which these programs increase access to services and promote systems change; (2) an Impact Evaluation, which assesses the effectiveness of SVORI by comparing key outcomes for those who participate in SVORI programming with outcomes of comparable individuals not participating in SVORI (includes a longitudinal study of approximately 2,700 adult male, adult female, and juvenile male returning prisoners in 14 states); and (3) an Economic Component conducted with a subset of the impact evaluation sites, which will determine the return on the SVORI investment and include both a cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis.

### Findings and Products Generated

Analyses from the Implementation Assessment have characterized SVORI programs and examined service delivery, with Program Director Reports indicating that SVORI participants receive more pre-release and post-release services than do comparable non-SVORI offenders receiving “business as usual.” Preliminary analyses based on offender self-reports confirm the pattern of higher service receipt among SVORI participants during incarceration. Future analyses will analyze differences in post-release service receipt and determine the impact of SVORI programming on a variety of intermediate and long-term outcomes, including recidivism.

### Reports

*National Portrait of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative*

*Reentry Research in Action: Enrollment Issues Among SVORI Programs*

*Reentry Research in Action: Evaluation Design Overview*

*Reentry Research in Action: Overview of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative*

*Reentry Research in Action: Implementation of SVORI Programs*

*Reentry Research in Action: Characteristics of Prisoner Reentry Programs*

*Reentry Research in Action: Characteristics of Prisoner Reentry Programs for Juveniles*

*Reentry Research in Action: Faith-Based Involvement*

*Reentry Research in Action: Sustainability of SVORI Programs*

### Journal Articles

Winterfield, L., P.K. Lattimore, D.M. Steffey, S. Brumbaugh, and C. Lindquist (Forthcoming). “The Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative: Measuring the Effects on Service Delivery.” *Western Criminology Review*.

Lattimore, P.K., C.A. Visher, L. Winterfield, C.H. Lindquist, and S. Brumbaugh (2005). “Implementation of Prisoner Reentry Programs: Findings from the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative MultiSite Evaluation.” *Justice Research and Policy*. 7(2):87–109.

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### For more information contact

Christine Lindquist, PhD  
RTI International Project Director  
PHONE: 919-485-5706  
E-MAIL: [lindquist@rti.org](mailto:lindquist@rti.org)  
WEB SITE: [www.svori-evaluation.org](http://www.svori-evaluation.org)

Pamela K. Lattimore, PhD  
Co-Principal Investigator  
PHONE: 803-754-5965  
E-MAIL: [lattimore@rti.org](mailto:lattimore@rti.org)

RTI International  
Crime, Violence, and Justice Research Program  
3040 Cornwallis Road, P.O. Box 12194  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194 USA

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