



CASE STUDY

Applying UCCI Research for Youth Justice Success in Merced & Napa Counties



GEO Reentry Services implements youth justice programs based on the principles and research of the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute (UCCI). UCCI's work identifies clear best practices: match services to risk and needs, involve families, use developmentally informed approaches, and monitor quality and outcomes. GEO Reentry applies these principles in partnership with local probation departments to achieve measurable results.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE: FROM ENGAGEMENT TO SUCCESS

The program is highly structured and designed to address multiple risk factors, integrating:

- Comprehensive assessments and individualized success plans
- One-on-one and group Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI), family engagement and inclusion
- Workshops, trauma-informed programming, substance use disorder programming, anger management, gang interventions, and life skills training
- Restorative justice practices and thinking skills development

The program unfolds in four phases, with a particular emphasis on an extended and intensive Engagement phase for youth:

- **Engagement:** Youth orientation, motivation-building activities, comprehensive assessment, and a higher number of initial CBI sessions emphasizing relationship-building, trust, and foundational skill development.
- **Discovery:** CBI with increased focus on applying new skills, setting personal goals, ongoing progress evaluation, and regular collaboration with families and stakeholders.
- **Commitment:** Planning for reentry or program completion, reassessment, and working toward finishing the program curricula. This phase reinforces commitment to change and prepares youth for life after the program.
- **Success:** Final assessments, aftercare planning, and graduation. This phase supports sustained success through continued goal setting and post-discharge support.

Additional components, such as rewards and redirection systems, mentoring, CBI lab, and ongoing quality assurance, reinforce accountability and support. Staff are trained as behavior-change coaches, and the program invests in professional development to ensure fidelity and impact.

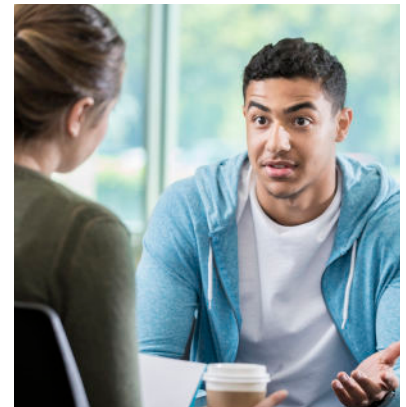
MERCED COUNTY: THE GEO REENTRY SERVICES MODEL IN ACTION

In Merced County, the GEO Reentry program provides a structured, strength-based approach for justice-involved youth. The model uses Positive Youth Development principles and emphasizes skill-building, relationship development, and community connections. Youth move through four phases—Engagement, Discovery, Commitment, and Success—with individualized case planning and regular assessment.

Services include cognitive behavioral interventions, trauma-informed care, substance use programming, anger management, gang intervention, life skills, and restorative justice. Family engagement and youth voice are built into the program through mentorship and advisory councils.

Improved Thinking Patterns: In 2024, evaluators analyzed Adolescent Thinking Scales (ATS) entry and exit scores for 13 youth over an average of 163 days in treatment. Youth improved by an average of 4% (1.54 points) across five domains, with three domains showing clinically significant gains, pointing to meaningful shifts in thinking patterns and behavior.

Reduced Serious Incidents: Behavioral incidents at the Merced Youth facility dropped markedly. Between 2022 and 2024, Serious Incident Reports decreased by 68%, even as bookings rose by 51%. This suggests that the program's focus on skill-building and positive relationships is making the facility safer and helping youth manage challenges more effectively.



NAPA COUNTY: BEHAVIOR-DRIVEN SUPPORT FOR YOUTH

Skyline Academy in Napa County is an alternative to secure custody under Senate Bill 823. The program is 100% behavior-based—youth move forward by meeting goals, not by serving a set time. Individualized case plans guide participation through phases focused on cognitive skill-building, trauma-informed care, family inclusion, restorative justice, and culturally responsive support.

Family and community engagement are core features. Satisfaction surveys ensure program responsiveness. Progress is tracked across a range of outcomes, including school enrollment, academic performance, employment, and community ties.

CONCLUSION: REENTRY IS AN OPPORTUNITY

GEO Reentry demonstrates that applying UCCI's research-based model can lead to measurable improvements for justice-involved youth. Merced and Napa Counties show reductions in problematic behavior, safer facilities, and stronger connections between youth and their families and communities. These results reflect a practical, evidence-based approach to supporting youth through reentry and beyond.