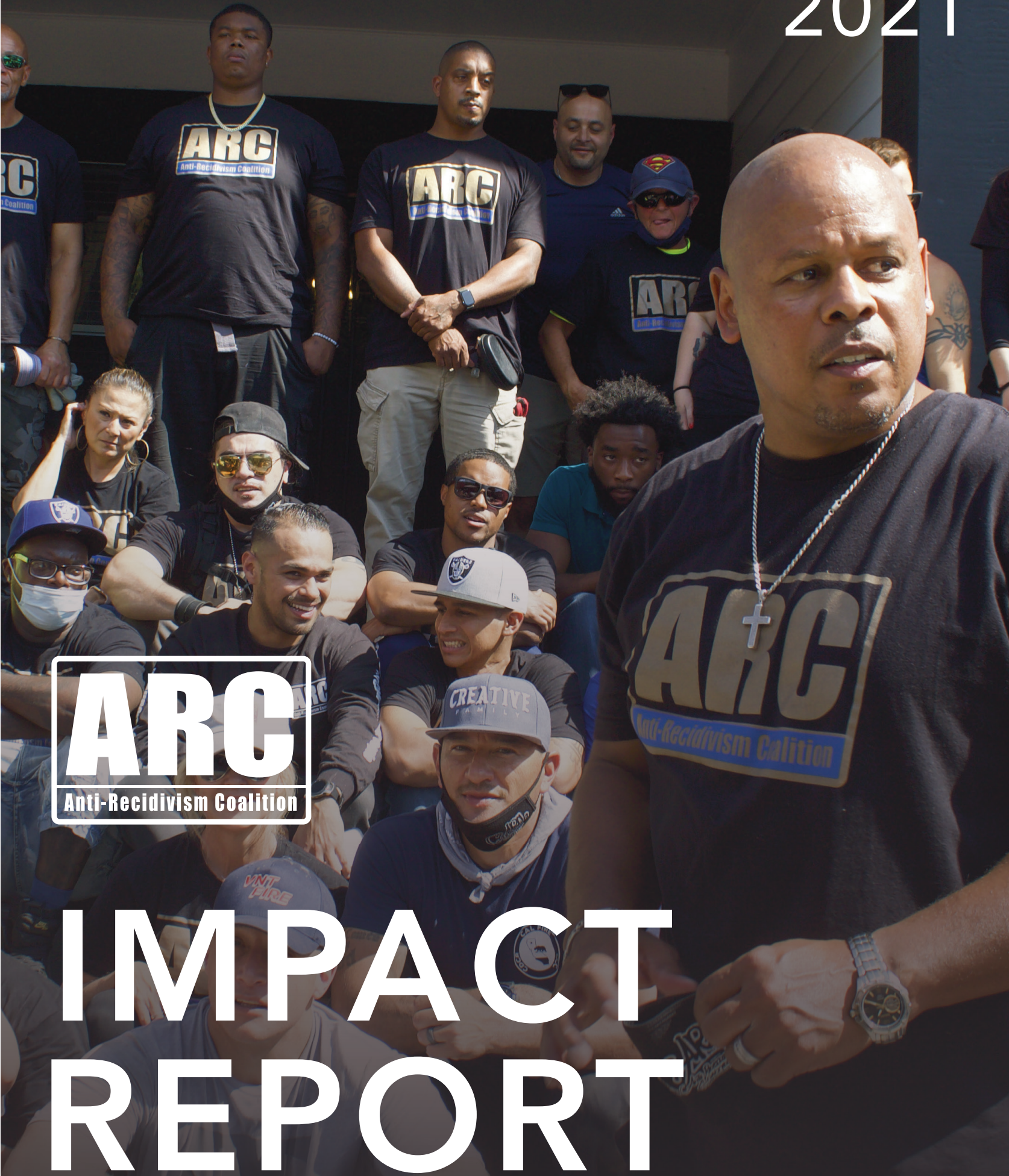


2021



**ARC**  
Anti-Recidivism Coalition

# IMPACT REPORT

# ARC



WORKS TO END **MASS INCARCERATION** AND CHANGE THE NARRATIVE AROUND **INCARCERATION** IN THE UNITED STATES.

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# OPENING LETTERS



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**SCOTT BUDNICK**  
Founder and Board Member

## FOUNDER LETTER

Almost 10 years ago, I founded the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, because I saw a great need to help currently and formerly incarcerated people – especially young people caught up in the system. What started off as an organization of 25 Members, has expanded to a network of more than 2,400 Members. I am so proud of where we've been – and where we're headed.

ARC's near-decade of work and service to the community has produced an array of vital and tangible results from thousands of lives impacted to 33 pieces of legislation passed, to hosting 20 retreats and wilderness experiences, providing housing for hundreds, and job placement for close to 300 people.

ARC's leadership during this decade has helped put criminal legal reform on the map. We ensured that incarcerated people were not forgotten during the height of the COVID pandemic, and we made systemic justice reform a central discussion in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder. We helped underscore the importance of narrative change, and put those with direct experience at the forefront of our work. We've had fun. We've had real impact. We've continually centered our work on the lived experience of those formerly and currently incarcerated, and we've made their story *the* story, so it never strays from what matters most.

But here's the thing.

Attention spans are short. News cycles are even shorter. Trends and political winds might suggest that our work is done – our victories are sufficient. This is not the case. Where we've succeeded and made a difference is just the beginning. Where we've changed laws, we'll surface the next slate of change we want to see. Where we've changed lives, we need to change millions more.

So, please enjoy this reflection and review of the progress we've made, the impact you've been a part of – and then strap in because we're going to expand our work and accelerate our pace in the months and years ahead. We want you there alongside us. We won't settle until we end mass incarceration and guarantee our communities are thriving -- and we can't do it without you. Thank you for being by our side these last 10 years and thank you in advance for being by our side for the next decade.

In Solidarity,

Scott Budnick  
Founder

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# OPENING LETTERS



**SAM LEWIS**  
Executive Director

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LETTER

Dear Friend,

I am grateful every day to serve as Executive Director of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition. As someone who spent more than two decades incarcerated, I can't imagine doing anything else with my days – with my life – than helping my brothers and sisters who are still inside and those who have come home like me. I believe I am successful because I worked hard, and because others believed in me, supported me, and rallied around me. I aim to do the same. I am so proud of ARC's staff (79% of whom are also formerly incarcerated) who work tirelessly to fundamentally transform our criminal legal system and create a world that is fairer and less punitive.

We achieved so much in 2021, and will accomplish even more in 2022. Despite the staggering burdens the pandemic brought to currently and formerly incarcerated people, we persisted. Today, we are serving more Members than ever before, have expanded a majority of our programs, and have scaled our policy work to include national legislation. Of all our accomplishments in 2021, I am personally the proudest of our expansion of the Hope & Redemption Team (HART), an initiative I founded in 2017 where former life prisoners go back into state prisons as life coaches to provide hope, demonstrate that redemption is achievable, and prepare participants for successful reentry into our communities. Our HART team will now be in every prison in California, and we are on track to serve 50,000 incarcerated people annually because of this expansion.

My life's mission is to help my community, and I know every one of our Members and allies shares this same commitment. Thank you for continuing to stand with us, for believing in our work, and for your support year after year. We're grateful to have you by our side.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel Lewis". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sam Lewis  
Executive Director



**The Anti-Recidivism-Coalition (ARC)** was founded in 2013, but its roots can be traced back to 2003, when founder, Scott Budnick, first stepped into Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall in Sylmar, California. Scott - a producer in the film industry - began volunteering with a writing workshop at a juvenile hall through the InsideOUT Writers program. Seated alongside incarcerated youth, some only 15-years-old, Scott learned that many of them were serving adult sentences. One young boy, in fact, was facing more than 200 years in prison. Through their writing, Scott learned of the life-changing decisions they had made, as well as the complex stories of their childhoods - often marked by trauma, violence, and neglect - that had led to those decisions.

As Scott's mentees were released from juvenile halls and prisons across California, he witnessed many of them struggling to find the resources and community support they needed for reentry. In response to their needs, Scott started a peer support network for formerly incarcerated young people - what is now the Anti-Recidivism Coalition. Before long, the small support group grew to an annual camping trip for a few

dozen individuals and supporters, and it has now grown into a statewide support and advocacy network of more than 2,400 Members and hundreds of volunteer mentors and allies.

Despite its growth, ARC's core mission is the same as it was nearly 10 years ago: to create a community in which credible messengers can drive systemic changes, both in California and across the country, based on their lived experiences in the criminal legal system. As we look toward the future, we are committed to an ambitious expansion of our resources for both formerly and currently incarcerated individuals, as well as advocacy for more compassionate and equitable policies in criminal justice at the local, state, and national levels. While we have big goals for our future, we know that the injustices we seek to correct and remedy are bigger, and that we can only begin to overcome them through the unified support of our Members, allies, donors, and volunteers.



# OUR MISSION

**ARC works to end mass incarceration and change the narrative around incarceration in the United States by elevating, mobilizing, and supporting those who have experienced incarceration.** To ensure our communities are safe, healthy, and whole, ARC empowers formerly and currently incarcerated people (Members) to thrive and achieve their highest aspirations. We provide resources such as a prosocial network, wraparound reentry services, and opportunities to advocate for systems change. Through our grassroots policy advocacy, we are dedicated to transforming the criminal legal system so that it is more just and equitable for all people.

We combine rehabilitative programming inside prisons and jails with a post-release supportive peer network and continuum of care to support individuals at every stage of their journey, from incarceration to release to freedom. With 79% formerly incarcerated staff who leverage their expertise as credible messengers, we walk alongside our members throughout their journey home. The efficacy of our approach is evidenced by our two-year recidivism rate of **less than 10% across our membership**—a rate that is remarkably low in comparison to a statewide recidivism rate of 60%.



**ARC WORKS TO END MASS  
INCARCERATION AND CHANGE THE  
NARRATIVE AROUND INCARCERATION  
IN THE UNITED STATES.**

# YEAR IN REVIEW

Since 2013, we've helped thousands of currently and formerly incarcerated individuals throughout California. But despite the infrastructure and experience we've built up over the years, nothing could have prepared us for the monumental changes that COVID-19 would bring to our work. The story of our last two years is the story of how our team, under the leadership of Executive Director Sam Lewis, leveraged our core values of deep listening and compassion to design new and impactful ways to reach our community.

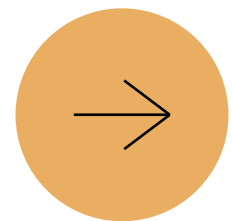


As a response to the pandemic, incarcerated men and women lost their privileges of having outside visitors. Programming, in-person self-help groups, education, and vocational programs came to a halt. Already isolated, the pandemic exacerbated challenging conditions inside so that those housed in prisons were acutely affected - mentally, socially, and physically - differently than those in the free world.

Our signature Hope and Redemption Team (HART) program, which was no longer able to provide weekly in-person programming inside 12 carceral facilities, responded to this new change by nimbly pivoting to print versions of our program that incarcerated Members would fill out and send back to

their ARC Life Coaches outside. We called them "in-cell study packets," and they helped us reach our community inside during a time when social isolation was at its peak. We also galvanized our supporters and allies to provide thousands of life-saving masks, bottles of hand sanitizer, and soap that we delivered to institutions for distribution inside.

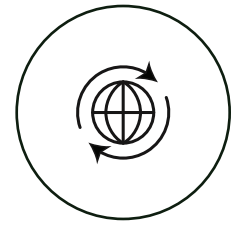
As the pandemic progressed, we worked with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), the Governor's office, and other organizations to monitor prison conditions and reduce crowding inside by decarcerating facilities. As a result of our efforts, over 10,000 incarcerated people were deemed eligible for early release and the California state prison population reached a 30-year low.





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# YEAR IN REVIEW



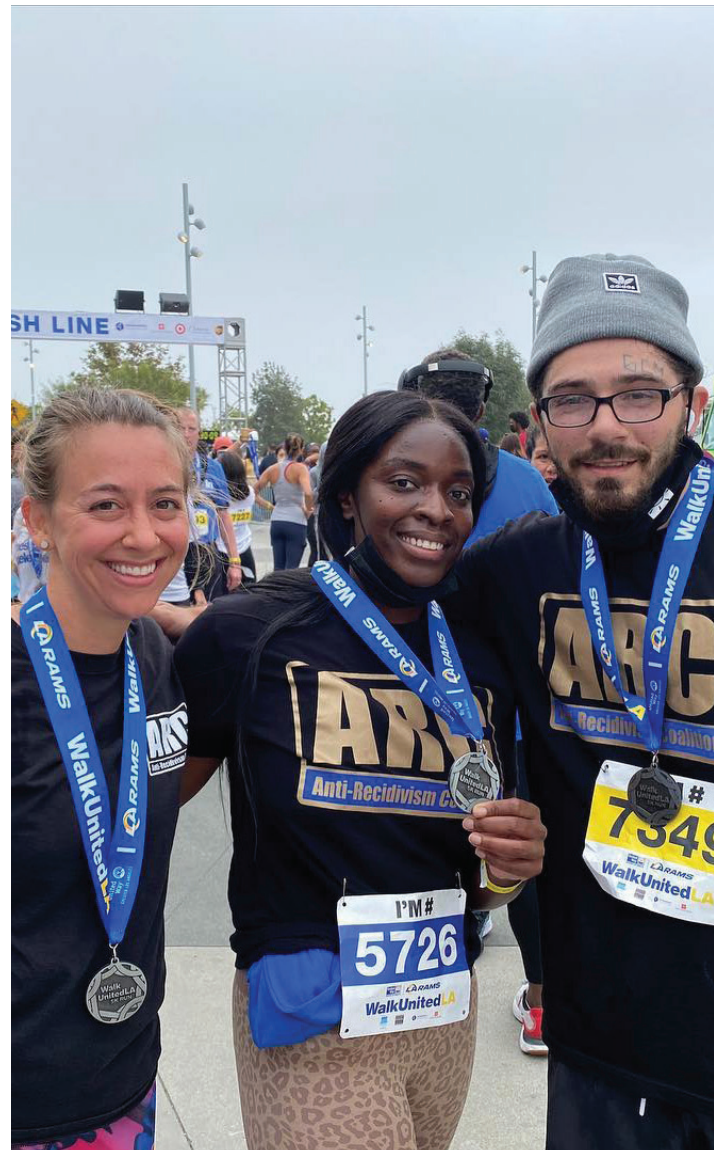
For those coming home, the road ahead is never easy. As the myriad challenges were exacerbated by the pandemic, we created a COVID Relief Fund alongside a coalition of partners to help Members pay their rent, car notes, and provide food for their families, among other financial needs.

We also worked tirelessly to create an online community for our Members, particularly those who were unemployed. It was difficult to navigate benefits programs during COVID, so we assisted our Members by pivoting our therapeutic services to the virtual space, increasing the number of clinical wellness staff, and even providing computers and wi-fi hotspots to help people bridge the digital divide. Although these last two years were some of our most challenging,

we're proud of how we learned, adapted, and expanded our services. We were motivated by an outpouring of support from our community of staff, Board, volunteers, and donors, who helped us navigate these unprecedented times. We had volunteers organize holiday toy drives, Board Members donate pallets of personal hygiene supplies to institutions, and dozens of Members help build a community garden at one of our transitional housing programs.

"Prior to joining ARC, I would have told you that camaraderie was just one among several important elements in an organization's makeup. As my journey at ARC transitions from an active member to an employee, I am realizing that mutual trust and friendship among all those connected to ARC is what makes it a successful and impactful organization. As a Community Health Worker for ARC, I create spaces for members who are integrating back into society to do so in a way that stimulates physical and mental well-being. The work that I do at ARC, reminds me daily that healthy community is a successful community. Thank you ARC."

**KEEAIRRA DASHIELL**





# ARC BY THE NUMBERS



## IN 2021, WE:

ENGAGED **869** MEMBERS CONSISTENTLY IN OUR SERVICES

PROVIDED **542** VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUP SESSIONS

PROVIDED **6,631** HOURS AND **23** MINUTES OF SERVICES

SERVED **576** HOPE AND REDEMPTION TEAM PARTICIPANTS

PROVIDED **802** RIDES HOME, AN INCREASE FROM 152 IN 2020

PROVIDED **1,432** THERAPY SESSIONS FOR 125 INDIVIDUALS

EMPLOYED **6** YOUTH POLICY FELLOWS/POLICY ADVOCATES

GRADUATED **84** INDIVIDUALS FROM THE SECOND CHANCE PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

ENGAGED **88** MENTORSHIP PARTICIPANTS (BARRY J. NIDORF JUVENILE HALL)

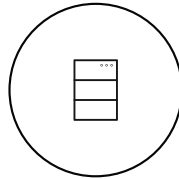
TRAINED **77** PEOPLE IN OUR VTC (VENTURA TRAINING CENTER) PROGRAM, A PARTNERSHIP OPERATED BY CALFIRE, CCC, CDCR, AND ARC

## SINCE OUR FOUNDING, WE:

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HAVE HOUSED **286** RESIDENTS  
IN OUR HOUSING SITES



HELPED PASS **33** CA STATE  
BILLS AND BALLOT MEASURES



HAVE HIRED **109**  
TOTAL STAFF MEMBERS

### OUR STAFF:

OF OUR **109** TOTAL STAFF MEMBERS,  
79% ARE PREVIOUSLY INCARCERATED AND  
87% ARE SYSTEM-IMPACTED.

### SECOND CHANCE PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM:

**340** GRADUATES SINCE  
THE PROGRAM'S INCEPTION

**241** JOB PLACEMENTS SINCE THE  
PROGRAM'S INCEPTION, WITH A PLACEMENT  
RATE OF 71%



TOTAL ARC MEMBERS: **2,453**  
**1,892** IN LA, **561** IN SACRAMENTO

# 2021 FINANCIALS

AT **\$15.4 MILLION**, ARC'S REVENUE IN CALENDAR 2021 INCREASED BY **43%**. GROWTH IN DOLLARS AND PARTNERSHIPS CAME FROM MORE AND **HIGHER-LEVEL DONATIONS**, NEW AND EXPANDED GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, COVID RELIEF SUPPORT, AND NEWLY FUNDED PROGRAMS.

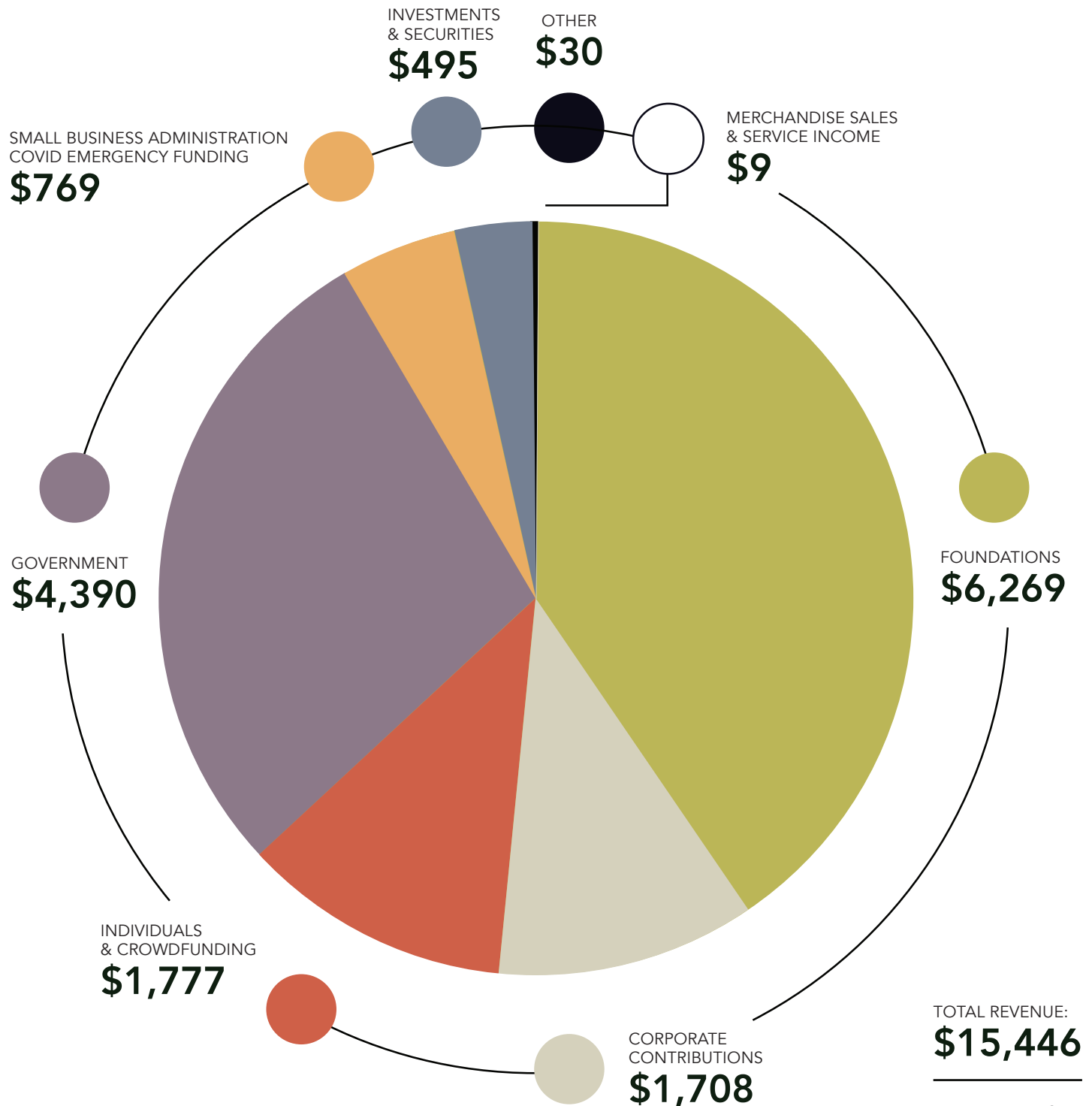


"I have been involved with ARC before its inception. When I got out in 2011 the ARC nonprofit organization wasn't created but the ARC community was there. Their support is what helped me get through the first years of my transition. Looking at it through a wider lens I've been out longer than my sentence because of my ARC community. Though I was able to become staff and create programs it was the community that kept me inside of my goals and I was able to change the trajectory of my life towards having a career at ARC and a better life."

**CARLOS CERVANTES**

# ARC SUPPORT & REVENUE

2021



\*ALL NUMBERS IN THE THOUSANDS

# INTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE *UPDATES*

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We brought on seven new Board members in the last year and have expanded our staff by over **45%**

We seek to become a preferred employer for our staff of **109** employees, of which **78%** are formerly incarcerated.



To support this recent growth, we aim to build capacity and infrastructure to bolster talent acquisition and retention, and our current offerings include: competitive compensation packages; retirement benefits; opportunities for advancement and professional development; trauma-informed trainings; mental health benefits; and an inclusive culture that establishes us as a best-in-class fair chance hiring workplace.

**We are proud to serve as leading employer of formerly incarcerated and system-impacted individuals.**

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# ARC IN THE NEWS

Our fundamental belief is that all people deserve second chances, and that telling our stories of hope, redemption, and healing will create a cultural shift toward a more equitable criminal legal system. We center lived experience as the ultimate and indelible tool for driving public discourse. To change hearts and minds, we must bring people into proximity with our community's experiences and intellect, as well as our struggles and triumphs. Our strategic communications and media strategy redefine how society views people with conviction histories. Below are some of the outlets ARC and its members have been highlighted in:

The New York Times

*The Atlantic*

AP

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NOW  
THIS

NBA.COM

Los Angeles Times

NFL.COM

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

witness  
LA

LOS ANGELES  
SENTINEL

THE SOURCE

Inside Philanthropy

# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS





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# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS



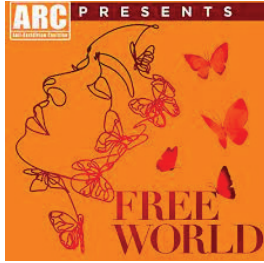
*With Doors Closed to Outside Visitors, ARC Nonetheless Kept All Programs Going—and Growing— During COVID*

## INSIDE PROGRAMS

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Our Inside Programs focus on our community members beginning the process of re-entry into the outside world. Before COVID, we would regularly send staff, members, and volunteers into the California prison system to provide rehabilitative programming and host policy workshops that bring hope to thousands of incarcerated people. Whether it's the Hope and Redemption Team (HART), the Peer Mentorship Program, or the Youth Offender Parole Workshops, our programming provides those inside the character building tools they need to make better decisions. These programs are essential in preparing our community members for the challenges they'll face once they leave prison. They've also helped many former students, on the inside, find work and opportunities on the outside - some of whom have become essential ARC staff following their release.

Yet, when the pandemic hit, with no visitors being allowed inside the California prison system for well over a year, ARC was, once again, forced to pivot all of its programming from in-person to virtual. The task was daunting, but we didn't want our community members on the inside to be penalized. So, we came up with the idea of putting together a version of our programs that could be mailed in (a correspondence course of sorts) called "in cell study packets" and it was very successful. We also produced video programming as rehabilitation tools for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as well. And despite all the challenges involved, we're very proud of the fact that we never had to halt any of our programming during the pandemic.



# WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT

*To Address Growing Needs Among Women and Non-Binary Individuals, We Expanded Our Programs, Added Women's Transitional Housing, And Launched Our First-Ever Women-Led Podcast*



“Set long term goals one step at a time and one day at a time. Every single step is important in your daily life. Being a part of the ARC Women’s Department is supportive and empowers you to help you reach your goals, one step and day at a time.”

**GERI MEYERS**

Our Women’s Department, established in 2019, aims to provide better gender-responsive services for women, non-binary individuals, members of the LGBTQI community and families. Women are allowed to speak freely and openly about their personal struggles in support groups, facilitated by women who were all formerly incarcerated. This creates a safe and open space for anyone who has recently re-entered society. The needs of women are much different from those of men. When they come home from incarceration they are often the primary caregivers, which means they have limited time. So ARC has tailored its programs to be more flexible so as to better accommodate their needs.

In 2021, we were excited to add Women’s Housing at Lorena, one of ARC’s housing sites, providing women with the opportunity to get back on their feet, transition back into society and build a community with other women. We hope to continue to expand these housing services for our female members. ARC also created a women-led podcast, FREE WORLD, produced entirely by formerly incarcerated women. Even the sound and music for the podcast are provided by formerly incarcerated women. Finally, we were also very excited about the expansion of the Hope and Redemption Team (HART) into the California female prison system,

where we were able to embed life coaches for women in need. This will greatly aid currently incarcerated women in developing the necessary tools for success after they are released. As we move forward into 2022 and beyond, we will continue to build out our housing, increase job search services and support programs for the women in our communities.



# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

# WORKFORCE & EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

*With COVID-Related Releases Bringing More People Home, ARC's Career Readiness Programs Gave Members Access to the Education, Training, and Skills They Needed to Secure Well-Paid Jobs.*

Our Workforce and Education Development programs help Members find jobs post-release and simultaneously establish family-supporting careers that will set them up for continued success and economic mobility. All our Members complete a three-day ARC Career Readiness Workshop during their orientation process, which gives them the soft skills (mock interviews, dress for success, e-etiquette, etc.) and resources needed to find employment and enroll in educational opportunities. It can be especially challenging for our Members who are also enrolling in school, which is why our program provides support during the process – including help applying for financial aid, registering for classes, and connection to on-campus groups for nontraditional students.

Our most robust workforce initiative is our Apprenticeship Readiness Program—an 11-week cohort in which Members learn the fundamentals of construction with our partners, the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building & Construction Trades, and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The Building Trades support us with job placements into union apprenticeships, while LAUSD supports us in teaching the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum. ARC staff provides wraparound services to help individuals pursue their career goals, and during the pandemic, we were able to graduate 146 individuals across 5 cohorts.

Additionally, we are proud to have partnered with corporate sponsors to develop pipelines to employment. As a grantee of NBC Universal and the Universal Filmed and Entertainment Group, we initially developed a partnership that led to internship job placements, and these internships have resulted in three Members landing full-time employment at NBC/Universal. Leveraging this model of success, we were able to develop an internship program with Pascal Pictures and are working on a program with DreamWorks. Our Members are breaking down barriers and reshaping the narrative of being formerly incarcerated through their hard work and commitment. They are setting incredible examples for the community while we provide the social, psychological, and programmatic support necessary to not only survive, but also thrive in the free world.

*With COVID-Related Releases Bringing More People Home, ARC's Career Readiness Programs Gave Members Access to the Education, Training, and Skills They Needed to Secure Well-Paid Jobs*



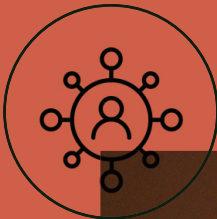
“I just want to let you know that there is hope. There is hope and there is inspiration for anyone who is struggling. I came out of prison and became involved with the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, and they partnered with LAUSD to offer the MC3 program. Through this program, we are offered a career – not jobs, careers. Getting into the union allows you to take care of not only yourself, but also your families. This is a way to set yourself up for your entire life.”

**ALBERT ZEPEDA**



“I can’t mention my success without mentioning ARC. The warm feeling that I came into, just realizing that there’s a community that caters to people coming home. Once I started seeing the self-help classes that they offered, I started feeling like the community cared. I started feeling like there was a niche for me in this society. ARC helped me put my first resume together, and now I’m proud to say that I’m a program manager of another organization that caters to people coming home from incarceration.”

**AARON FRANKLIN**



# MEMBER SERVICES



*ARC Adapted and Innovated Our Member Services to Reach People During the Pandemic, As Well As Growing Our Clinical Staff to Meet Their Mental Health Needs*

ARC provides services that help ease the transition from incarceration to the outside world and also provides them with the resources they’ll need to survive and thrive. The pandemic made this transition especially difficult for those who had been serving long sentences. They were released into a world that was largely shut down and one built on understanding modern technology and having access to it. That is why we made it a priority to deliver our services remotely, ensuring every member could receive access to our programs during COVID. And we’re proud to say that those remote services were operational within the first month of the pandemic.

The member services we provide can be divided into three categories: clinical services, life coaching, and community-building events. Our clinical services include therapy groups led by mental

health professionals as well as individual therapy for our members. For individuals, they not only have access to a therapist but also a life coach, who has “lived” experience and assists them in the challenging transition back home. They connect members to a range of services and resources, including legal support, career-readiness training, creative writing workshops, public benefits and transportation needs. If there’s any sort of substance abuse, our staff can also help refer them to the appropriate programs.

It hasn’t been easy for our members during the pandemic. They have struggled with housing insecurity, job losses and mental health issues and they’ve done it all with the added stigma and isolation that comes with being post-release. This past year, to help our members facing this added trauma of re-entry, especially when it comes to mental health, we were able to grow our staff to address this growing need.

# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS



## STATE AND NATIONAL POLICY ADVOCACY

*We Continued Our Fight in the State Capitol and Expanded Our Mission into The Halls of Congress, Changing the Narrative Around Criminal Justice at Every Level of Government*

Advocating for impactful criminal justice reform is some of the most important work we do. Since our inception in 2013, ARC has partnered to pass 33 pieces of state legislation, which doesn't include the legislation we were able to secure on the local level. We learned early on the power of storytelling as well as the importance of bringing people directly impacted by incarceration before lawmakers to help change their hearts and minds. These individuals weren't just letters on a page. They represented the body and soul of a human success story. Our policy work focuses on sentencing, especially youth sentencing, as well as ensuring constitutional protections, providing housing, therapy, family reunification and securing jobs for those formerly incarcerated individuals re-entering the outside world.

On a national level in 2021, we were able to expand our successes at the state level into Congress by introducing bipartisan bill packages all focusing on youth initiatives. We also expanded our advocacy work into other states, allowing us to take our message of success,

redemption, and hope beyond the borders of California and give a voice to incarcerated people throughout America.

As our advocacy work continued deeper in 2021, we were forced to face the emerging narrative that the sudden rise in crime statistics was somehow caused by criminal justice reform. These claims completely ignored the data which clearly detailed the impact that the global pandemic and resulting economic decline had on increasing crime rates. They also exaggerated what, in historical terms, was a relatively small increase. Fear-mongering among politicians and news organizations was another challenge we were forced to confront in 2021. However, we know that policy reform will ultimately lead to a safer society and a more just nation. After all, ARC members are living proof that criminal justice reform is not only not to blame but rather the only way forward.

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# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS



## LOCAL POLICY ADVOCACY

*In Los Angeles, We Strengthened Our Partnerships Around Youth Justice, Helped Develop "The Youth Commission," And Diverted Police Funding Back into Our Communities.*

Our local policy work in Los Angeles is primarily focused on reimagining youth justice and stems from a desire to protect the most vulnerable members of our communities. Our organization is home to many Members who were incarcerated when they were young—some as young as 13 years old—and many of them have returned to their communities because of legislation that ARC has championed.

In our local policy advocacy, we recognize there is strength in numbers. Since 2016, ARC has been working alongside the Urban Peace Institute, Children's Defense Fund, Arts for Healing and Justice Network, and the Youth Justice Coalition as a part of a coalition called Los Angeles Youth Uprising (LAYUP). As one of the five core organizations guiding LAYUP, we are united in our goal of ending youth incarceration in LA County. We work to redirect funding from law enforcement agencies and other county departments into community-based organizations through direct-action community organizing and policy change.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, we recently participated in the development of the Youth Commission, the official youth advisory body to the County. Established in 2020 by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Youth Commission is a youth-led organization that seeks to transform LA County's child welfare and Juvenile Justice system through youth empowerment. We also monitored and engaged in the official implementation, staffing, and creation of the nation's first Probation Oversight Commission (POC), which has led to a diversion in over \$12 million away from law enforcement and into community-based organizations.

As we move forward, we will keep finding ways to impact our local community while supporting and advocating for the youngest Members in need of our help.



"In 2020 I was released from DJJ with not much support coming from my family. I was living at home with my mother at the time and I quickly realized how toxic that environment was; one day I decided to reach out to Sam Lewis who had mentored me while I was still inside. I needed immediate housing and a better support system, in order to reach my goals and fulfill my ultimate potential. As I was granted housing at ARC transitional housing, I knew that I had to take advantage of that opportunity; over time I became a Public Policy Advocate for ARC. In this position I'm able to advocate for those that are still incarcerated which I can relate to because I also have the same lived experience. Doing this work pushed me to a higher level in my life and It felt so good to be a part of the ARC mission to end mass incarceration. Ever since then I told myself I will forever be part of the ARC family." **KENZO SOHOUE**

# SACRAMENTO OFFICE



*Our Staff Grew Substantially in Sacramento, As Did Our Presence in NorCal's Prisons, Offering an Expansion Model We Hope to Spread Across the Nation.*

Since its establishment in 2016, our Sacramento office has served as our home base in Northern California. The office gives us proximity to the prisons nearby as well as to the state capitol, where we conduct much of our advocacy work. Despite the challenges we have had to overcome during the pandemic, we have seen substantial growth at our Sacramento office during the past two years. Our Sacramento team grew—we now have 13 staff members, including a workforce coordinator and a therapist. This growth has allowed us to expand our work in the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and inside the various prisons in the area. We've also been able to scale up our programming after receiving an Innovative Programming Grant (IPG) through CDCR, which has allowed us to provide formal services in DJJ. Currently, ARC Life Coaches are providing rehabilitative programs in all DJJ facilities in Stockton, Pine Grove, and Ventura and have reached, supported, and empowered many young people in the system to change their lives.

In recent years, we've seen a significant increase in attendance at our member events for multiple activations—this energy, in the midst of a pandemic, is indicative of an ongoing need for support and resources in our community.

Our Sacramento office is evidence that we can replicate the ARC model in different regions around the state. In both the Los Angeles and Sacramento offices, our recidivism rates are below the state's average. A substantial part of that success is our "credible messenger" approach. We know that individuals who have lived experience are the most effective direct service providers for individuals who require culturally competent support.





# RIDE HOME

*When Others Wouldn't, ARC Stepped Up to Provide Rides to Those Leaving Prison, Connected Them With Services, And Helped Bridge the Gap to a New Life.*



When someone leaves prison after spending years - or even decades - inside, they quickly discover that reentering the outside world is a daunting task. Individuals who have lost their connections to their family, friends, and community face their first struggle as soon as they are released: securing a ride home from prison. That's where ARC's Ride Home program comes in. We make sure that those in need not only have a ride home from prison, but that they are headed in the right direction when they get there. Started in 2013 through a collaboration with Stanford Law School, the program employs formerly incarcerated individuals as drivers to bring people home from California prisons. These drivers, who are able to empathize with their passengers, offer them a non-judgmental space in which to reenter the community—a critical component to a successful transition.

Once they pick up their passengers, our drivers take them to get their first meals on the outside, as well as take them shopping to secure the clothing, hygiene supplies, and other essentials they'll need to acclimate

into society as they enter this new chapter of their lives. Our staff then helps connect them to the broader ARC community, where they receive access to ARC's wraparound services. We ensure that they have adequate housing, and we help them obtain all the documents they'll need to restart their lives in the community, including an ID, a Social Security card, and their birth certificates.

During the pandemic, we faced significant difficulties in this program. First, other agencies were unwilling to offer transportation services during COVID, so we had to rise to the challenge. In 2021, we provided 803 pickups, which was a major increase from the 154 pickups in the previous year. As we move forward as an organization, we hope to continue to expand this program in California. If we could offer this program to every single person who's coming home, then we could greatly improve our public safety, lower recidivism rates, and help our Members reintegrate into their communities more successfully.

"Having someone who was formerly incarcerated pick me up when I was released was so meaningful... On the way home, Carlos pushed me to stretch my imagination. He reassured me that with ARC's help, I would accomplish my goals and that opportunities are always in reach. That Ride Home allowed me to see that more is possible, and more can be done - my reality is not limited to the life I lived so far. Now that I'm an ARC staff member, it galvanized me to start offering Rides Home for others too so I can give back and help people in the way that I was helped."

**JOSE NORRINGTON**





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# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING



When our Members transition from the carceral system to the outside world, one of our core missions is to help them secure safe and affordable housing that will set them up for success. Individuals returning home from incarceration have a high risk for homelessness and face significant barriers to accessing safe, affordable housing, which can further prevent them from pursuing education, maintaining steady employment, and accessing the critical supportive services needed for successful reentry. We serve a wide range of our Members – from those who have no outside support from friends or family, or those whose family and friends do not have the financial means to aid in helping our Members attain housing. Whatever the situation may be, we step in and provide supportive services.

Initially launched in September 2014, ARC's Supportive Housing and Education Initiative provides transitional housing and on-site services to individuals returning home from incarceration. ARC currently has two housing sites, "Lorena" and "Magnolia" which both feature on-site Program Coordinators, Case Managers, Life Coaches, and Resident Advisors. The

support staff at these locations help with the transition to the outside world in numerous ways, including helping our members gain access to college classes (through our partnership with the California Community Colleges System), and into a variety of workforce training programs, including our highly successful CAL FIRE firefighting training program.

We've continued to build on our success during the last few years. Our Magnolia housing site recently transitioned to providing housing and support to Transitional Age Youth – those 18-25 years old – which is part of our renewed focus to serve our most vulnerable members. We've also moved our "Ex-Lifer" program to East Los Angeles to a new site with bright apartments, common space for classes, and easy access to public transportation. As we move forward with our mission, we will continue to seek out additional partnerships with CDCR and expand our rental assistance programs to help subsidize our Members until they can support themselves.



# LOOKING FORWARD

As we look toward our 10-year anniversary in 2023, we are emboldened to expand the community we serve and to continue to reach individuals who are most in need of support. There is a startling number of incarcerated individuals struggling to survive their time inside, and there are many more struggling to return to a normal life outside of prison walls. We are determined to continue providing programming for those inside, while helping those on the outside find stable housing, meaningful careers, and a sense of purpose. Simultaneously, we want to foster a community that supports our Members on a daily basis.

Here in California, we aim to offer robust reentry opportunities for people who are coming out of incarceration across the state - with a focus on young people, women, and nonbinary people - so that everybody, including our most vulnerable community members, have the chance to make meaningful contributions to their families and neighborhoods when they return home. We're also seeking to scale up our post-release work programs - such as our firefighting program and our building trades program - to expand them into Orange, San Bernardino, Sacramento, San Diego, and Alameda Counties.

Nationally, we aim to share our best practices and uniquely effective approach to both systems change and direct services with communities in other states. Long-term, we are committed to enhancing public safety, decreasing the cost footprint of our bloated prison system, and reducing recidivism by realigning investments and resources across the country. Fiscally, we aim to decrease the amount of tax dollars that we spend on prisons. Right now, California spends \$16 billion each year on prisons—imagine how our communities could change if we could cut that in half and redirect these funds to the acute housing, employment, and education needs of the state.



Lastly, we are prioritizing the ongoing and vital work of changing the narrative around crime and punishment. Since our founding in 2013, our advocacy work has impacted over 68,000 individuals. In the coming years, we aim to strategically increase our presence outside of CA. This systems-change approach, when paired with the growth of our direct services, will further solidify our role as a leading justice reform and reentry organization on the West Coast. We envision a bold, audacious future in which we enhance, expand, and share with others a continuum of care, from in-reach to reentry, for those impacted by the criminal justice system.



# IMPACT REPORT 2021



## ***ANTI-RECIDIVISM COALITION***

### **LOS ANGELES OFFICE**

787 S. Alameda St  
Los Angeles, CA 90021  
(213) 955-5885  
[info@antirecidivism.org](mailto:info@antirecidivism.org)

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### **SACRAMENTO OFFICE**

2830 G Street, Suite 210  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
(916) 942-9080  
[info@antirecidivism.org](mailto:info@antirecidivism.org)



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