

Reentry Housing Options for Sex Offenders

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Overview

Housing Challenges for Persons Convicted of Sex Offenses

Vermont Department of Corrections

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JUSTICE CENTER

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
Collaborative Approaches to Public Safety

National **nonprofit, nonpartisan** membership association of state government officials

Represents **all three** branches of state government

Provides **practical** advice informed by **the best available evidence**



The National Reentry Resource Center

- The NRRC is a project of the CSG Justice Center and is supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.
- NRRC staff have worked with nearly SCA 600 grantees, including 40 state corrections agencies.
- The NRRC provides individualized, intensive, and targeted technical assistance training and distance learning to support SCA grantees.

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/>



- ✓ Please register for the monthly NRRC newsletter at:
<http://csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe/>
- ✓ Please share this link with others in your networks that are interested in reentry!

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About the Presenter

Dr. Kurt Bumby, PhD is a Senior Associate with the Center for Effective Public Policy. In this capacity he provides training and technical assistance nationwide to policymakers, administrators, and practitioners across disciplines to support sex offender management, prisoner reentry, and other court-based initiatives. In addition, he authors and coauthors various policy and practice briefs, training curricula, and written resources produced at the Center. Dr. Bumby received his doctoral degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has had a diverse career in the juvenile justice and adult criminal justice fields, maintaining roles as an administrator, clinician, consultant, and researcher.



Housing Challenges for Persons Convicted of Sex Offenses

Dr. Kurt Bumby

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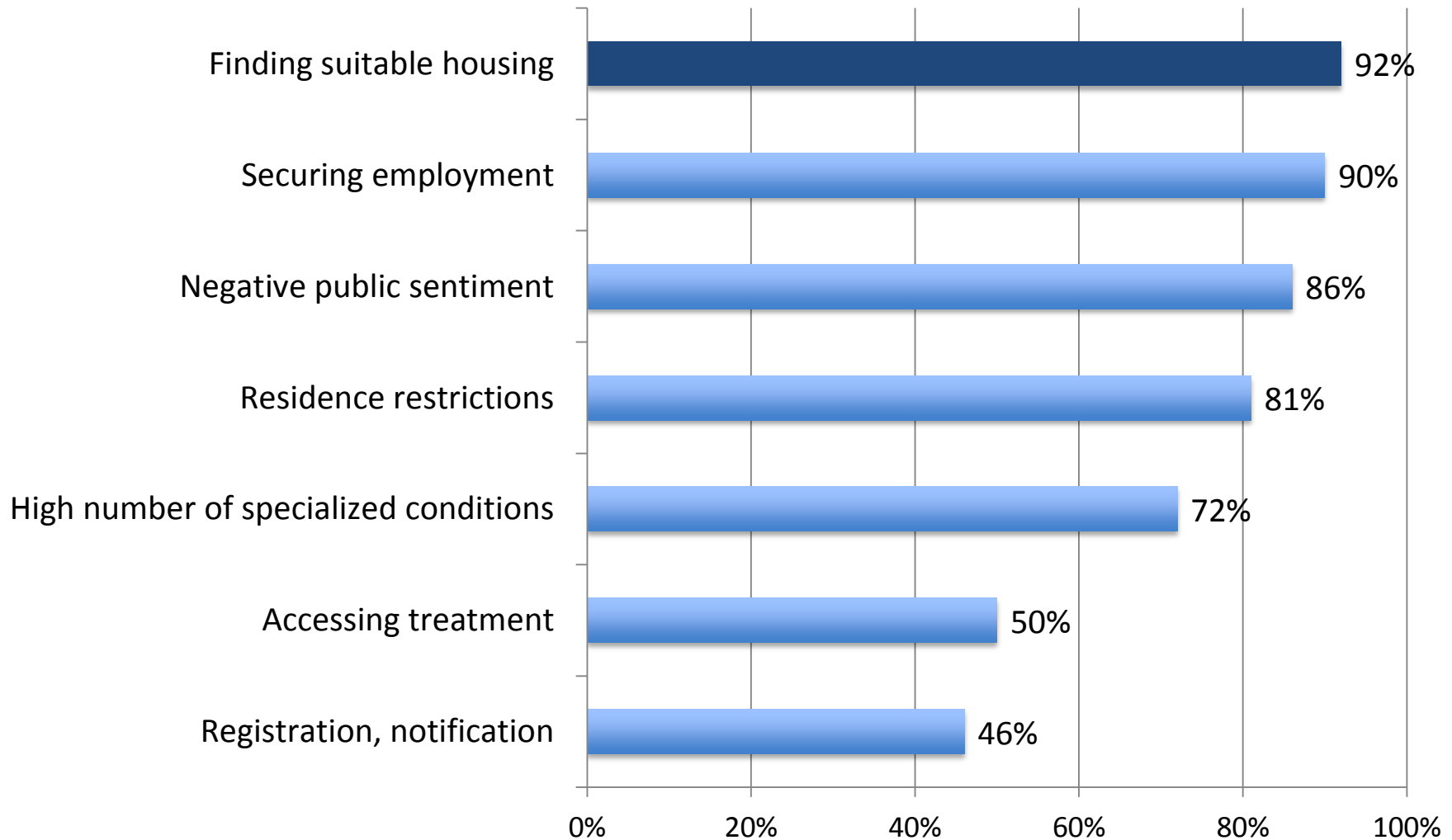
Keys to Successful Reentry (and Public Safety) for Individuals Convicted of Sex Offenses

- Empirically-grounded assessments to guide case management
- Sound transition and release plans
- Risk-need based interventions
 - Institutional and/or community based
 - Sex offense specific treatment
 - Other risk-reducing programs, services
- Balanced, change-promoting supervision strategies
- Accurate monitoring, tracking

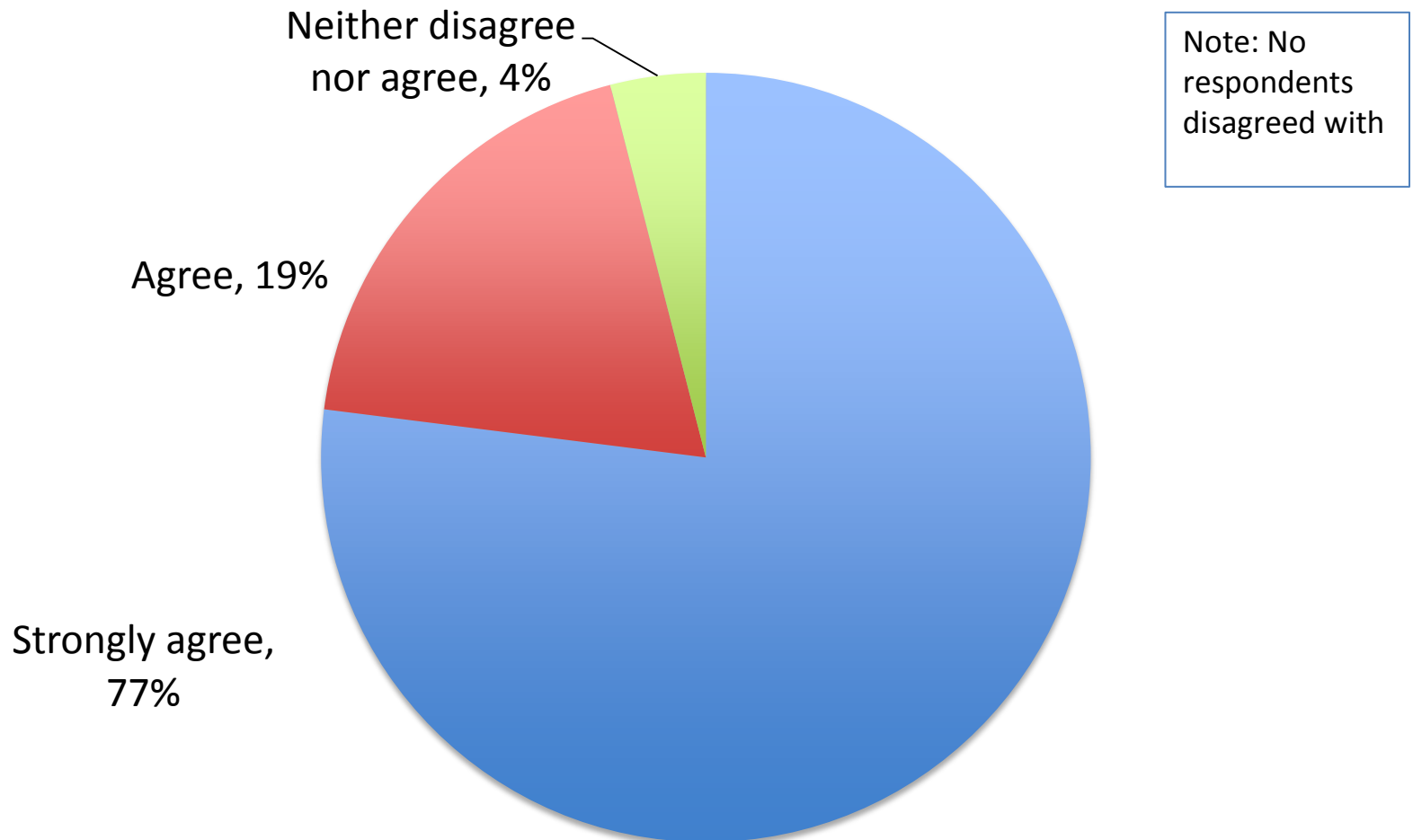
Keys to Successful Reentry (and Public Safety) for Individuals Convicted of Sex Offenses (cont.)

- Research-informed laws, policies
- Victim-responsive policies, strategies
- Social ties, community supports
- Prosocial activities
- Stable, suitable employment
- *Stable, suitable, affordable housing*

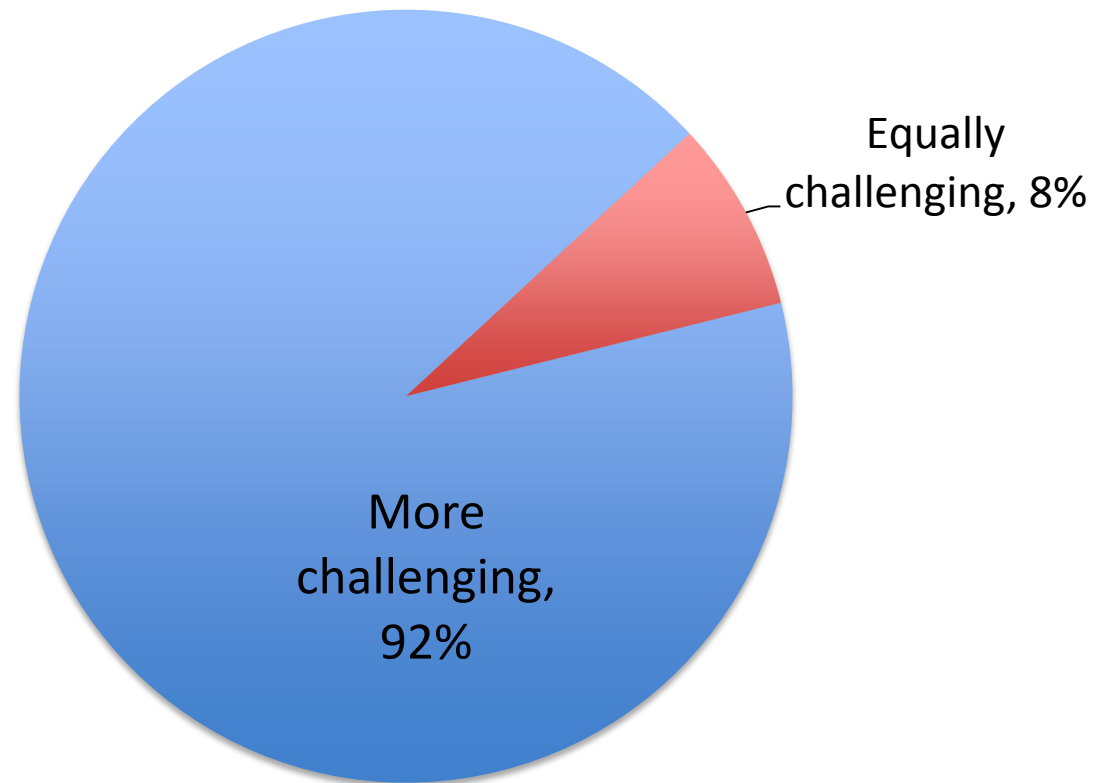
Practitioners' Perceptions of Most Significant Reentry Barriers for Sex Offenders



“Finding suitable housing for sex offenders is a significant problem in my jurisdiction.”



“Compared to non-sex offenders, how challenging is it for sex offenders to find suitable housing in your jurisdiction?”

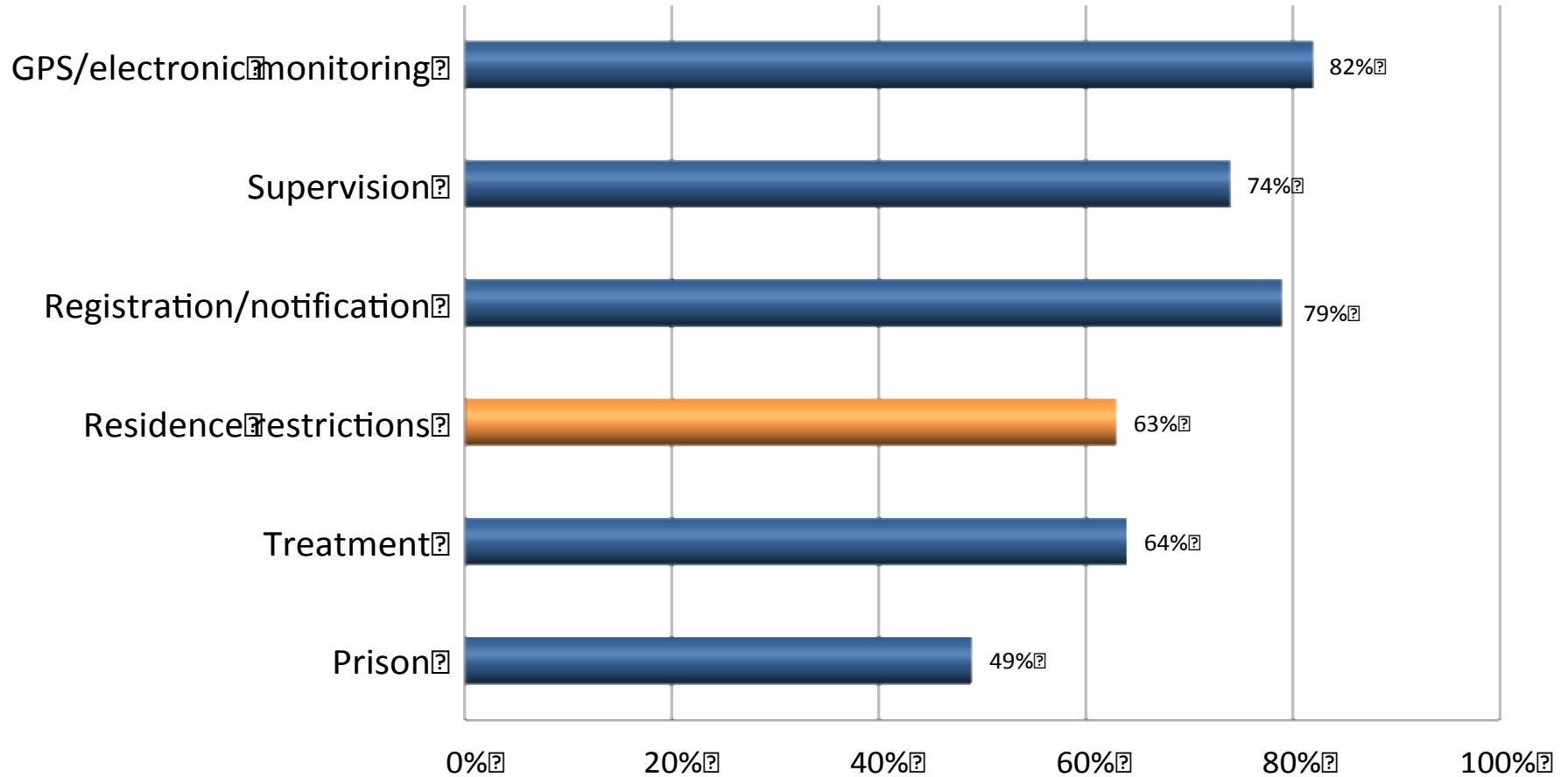


Note: None of the respondents endorsed “less challenging.”

Reported Barriers to Housing for Individuals Convicted of Sex Offenses

- Negative community sentiment
- Limited awareness among various stakeholders about this population and “what works” (and what doesn’t)
- Limited collaboration between and among institutional and community-based stakeholders
- Limited resources
 - Agency
 - Individual
 - Housing options
- Non evidence-based laws, policies
 - Housing exclusion policies that are solely offense-based
 - Residence restrictions

Public Perceptions about Effectiveness of Various Sex Offender Management Strategies



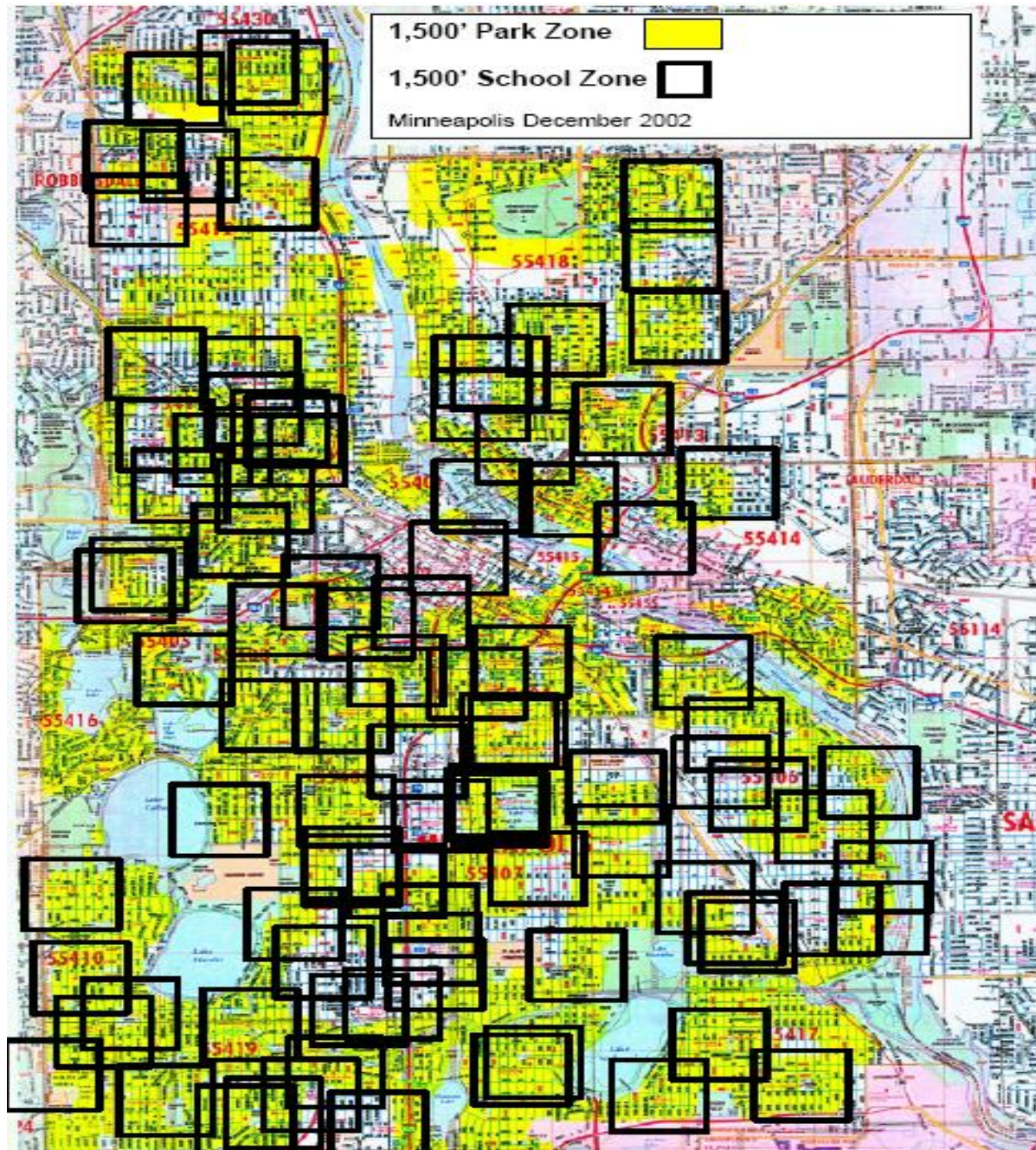
(CSOM, 2010)

Well-Intended Policies Are Not Always Well-Informed

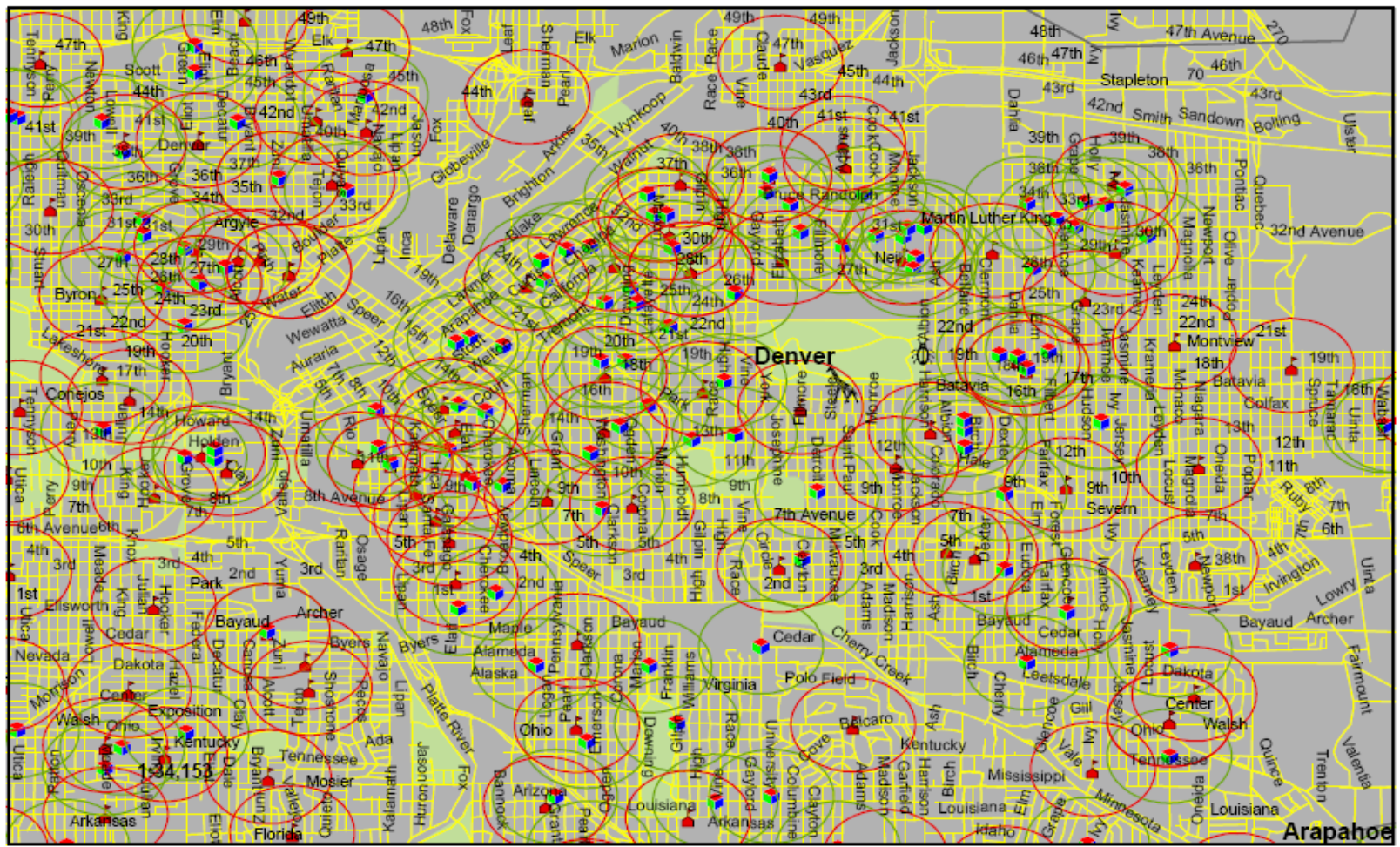
- May look good
- May sound good
- May feel good
- May make intuitive sense
- May or may not be effective

Research on Residence Restrictions and Geographical Proximity: Key Findings

- No evidence of deterrent effect pre- vs. post-implementation of residence restriction laws
 - No significant difference in trends for sex crime-related charges or arrests
- No difference in recidivism pre- and post-implementation of residence restriction laws
- No evidence of link between residential/geographical proximity and recidivism
- Evidence of increased risk-related factors



Map 2a: 2000 Foot Buffers Around Denver County Schools and Child Care Facilities



Colorado Division of Criminal Justice
Sex Offender Management Board
March, 2004



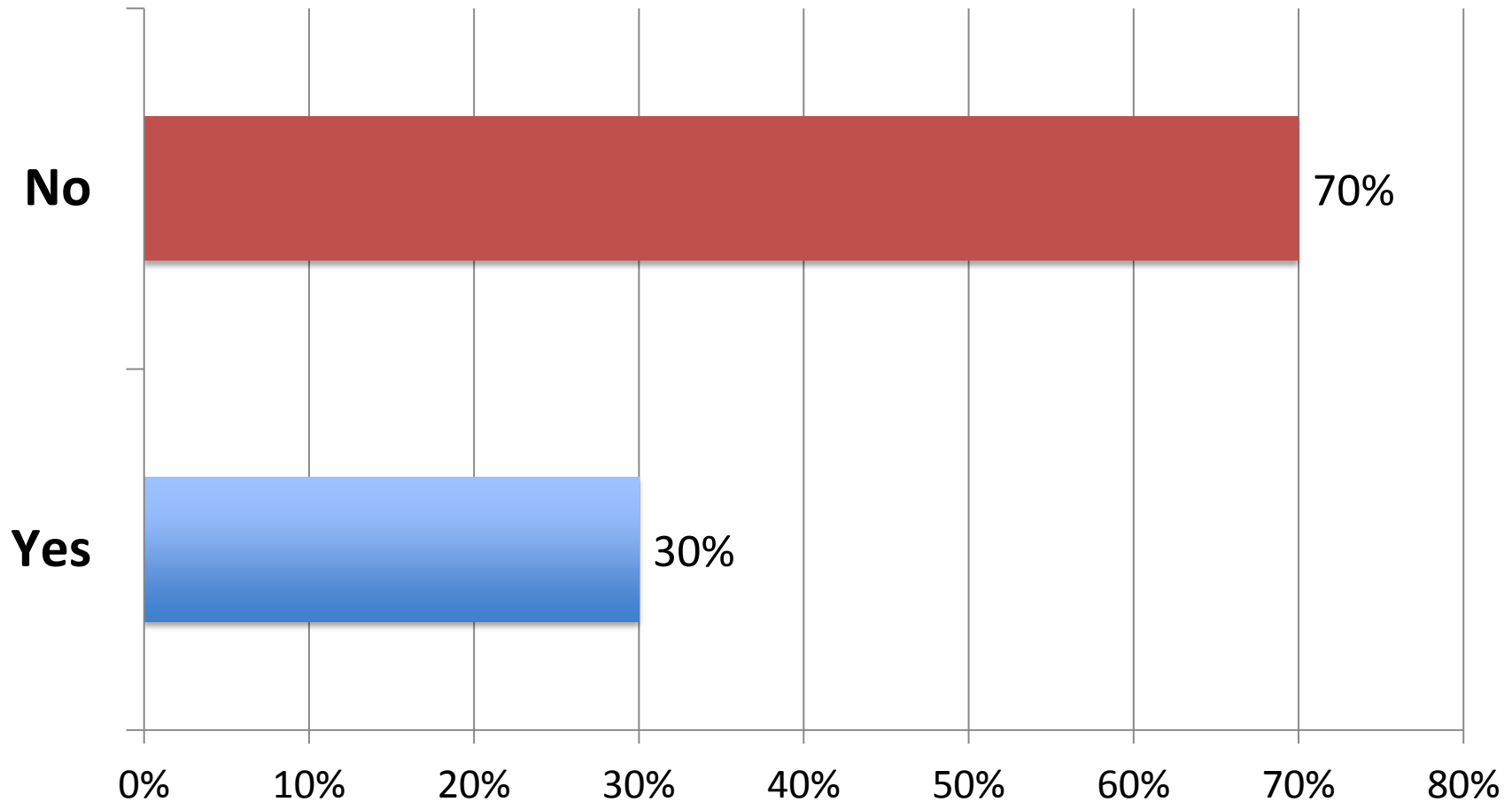
Impact of Housing Barriers

- Extended incarceration because of unsuitable release plans
- Displacement to disadvantaged locations
- “Clustering,” density
 - Specific residential properties
 - Jurisdictions, communities
- Homelessness, transiency
- Inaccurate residence, registry listings
- Covertly residing in prohibited locations
- Tracking, monitoring, enforcement difficulties
- Supervision challenges

Impact of Housing Barriers (cont.)

- Questions about victim access, protection
- Limited, lack of access to treatment
- Social isolation, lack of community supports
- Reduced opportunities for prosocial activities
- Limited employment opportunities, unstable employment
- Financial hardship
- Increased technical violations
- Potentially increased recidivism risk, decreased public safety

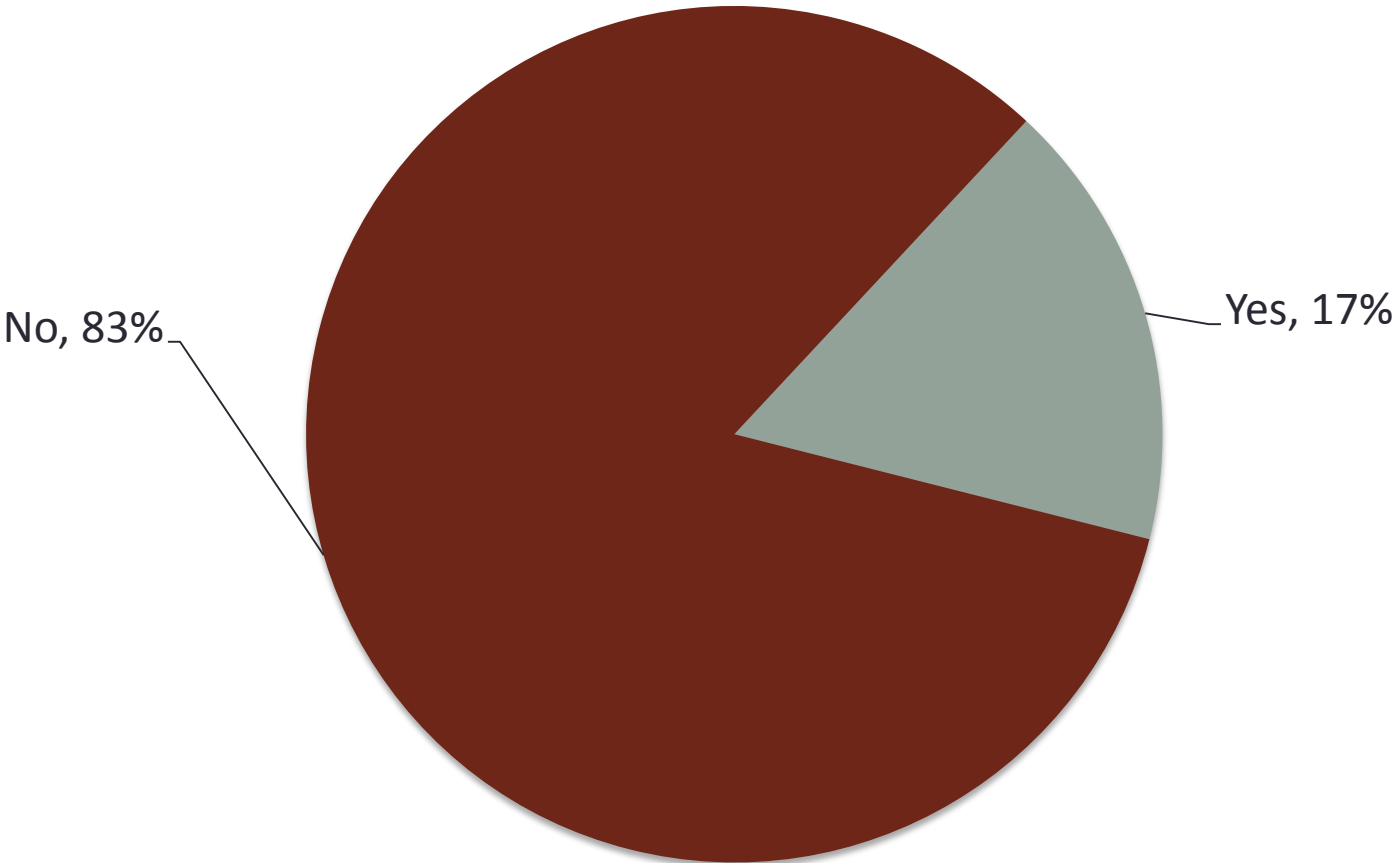
“Have you and/or your organization developed promising ideas or strategies to offset housing-related barriers faced by sex offenders in your jurisdiction?”



Stage of Planning or Implementation with Housing-Related Strategies for Sex Offenders



“Are you aware of innovative or promising strategies to address housing-related challenges with sex offenders in other jurisdictions?”



Opportunities to Promote Suitable Housing to Increase Successful Reentry

- Redeploy existing resources
- Explore transitional housing, shared living arrangements
- Provide housing vouchers, time limited rental assistance
- Reconsider, modify residence restrictions
- Promote education, awareness, engagement
 - Legislators, lawmakers (federal, state, local)
 - Agency managers, practitioners
 - The public
 - Housing officials
 - Other community stakeholders
- Identify, incentivize, support housing providers
- *Learn from others about promising strategies*

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About the Presenters

Derek Miodownik has been a professional practitioner in conflict transformation and restorative justice for the past 20 years. Presently, he is the community and restorative justice executive for the Vermont Department of Corrections, where he oversees the state's extensive network of partnerships with community justice centers and transitional housing providers. During his tenure, Vermont's Circles of Support and Accountability program has grown into a nationally leading model. Before moving to Vermont, Miodownik was the implementing director of the Red Hook Youth Court, a program of the Red Hook Community Justice Center/Center for Court Innovation in Brooklyn, New York.

Elizabeth Whitmore is a life-long Vermonter, and has been active in the field of housing since she graduated from the University of Vermont in 2004. Liz joined the State of Vermont as a Corrections Housing Coordinator in 2013. Prior to that she provided direct service at the Committee on Temporary Shelter and program administration at the Burlington Housing Authority, with a concentration on subsidized housing for special populations. Liz also served as a volunteer on the Board of Directors of Dismas of Vermont, a statewide organization which provides housing and reconciliation to formerly incarcerated individuals.

HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS FOR SEXUAL OFFENSES

Vermont Department of Corrections, April 2016

Vermont Department of Corrections

- 2,026 individuals incarcerated
- 7,863 individuals supervised in the community
- 850 on conditional reentry/furlough
 - **Based on a June 30, 2015 headcount*
- Average cost= **\$62,224** per year of incarceration
- Around 150 inmates are held past their minimum sentence due to lack of approved housing, 1/3 of those are serving a sentence for sex crime convictions

Vermont is Unique

- Vermont DOC sits within the broader Agency of Human Services
- Vermont operates as a unified department to manage offenders throughout their terms of custody, across incarceration and field supervision. Even while incarcerated, a sentenced inmate has both an onsite caseworker and an assigned field officer to coordinate the planning of the individual's case.
- Legislative support for Restorative Justice (RJ policy enacted in 2000)

Transitional Housing Overview

- The Vermont DOC funds approximately 325 transitional housing beds across the state
- DOC-funded transitional housing began in 2004 in response to a legislative priority of reducing over crowding in Vermont facilities and the reliance on out of state prison beds
- Since then our budget and available beds have grown ten-fold, funded primarily with State general fund dollars
- Average cost= **\$21,900** per year of transitional housing

- Programs vary widely in type (congregate houses vs scattered site apartments), level of structure and services provided
- Target populations → Offenders returning to the community from incarceration, or those supervised in the community at risk of reincarceration due to instable housing
- Most participants are supervised on Furlough/Conditional Reentry status
- Rental assistance ends on or before the date a participant “maxes out” of DOC supervision

Community Justice Centers

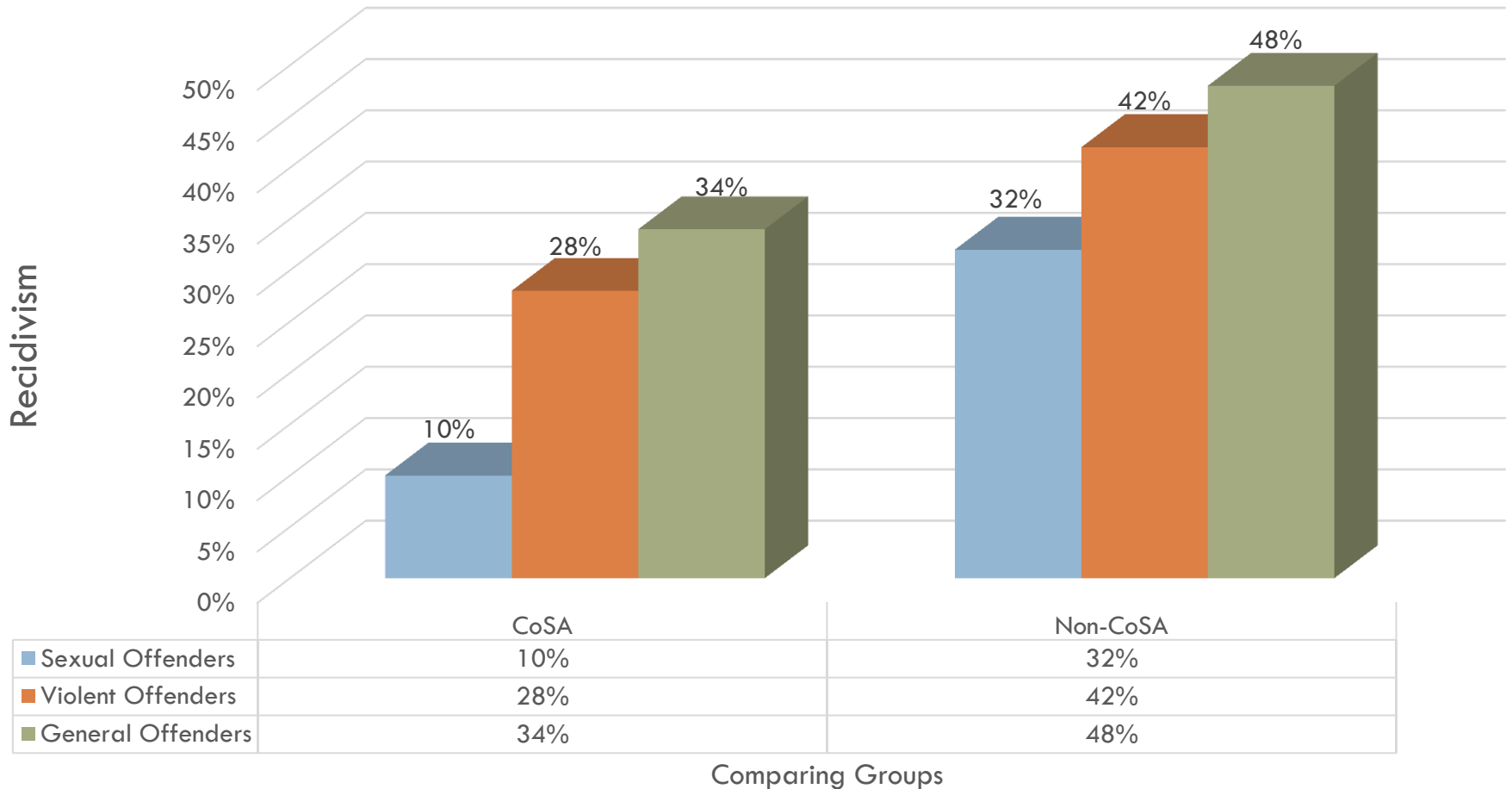
- Municipally-based centers for citizen involvement in addressing the conflict stemming from crime
- Provide an array of restorative services
- Currently 21 Centers/Programs (municipally based and/or non-profit organizations)
- Community Justice Network of Vermont

Circles of Support & Accountability (CoSA) in Vermont

- CoSA is a supervision and restorative reentry strategy that works with moderate to high-risk offenders
- A CoSA consists of 3-5 trained and supervised volunteers who enter into structured, voluntary and mutual relationship with an individual reentering the community after incarceration

- VT DOC provides the financial resources and practice standards through centrally-managed grants, and the referrals through local Probation & Parole offices
- CJs recruit, train and supervise citizen volunteers to legitimize the ***social contract*** and ensure compliance with conditions of release (***legal contract***)
- Goal of CoSA → **NO MORE VICTIMS**
- **58** new core members engaged in FY15

Comparing CoSA vs Non-CoSA



■ Sexual Offenders ■ Violent Offenders ■ General Offenders

Housing with CoSA

- CoSA combined with rental assistance began to take shape around 2010
- In FY15, **13** individuals with previous sexual offenses were supported with transitional housing + CoSA
- Dr. Kathy Fox (UVM) publishes qualitative research on VT CoSA program (2013). DOC/UVM CoSA recidivism study underway.

Program Highlight #1 (*St Albans*)

- All participants participate in CoSA or Reintegration Circles as well as case management and employment services

- Participants begin in a 4 bedroom shared apartment
 - ▣ Weekday staff onsite
 - ▣ Weekly dinner and house meetings

- Transition to 1-2 bedroom apartments

- Graduate to independent housing with continued case management as needed

Program Highlight #2 (*Montpelier*)

- All participants participate in CoSA
- Participants hold their own lease
- 3-6 months of rental assistance
- CJC acts as landlord support and liason, as needed

Why does this work?

- Social Capital
- Small communities
- Strong interconnectedness
- Culture of civic engagement
- Clear expectations

Contact Information

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About the Presenter

Paul Solomon is the executive director of Sponsors, Inc., an organization that has been providing reentry services to people with criminal histories in Eugene, Oregon, since 1973. Solomon was instrumental in the development of Sponsors' 72-bed, \$6 million reentry complex that opened in July 2010, and has spearheaded the organization's most recent \$9 million campaign to build a 54-unit apartment complex for people with criminal histories. He also serves as vice chair of the Lane County Public Safety Coordinating Council and is the chair of Lane County's Reentry Task Force. He was appointed by Governor Kitzhaber as a citizen member of the Governor's Reentry Council.

Homelessness and Halfway Houses: Special Look at Strategies for People Convicted of Sex Crimes



Paul Solomon
Executive Director, Sponsors Inc.

Sponsors History

- Founded by a group of Catholic Nuns and community activists in 1973.
- Began providing housing services in 1988, with a 5 bed halfway house.



Today the agency manages 15 buildings on 6 sites with a total 150 beds of transitional, long-term, and permanent housing for people with criminal histories



Target Population



- People releasing from state or county correctional facilities.
- Men and Women convicted as adults and assessed as moderate – very high risk.
- Priority Populations:
 - People convicted of sex offenses
 - Seniors (Oregon ranks #1 over 55)
 - Women with children
 - Veterans
 - People with disabilities and mental illness

Risk/Needs/Responsivity



- Triaging our resources to the highest risk
- Assessments → Service Delivery
 - LS/CMI (Risk Needs Assessment)
 - URICA (Stage of Change Assessment)
 - Specialized Assessments
- Identifying top criminogenic risk factors
- Addressing Responsivity Issues
- Aligning system resources to apply dosage
- Tracking dosage

Housing Models for People Convicted of Sex Crimes



Transitional Housing



Long-term Housing



Permanent Housing

Transitional Housing – Roosevelt Crossing

- Opened 2010 – LIHTC/ARRA/VA \$6 Million
- 47 residential units of housing with 74 beds
- 62 Beds of transitional housing (60-120 days); 12 beds of long term housing (1 yr)
 - SCA Mentoring Program – (500+ matches)
 - Reentry Resource Center – Jobs Program
 - Parenting Inside-Out Curriculum
 - Moral Reconciliation Therapy (Evidence Based CBT)
 - Veterans Grant and Per Diem (transitional)
 - Legal Clinic
 - Change Company Journals (skill building)

*Approximately 1/3 of Sponsors clients are people with sex offense convictions and are eligible for all of the programming above.

Roosevelt Crossing – Men’s Transitional Program



Resident rooms (w/full bathroom)



Resident Kitchens



Walk-in Fridge & Freezer



Onsite Parole Office



Honors Building



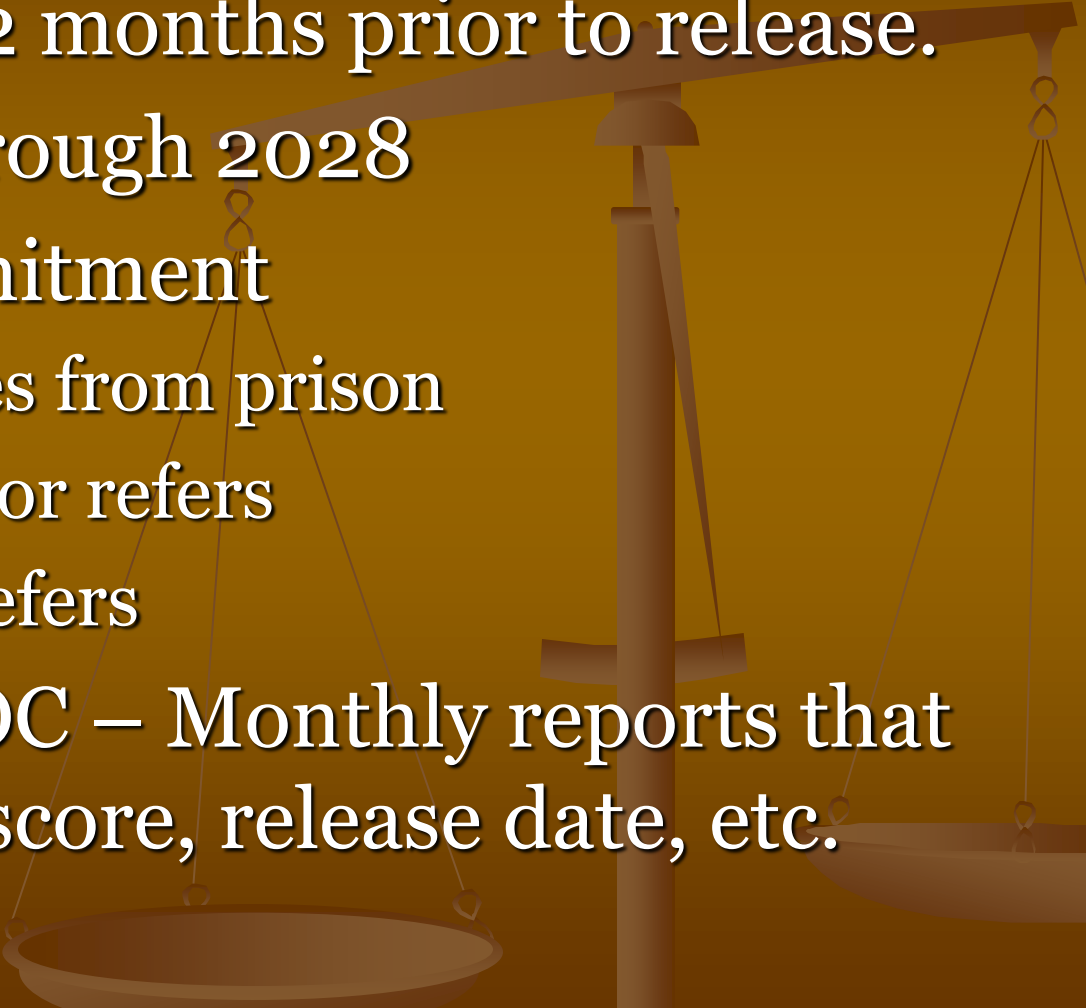
Fitness/Recreation Center



Administrative Offices and Conference Rooms



Screening Applicants

- Reach-ins 6 – 12 months prior to release.
 - Beds booked through 2028
 - Referrals: commitment
 - Individual writes from prison
 - Release counselor refers
 - Parole Officer refers
 - MOU' s with DOC – Monthly reports that include LSCMI score, release date, etc.
- 

Transitional Housing

- Average stay 60 – 120 days
- Clients are required to:
 - Check in with case manager twice daily
 - Submit to twice weekly drug tests +randoms
 - Put a minimum of 50% of earnings on acct.
 - Engage in programming as determined by risk/needs assessment and case plan.
- Working with PCOSO
 - Not segregated, offenses not disclosed.
 - Employment considerations
 - Team Meetings (case mgmt, PO, Tx Provider, et al)

Long Term Housing

- 10 units of permanent housing for men with sex offense convictions.
- Providing residence for sex offenders who have difficulty acquiring permanent, sustainable housing.
- Residents are employed, in school or are on disability and self-finance rents (\$350 a month)
- One on-site property manager



Zoning/NIMBY Issues



- Property appropriately zoned vs. process of re-zoning (public hearings).
- Outreach is essential regardless of zoning
- Location Priorities:
 - Close to public transportation, social services, P&P
 - Not in the middle of residential neighborhoods
- Outreach should begin ASAP
 - Neighborhood Association Meetings
 - Door to Door; Mail flyers
- Political Support (elected and public safety officials)
- Citizen Advisory Committees

The Oaks

- Partnership between Sponsors and Lane County's Housing Authority and Lane County Parole and Probation
- Scope – 54 units: One bedroom apartments for ex-offenders; Subsidized Rents; Total project cost: \$9,143,982
- Funding: Low Income Housing Tax Credits, SDC Waivers, private grants, donations and contributions from local government.

The Oaks – Permanent Housing



The Oaks



Operational Funding Sources

- Transitional Housing - \$35 a day (per bed)
 - CCA/JRI Contracts; VA GPD;
 - SCA Demonstration Project Grant
- Long-term Housing (1 FTE - \$35K Per yr)
 - Community Corrections Contract
- Permanent Housing (2 FTE - \$100K Per yr)
 - Oregon Justice Reinvestment
 - LIHTC Pro Forma/LLC
 - HUD/DOJ Pay For Success NOFA (add' tl FTE)



Sponsors



Q & A

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For more information, contact Maureen Richey (mrichey@csg.org) or Lahiz
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