



Community Reinvestment in Colorado

(October 2018)

In 2015, CCJRC began a re-visioning process because we felt that our founding mission of *ending mass incarceration in Colorado* was not expansive enough. First, we believed that it was the overuse of the entire criminal justice system, not just incarceration, which needed to be rebalanced. Our new safety vision included a much more robust (and funded) role for the community to improve the quality of life in those communities that have been so harmed by over-criminalization and mass incarceration.

We call that strategy Community Reinvestment. There are currently three Community Reinvestment initiatives in effect in Colorado that provides funding for community-based reentry, crime prevention, and victim services. All of these bills had bi-partisan sponsorship and no opposition. Each of these initiatives uses a community-facing intermediary to manage the funding program to better ensure that the money reaches deeply into communities most impacted.

Reentry Grant Program-known as WAGEES

CCJRC's first Community Reinvestment initiative was [HB14-1355](#) that created the first community-based grant program to support people leaving prison through comprehensive reentry services. The nonprofit [Latino Coalition for Community Leadership](#) (LCCL) was selected to manage the grant program. HB14-1355 initially provided \$500,000 for the grant program that grew to \$1.7m annually through other legislative efforts by CCJRC that funded seven nonprofit organizations that provide reentry services in nine communities. In the fall of 2017, the Department of Regulatory Agencies conducted an [independent evaluation](#) and strongly recommended reauthorization of the grant program. During the 2018 legislative session, not only did the reauthorization bill pass ([HB18-1176](#)) but funding was more than tripled to an annual appropriation of \$5.7 million with another sunset review in 5 years. The expansion of funding will allow LCCL to add ten additional community partners and pilot a specific reentry program for higher needs women based on a medical home model. Several of the Executive Directors and approximately 60% of the WAGEES case managers were formerly incarcerated and their leadership has dramatically changed the field of reentry in Colorado. The WAGEES grant program was also the subject of an [analysis](#) by the Urban Institute in Washington, DC.

Crime Prevention Pilot in N. Aurora & SE Colorado Springs-known as Transforming Safety

In 2017, [HB17-1326](#) was signed into law which enacted substantial parole reforms that reduced the amount of time someone could go back to prison on a technical parole violation and redirected \$4m a year in savings to the creation of a crime prevention initiative piloted in North Aurora and South East Colorado Springs. Funding is provided for a grant program to provide direct services and capital for small business lending. The state Department of Local Affairs provides overall oversight. [The Denver Foundation](#) and the [Pikes Peak Community Foundation](#) manage the grant program and the Latino Coalition for Community Leadership provides technical assistance to grantees and manages data collection/evaluation. Two [Community Development Financial Institutions](#) manage the small business lending program, namely [Accion](#) in Colorado Springs and [Community Enterprise Development Services](#) in Aurora. Additionally, the legislation required that a

Local Planning Team made up of residents and others with direct community ties determine the crime prevention priorities that would inform the grant guidelines. By early 2018, each Local Planning Team had completed it's work and established the following priorities.

N. Aurora Crime Prevention Priorities

1. Support adults and youth who are or have been involved in the criminal justice system in order to reduce recidivism or incidence of reoffending.
2. Help youth (up to age 25) develop the skills and resilience to avoid, reduce, or stop high risk behaviors that can lead to involvement with the criminal justice system.
3. Reduce/prevent crime affecting the most vulnerable people in the North Aurora community, with a particular focus on people experiencing homelessness, immigrants, victims of sexual assault, and victims of sex trafficking.
4. Increase academic achievement by reducing rates of school suspension, expulsion, and referrals to law enforcement, with a particular emphasis on students of color.

SE Colorado Springs Crime Prevention Priorities

1. Support adults and youth who are or have been involved in the criminal justice system in order to reduce recidivism or incidence of reoffending.
2. Help youth (up to age 25) develop the skills and resilience to avoid, reduce, or stop high risk behaviors that can lead to involvement with the criminal justice system.
3. Address systemic causes of economic, racial, and academic disparities.
4. Improve community-based supports to reduce violence and neglect in families.

In early June 2018, the first round of [grants was awarded](#) and a second grant cycle will be completed in the fall of 2018. More detailed information is available at the [Transforming Safety website](#) and [video](#).

Crime Survivor Grant Program

In April 2018, CCJRC released its report entitled, [Victim's Speak](#), that published the results of a survey of 500 crime survivors in the Denver metro area, with an oversampling of victims of color. One of the key findings was the lack of community-based support services, particularly evident for men, people of color, and young adults. Based on these findings, CCJRC worked with bipartisan legislators to pass [HB18-1409](#) that created a community grant program for victim services that is housed in the state Department of Public Health & Environment-not a criminal justice agency. The Latino Coalition for Community Leadership was selected to manage the grant program which will target survivors who are men, people of color and young adults. The legislation also specifies that grantees may not deny services to anyone for not reporting the crime, not participating in any prosecution, or other variables like length of time since victimization, or the location of the victimization. This grant program will have a sunset review in 5 years and \$850,000 is to be appropriated annually.