

Coming Home For Good

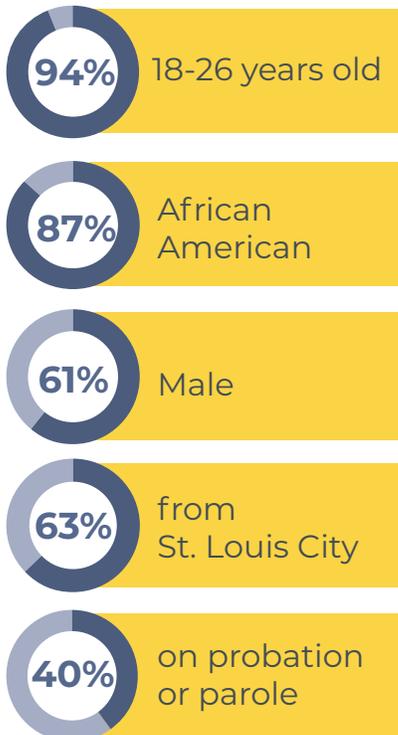
How St. Louis-based RELINK is rebuilding the lives of justice-involved young adults through health, social services, and advocacy.

What is RELINK?

When justice-involved people leave jail, they often face a unique set of challenges that can limit their abilities to succeed and stay out of the criminal justice system. RELINK is a St. Louis Integrated Health Network (IHN) initiative that combines one-on-one support with referrals to committed community partners in health, mental health, housing, employment, and education. Through this collaborative support system, we hope to reduce health disparities, improve system coordination, and decrease the risk of 18 to 26 year-olds returning to jail.

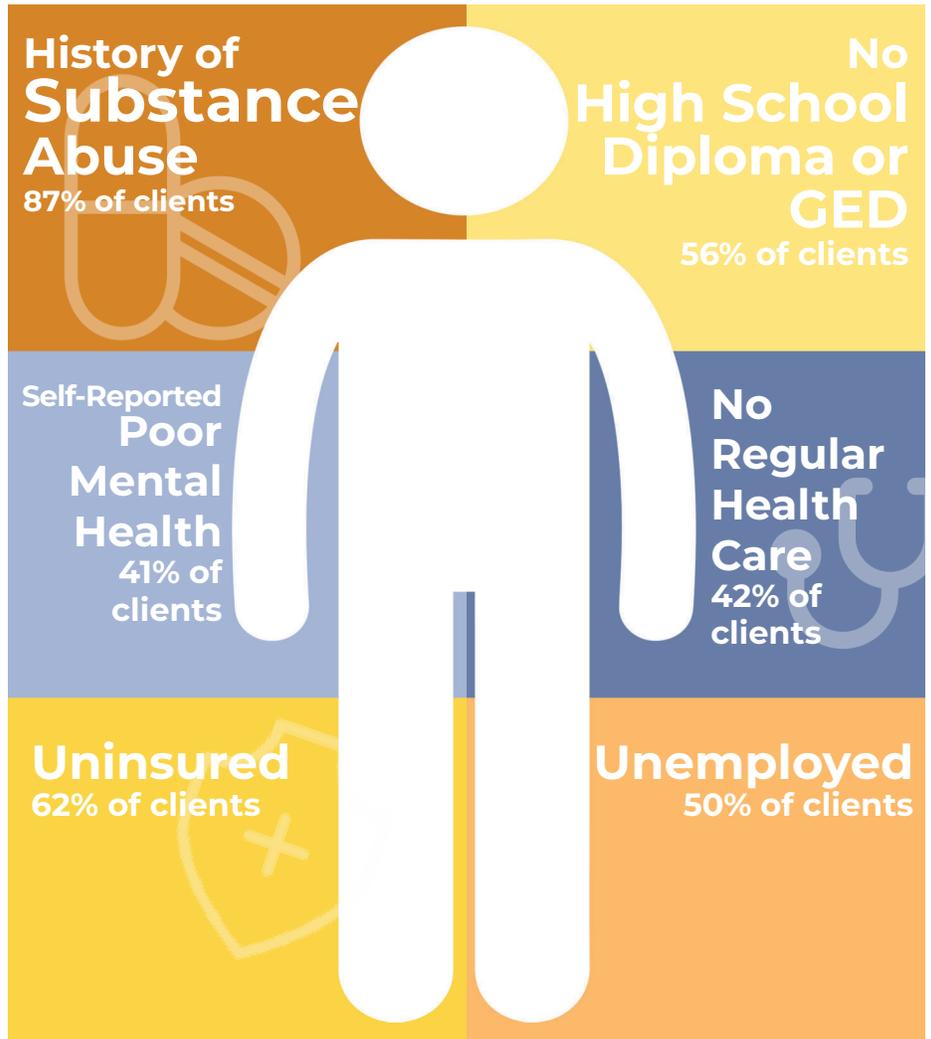
This report details successes, challenges, and recommendations based on RELINK's first two years*.

Who are our clients?



BARRIERS FOR RELINK CLIENTS

RELINK clients face numerous challenges. Without support these challenges increase the risk of returning to jail or even death.



RELINK Who's Who

Three key groups support RELINK clients' successes:

Community Health Workers (CHWs) - Assist clients before and after release

Integrated Health Network (IHN) - Manages the RELINK grant and employs CHWs

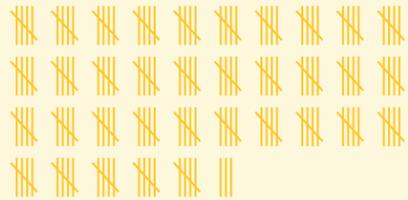
Health and Social Services Network (HSSN) - 20+ partners who provide essential services to RELINK clients

*Report timeframe: February 6, 2017 - September 30, 2018

Stage 1: Pre-Release

CHWs connect with jailed individuals, enroll them, and provide multifaceted support.

95 clients have been enrolled in RELINK



Clients spend an average of **162 days in** pre-release (eligible for release).

PRE-RELEASE SUPPORT SERVICES

On average, CHWs spend **50 hours** in St. Louis jails every month.

Emotional Support & Trauma-Informed Activities

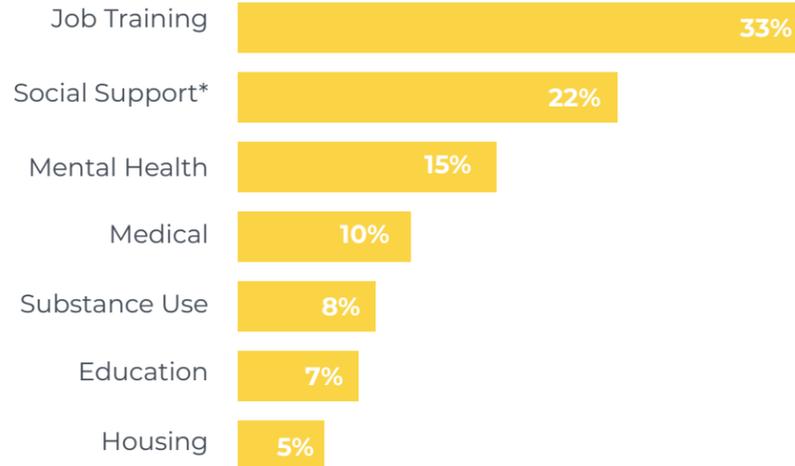
- Release Readiness Classes
 - About RELINK
 - Empowerment
 - Goal Setting
 - Employment
 - Accountability
 - Community Resources
 - Substance Abuse
 - Trauma

Courtroom Advocacy

Stage 2: Post-Release

CHWs empower clients' successful reentry by providing service referrals, health education, and training.

CLIENTS UTILIZE WRAPAROUND SUPPORT UPON REENTRY



*Social Supports include the Social Security Office, parenting, family supports

"The RELINK staff is hardworking and inspirational for us — that helps us get our lives back on track after incarceration. I'm truly thankful for the program." - RELINK client

72% of appointments made are kept

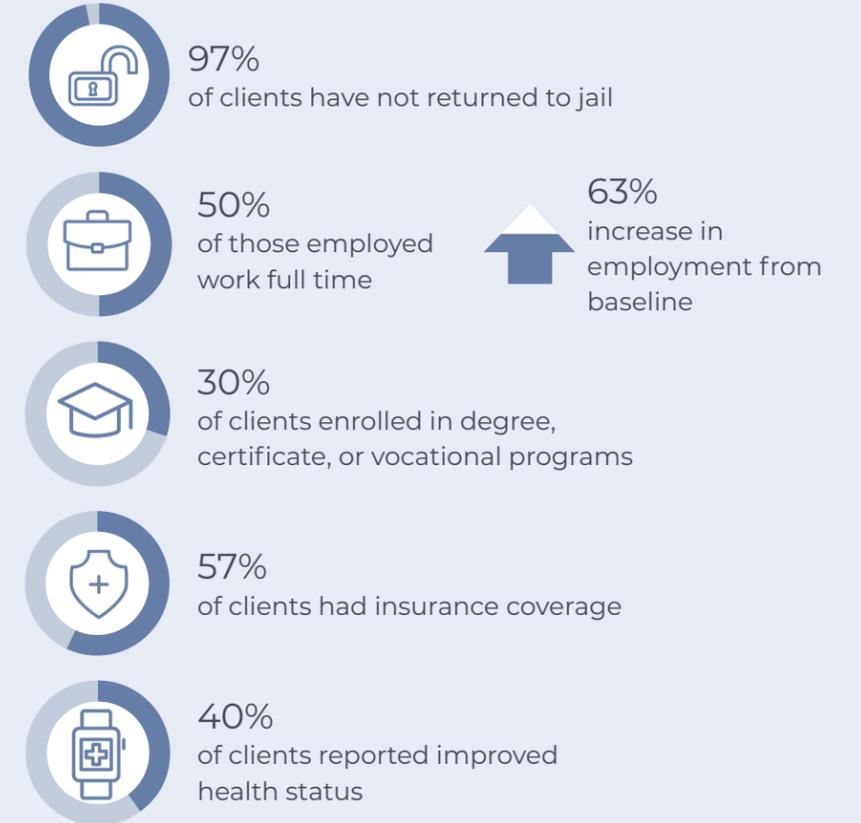
POST-RELEASE SUPPORT

CHWs host monthly workshops for released clients to work on their goals and learn about community resources.

Follow-Up & Outcomes

CHWs provide ongoing support to clients and continually make an impact on clients' lives.

"If I didn't join the RELINK program, I wouldn't be on the path to greatness. From the physical help to motivation, the Community Health Workers and the rest of the IHN staff have been a great help." - RELINK client



- Pre-Release Highlights:**
 - CHWs leverage administrative processes within jails to improve program coordination.
 - CHWs expand the available capacity for reentry support.
 - RELINK receives the support of correctional leadership for reentry and anti-recidivism programming.

- Challenges:**
 - A lack of data infrastructure and information sharing across reentry leads to gaps in coverage and support.
 - CHWs, Reentry Case Managers and Discharge Planner have limited capacity to meet the large volume of client needs.

- Post-Release Highlights:**
 - HSSN and broader partners build capacity to serve young adults on demand.
 - The network of providers helps to increase and maintain client accountability.
 - Providers preserve the dignity of clients, increasing overall wellness.

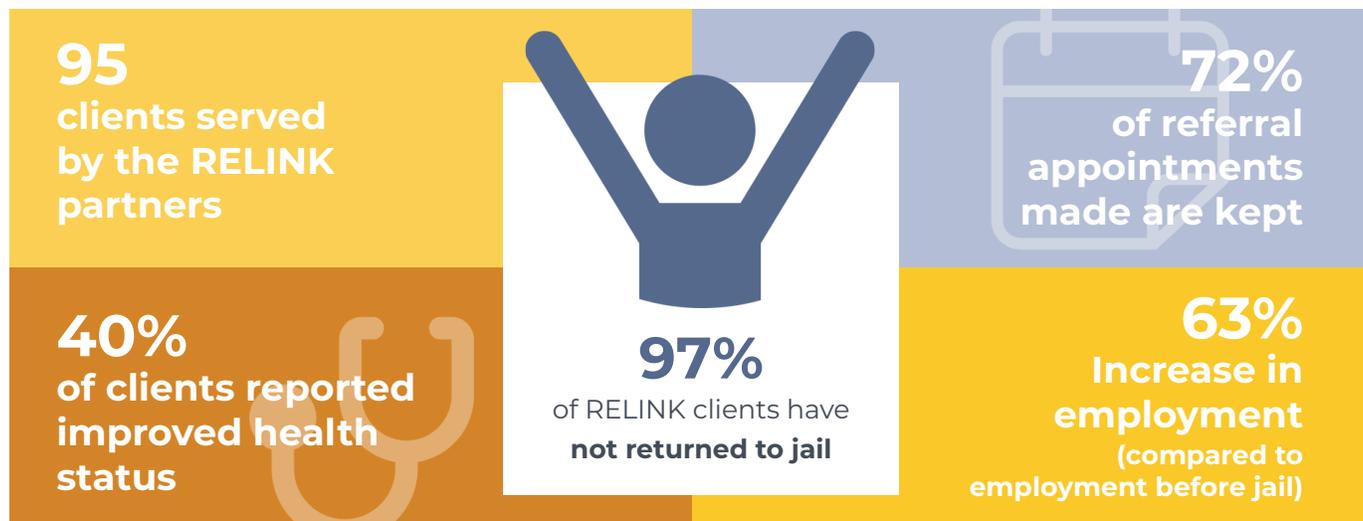
- Challenges:**
 - There are few options for safe, long-term housing.
 - There are limited inpatient mental and behavioral health treatments for uninsured and under-insured clients.
 - Clients have few choices in health and social services due to community supervision requirements.

- Follow-Up Highlights:**
 - RELINK clients report feeling empowered to seek resources.
 - Service providers from multiple industries (e.g., health, criminal justice, public benefits and resources) collaborate to respond to clients quickly and support their reentry.

- Challenges:**
 - Current CHW workforce is limited in its ability to serve clients long-term.
 - Clients' individual and social barriers impact CHWs' ability to maintain contact with them.

RELINK SUCCESSES

RELINK helps justice-involved individuals achieve meaningful results.



LESSONS LEARNED

RELINK is in its third year. Here's what we've learned about effective reentry programming:

- Health is often overlooked in reentry programming, but supporting a client's health is a critical aspect of keeping them out of jail.
- When the criminal justice system, health, and social service systems work together, we save costs and improve community safety. However, we still need to improve client trust and service utilization.
- A focus on preventative services, such as mental health, housing, and education for people ages 18-26 could reduce system costs and improve the overall health of the community.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Ask your organization to advocate for and sustain the following strategies:

- Develop diverse funding sources to sustain and expand successful deflection, diversion, and re-entry strategies and programs.
- Develop multifaceted diversion systems for justice-involved individuals with robust partnerships that maintains continuous access to essential supports such as housing, mental health services, life skills/job training.
- Support the reform of policy, practice, and strategic change for criminal justice and policing systems.
- Promote and prioritize trauma-informed and culturally sensitive organizational and institutional practices.



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