

Program completion

OARS program participants may be enrolled for up to two years after release from the institution. Successful program completion criteria include:

- Participant is maintaining stable housing independently.
- Participant is living without reliance on alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Participant is actively engaged in their treatment and has transitioned to locally based services in their county of residence.
- Participant is financially able to maintain their treatment, housing, and basic needs without assistance from the program.
- Participant is making healthy decisions regarding recovery and mental health stability.

Program contacts

Department of Corrections

Reentry Disabilities Treatment Director
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Department of Health Services

OARS Program Specialists
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P-00227 (04/2024)

OARS

Opening Avenues to Reentry Success

A program offered by the
Wisconsin Department of Corrections
in partnership with the
Wisconsin Department of Health Services



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES

Program vision

To enhance public safety by supporting the successful transition, recovery, and self-sufficiency of offenders with mental health needs as they reintegrate into the community.

Program goals

- Enhance public safety by reducing recidivism and revocation rates
- Improve continuity of care of offenders with mental health needs as they release from prison to the community
- Encourage offender involvement in meaningful, healthy structured activities
- Promote offender self-sufficiency
- Decrease long-term costs associated with this population

Who the program serves

OARS serves a limited number of offenders releasing from the Wisconsin Resource Center, Wisconsin Women's Resource Center, and Department of Corrections adult institutions who:

- Have a minimum of six months of supervision upon release.
- Have serious and persistent mental health needs.
- Rate moderate to high risk of reoffending according to the Department of Corrections assessment.
- Demonstrate a general motivation and willingness to engage in treatment programming.
- Agree to participate in the OARS program.

Program team members

A team works together to develop a comprehensive Individualized Service Plan before and after release from prison to help the participant successfully reintegrate into the community. OARS team members include:

- OARS participant (offender)
- Institution social worker
- Community corrections agent
- OARS case manager
- DHS program specialist
- Natural supports
- Treatment providers in the community

Services provided

- Assistance with obtaining and maintaining safe and affordable housing
- Resources for medication and access to quality psychiatric care
- Access to healthy and meaningful structured activities, including educational programs, volunteer opportunities, and employment
- Treatment options to address individualized needs
- Social support and acceptance
- Access to local transportation, budgeting, and financial resources

Participant responsibilities

- Follow all rules of supervision
- Work with OARS team to identify treatment and educational opportunities available before and after release from the institution
- Cooperate with treatment, including taking all medications as prescribed, before and after release from the institution
- Participate in the development and review of the Individualized Service Plan
- Meet with the assigned OARS case manager and community corrections agent
- Sign releases of information and consents for housing and treatment services
- Be responsible and respectful with regards to any housing that is provided
- Communicate with an OARS team member regarding any concerns about the program expectations