

First Step Act Basics

Reentry Services Division | December 2023

1. RISK & NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

RISK ASSESSMENT

PATTERN¹ is a tool Unit Team uses to calculate your risk level within 28 days of arriving in a BOP facility. Subsequent reassessments occur every 90 or 180 days depending on release date.

This risk level determines your likelihood of returning to prison. It is automatically re-calculated at each program review based on your program participation and behavior while in prison.

Risk Levels

- High
- Medium
- Low
- Minimum

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

SPARC-13² Needs Assessments determine your specific needs and help identify which programs may help you live a healthy, productive life upon release.

- Conducted through TRULINCS and BOP Departments
- Completion is necessary to determine which programs can best assist you and make you eligible for the incentives below

Needs are assessed by these Departments:

- Education
- Health Services
- Unit Management
- Psychology Services

2. PROGRAMS

At your program review, or teams meeting, your Unit Team will recommend programs and/or activities based on your Needs Assessment. These programs are listed in the FSA Approved Programs Guide.

EVIDENCE-BASED RECIDIVISM REDUCTION (EBRR)

A structured group or individual activity that evidence has shown to reduce or likely reduce your rate of returning to prison.

PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY (PA)

A group or individual activity that enhances skills to address identified needs. PAs can promote productivity and aid with maintaining or working toward minimum or low risk levels.

3. INCENTIVES

HOW TO EARN FSA INCENTIVES

Complete all Needs Assessments in TRULINCS and with BOP Departments to opt-in.

To remain in opt-in status:

- Participate in the Financial Responsibility Program (FRP) and required programs
- Maintain good conduct and remain out of disciplinary segregation
- Enroll in and complete programs recommended at your program review that address your needs

FSA INCENTIVES

For **enrolling, participating, or successfully completing EBRRs:**

- Additional monthly phone minutes
- Visitation privileges
- Consideration of release transfer closer to home
- Quarterly institution incentive events

For **EBRR completions 100 hours or more:**

- Achievement award (fixed monetary amount)
- Preferred housing, if available

FSA TIME CREDITS (FTC)

- Individuals may earn up to 365 FTCs toward early transfer to supervised release. FTCs after 365 will count toward prerelease (community) placement.
- Individuals earn 10 FTCs for every 30 days opted in. After two consecutive FSA assessments with Low or Minimum risk levels, individuals earn an additional 5 FTCs (15 total) for every 30 days.
- Individuals will not earn FTCs for periods of time that they:
 - Are out of the institution for an entire calendar day or more
 - Do not remain in opt-in status

Eligibility to earn FTCs is determined by current and prior offenses. Those who are eligible will earn FTCs toward prerelease and/or supervised release. Some earn FTCs but are not eligible to apply them if:

- High and medium risk level (may petition the Warden via Request to Staff Member during regularly scheduled Program Review to apply earned FTCs toward prerelease)
- Final orders of deportation or removal

*See your Unit Team for any of your personal FSA-related questions.

¹PATTERN: Prisoner Assessment Tool Targeting Estimated Risk and Needs

²SPARC-13: Standardized Prisoner Assessment for Reduction in Criminality

Program Statements:

PS5220.01 First Step Act Program Incentives
PS5322.13 Inmate Classification and Program Review

PS5400.01 First Step Act Needs Assessment
PS5410.01 First Step Act of 2018 - Time Credits: Procedures for Implementation of 18 U.S.C. § 3632(d)(4)

First Step Act (FSA) of 2018 (P.L. 115- 391)