

Second Chance Stipends Pilot Launches to Support Formerly Incarcerated Adults in Nebraska

Direct cash initiative provides returning citizens with economic stability during the critical transition back into community

OMAHA, NE — Today, the Solid Ground Project launched the Second Chance Stipends pilot in Nebraska, with program administration provided by RISE, Nebraska's leading reentry nonprofit. The one-year pilot provides formerly incarcerated adults with direct monthly cash support during the critical transition from incarceration to community. By helping participants afford their basic needs, the pilot aims to reduce barriers to successful reentry, strengthen public safety, and support long-term stability. This pilot builds on learnings from cash-based reentry pilots across multiple cities and states, and the insights that providing financial stability in the months immediately after release can be an important determinant of recidivism and successful reintegration.

The pilot will offer 200 participants \$1,000 in the first month, then \$750 per month over the course of one year. Eligible participants are adults 18 or older who were released from NDCS State facilities between April 1, 2026 and September 1, 2026. Individuals with a recent conviction of a homicide or felony sex offense are not eligible to participate. Those receiving cash decide how to use the support based on what their reentry requires, whether that is covering housing, transportation, food, work clothing, or other everyday costs that too often stand between returning individuals and a successful fresh start.

“When someone walks out of prison, the clock starts immediately,” said **Jeremy Bouman, Founder and CEO of RISE**. “People need a place to live, a way to get to work, a phone to stay connected, and the stability to meet the requirements of reentry. Too often, a financial setback in those first few months can put everything at risk. Through our work administering this pilot, people can get the practical support they need during this pivotal period. This gives the breathing room to focus on rebuilding their lives instead of just surviving day to day.”

The transition from incarceration to community reintegration is a finite and uniquely vulnerable period. Individuals leaving correctional facilities often face challenges accessing housing, employment, transportation, and essential services. In Nebraska, technical violations account for a significant share of reincarceration among individuals on parole. According to the Nebraska Department of Corrections, in 2021, 261 individuals were reincarcerated for technical violations

while on parole, compared to just 52 for new felony convictions. Financial instability can make these challenges even harder to overcome.

“Every day, we meet people who are working hard to build a new life after incarceration,” said **Blanca Mejia, Founder of Generation Diamond, a South Omaha nonprofit providing reentry support and free tattoo removal services.** “ We call the people we serve diamonds in the rough because every person deserves the chance to shine. Cash doesn't solve every problem, but it can provide the stability to keep moving forward, reconnect with their families and communities, and truly build better futures.”

When formerly incarcerated adults have the stability to meet basic needs and focus on reintegration priorities, including engaging in community and pursuing employment, Nebraska's communities and economy grow stronger. Nebraska's correctional facilities are operating above 110% of operational capacity, costing the state about \$50,000 per adult per year. Preventing even a small number of returns to prison strengthens public safety and saves taxpayer money. This pilot is a practical step toward making that possible.

New polling shows strong and broad public support for the Second Chance Stipends pilot across Nebraska. Fifty-one percent of Nebraskans support cash stipends for formerly incarcerated adults, a figure that rises to 61% when the purpose, reducing recidivism and promoting financial stability, is mentioned. Fifty-two percent hold favorable views of formerly incarcerated adults receiving cash stipends, and 58% say stipends would be effective in helping them maintain economic stability. The data also reflects support for the pilot's broader community impact: 62% of Nebraskans believe cash stipends would invest in safer, stronger communities, and 66% say stipends would help support parenting and childcare responsibilities. Taken together, the polling reflects a clear and consistent message from Nebraskans — targeted financial support for formerly incarcerated is seen as a practical investment in public safety, stronger communities, and Nebraska's future.

The Second Chance Stipends pilot is a research pilot from the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Guaranteed Income Research (CGIR), which is running a Randomized Controlled Trial to measure outcomes including recidivism rates, economic stability, and calculate the potential return on investment to Nebraska. The pilot is part of the Solid Ground Project, made possible through the support of the Sherwood Foundation, and advanced in partnership with Economic Security Project.

For more information about the Second Chance Stipends pilot, visit the [Solid Ground Project website at \[LINK\]](#).

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About the Solid Ground Project

The Solid Ground Project is a community-rooted initiative providing direct cash support to working students and returning citizens in Nebraska, made possible through the support of the Sherwood Foundation. Learn more at [\[LINK\]](#)

About RISE

RISE is Nebraska's largest nonprofit focused solely on rehabilitative programming in prisons and reentry support. RISE operates in seven Nebraska prisons with a 90% graduate employment rate and a recidivism rate a third of the state average. Learn more at seeusrise.org

About the Center for Guaranteed Income Research

The Center for Guaranteed Income Research at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy & Practice conducts research on guaranteed income programs across the United States. Learn more at penncgir.org.

About Economic Security Project

Economic Security Project develops and advances ideas that build economic power for all Americans. Learn more at economicsecurityproject.org