



*A unified voice for community-based organizations in California prisons.*

## **CBO PROVIDED PROGRAMS CUT CDCR RECIDIVISM RATE IN HALF**

In February 2024, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) released [their latest recidivism report](#), indicating a decline in recidivism rates. **This positive trend is attributed by CDCR to the effects of recent criminal legal reforms, including the enactment of Proposition 57**, which has played a critical role in expanding rehabilitative programming in the prison system, highlighting the connection between comprehensive rehabilitation services and reduced recidivism. This report evaluates the impact of Proposition 57 over a three-year follow-up period, from 2018-2019 up to 2022, focusing on recidivism rates among those who participated in and completed rehabilitative programming.

One of the key components of Prop 57 is the expansion of credit-earning opportunities for incarcerated Californians, including what are known as Rehabilitative Achievement Credits (RAC). These credits allow incarcerated people to earn reductions in their sentences by participating in approved rehabilitative programs. According to CDCR,<sup>1</sup> RAC programs are “approved self-help and volunteer public service activities.” In practice, these programs are community-based organizations (CBOs) providing high-quality, rehabilitative programming within the California prison system.

### **Key Statistics:**<sup>2</sup>

- Participants in any form of programming showed a markedly lower recidivism rate (39.2%) compared to those with no enhanced credit earnings (45.6%).
- Those who earned Educational Merit Credits exhibited a recidivism rate of 26.1%.
- **Participants in programs eligible for Rehabilitative Achievement Credits (RAC) reoffended at a significantly lower rate of 21.1%.**

The data on RAC is particularly compelling, highlighting that rehabilitative programming supports the "California Model" by showing the real possibility of lowering the state's recidivism rates closer to that of the Nordic Systems, which have some of the lowest recidivism rates in the world.<sup>3</sup> **The findings from this report affirm the positive impact of Prop 57 and the critical role of CBO rehabilitative programming in lowering recidivism rates among incarcerated Californians.** These results support the case for continued investment in and expansion of CBO provided rehabilitative programs within the California prison system.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/proposition57/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/news/2024/02/13/cdcr-recidivism-report-finds-recidivism-rates-drop-2/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://bpr.studentorg.berkeley.edu/2022/10/25/what-can-we-learn-from-the-norwegian-prison-system/>