



# REENTRY

HELPING FORMER PRISONERS RETURN TO COMMUNITIES

A GUIDE TO KEY IDEAS, EFFECTIVE APPROACHES, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES FOR MAKING CONNECTIONS CITIES AND SITE TEAMS

Part of a series from the Technical  
Assistance Resource Center of  
the Annie E. Casey Foundation



### *Acknowledgments*

Elizabeth Gaynes, executive director of the Osborne Association, wrote this guide. Jacqueline Lalley, director of Publishing and Communications for Lariat Solutions, edited and contributed to the guide. Bart Lubow and Mark McDaniel of the Annie E. Casey Foundation provided direction and reviewed several drafts.

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#### *About the Annie E. Casey Foundation*

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of UPS, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information and a copy of this report, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).*

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# preface to family strengthening resource guides

*Children do well when their families do well, and families do better when they live in supportive neighborhoods.*

This simple premise underlies *Making Connections*, the centerpiece of a 10- to 15-year commitment by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to improving the life chances of vulnerable children by strengthening their families and neighborhoods. The Foundation is working in U.S. cities to promote neighborhood-scale programs, policies, and activities that contribute to stable, capable families.

*Making Connections* seeks to improve outcomes for children, families, and communities by tapping the skills, strengths, leadership, and resilience that exist in even the toughest neighborhoods. The initiative is founded on the belief that families and their children can succeed if the people who live, work, and hold positions of influence in tough neighborhoods make family success a priority—and if there are deliberate and sustained efforts within the broader community and at the state level not only to connect isolated families to essential resources, opportunities, and supports, but also to improve the material conditions of the neighborhood.

The Foundation is dedicated to helping communities engage residents, civic groups, public- and private-sector leadership, and faith-based organizations in efforts to transform the toughest neighborhoods into family supportive environments. *Making Connections* works to enable residents to earn decent wages; interact with family, friends, neighbors, and social institutions; and live, work, and play in a safe, congenial, and enriching environment.

To improve the health, safety, educational success, and overall well-being of children and families, *Making Connections* is a long-term campaign aimed

at helping selected cities build alliances and mobilize constituencies at the neighborhood level.

*Making Connections* has identified three kinds of connections that we believe are essential:

- + **Economic Opportunities** that help families succeed economically by securing good jobs, accumulating savings, and accessing adequate goods, services, and community facilities that provide them with the basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, and health care. To meet this need, communities must address workforce issues, such as job development, employment and training, as well as wage supplements, asset-building strategies, and community investments. All of these help ensure predictable incomes, which in turn bolster healthy child development and help revitalize communities.
- + **Social networks in the community**, including friends, neighbors, relatives, mentors, community organizations, and faith-based institutions that provide neighbor-to-neighbor support and help connect families and residents to each other.



## MAKING CONNECTIONS CITIES

Atlanta	New Haven
Baltimore	New Orleans
Boston	Oakland
Camden	Philadelphia
Denver	Providence
Detroit	San Antonio
Des Moines	San Diego
Hartford	Savannah
Indianapolis	Seattle
Louisville	St. Louis
Miami	Washington, D.C.
Milwaukee	

the *MAKING CONNECTIONS* network

In 1999, the Foundation began to develop a set of ideas about strengthening families with sites in 22 cities across the country. We did not seek to work in only the most stressed and disinvested places, but rather in communities where existing efforts and the policy climate appeared receptive to a long-term family strengthening effort through neighborhood transformation. The initial phase of *Making Connections* was thus exploratory and focused on alliance and capacity building. In mid-2002, *Making Connections* transitioned to a second phase focused squarely on results—meaning measurable improvements in the well-being of children and families and in neighborhood conditions.

Currently ten sites have entered Phase II of the initiative: Denver, Des Moines, Hartford, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee, Oakland, Providence, San Antonio, and Seattle. Each is engaged in comprehensive family strengthening and neighborhood transformation efforts that are guided by a set of core results used to measure progress, invest resources, deploy technical assistance, and make sure work is consistent with local priorities and the goals of *Making Connections*.

Boston, Camden, Detroit, Miami, New Orleans, Philadelphia, San Diego, Savannah, and St. Louis are Family Strengthening Investment sites focused on specific strategies, such as increasing family economic success and helping children enter school ready to learn. The Family Strengthening sites also contribute to cross-site learning exchanges and the Foundation's efforts to improve access among working families to the Earned Income Tax Credit.

The civic sites of Atlanta, Baltimore, New Haven, and Washington, D.C., are important to *Making Connections* because of their special relationship to the Foundation. Baltimore has been our headquarters since 1994. Atlanta is home to UPS, which was cofounded by Jim Casey, and New Haven is the new home for the Foundation's direct service arm, Casey Family Services. Washington, D.C., is included as a civic site because it is the nation's capital. Although not bound by the formal parameters of the initiative, these sites allow us to partner with local officials, community organizations, and residents on a range of flexible investments that strengthen families and neighborhoods.

All of the sites are part of the *Making Connections* Network, which is convened regularly around different issues and topics to share lessons, strategies, and effective approaches to strengthening families.

- + **Services and supports**, both formal and informal, public and private, which provide preventive as well as ongoing assistance, and which work for families because they are accessible, affordable, neighborhood based, and culturally appropriate. These include high-quality schools, health care, housing assistance, and affordable child care.

#### MAKING A DIFFERENCE: CORE RESULTS

*Making Connections* must demonstrate to residents, communities, policymakers, elected and government officials, other foundations, and the general public that strengthening families and neighborhoods offers a compelling solution to the social isolation, economic disinvestments, and fragmented systems that have ensnared too many lives for too long.

The Foundation is thus using a set of core results to help evaluate progress, gather data, guide investments, and hold itself accountable for producing the evidence that shows how *Making Connections* makes a lasting difference in the lives and life chances of children, families, and neighborhoods.

The following six result areas, and the indicators used to quantify them, were distilled from the broad range of research, assessments of the Foundation's previous investments in multisite community change initiatives, and data gathered to build the evaluation framework for *Making Connections*.

### 1. Families have increased earnings and income

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + More parents and young adults are employed
- + More parents are employed in jobs that provide family supporting wages and benefits, as well as opportunities for career advancement
- + Levels of family income and earnings increase
- + Stable labor force attachment increases

### 2. Families have increased levels of assets

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + The number of families who save and the level of family savings increase
- + More families own homes, cars, and other assets
- + More eligible families file for the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
- + Access to reasonably priced housing, consumer goods, and financial services increases
- + Fewer families have payment-related disruptions in housing status and living conditions, such as utility shut-offs, repossessions, and foreclosures

### 3. Families and youth increase their civic participation

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + More families have adults members that register and vote
- + More residents are prepared for and take up formal and informal leadership roles
- + More families take civic action through formal activities and associations, such as tenant and other civic organizations

### 4. Families have strong supports and networks

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + More families are connected to informal helping networks and natural helpers
- + More families are connected to formal networks, such as resource exchange and mutual aid associations

### 5. Families have access to services that work for them

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + More services and supports that strengthen families meet standards for quality and effectiveness
- + More families are satisfied with agencies, organizations, and institutions and the services they provide

### 6. Children are healthy and ready to succeed in school

*We'll know we're making a difference when:*

- + Pregnant women receive prenatal care in the first trimester
- + All children have access to health insurance
- + More children enter school with the strengths, skills, and good health that enable them to learn
- + More children have developmentally appropriate preschool experience
- + More parents are involved in their children's schools

During Phase I of *Making Connections*, the Foundation encouraged local priorities to shape the work in the sites. Within the Phase II sites, however,



the focus on the core results is explicit and resources and time are spent on deliberate and sustained efforts to pursue this set of outcomes.

### CORE CAPACITIES

No single investment, intervention, or entity alone can create and sustain durable change that strengthens families in tough neighborhoods, especially on a large scale. *Making Connections* must help catalyze a mobilized community that can drive and sustain change over the long term. In Phase I of the initiative, we introduced a set of milestones and markers that keyed on building the relationships, alliances, and capacity needed to underpin a broad-based family strengthening agenda.

Given the focus on results in Phase II of *Making Connections*, our proposed theory of change looks to develop certain core capacities within the sites that leverage alliances and capacity in the sites to propel change and achieve results. The Foundation and site teams thus work to support, invigorate, and nurture the development of these core capacities, which include:

- + Develop, achieve, and sustain a **collective vision** for results among residents, institutions, and other stakeholders
- + Develop, promote, and sustain **resident leadership** within the **collective change process** to achieve results
- + **Develop and sustain relationships and partnerships** among residents, institutions, and others in support of a collective change process to achieve results
- + Implement **powerful strategies** to achieve results
- + Promote, lead and sustain the **successful transformation of public systems**

- + Support **collaborative learning and accountability** for results
- + Build capacity to **communicate core messages, ideas, and beliefs** to engage and influence public will and a wide audience

### What do we mean by “family strengthening”?

Family strengthening policies, practices, and activities recognize the family as the fundamental influence in children’s lives. They reinforce parental roles and messages and reflect, represent, and accommodate families’ interests. Family strengthening means parents have the opportunities, relationships, networks, and supports to succeed, which include involving parents as decision-makers in how their communities meet family needs.

A family’s major responsibility is to provide an optimal environment for the care and healthy development of loved ones. Although basic physical needs—housing, food, clothing, safety, and health—are essential, children also need a warm emotional climate, a stimulating intellectual environment, and reliable adult relationships to thrive.

Threats to a family’s ability to manage its responsibilities come from many sources: externally generated crises, such as a job or housing loss, or internal crises, such as child abuse or estrangement among family members. Unexpected events, such as the birth of a child with a disability or a teen’s substance abuse problems, as well as everyday stresses such as new jobs, marriages, deaths, and household moves, can cause destabilizing changes. The family’s ongoing stability hinges on its ability to sustain itself through these disruptions.

To help families cope effectively with crises and normal life events, communities need a variety of resources. These include adequate and accessible services for children at all stages of their development,

effective family supports, and cohesive social networks.

Family strengthening policies and practices consider the whole family, not just individual family members. Often, formal system and agency programs inadvertently create tensions when their focus excludes family needs. A striking example is a well-intentioned nutrition program, which arranged to ensure that homeless children received breakfast, lunch, and dinner at school. The children’s parents and other siblings had no source of food, however, and the program participants had no opportunity to share meals with the rest of their families. Once the program leaders recognized the problem, they learned to reconsider their strategies and included parents and siblings in the school mealtimes.

Similarly, many welfare-to-work programs report difficulties in job retention because of stresses often resulting from the jobs themselves. When a family finds better employment, its rituals, daily logistics, roles, and responsibilities often change. More successful programs consider these disruptions ahead of time and develop ways to help families adjust and adapt.

#### **What do we mean by “strengthening neighborhoods”?**

Families must be helped to thrive within the context of their neighborhoods and broader communities and regions. Workforce strategies, for example, should connect neighborhood residents to specific local or regional businesses and industries that offer family supporting wages. Community investment strategies should connect the assets and resources of each unique neighborhood to the larger regional economy and encourage new investments, new business development, and access to high-quality, affordable goods and services.

*Making Connections* recognizes that the informal social networks most important to people (their

friends, neighbors, faith communities, and clubs) almost always exist at the neighborhood level. Time and again, these natural helping networks strengthen families’ ability to raise their children successfully. One key component of strengthening neighborhoods is thus to nurture and sustain social capital.

At the same time, *Making Connections* seeks to link families to broader networks both within and outside their own neighborhoods in ways that open up new possibilities for children and parents alike.

Finally, strengthening neighborhoods means placing formal public services in neighborhoods, and making sure those services work for families, not against them. This requires redefining the jobs of public workers so that professionals from separate mainline systems—as well as natural helpers or informal caregivers—work together in teams and are deployed to specific neighborhoods to take the necessary steps to help families succeed.

#### **The Technical Assistance Resource Center**

The Foundation’s Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) helps the *Making Connections* Network access powerful ideas, skillful peers, proven practices, and opportunities to increase the leadership skills of local residents. TARC provides assistance to the *Making Connections* cities on a range of topics, from building alliances that lead to stronger families in healthier, more stable communities, to diverse strategies that community leaders may pursue in terms of jobs, housing, safety, schools, and health care. TARC responds to the sites’ priorities through a “help desk” approach that works to meet site requests for assistance with real time “peer consultations,” in which colleagues who have addressed a particular problem successfully share their learnings. In this way, *Making Connections* cities are building a wealth of practical know-how that’s emerging from on-the-ground innovators.



Another component of the Foundation's technical assistance strategy is a set of Resource Guides, including this one. These guides summarize trends in the field, highlight effective examples, and point to the people, organizations, and materials that can provide additional help. Resource Guides allow Foundation staff to create a common fund of knowledge across a broad range of issues, and also support community leaders, residents, and other local partners who want to learn more about specific subjects.

The number of Resource Guides will fluctuate as demand changes, but approximately 12 to 15 will be produced (*see the inside back cover for a list*). All guides address topics aimed at both supporting individual families and strengthening neighborhoods. They fall into four categories:

- + Family Economic Success;
- + Enhancing Social Networks;
- + Building High-Quality Services and Supports; and
- + Techniques for Advancing a Family Strengthening Agenda in Neighborhoods.

The guides in the first three categories address substantive areas in which activities can lead directly to better outcomes for children and families, while also strengthening neighborhoods. For example, the first Family Economic Success Resource Guide focuses on jobs. It offers strategies that can help connect low-income, working families to local and regional labor markets, and thus secure better wages and benefits. The guide also shows how family supporting jobs fortify tough neighborhoods, making them more attractive as places to live and providing strong incentives for younger residents to participate in the labor force.

The Resource Guides in the second and third categories similarly affect both individual families and their neighborhoods. The guide on child care can help communities develop plans for increasing the supply of this critical family support, especially the notoriously hard-to-find care for infants and school-age children and care during nontraditional work hours. Achieving this goal not only would improve the developmental preparation of young children, it also would help stabilize parental employment, enhance the viability of neighborhood enterprises, and promote safer, better-connected communities.

The guides in the fourth category address techniques for advancing neighborhood-based family strengthening work, such as how to develop a communications strategy and how to use data and maintain accountability for specific outcomes.

Additional guides will be developed as our learning and experience in the sites deepens. By the same token, this and other guides are works in progress; they will be updated periodically as we continue to share effective strategies and practice. We view these guides thus not as an end unto themselves but as a first step in posing and answering some of the most difficult questions about how to strengthen families in tough neighborhoods. We encourage you to share your thoughts with us about what works, and point us to additional sources of expertise. And we thank you, again, for your commitment to securing a better future for children and families most in need of better connections to opportunity, support, and help.

# foreword: the challenges of prisoner reentry for families and communities

The growth in the U.S. prison population has had a major impact on families, communities, and state budgets. Its impacts have been most profound, however, among people of color and within poor, disinvested neighborhoods. In fact, for the most disinvested neighborhoods, it is not possible to talk about building community, economically or socially, without addressing both the conditions and policies leading to incarceration and the programs and strategies developed to enable ex-offenders to successfully return to their communities.

From an economic perspective, the population of currently and formerly incarcerated residents in disinvested communities represents a large and disproportionate share of the working-age population—a population that must be in the workforce if these neighborhoods are to become economically viable. The absence of primarily young men, disproportionately of color, reduces the labor pool, and their reentry back into the community creates its own set of challenges and opportunities.

From a family strengthening perspective, the ex-offender population is parent to many of the children and youth within these neighborhoods. These children and their families face special challenges while a parent is incarcerated and when that parent is released. The ex-offender's roles and responsibilities as a parent need to be addressed and supported—both during incarceration and upon reentry.

Under current policies and practices, newly released prisoners face major challenges assuming or reassuming economic and social roles in the community. They face legal barriers in securing certain forms of assistance and types of employment and in assuming civic roles and responsibilities, including voting. They usually receive little training, preparation, or support while in prison to prepare them for

reentry and often finding themselves further behind when they leave prison than when they entered. Racism, as well as an absence of cultural congruity and competence within the public and private systems with which they must deal, compounds these challenges.

To address these reentry issues, programs for incarcerated people and their families must embrace a restorative approach, one that examines the issues of reentry in the context of family strengthening, economic opportunity, and social networking and community building—from the moment of incarceration to well beyond the initial period of release back into the community. Such an approach includes:

## Family Strengthening

- + Providing the range of counseling, substance abuse treatment, and other services that ex-offenders need to assume roles in society as parents and family and community members
- + Providing support to children and families of ex-offenders in addressing issues related both to incarceration of a family member and reentry of that member back into the community
- + Establishing family resource centers and self-help and other support groups both for ex-offenders and for their families

## Economic Opportunity

- + Removing the barriers that ex-offenders face in securing needed income support, work and training, housing, and employment services required to sustain themselves and their families financially



- + Modifying child support enforcement provisions and other financial requirements placed upon ex-offenders to ensure that they are manageable and support reestablishment of the ex-offenders' economic role and responsibility in the community
- + Establishing or expanding evidenced-based practices to developing employment opportunities for ex-offenders that can lead to family-sustaining employment

### **Social Networking and Community Building**

- + Creating partnerships between communities, corrections and law enforcement, and other public services to design and implement reentry and reintegration strategies, with a special emphasis on engaging community voices and resources, including faith institutions and community-based organizations
- + Establishing expectations that ex-offenders can contribute to their communities in civic as well as economic ways, and establishing opportunities for them to do so, including the right and responsibility to vote
- + Involving ex-offenders and their families in planning and decision-making around community-based approaches to improve reentry and reunification



# executive summary

Our nation's high rate of imprisonment has a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged children, vulnerable families, and disinvested neighborhoods. The vast majority of people in prison, their families, and their communities are not sufficiently prepared for the successful reentry of people who have been in prison into the social and economic mainstreams of American life. These issues impact *Making Connections* sites' ability to bring about families' economic success and asset building, school readiness, positive social networks, and effective services and supports. This guide offers *Making Connections* site teams and local partners a way to think about and reduce the negative impact of incarceration on their communities.

This guide is organized into four sections:

The **Introduction** creates a context for the issue, starting with the impact on children when a large number of people—family members, loved ones, and others—are reentering the community after incarceration. It answers the following questions:

- + Why is prisoner reentry particularly important to *Making Connections* neighborhoods?
- + Why is prisoner reentry particularly important to families who live in *Making Connections* neighborhoods?
- + What is the impact of incarceration?
- + What happens to the families of those who go to prison?
- + What happens when people come home from prison?
- + How do families support prisoner reentry?
- + What are the limitations of neighborhood-based support currently being provided?
- + How can neighborhoods support prisoner reentry?

- + How can the justice system better support prisoner reentry?
- + How can strategic partnerships support prisoner reentry?

While the return of people who have been in prison to their communities and families presents many challenges, these individuals must not be demonized. But it is equally important to avoid romanticizing these individuals and underestimating the work of reintegration. The introduction helps *Making Connections* sites enter this work with an understanding of the relevant issues so that they can make ambitious but realistic plans.

## Potential Requests, Opportunities, and Challenges

explains the kinds of concerns that might be raised by neighborhood residents and community leaders regarding prisoner reentry. Trends that offer opportunities for *Making Connections* sites are described, including increased economic pressure to find less expensive, more effective responses to criminal behavior; better data on the extent and impact of incarceration and reentry, especially in specific communities; and increased understanding of how families and children are affected by incarceration and the fundamental role they play in successful reentry. This section raises challenges that sites are likely to face, including:

- + Racial disparity in the justice system
- + Welfare policy, including child support enforcement
- + Legal barriers to reintegration
- + Reduction in prison programming and post-release services
- + Practical barriers that weaken connections between people in prison and their children and families



- + Release without adequate planning, identification, health care, skills, money, transportation, and/or housing

This section also identifies key questions that site teams and community partners should ask when assessing prisoner reentry issues.

**Promising Approaches and Resources** describes a set of strategies that sites should apply in order to support prisoners' reentry into the community; it also provides examples of each strategy in practice:

**A. Provide services and support for people who are or have been incarcerated:**

- 1. For incarcerated people:** Provide needed services and supports related to family, employment, mental and physical health, and spirituality, starting at the point of incarceration. Begin planning for release.
- 2. For those about to be released:** Prepare a comprehensive discharge plan that includes living arrangements, medications, identification, transportation, emergency funds, escorts, and linkage to community or faith-based organizations and mentors.
- 3. For formerly incarcerated people:** Make sure that individuals have access to supports and mentoring related to housing, substance abuse treatment, medicine and health care, education, job training, employment, child care, identification, transportation, and emergency funds.

**B. Support children and families affected by incarceration.** From incarceration through reentry, reach out to locate families of those in prison and assist them in maintaining ties, involve them in planning for release, and provide them with support. Make sure children are not blamed or penalized for their parents' circumstances or behavior.

**C. Reduce legal and practical barriers to reintegration,** including legal barriers to accessing employment, housing, and other benefits and services, as well as the loss of the right to vote.

**D. Promote policies that support reentry of prisoners into communities.** Criminal justice/sentencing, diversion, and release policies should reduce reliance on mass incarceration, maximize community-based sanctions and supervision, address the impact of sentencing on children and families, and reduce racial disparities.

The **Resources** section provides descriptions of and contact information for organizations that are engaged in the strategies described above, as well as helpful websites.



# introduction

The impact of crime on communities and their residents receives a great deal of attention. But distinct from that impact, the removal of those who may have committed crimes from their communities has a profound effect on their families and neighborhoods. Nearly all of them will return—to families, neighborhoods, and communities that may or may not be prepared to welcome them back.

Previous TARC guides have focused on strategies for connecting families in *Making Connections* neighborhoods to jobs, improving their health care, and meeting their housing needs. Each of these challenges is more difficult for individuals returning to communities following a prison sentence. When neighborhoods are home to a high percentage of people who have been in prison—as impoverished, minority neighborhoods often are—there is an impact on all children who live in the neighborhood, regardless of whether they have personally experienced the incarceration of a parent.

While there are challenges associated with people who have been in prison, these individuals must not be demonized. It is true that many have had multiple episodes of criminal activity and incarceration, which caused their families, neighborhoods, and victims significant harm. Most have histories of drug and alcohol dependency. And a small percentage have victimized their own children and family members. However, the greatest challenges facing sites that seek to reintegrate these residents into their neighborhoods are the attitude of vengeance that pervades American society and the failure of the formal justice system to consider the needs and capacities of the communities most affected by street crime and crime policy.

## **Why is prisoner reentry particularly important in *Making Connections* neighborhoods?**

The origin and, accordingly, the return destination of prisoners is highly concentrated among a relatively small number of stressed and depressed communities, some of which are *Making Connections* sites. These communities disproportionately bear the burden of reintegrating people who have been in prison.

The U.S. prison population has quadrupled during the past quarter century, and approximately 600,000 people are released annually from federal or state prisons.<sup>1</sup> While public awareness of these trends has increased, there is still widespread ignorance of their impact on communities and families: An estimated 10 million children (14 percent) have experienced the incarceration of a parent, and even more have suffered reduced resources and opportunities because of a parent’s criminal record.

While it is impossible to quantify former prisoners living in *Making Connections* neighborhoods or current prisoners separated from these communities, many *Making Connections* neighborhoods fit the profile of those most impacted by incarceration: Incarceration affects people of all types, yet it disproportionately affects economically disadvantaged, African-American, and Latino families. African Americans make up 46 percent of people in prison but 12 percent of the general population nationally, and Latinos make up 16 percent of people in prison but 12.5 percent of the general population. See the tables in the next chapter for incarceration data specific to *Making Connections* sites.



Prisoner reentry is also important in *Making Connections* neighborhoods because without attention to it, it is difficult to build neighborhood-wide collaboration. There is a common misperception that those who have been arrested are dangerous and pose an immediate threat to others in the community. In reality, of all people released from federal prisons in 2000, 92 percent had been imprisoned for non-violent offenses, and more than one-third had been imprisoned for selling or possessing illegal drugs.<sup>2</sup>

Most people in prison continue to belong to and draw support from their families and neighborhoods of origin. But many disinvested communities struggle to address the needs of current residents, much less provide the substance abuse treatment, employment, health care, housing, and counseling that many former prisoners and their families need. Moreover, while people in prison are serving longer sentences, there are few opportunities to participate in educational, vocational, and treatment programs. Parole systems that were once expected to both supervise and assist people who have been in prison have been largely dismantled or downsized. Although the census counts people in prison as residents of the counties in which they are imprisoned, their real homes are in neighborhoods such as *Making Connections* sites.

#### **What happens to the families of those who go to prison?**

Despite periodic public attention paid to the four-fold growth in the prison population and the release of more than 600,000 individuals from prison each year, the heart of the matter continues to be ignored: these individuals are the children, parents, siblings, and spouses of millions of Americans.

Like people in prison, prison families are growing in number but are virtually unseen or undetected by society. These families have been traumatized and are often in serious need of economic and social support,

and their trauma impacts their communities—yet, because of the fear, denial, and stigma attached to imprisonment, this population has until recently received scant attention from human service planners and providers. The strengths and assets of these families are also virtually invisible except to those who know them.

The impact of imprisonment on families is not well understood by the general public and not fully appreciated by the families themselves, the prisoners, or the systems that they often struggle to navigate. For spouses and domestic partners with children, incarceration of the partner often results in a three-fold loss—of emotional support, economic support, and parental support.

Spouses and domestic partners of incarcerated parents struggle with:

- + Loss of income if the incarcerated parent was providing financial support
- + Loss of emotional support and the pain of separation
- + Disruption of family life (regardless of whether the incarcerated parent was living with some or all of his/her children
- + Social stigma and feelings of humiliation

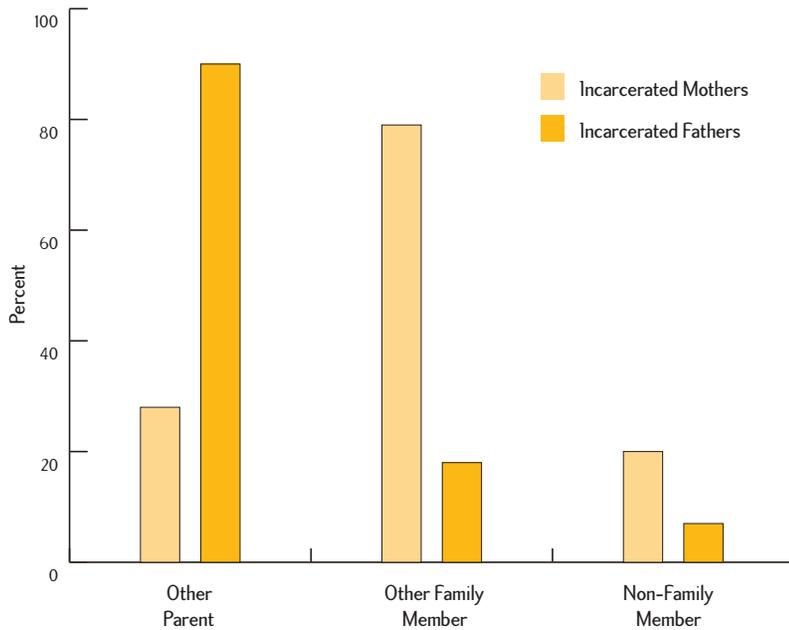
In addition, in cases in which substance abuse or crime have been part of the parents' lives, these behaviors may increase on the part of the spouse or partner outside prison, as emotional and financial stressors mount.

While each family's experience is unique, many children experience the following after the incarceration of a parent:

- + Insufficient food, shelter, and/or clothing as a result of decreased income

- + Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, attention deficit disorder (with or without hyperactivity), and attachment disorders
- + Emotional trauma and profound feelings of loss
- + Lasting feelings of powerlessness if the child witnessed the arrest, especially in cases of police indifference or brutality
- + Shame and embarrassment, even in communities with high incarceration rates (some children try to cope by putting on a boastful or indifferent front)
- + Difficulty in school and academic and social failure
- + Neglect resulting from substance abuse among family members who are struggling to cope with increased stress
- + For children entering foster care, disrupted education and other stressors due to multiple placements, as well as increased risk of physical and sexual abuse

Who Is Taking Care of the Children of Incarcerated Parents?



Note: Percentages add to more than 100% because many inmates have multiple children living with different caregivers.  
 Data Source: Murnola, Christopher J. 2000. "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children." Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Chart Source: Women's Prison Association

It must be stressed, however, that each child and each family is different. A child may in fact be relieved and show signs of improvement if having the parent at home added danger or stress to the child's environment. However, in virtually every case, the family suffers from the incarcerated parent's reduced contribution to its stability and well-being. Many people in prison are seen—or see themselves—as a financial and emotional burden to families who must now bear the expense of their support by sending packages and supplying money for commissary, visitation, and phone costs. In addition, families are called upon to provide encouragement and must endure the fear and stress that all families experience when a family member is removed or incapacitated in some way.

#### **What is the impact of incarceration?**

Adults and juveniles in trouble with the law are likely to have been victimized as children; to come from chaotic, troubled, and economically marginal families and neighborhoods; and to have failed at school. Compounding these forces, incarceration itself creates psychic trauma; job loss and impoverishment; dislocation and homelessness; chaos in the family life, which can lead to abuse; and alienation and despair, which can lead to educational failure. Job loss and educational failure as well as substance abuse and the drug trade are thus both causes and consequences of incarceration.

The impact of this destructive cycle is felt most by African Americans and Latinos, who fill our prisons in numbers far out of proportion to their representation in the U.S. population. For example, an African-American male's chance of going to prison during his lifetime is greater than one in four, and a Latino male's chance is one in six, compared to one in 23 for a white male.<sup>3</sup> (See *Incarceration Rates in Making Connections States* table, next section, for more data.) This overrepresentation both reflects

current inequities related to race, class, culture, and power and further disadvantages groups of children, families, and neighborhoods socially and economically.

Although prison populations have grown rapidly, the availability of in-prison programs supporting reentry (such as drug treatment, education, and vocational services) has decreased. Furthermore, the ability of people in prison to receive support from family members and take part in family life has decreased because of the long distance between newer prisons and prisoners' communities.

#### **What happens when people come home from prison?**

Coming home from prison is cause for celebration but fraught with anticipation and expectations that are often unfulfilled, leaving reentering prisoners and their families with significant challenges. Many of these challenges are exacerbated by the growing number of people being released from prison into a shrinking number of communities, and by the combination of increased sentences and reduced in-prison services to support successful reentry.

A central problem is this: The challenges families face during incarceration are not solved upon release. While strong, positive family ties significantly improve prospects for successful reentry, people leaving prison also may place significant strain on their families and neighborhoods.

This strain is magnified by numerous barriers: For example, many employers disqualify applicants who have been convicted of crimes. Many subsidized housing agencies turn away those with drug convictions, leaving the former prisoner's family to choose between being with their loved one and having a home. Loans for higher education and a range of other benefits can be unavailable to those with a criminal history. Depending on federal, state, and local policies, people who have been in prison can lose voting rights, be deported, lose parental rights,



and face other barriers to reunification. (See the table *Incarceration Policies in Making Connections States* in the next section for site-specific policies.)

Repeat imprisonments increase the difficulty of reentering the community: families break up, chances of employment drop, and contact with and identification with criminals increase as imprisonments accumulate. Of all people released from prison in the United States in 1994, 51.8 percent were back in prison within three years, more than half of them for technical violations such as parole infractions.<sup>4</sup> The circumstances into which the individual is released have a great deal of impact on his or her likelihood of recidivism:<sup>5</sup> Living with a spouse, arranging for post-release employment during incarceration, living in a less populated area, and living in an area with a low poverty rate (as long as the former prisoner is employed) all increase chances of staying out of prison. Other conditions are predictors of recidivism, such as having been arrested for the first time for a drug offense or parole violation.

Emotional factors also play a role in how people fare upon release from prison. Many experience a kind of post-traumatic stress that makes it difficult for them to reconnect with family members, hold jobs, maintain sobriety, and nurture relationships. Higher-than-average numbers of people in prison have been homeless, are mentally ill, and have infectious diseases, adding to the challenges of post-release adjustment.

Given the range of hurdles to successful reentry, it is critical that every possible source of support be mobilized for people who have been in prison. The primary supports, addressed in subsequent sections, are employment-related education and training, housing, and health care, including mental health services and substance abuse treatment. Sites that want to increase the rate of successful reentry must

help increase access to all of these. However, a critical—possibly the most critical—source of support for prisoners reentering society has been largely overlooked: their families.

### **How do families support prisoner reentry?**

The most significant resource for supporting prison families consists of the prisoners and families themselves. Both logic and research suggest that families are the reentry program of first and last resort. At least one study has found that people who have family ties during incarceration do better when released than those without such ties.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, research by the Vera Institute of Justice finds strong family support or involvement to be an important indicator of successful reintegration, correlating with reduced criminal activity, less drug use, and better employment outcomes.<sup>7</sup> Family involvement positions the former prisoner to not only benefit from, but contribute to, the well-being of his or her children, family, and community.

What does a family do to provide support to an incarcerated member? During incarceration, family members and community leaders visit the prisoner regularly, listening, sharing thoughts and feelings, and bringing news of developments on the outside. Church leaders, teachers, and other community leaders and members keep the incarcerated person in their thoughts and conversations. They take concrete steps to prepare for the incarcerated person's release, including preparing a place for him or her to stay; locating or forming support groups, counseling, and substance abuse recovery programs; and researching employment, job training, and education possibilities.

Staying connected to an incarcerated person can be extremely difficult, emotionally and practically: Policies and procedures routinely separate incarcerated people from their families. Men typically are incarcerated an average of 100 or more miles from where their children live, and women 160 or more.



More than 50 percent of incarcerated fathers and mothers report never having a visit from their children in prison. Even phone calls home are off-limits for many, costing families hundreds or thousands of dollars a year. Model programs across the United States are working to help families overcome and remove obstacles, strengthening connections between the incarcerated and their loved ones by providing:

- + Facilitated, supervised parent-child visits in prisons
- + Parenting classes and materials for incarcerated parents and their partners
- + Transportation to prison for family visits
- + Release-preparation programs inside and outside the prison walls

Programs also are advocating in the justice system for providing such supports and for removing the barriers to family contact.

Even while in prison, parents can provide the comfort, instruction, support, and love children need for healthy development. Incarceration-related interventions succeed only if their goal is to empower both parents to act as capable, responsible, loving parents to their children.

#### **What are the limitations of neighborhood-based support currently being provided?**

Community-based, community-led, and faith-based organizations have for years been providing a small number of the services and policies required to sustain people in prison and their families during and after incarceration. Many of these organizations offer services focused in one location and on one issue or problem that affects a broad cross-section of the neighborhood. While they may not exclude prison families and people who have been in prison, they often lack a clear understanding of the specific

needs affecting reentering prisoners or their children and families—if they even know who these individuals are.

There are also organizations that focus almost exclusively on individuals with criminal records and their families and provide a continuum of services or support from arrest through reentry. Such organizations range from multiservice organizations funded by the formal justice system to neighborhood-based organizations affiliated with prison ministries. Providing services through criminal justice organizations—even comprehensive services attuned to the special needs associated with reentry—could limit the mainstreaming of people who have been in prison and their families into neighborhood life and maintain the separation imposed by stigma and shame.

#### **How can neighborhoods support prisoner reentry?**

Neighborhood support is crucial to the successful reentry of people who have been in prison into communities and families. Schools, preschools, and child care providers; religious institutions; health clinics; and other influential community institutions can—if informed, prepared, supported, and connected—help all family members deal with the challenges of incarceration. Examples of some effective neighborhood-based programs are included in the Resources section.

#### **How can the justice system better support prisoner reentry?**

Working directly with people who have been in prison—and their families—to help them reclaim their appropriate roles must be a central part of our society's effort to support this growing population. But by itself, this is not enough. In fact, even in combination with drug treatment, education, and employment programs, it is not enough—because our society as a whole neither understands nor is



sympathetic toward the challenges that people face as they leave prison.

Our society must address the ever-growing number of former prisoners reentering communities by prioritizing direct services and support to help them and their family members reclaim their community and family roles. Among the most needed reforms are better-funded and more coordinated drug treatment, education, and employment programs, as well as policies that help strengthen families' connections to economic opportunity, support networks, and effective services. New prisons can and should be built closer to where the families of inmates live. Less restrictive visiting policies and more civil treatment by prison staff of family members are needed to strengthen bonds between incarcerated people and their loved ones.

Larger than all of these needs, however, is the need for a criminal justice system less reliant on incarceration and more aware of the community-based interventions that can provide adequate sanction without destabilizing families and neighborhoods.

### **How can strategic partnerships support prisoner reentry?**

In recent years, the predicaments of prison families and people who have been in prison have captured the attention of an increasing number of policymakers, elected officials, national foundations, and social advocacy groups. The federal government has funded a range of reentry initiatives, and leading research organizations have begun to explore and promote effective programs, policies, and practices to help mitigate the impact of incarceration on children, families, and communities. A number of government and private funding streams are now targeted at improving prisoner reentry strategies. Nonprofits, local government agencies, and other organizations outside of the justice system have proposed that

people who are or have been in prison, and their families, receive services.

One factor propelling this trend is increased attention on prisoners and former prisoners among a variety of strategic partners. Public health leaders seeking to stop HIV and AIDS, substance abuse treatment providers, those working to shape TANF and workforce investment, and advocates in the fields of fatherhood, family support, mentoring, and child welfare have broadened their scope to address the needs and concerns of people who are or have been in prison and their families.

These trends provide a base upon which to build more effective strategic partnerships that help support prisoners and their families before, during, and after incarceration. The need for partnerships that link formal and informal systems and reflect place-based as well as system-based approaches has become increasingly clear and compelling. There is also a growing call for strategies to reinvest dollars saved through successful reentry into communities disproportionately impacted by the nation's record-high incarceration rate to help reduce accompanying high rates of recidivism.



# potential requests, opportunities, and challenges

## A. WHAT ISSUES MIGHT NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS AND LEADERS RAISE ABOUT THE REENTRY OF PRISONERS INTO COMMUNITIES?

The issues raised among neighborhoods with high incarceration rates vary, depending on residents' experience: On the one hand, residents have been told for many years that keeping criminals incarcerated is the way to reduce crime and that people who have been in prison are dangerous. Thus, the prospect of prisoners returning to live among them does not inspire them to “tie a yellow ribbon round the old oak tree.” However, residents are likely to have experienced arrest and/or incarceration personally or through a family member; they are likely to need support and may be eager for systems change.

Because of this spectrum of experience, site teams will likely receive widely varied requests from community organizations, residents, and local justice agencies. Following are some of the issues they may raise, and some responses:

### **Safety of Neighborhoods and Families**

With regard to specific people who are or have been in prison, residents may want to know about the crimes that led to incarceration, and whether these individuals pose a danger to their families and the community. While there is no guarantee that they—or potentially dangerous people who have never been incarcerated—will not commit new crimes, recidivism is best reduced not by social censure but instead by a combination of supervision, services, and supports (see Introduction for additional information on recidivism). In most cases, it is safe and beneficial to encourage the maintenance of relationships between people in prison and their children and families. Communities can best increase their safety by demanding adequate resources for families

and neighborhoods struggling with the impact of reentry and by demanding that the formal system focus less on retribution and more on effective prisoner reentry.

### **Rehabilitation**

Community leaders and residents may well question whether prison rehabilitates or merely warehouses people, and whether men and women leave prison capable of contributing to their families and communities. The mission of a prison is typically the care, custody, and control of prisoners—not the successful reintegration of those released. Nonetheless, many prisons do attempt to provide education, substance abuse treatment, vocational training, spiritual development, and other services that greatly reduce the chance of recidivism. Even in the absence of formal programs, a large number of people in prison use their time to educate and rehabilitate themselves. Residents should visit their prisons and advocate on behalf of effective interventions that prepare people to live crime-free, drug-free lives when they come home. Neighborhoods concerned about the failure of prisons to make their communities safer might consider whether more people who violate the law could be sanctioned in less expensive and more effective ways, while holding the prison system more accountable for rehabilitation and reintegration.

### **How Neighborhoods Can Support Reentry**

Communities must mobilize resources to help people in prison and their families by providing drug and mental health treatment, employment, education, and housing. Residents and leaders should support formal systems as well as community- and faith-based efforts that help families stay connected to people in prison (by reducing the cost of phone calls and encouraging visits, for example) and help families

“make room” for individuals returning home. At the same time, a broad range of partners must advocate for policies to ensure that the criminal justice system views the families of prisoners as valuable resources rather than as quasi-criminals.

Effective programs and service models for successful prisoner reentry are described in subsequent sections.

### Devoting Resources to Reentry

Community leaders may be concerned about the strain placed on their resources by people who are or have been in prison and their families, given the substantial support they need, including public assistance, education, jobs, housing, health care, and other services. Some may wonder whether former prisoners and their families would be served better by integrating them into existing service delivery systems or by offering services targeted to their distinct needs. Increasingly, however, community leaders are questioning massive public expenditures on corrections budgets and calling for significant reinvestment in the neighborhoods most impacted by the nation’s rising prison population. There is growing public will for greater expenditures on preventing—rather

than mitigating—the impact of crime and other social ills and for making better use of existing resources through improved accountability.

### B. WHAT ARE THE TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES ON WHICH SITES CAN BUILD?

The challenge of reintegrating people who have been in prison has become far more widely noted as their numbers have increased and the societal consequences of the nation’s high incarceration rate have become more keenly felt. Many policymakers have begun to recognize that in- and post-prison services should have kept far better pace with the large number of new prisons built during the past 30 years. A new focus on prisoner reentry presents an opportunity for reinvestment of public and private resources into the neighborhoods and families from which prisoners come and to which they will return.

There are three trends on which sites can build: (1) pressure to find less expensive and more effective responses to criminal behavior, (2) data demonstrating the extent and impact of incarceration and reentry, and (3) a focus on families and children.

## the PUBLIC SUPPORTS ALTERNATIVES to PRISON

More than half (53 percent) of voters believe that people who are incarcerated are more likely to commit crimes after being released than they were before entering prison, according to a Maryland poll commissioned by the Justice Policy Institute. Only 20 percent said people were less likely to commit crimes after being incarcerated.

The same poll showed voters believe by a two-to-one margin that there are too many people in prison; 86 percent of respondents favor judges having the option to order treatment rather than prison for some drug users.

After voters in California passed Proposition 36 in 2000, the proportion of the state prison population incarcerated for drug crimes dropped from 28 percent to 22 percent in 2003—a decline of 10,000 individuals at a cost savings of \$22,500 per person per year.



### **1. Economic downturns are reducing prison budgets.**

State budget deficits have spurred many states to reexamine whether their investment in prisons is paying off, and whether they can afford to warehouse people for longer periods as needs in other sectors grow. Overall crime rates are falling, and the public has become less willing to continue incarcerating people and ignoring the costs—which are high: In Washington, D.C., in the 1980s alone, corrections spending rose at seven times the rate of higher education expenditures. Since 1976, the University of the District of Columbia’s budget has increased by just 82 percent, while corrections spending in the nation’s capitol more than tripled.<sup>8</sup>

In many jurisdictions, alternatives to incarceration, treatment courts, restorative justice, and other approaches to reducing reliance on prisons have generated innovative programs. Community activists have begun organizing around the need to reinvest dollars spent on prison construction, operation, and maintenance in meeting local needs. And faith communities have become more involved in a wide range of service and advocacy projects that focus on prisoners and reentry. Many of these initiatives are discussed in later sections.

### **2. Improved data and research are clarifying priorities.**

In recent years, better data have been generated to identify concentrations of crime and locations of prison families and reentering prisoners. Such mapping information makes it possible to make the case for increased resources in areas supporting reentry where crime and incarceration are disproportionately high. And although it is too early in the advent of reentry programs for these programs to produce conclusive outcome data, researchers and program planners are at work to produce such data: We do know, for example, that participants in prison-based educational, vocational, and work-related programs are more successful than nonparticipants. They

commit fewer crimes and are employed more often and for longer periods of time after release.<sup>9</sup> We also know that, as stated in the Introduction, post-release circumstances such as living with a spouse or having a job arranged before release decrease chances of recidivism. So there is a strong case for devoting resources to programs that strengthen family relationships during incarceration and prepare people in prison to enter the workforce.

### **3. Growing recognition that families are the most powerful “reentry program.”**

Growing public attention to the positive impact of families on people in prison, the vulnerability of prisoners’ children, and the impact of reentry on families can create the impetus for more support for sites already engaged in family strengthening policies and practices. To seize this opportunity, sites must help formal systems and communities strengthen people who are or have been in prison and their families through economic opportunity, social networks, and effective systems. They must conduct special outreach to locate families with incarcerated members through schools, churches, and other community institutions, and these families must have support groups, child care, job programs, substance abuse counseling, and material assistance. These supports must be offered within the prison walls whenever possible, but—just as important—families must know about them, discuss them with their loved ones during incarceration, and help their loved ones access support upon release.

Tailoring existing support programs to the needs of incarcerated people and their families is especially important given the isolation of many families involved in the criminal justice system. They are reluctant to share their status, seek support, or reach out to others because of shame, fear of social censure, and unsympathetic responses from the formal justice system.



### C. WHAT CHALLENGES MIGHT SITES FACE?

With many doors closed to people who have been in prison, sites must help keep these individuals' and their families' faith in themselves and each other alive. The journey back to normalcy can be depressing and discouraging. There are employers who will not hire people who have been in prison, regardless of the nature of the offense or sentence. They may be legally barred from certain jobs, licenses, housing, and educational opportunities. People who have been in prison may lose their voting rights, and immigrants who have served their time may be deported. Most important to many formerly incarcerated parents, incarceration reduces access to their children and can even result in permanent separation.

While it is safe to say that residents of disinvested communities are at the very least ambivalent about the influx of people who have been in prison and their impact on community life and crime rates, neighborhoods are impacted in different ways, depending upon state and local policies: In many states seeking to lengthen prison sentences, parole has been all but abolished, eliminating or reducing resources for supervision and leaving community members feeling vulnerable. On the other hand, in communities with parole, families and neighbors can feel threatened and intruded upon by the presence of police and parole officers enforcing curfews, home searches, drug tests, and job-site visits.

In addition to the challenges that naturally accompany reentry, policies and practices in the criminal justice system at all levels can add to post-release stress, increase economic pressure, and lead prisoners to be unable to meet conditions of their release including:

- + **Racial and economic disparity** that places the burden of incarceration and reentry disproportionately on poor communities of color, which

have never been engaged in nor granted resources by the criminal justice system

- + **Welfare policy**, including child support enforcement, that overstates the ability of returning prisoners to provide financial support and undervalues their ability to provide emotional support to their children
- + **Legal barriers** to reintegration and reunification (including limits on housing benefits, employment, voting, and education—see table, *Incarceration Policies in Making Connections States*)
- + **Politicization of crime**, resulting in lack of support in the justice system for in-prison vocational training, higher education, substance abuse treatment, and discharge planning—as well as post-prison supports—all of which have been shown to be effective
- + **Practical barriers** to maintaining connections between people in prison and their families, such as remoteness of prisons and high costs for visiting and telephone use
- + **Resistance of elected officials and residents** to providing housing and programs for former prisoners in their neighborhoods (otherwise known as the “not in my backyard” mentality)
- + **Overreliance on incarceration** accompanied by calls for mandatory and excessive sentences, abolition of parole, harsh prison conditions, and elimination of programs that prepare people in prison for reentry
- + **Release of prisoners without adequate discharge planning**, identification, access to health care, skills, money, transportation, and/or housing, which increase rates of recidivism and parole violation



INCARCERATION POLICIES in *MAKING CONNECTIONS* states

	Life Sentence without Parole	Death Penalty	Mandatory Sentencing for Drug Offenses <sup>10</sup>	Voting Rights Terminated <sup>11</sup>
California	x	x	x	
Colorado	x	x	x	
Connecticut	x	x	x	
Indiana	x	x	x	
Iowa	x		x	x
Kentucky	x	x	x	x
Rhode Island	x		x	
Texas		x	x	
Washington	x	x	x	
Wisconsin	x		x	

INCARCERATION RATES in *MAKING CONNECTIONS* states

More than half of the states in which *Making Connections* sites are located have rates of incarceration that are higher than the national average. And in many of these communities, rates among African Americans and Latinos are even higher than the disproportionately high national averages.

	Percentage of Population That Is Incarcerated <sup>12</sup>	
	General Population	By Race: White / African American / Latino
United States Average	3.3	.4 / 2.2 / .8
California	4.1	.5 / 2.8 / .8
Colorado	4.2	.4 / 2.8 / 1.1
Connecticut	4.1	.2 / 2.4 / 1.4
Indiana	3.1	.4 / 2.2 / .5
Iowa	4.4	.3 / 3.3 / .8
Kentucky	3.3	.4 / 2.4 / .5
Rhode Island	2.5	.2 / 1.7 / .7
Texas	4.7	.6 / 3.3 / .8
Washington	3.3	.4 / 2.1 / .7
Wisconsin	5.4	.4 / 4.1 / 1

questions for **SITE TEAM LEADERS and LOCAL PARTNERS**

Site team leaders and local partners must evaluate the scope and impact of prisoner reentry as well as current responses. This information can be gathered from courts; corrections and parole agencies; child welfare departments; health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment providers; and the agency coordinating criminal and juvenile justice activity. Additional sources of information are listed in the Resources section of this guide. It is vitally important to ask people who are or have been in prison and their family members if their experiences are consistent with those suggested by official sources.

Site teams and local partners should make sure to ask the following questions.

In your community:

How many people are being sentenced to prison annually? How many are coming home? What are their characteristics (age, race, sex, etc.)?

How many residents are currently serving a sentence? How many are under some form of correctional supervision? By which agencies? What are their characteristics (age, race, sex, zip code of residence, and crime of conviction)?

Of those under correctional supervision, how many have been rearrested or returned to custody? Break this down into misdemeanor arrest or conviction, felony arrest or conviction, and violation of probation or parole.

What percentage of those described above were homeless, tested positive for controlled substances, and/or were unemployed at the time of rearrest/return?

What kind of discharge planning is available to people in prison?

Of those under correctional supervision, how many were custodial or non-custodial parents of minor children? How many children in foster care have a parent or parents in prison?

How and when are reentering prisoners released from prison? Are they provided with transportation? Medication? Emergency funds?

What are the legal barriers facing reentering prisoners and individuals with criminal records regarding employment, housing, and other benefits?

What programs are available to people in prison with regard to vocational training; substance abuse treatment; mental health; parenting education, family support, and family counseling; housing; and education (literacy, GED, and higher education)? What percentage of people in prison participate?

What programs and services are available for reentering prisoners from community-based, faith-based, and government agencies, respectively? How many participate?

Which service providers and agencies can create change in policies and programs so that their services address individuals and families affected by incarceration?



## WOMEN in prison

There were more than 97,000 women in prison at the end of 2003. Although 93 percent of people in prison in the United States are men, women's incarceration increased at twice the rate of men's from 1980 to 2000, due largely to mandated sentences for drug use. The following statistics and trends help form a portrait of women in prison and the issues facing them:

**Most are non-white:** 63 percent in state prisons and 67 percent in federal prison are black or Hispanic. Only 24 percent of the U.S. population is black or Hispanic.

**Many have children:** 65 percent of women in prison have children under age 18 (as compared with 44 percent of men in prison), leaving about 1 in 359 children with a mother in prison. Half of women in prison are more than 100 miles from their children; of those, 38 percent will not see their children at all during their incarceration. In addition, 5 to 10 percent of women entering prison are pregnant.

**Most are in their thirties:** 47 percent of women in state or federal prison nationwide are in their thirties, past the years in which criminal activity most commonly occurs (almost half of arrests of women involve people under age 25).

**Most have low educational attainment:** 64 percent of women in state prison have not finished high school.

**A large number are HIV-positive, have Hepatitis C, are mentally ill, or have histories of drug abuse:** All of these conditions are present at a higher rate than in the general population of women.

**Many have had limited work opportunities:** Half of incarcerated women were unemployed the month before their arrest. Many have engaged in illegal activity as a form of work, and women living with criminally involved men are 37 percent more likely than other women to deal drugs.<sup>13</sup>

Programs and services can help respond to these conditions facing women both during and after incarceration. These include programs that maintain healthy connections between incarcerated women and their children; education and employment programs for women in prison or at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system; health services for women who are or have been in prison; and policy initiatives to challenge mandatory minimums for drug offenses.

One model program for women who have been incarcerated is the Sarah Powell Huntington House, operated by the Women's Prison Association since 1993. This 28-unit apartment building in the Lower East Side of Manhattan provides a transitional residence and supportive services for 37 homeless women who have been involved in the criminal justice system and seek reunification with their children. Since its opening, Huntington House has been home to 328 women and has helped them reconstruct their lives in the community, get and stay sober, go to work, reunify with their children, and move into their own permanent residences.

*For more information about women and incarceration, contact the Women's Prison Association & Home, 110 Second Ave., New York, NY 10003, 212-674-1163, 212-677-1981 (fax), [www.wpaonline.org](http://www.wpaonline.org).*

# promising approaches and resources

Communities seek to address incarceration for many reasons. Most want to create stability and safety in their neighborhoods. Many also see that the risks of negative child and family outcomes are increased by incarceration and want to lower these risks. Still others wish to make better use of public resources and are finding prisons to be a drain on those resources. And, of course, former prisoners and their advocates and families want those leaving prison to be able to contribute to their communities in positive ways.

A number of strategies have been used successfully by *Making Connections* teams and others who are working to achieve these goals:

## A. PROVIDE SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE OR HAVE BEEN INCARCERATED:

- 1. For incarcerated people:** Provide needed services and supports related to family, employment, mental and physical health, and spirituality, starting at the point of incarceration. Begin planning for release.
- 2. For those about to be released:** Prepare a comprehensive discharge plan that includes living arrangements, medications, identification, transportation, emergency funds, escorts, and linkage to community or faith-based organizations and mentors.
- 3. For formerly incarcerated people:** Make sure that individuals have access to supports and mentoring related to housing, substance abuse treatment, medicine and health care, education, job training, employment, child care, identification, transportation, and emergency funds.

**B. SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY INCARCERATION.** From incarceration through reentry, reach out to locate families of those in prison and assist them in maintaining ties, involve them in planning for release, and provide them with support. Make sure children are not blamed or penalized for their parents' circumstances or behavior.

**C. REDUCE LEGAL AND PRACTICAL BARRIERS TO REINTEGRATION,** including legal barriers to accessing employment, housing, and other benefits and services, as well as the loss of the right to vote.

**D. PROMOTE POLICIES THAT SUPPORT REENTRY OF PRISONERS INTO COMMUNITIES.** Criminal justice/sentencing, diversion, and release policies should reduce reliance on mass incarceration, maximize community-based sanctions and supervision, address the impact of sentencing on children and families, and reduce racial disparities.

The rest of this section describes these strategies in detail.

## A. PROVIDE SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE OR HAVE BEEN INCARCERATED:

**1. For incarcerated people:** Provide needed services and supports related to family, employment, mental and physical health, and spirituality, starting at the point of incarceration. Begin planning for release.

Communities can do a great deal to increase the likelihood that, after release, individuals will have sufficient employment, be positively involved with their families and communities, and be in good health.



Communities should take an active role in determining what services people receive while incarcerated and demanding effective programming that relates to post-release community needs. Residents can become informed about prison programs and practices by:

- + Volunteering to serve on a citizen advisory board (these are mandated in some jurisdictions)
- + Joining a prison advocacy group such as a chapter of CURE (Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants) or FAMM (Families Against Mandatory Minimums) (see Resources section)
- + Volunteering to provide prison-based services
- + Developing relationships with legislators who oversee correctional budgets

There has been increasing attention to the need for “transitional services” to prepare people in prison to reenter their communities. Very often, however, people in prison receive these services only a few months before release. While short-term services can be helpful, gaps in educational, employment, and cognitive skills, as well as physical and behavioral health issues, cannot be adequately addressed in a few short weeks. These gaps and issues should be identified at the time the prisoner is taken into custody and should be systematically addressed through the entire period of imprisonment.

### **Educational Programs**

Because education is directly linked to lower rates of recidivism, people should be better educated and/or more skilled after incarceration than before.

While 90 percent of state prisons provide educational services, only about 25 percent of people in prison report taking a basic education or high school-level course. Given the extent of most prisoners’ educational deficits, remedial services must

start as early as possible and continue until competencies are demonstrated.

There is mounting evidence that participation in educational programs reduces the rate of recidivism. In a study involving more than 3,000 people in prison in three states, researchers determined that those participating in educational programs were significantly less likely to be rearrested, reconvicted, and reincarcerated. Researchers also determined that in each of the three states, an investment of \$1 in educational programs yields a \$2 savings in reduced prison costs.<sup>14</sup>

A variety of methods are used to provide education in prison. It may be provided by teachers from the public school system, employees of the corrections department, or private contractors, through competitive bidding. Some success has been achieved using inmate tutors who supplement instruction provided by paid employees. Community volunteers play crucial roles by assisting teachers and serving as catalysts for improving educational services.

When evaluated, higher education in prison has been shown to significantly decrease recidivism. Children’s literacy is also improved when their parents have completed higher education. Both of these facts point to the value of providing higher education to people in prison, but there is still a significant gap in this area, which some private colleges are attempting to fill on a voluntary but extremely limited basis (see Resources section).

### **Training and Employment**

There is little doubt that securing a good job at a good wage is vitally important for people returning to their communities from prison. Yet many correctional institutions do little to prepare inmates for the world of work. Most men and women enter the correctional system with a poor employment history,



inadequate work skills, and few career goals; many leave prison without having addressed any of these deficiencies. They are further handicapped by employers' practice of not hiring people who have been in prison. And some will be unable to work because they do not have a social security card or birth certificate and do not know how to get one.

Preparing prisoners for employment must begin early during their incarceration. First, people in prison should complete a comprehensive vocational assessment to help them understand their interests, work values, and skills—as well as such career barriers as housing, substance abuse and health problems, and educational deficits—and to develop an action plan that will guide their participation in prison-based programs and post-release vocational activities. To avoid duplication of efforts, the assessment should be made available to community-based and other organizations that provide employment services outside of prison.

Second, people in prison should receive instruction that provides them with the soft skills needed to find and maintain employment, including learning how to conduct a job search, problem solve, communicate effectively, and work as part of a team. These employment-readiness programs should also aim to strengthen life skills through workshops on such topics as managing anger and making connections between behavior and consequences. To complement this instruction, community-based organizations can help develop and support prison resource rooms—where people can access job listings, information about local occupations in demand, and support service contacts—and can help organize prison-based job fairs that bring potential employers into the correctional facility.

Third, people in prison can receive high-quality vocational training services through partnerships between prisons, community-based organizations, and local businesses. All too often, the training

## JOBS as part of a “TOTAL MILIEU”

### **Pioneer Human Services, Seattle**

Pioneer Human Services, in Seattle, operates six correctional residences for adults and youth. Its correctional approach is to provide a total milieu of work, housing, counseling, and job-site services, including health insurance, to encourage and support independent living.

Pioneer operates four work-release residential facilities for adults. These residences are uniquely designed to help men and women who have been released from prisons and other institutions and can benefit from an integrated program of treatment and job training before they move into the community. The organization also operates two group homes for boys sentenced to detention by the courts.

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provided in prisons has not kept pace with changes in the workplace, giving prisoners few marketable skills upon release. Community-based organizations must demand better. They can add value to existing training by helping people in prison acquire basic computer skills or by working with prison administrators to develop new training programs. In either case, both prison and community-based programs must involve private sector employers to determine hiring needs and design an appropriate curriculum.

For obvious reasons, most prison-based employment is tied to the prison's operational needs—for cleaning and maintenance, electrical and plumbing work, and food production and preparation. Prisons may also operate factories that manufacture or repair products needed by the prison system or other state agencies, including office furniture, license plates, soap, or flags. However, these factories often use antiquated equipment, teaching skills that have very little value to employers in the community. Hourly salaries are usually measured in pennies rather than dollars, and there is little, if any, incentive for increased productivity. In some states, however, prison industries produce marketable goods that are sold to government and nonprofit agencies, providing wages and skills training at higher levels. CorCraft, in New York State, for example, makes furniture and other items that are sold in limited markets.

Partnerships between private employers and corrections agencies have resulted in a wide range of employment opportunities, although relatively few people in prison can take advantage of these opportunities. The nonprofit sector has also looked for ways to provide people in prison with opportunities to learn and use skills relevant to the current job market. For example, through a partnership among the Illinois Department of Corrections, Lutheran Social Services, and Habitat for Humanity, prisoners

are being employed to prefabricate Habitat homes for recipients.

### **Health Services**

Unlike training or educational programs, health and mental health services for people in prison are constitutionally required. These services, however, vary considerably in quality, and many jurisdictions have been brought to court for failing to provide care that meets constitutional standards. Because of their economic circumstances, the transitory nature of their lifestyles, and their use of illegal drugs, people in prison have a high prevalence of chronic and infectious diseases and mental health problems. At the end of 2000, the Justice Department reported that 2.2 percent of state prisoners and 0.8 percent of federal prisoners were known to be infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Further, the National Commission on Correctional Health Care recently reported that the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, hepatitis B and C, and tuberculosis among inmates was significantly higher than among the total U.S. population. The commission also determined the same to be true for such chronic diseases as asthma, diabetes, and hypertension. Given the life-threatening nature of these diseases and the complexity of the treatment required, it is critical for people in prison to receive the appropriate level of care throughout incarceration and to continue treatment following release into the community.

Community groups seeking to ensure that people in prison receive adequate health care should encourage local authorities to secure national accreditation from the commission, which uses a voluntary process emphasizing external peer review panels to determine whether health and mental health services delivered at a correctional facility comply with nationally recognized standards. Prisons that are in compliance with these standards can both reduce



their potential liability and improve the efficiency of their health care delivery system.

Successful treatment of chronic and infectious illnesses also requires a considerable investment in patient education, both to ensure compliance with the treatment plans and to prevent further spread of communicable diseases. Community-based organizations with expertise in health and mental health issues can play an important role in this regard by conducting workshops, distributing literature, and providing individual counseling on a paid or volunteer basis. Peer-led education programs are particularly effective in the delivery of these services and can be very useful in connecting prisoners to treatment providers in the community.

Information regarding the treatment and prevention of infectious diseases in correctional settings is available from many sources, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) and the *Infectious Diseases in Corrections Report* at Brown University ([www.idcronline.org](http://www.idcronline.org)).

### **Mental Health Services**

A recent study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice has documented what many practitioners have long believed: The prevalence of many mental illnesses among people in prison is higher than among the U.S. population as a whole.<sup>15</sup> It is estimated that more than 15 percent of the men and women released each year from federal, state, and local correctional facilities suffer from serious mental disorders. Many return home with no plan for treatment or aftercare, which poses an enormous challenge for their families and communities.

People in prison who have mental illness must have ongoing access to services that enable their successful transition into the community. But this cannot happen unless mental health service providers and correctional agencies collaborate with each

other. At the core of this collaboration is the development of a treatment plan that begins in prison and continues into the community. Arrangements must be made to ensure that medications are provided throughout the transition period and that post-release appointments with mental health providers are kept. Ongoing communication between correctional staff and community treatment providers is an essential component of the process. Providers must be informed when a prisoner requiring care is about to be released and given the opportunity, where required, to escort him or her from the prison to a treatment facility.

Mental health practitioners must be prepared to help people deal with the special issues facing patients recently released from prison. This includes dealing with the stigma attached to incarceration and working with parole officers and other criminal justice agencies. To that end, it is very helpful to employ peers in the treatment process. This is best accomplished through the use of peer support groups that meet regularly under the supervision of treatment staff.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), an evidence-based model for providing mental health services, offers a comprehensive approach for meeting the needs of prisoners with serious mental illness who are returning to their neighborhoods. ACT involves the use of small caseloads, round-the-clock coverage, comprehensive treatment planning, and an interdisciplinary team involving psychiatrists, case managers, nurses, social workers, vocational specialists, substance abuse treatment specialists, and peer counselors.

### **Pre-Release Transitional Services**

While prison-based education and substance abuse treatment programs can contribute to a successful reentry, they usually do not provide the core competencies needed for long-term success in the community,



nor do they connect participants with resources in the outside world. Thus, it is necessary to complement the work done by these programs in prison with pre-release transitional services that support successful reentry and build bridges to community-based resources.

Comprehensive life-skills programs work to help formerly incarcerated people function better in their roles as family member, employee, and citizen. These programs should complement other prison-based programs and make strong connections to community resources. Since each locality presents circumstances that are unique, no existing curriculum will meet the needs of every correctional facility. An assessment comparing programs presently being offered to their “fit” with current needs must be conducted before selecting and tailoring a program for a particular location. Yet the fundamental elements of effective pre-release transitional services are consistent. They include:

- + **Employment skills**—Program participants should be able to set short-term and long-term vocational goals, search for employment, and secure a job consistent with their career objectives. Particular emphasis should be placed on meeting employer expectations and strategies for maintaining employment.
- + **Practical living skills**—Program participants must be able to manage finances responsibly, secure adequate housing, maintain their physical and mental health, and function effectively as parents.
- + **Personal growth skills**—Program participants should be able to set objectives and follow through on plans, exhibit sound moral reasoning, and understand their responsibilities as citizens.
- + **Social skills**—Program participants should be able to manage their anger and resolve conflict effectively.

Programs that prepare people for release by teaching some or all of these skills, using “off-the-shelf” or locally developed or adapted materials, exist in many prisons. They may be taught by corrections counselors, other prisoners, nonprofit providers, or volunteers. Those programs shown to be most effective in reducing criminal and antisocial behavior include a cognitive behavioral component designed to change decision-making patterns, values, and attitudes that lead to criminal behavior. (The importance of including evidence-based cognitive-behavioral treatments is addressed in the recently issued *Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council* at [www.reentrypolicy.org](http://www.reentrypolicy.org). Information about cognitive behavioral programs used in correctional settings is available from the National Institute of Corrections at [www.nicic.org](http://www.nicic.org).)

### Family Services

When a person goes to prison, his or her family will often feel sentenced as well. In this respect, all programs—whether educational, vocational, or therapeutic—must consider the needs of prisoners in a family-centered context. Further, there are programs and services that specifically support families, such as those that help enable visitation (including transportation), improve telephone access, and provide parenting support and family counseling. These will be described in the next section.

### Ministerial Services

Prisons have chaplains and offer religious activities designed to attend to the spiritual needs of inmates. Many faith institutions run prison ministries that reach out to people in prison and their families. Institutional chaplains and community-based spiritual communities may offer scripture study, pastoral counseling, worship services, and other ministerial support.

### Services for People with Special Needs

Prisons and community organizations should collaborate to develop additional programs based on the special needs of the prisoner population or the community. For example, a community concerned about domestic violence would want to ensure that people in prison who have a history of domestic violence—whether or not the crime for which they were sentenced involved domestic violence—are enrolled in effective programs designed for batterers. Sex offenders should have access to sex offender treatment.

**2. For those about to be released:** Prepare a comprehensive discharge plan that includes living arrangements, medications, identification, transportation, emergency funds, escorts, and linkage to community or faith-based organizations and mentors.

A well-known phenomenon within prisons, “gate fever,” describes the stress and tension that people experience as their release date nears. Those who have served sentences of several years are likely to be apprehensive about the awaiting world and their place in it. Many people will leave the front door of the prison with little else than a new suit and a bus ticket. Without a clear plan about where they will go, what they will do, and how they will eat, their chances of failure increase.

Instead, all people who have been in prison should exit the gate with a discharge plan, developed by a case manager, that includes living arrangements, medications, identification documents, transportation, emergency funds, escorts, and links to community- or faith-based organizations and mentors. The case manager should also provide information and guidance, advocate on the client’s behalf with outside agencies, and make arrangements to ensure that any required services are available upon release. A comprehensive discharge plan inoculates people in prison against the worst symptoms of “gate fever,”

reducing the stress associated with release and preparing them for its challenges.

For the process to be successful, however, it must provide more than a service plan and a list of community resources. Discharge planning should help build prisoners’ motivation and readiness for change, give them the opportunity to rehearse new behaviors, prepare them for the difficulties of reentry, and give them the personal resources needed to make the adjustment. It must be a continuation of a process of change that begins at the start of incarceration. And, for those who will be returning to their families, the process should anticipate and accommodate the needs of their spouses and children as well.

While people in prison should begin planning for their return to the community at the earliest possible time, the intensity of the preparation process should increase as they approach their release date. The formal discharge planning process should begin roughly six months prior to release. As that date nears, the amount of time spent in pre-release activities should increase accordingly.

Discharge planning for inmates who are being detained pending adjudication of their cases differs considerably from planning for those nearing the end of their sentences. In the former case, there is less time available for making plans, and there may be no post-release criminal justice supervision. In the latter, discharge planning takes a more predictable route and often involves parole supervision. However, in many states, parole release rates have dropped significantly, and people in prison often do not discover their parole status until just prior to release. This leaves little time to nail down plans. Lacking predictability and often failing to reward good behavior or planning, the parole system too often has a negative impact on the discharge planning process.



Despite their obvious importance, most correctional systems do not provide for the development of comprehensive discharge plans, which puts an enormous burden on underresourced communities and family members of released inmates. Parole officers, often hampered by large caseloads and a lack of public support for the rehabilitative aspect of their work, may provide only little relief. Given these factors, community-based organizations often must play a catalytic role in the discharge process and serve as the link between prison and reentry into the community.

Community groups interested in advocating for improved discharge planning services can evaluate the existing process using the checklist provided below. The deficiencies identified may open up opportunities for contractual or volunteer work, depending on the financial resources of the correctional system. In most cases, community groups serve the discharge planning process by conducting workshops that prepare people in prison for their release and by connecting them to neighborhood resources. Local organizations seeking to play a more central role can provide discharge planning services, helping inmates develop a service strategy and ensuring that they follow through with it upon release. No matter what approach is taken, volunteer mentors can be used to support the discharge planning process and facilitate the transition to the outside world.

Often overlooked, but extremely important in the discharge process, are such basic necessities as suitable clothing and transportation money. An inmate released without an overcoat in the winter or sufficient funds to make the trip home will become quickly discouraged. Until these necessities are better identified and acknowledged by formal systems, community groups can help fill the gap in a variety of ways. For example, clothing drives can be

used to provide people in prison with garments that are suitable for the season, and funds can be raised to subsidize transportation home.

Neighborhood groups seeking to become involved in the discharge planning process can learn much from the practices and experiences of the health care community, where discharge plans are common. They can work with prisons to help create appropriate discharge plans for people with health problems—such as HIV, mental illness, or chemical dependency. Such planning can lessen reentry challenges and ensure continuity of care, linking prisoners with treatment and other vital community services and assisting with pre-release enrollment in Medicaid and related programs to help cover the costs of post-release treatment and prescription services. When applicable, the discharge planner should also communicate with parole staff to improve cooperation with post-release treatment staff. Because people who have been in prison can be lost to the medical system as a result of homelessness, relapse, or mental health issues, sustained advocacy and follow-up are vital.

Increasingly, community-based organizations are entering into contracts with correctional systems to facilitate the delivery of post-release health care. These organizations face a big challenge in establishing working relationships with post-release treatment providers that are able to meet the multiple, complex problems of people with criminal records. They also must be ready to respond to discharges from jail or prison that may occur at any time, with little or no notice.

Regardless of who provides discharge planning, successful outcomes require close collaboration between the multiple agencies responsible for the release, supervision, and treatment of people leaving prison.

## criminal justice INITIATIVE promotes discharge planning

### AIDS Institute, New York State Department of Health

The Criminal Justice Initiative was developed in response to the emerging prevention and service needs of HIV-infected people who are in prison or on parole in New York State. Its goal is to provide a comprehensive, seamless continuum of high-quality HIV prevention and support services to these individuals in order to improve their health and well-being and reduce HIV transmission. As part of that goal, the initiative has funded a consortium of nonprofit agencies throughout the state to provide discharge planning to prisoners with HIV. A collect-call AIDS in Prison Project Hotline is available to the people who are served by the collaborating agencies and is operated by the Osborne Association.

The Criminal Justice Initiative uses multiple strategies to ensure effective service delivery. In New York State correctional facilities, services include HIV-prevention interventions, peer educator training, anonymous HIV counseling and testing, HIV support services, and transitional planning. Services are also provided to incarcerated youth in facilities run by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services and are available in some county jails and in community-based organizations.

HIV-infected parolees, their partners, and their family members are provided with HIV-prevention and risk-reduction interventions, HIV support services, and family-centered case management. Additional services for individuals in state correctional facilities include a peer education hotline, counseling, and HIV/AIDS clearinghouse information services. Coordination and referral services are provided for people on parole and those recently released from prison.

The AIDS Institute receives a total of \$637,700 in state funds under a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Correctional Services. Criminal Justice Initiative contractors receive a total of nearly \$3 million in combined state and federal funds.

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**3. For formerly incarcerated people:** Make sure that individuals have access to supports and mentoring related to housing, substance abuse treatment, medicine and health care, education, job training, employment, child care, identification, transportation, and emergency funds.

*Making Connections* site teams and local leaders should consider three types of strategies generally considered essential to successful reentry:

- + **Health strategies**, including mental health services, substance abuse treatment, access to health care for infectious disease, and other health challenges

## CHECKLIST for effective DISCHARGE PLANNING initiatives

1. Are people informed about the discharge planning process when they enter prison?
2. Does the formal process begin with the assignment of a discharge planner no less than six months prior to release?
3. Does the discharge planner have the capacity to provide timely information and referral services?
4. Does the discharge planning process incorporate the use of a standardized form that identifies the prisoner's strengths and weaknesses, prioritizes needs, and specifies participation in services before and after release?
5. Does the process realistically address health and mental health issues, housing needs, employment, family reintegration, and financial assistance—including Social Security and Medicaid enrollment?
6. Does the process ensure that people will have the documents needed to secure work (a birth certificate and Social Security card) upon release?
7. Do discharge plans connect both the prisoner and his or her family to resources and pro-social activities in the community?
8. Is the prisoner actively engaged in the problem-solving process and development of the plan?
9. Is the plan reassessed 30 days prior to release and modified as required?
10. Does the discharge planning process consider the requirements of the parole authorities?
11. Do prisoners receive updated copies of the plan when it is modified and sign off on any changes?
12. Does the discharge planning process build motivation and readiness for change through group and individual activities?
13. Do community-based groups play an active role in the process, providing information about services and connecting prisoners to them as required?
14. Are discharge planners provided with feedback on the success or failure of their efforts?

- + **Vocational strategies**, including education, training, and employment
- + **Housing strategies**, including release to family, halfway houses, work release, transitional housing, and permanent housing

Services and supports for the families of formerly incarcerated people are crucial; these are covered in detail later in this guide.

Sites may want to also consider integrated strategies, such as case management that links people leaving prison with any needed service. And it's important to recognize correctional and other system

requirements that may govern employment, treatment, or housing.

### **Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Strategies**

Given the prevalence of chronic health problems in the prisoner population, people recently released from prison and their families must be provided with ongoing treatment services that protect their well-being as well as build and maintain healthy communities. *Making Connections* site teams may want to examine the health, mental health, and substance abuse services available to people in their neighborhoods who have been released recently. It's important to determine whether and to what extent continuity of care exists between the prison and the community. For example: Are post-release treatment plans prepared in prison? Are prison medical records made easily available to post-release health practitioners? Are appointments for care made prior to release? Are the services accessible to people who have just been released from prison, who are likely to have limited transportation options and funds? If the availability of community-based services is insufficient, the treatment plans of those recently released are unlikely to be carried out successfully.

When people with substance abuse or physical or mental health problems are released from custody, the ability to quickly secure needed treatment is in their and society's best interest. Delays in receiving care may lead to life-threatening conditions or worsening of psychiatric problems, creating unnecessary risks to personal and public safety. Yet treatment services for most people who have been in prison are delayed for weeks or even months because they lack immediate access to Medicaid, which they are not eligible to receive while incarcerated.

Many states terminate benefits upon learning that a Medicaid recipient has been jailed, forcing

him or her to reapply for benefits upon release. However, federal law permits suspension of Medicaid benefits during incarceration. This scenario is preferable to termination because it enables people in prison to reactivate their coverage and begin receiving care immediately upon release. Transitional programs and advocates can promote uninterrupted access to community treatment services by prompting local agencies to suspend, rather than automatically terminate, prisoners' Medicaid benefits and by helping prisoners not previously enrolled in Medicaid to begin the application process before their release date.

Medicaid enrollment, however, is only the first step in meeting the health care challenges of people who have been in prison. They must also be linked to the appropriate treatment services, which must be sensitive to their needs and, when a returning prisoner has multiple health or mental health problems, coordinated among providers. Those leaving prison are likely to have a difficult time navigating a health care system that frustrates even the best-informed consumers. This difficulty, compounded by the stress of reentry itself, may cause newly released prisoners to miss appointments and opportunities for care. Those with mental health problems may be particularly reluctant to follow through with treatment plans.

Ideally, case managers should supervise the process of meeting the health, mental health, and substance abuse-related needs of people who have been in prison. This responsibility, however, often falls upon parole officers who have large caseloads and lack training in these areas. Appropriately qualified social workers who work as part of a reentry team are better suited for this role. *Making Connections* site team members may want to champion the creation of such reentry partnerships.



meeting  
MENTAL HEALTH needs

**Iowa Reentry Court**

One program working to address the mental health needs of people who have been in prison is the Iowa Reentry Court Initiative. In Cedar Rapids, one of the initiative's nine sites, some prisoners who have mental health disorders or who have been dually diagnosed with mental health and substance abuse problems are put on parole and enter a treatment and recovery program as an alternative to prison. Participants are identified by a case manager in consultation with in-prison staff; if the parole board decides a prisoner should be admitted, he or she enters a mental health program lasting six months or more, depending on the duration of supervision. Participants appear once or twice a month before the Community Accountability Board, which helps them identify local resources and recognize their accountability to the community at large. Services provided to participants include mental health treatment, medication management services, housing, and transportation.

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**Vocational Strategies**

Community-based organizations can also help people recently released from prison seek employment. These individuals must find work as soon as possible, due to financial pressure and the need to satisfy parole requirements. Community groups can provide one or more of the following services:

**Job placement assistance**—Placement services are usually offered at no cost to businesses and marketed as a way for them to find candidates for hard-to-fill jobs. In communities where the prison provides pre-employment workshops, community-based organizations can provide refresher classes. In communities where the prison does not, community organizations can offer a formal series of workshops, along with vocational assessments. Regardless, such services should be offered prior to release from prison. If possible, the workshop staff should include a former prisoner, and the program should offer peer-led support groups.

**On-the-job training**—These services can both meet the immediate needs of former prisoners seeking employment and provide employers, who are usually compensated for the training costs, with skilled workers. All parties sign a written agreement that specifies what training the employer will provide and which competencies the worker will acquire. The training period can vary depending on the skills required and the individual's aptitude. Funding for on-the-job training programs can be secured under the federal Workforce Development Act, which allows localities to enter into contractual relationships with organizations providing services to special populations.

**Wage subsidies**—Through these monetary incentives, companies hire people with multiple barriers to employment. Unlike on-the-job training, there is no contractual agreement to provide instruction based on an individualized training plan.

**Supportive work programs**—These programs offer entry-level positions with intensive supervision to those with little or no job experience. They usually are set up as a contractual relationship between a community organization and a government agency, for-profit business, or nonprofit organization to provide such basic services as janitorial work.

**New Orleans Jobs Initiative**

The New Orleans Jobs Initiative (NOJI) links unskilled inner-city residents to jobs that pay family-supporting wages, offer career-ladder opportunities, and provide benefits. Part of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Jobs Initiative, NOJI focuses on the manufacturing, construction, health care, and office sectors, which all are experiencing job shortages and pay high wages to entry-level workers. Many of its participants are former prisoners. Executive Director Darryl Burrows says participants are largely “young, African-American men from the hip hop culture . . . people out of prison, off the streets, from substance abuse clinics.” A NOJI survey of employers who hired participants found that all of them were either somewhat or very satisfied with their new employees’ work habits and technical skills, indicating that 80 percent were doing a quality job on each task.

An underlying philosophy of NOJI is that true workforce development reform will not occur without the active engagement of a broad range of stakeholders. From the beginning, Burrows has forged relationships among low-income residents, community organizations, business leaders, churches, and community college administrators. And he’s been able to tap into a growing pool of employers who realize that their own success depends on educating and training residents living in impoverished neighborhoods.

Another key to NOJI is its focus on helping participants function in a new culture. In the course of 21 days, participants in NOJI’s work-readiness program undergo a process of “code-switching”—giving up the norms of the street and prison for the norms of the workplace.

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Following a period ranging from a month to a year, the community organization helps workers secure unsubsidized employment at higher wages.

**Case management services**—Community-based groups can help former prisoners, who are used to the structured routine of prison, cope with daily issues and obligations through case management services that link them to a range of community resources and support their reintegration into their family. The importance of connecting former prisoners with their

families cannot be understated: A study involving more than 1,200 inmates released from federal prisons found that those living with spouses had a recidivism rate of 20 percent—versus 47.9 percent for those who had other living arrangements.<sup>16</sup>

**Federal Bonding Program**—One barrier that prevents many people who have been in prison from securing work is the concern employers have about their trustworthiness. Employers typically protect themselves against worker theft or dishonesty by



securing fidelity bonds, which insure them against loss of money or property caused by dishonest acts of their employees. Most commercially purchased fidelity insurance does not, however, cover “at-risk” employees—including people with a history of a felony conviction, substance abusers, and persons with bad credit. In 1986, the Department of Labor began a pilot project that provided special fidelity bonds for at-risk workers at no cost to employers. The program was intended to be an incentive for employers to hire hard-to-place job seekers who received training through federally funded programs. Over the course of more than a decade, the pilot project demonstrated its success, helping more than 40,000 people secure work—and receiving only 450 claims.

Community-based groups can help employers learn more about this bonding service, which currently is managed by the McLaughlin Company (as an agent for Travelers Property Casualty) through state employment centers and employment and training agencies. No-deductible, six-month bonds can be

issued in amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000, with extended coverage also available. Information may be obtained by calling 1-877-872-5627.

**Work Opportunity Tax Credit**—This federal incentive reduces income tax liability for businesses that hire the hard to employ, including former prisoners who are members of low-income families. Community-based groups can encourage employers to hire people who have been in prison by informing them of the tax credit and helping them complete the required paperwork. Materials to market the credit can be obtained from each state’s workforce agency. To certify their qualification, employers must complete the appropriate IRS forms, which are available online at [www.ows.doleta.gov/employ/tax.asp](http://www.ows.doleta.gov/employ/tax.asp).

**Retention services**—Pre-release planning, vocational assessments, identification of employment barriers, and case management services all significantly increase the likelihood that people who have done time get and keep a job. Community groups

## EDUCATION for PRISONERS in NEW YORK

### **Hudson Link**

In 1998, a group of inmates at Sing Sing prison, just outside New York City, recognized the devastating effect of the lack of college degree programs on people who are or have been in prison. Such programs had previously been offered in prison but had been eliminated when public funding was cut. These inmates approached religious and academic volunteers for help, and the volunteers secured private funding to restore the programs, founding Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison. The program acts as a link between the Sing Sing administration, the colleges involved, and funders, who underwrite textbooks, teacher salaries, and other expenses.

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can help extend these services by supporting career advancement efforts that match individuals leaving prison with mentors working in the same field for career guidance and advice.

**Educational services**—In 1994, people in prison lost their eligibility for Pell grants. Since then, many more will be prevented from receiving high school equivalency diplomas because of budget cuts in prison educational programs. As a consequence, people are often released from prison without the educational skills and credentials they need to become securely employed. And, although some may be very close to earning a GED or college diploma, newly released prisoners often put their educational needs on the back burner to deal with the more immediate needs of employment and housing. Community organizations can help them start or complete degree programs by guiding them through the complex bureaucracies of colleges and universities. Some may need assistance negotiating with admissions offices for the transfer of their college credits and access to information about financial aid. Those seeking high school equivalency diplomas may need help finding educational programs that don't conflict with their job schedules. Others may simply need a volunteer tutor who can prepare them for an exam.

Additional information on all of these vocational strategies can be obtained from the National Institute of Correction's Offender Workforce Development Division, which also provides training on working with people who are or have been in prison, disseminates information on best practices, and offers technical assistance. Online resources and a complete description of its services are available at [www.nicic.org](http://www.nicic.org).

### **Housing Strategies**

A prisoner's return home to his or her parents, children, spouse/partner, or other family member is the

reentry plan of first resort. The challenges of transition are greatly eased when a prisoner's family is ready, willing, and able to reopen its doors and provide support.

For many people leaving prison, however, living with family is not a viable option (for example, in situations involving substance abuse, domestic violence, or other issues). In these cases, the released prisoner faces not only the pressing task of getting a job but also the challenge of finding a place to live. The two challenges are inextricably linked. Without a permanent address, job seekers are less likely to find work. Without a job, newly released prisoners returning to their community often cannot afford to pay rent—or to make the security deposit often required. This scenario is further complicated by the lack of affordable housing in many communities, the prejudice many landlords have toward people with criminal records, and the prohibition often imposed by parole officers against living in certain neighborhoods. Federal housing law prohibits certain persons convicted of drug offenses from living in public housing, further limiting the options available to those returning home.

To help people overcome the housing challenges of reentry, community organizations can connect them with local housing-assistance resources, which may include:

**Work-release programs**—By providing for gradual reentry into the community, work-release programs help inoculate people in prison against culture shock and prepare them for the responsibilities of independent living. Typically, people selected for these programs are nearing the end of their sentence and have been deemed to be nonviolent. During nonworking hours, they remain in the facility where they are employed, under the supervision of custodial staff. Some localities permit them to visit their families on a scheduled basis and to attend to other needs in the community.



Through these employment programs, people in prison can reimburse the state for part of their confinement costs and build up their savings for use upon release. The programs are underutilized, however—perhaps because of a small number of well-publicized cases in which people have abused them. In 2002, fewer than 1 percent of local jail inmates were participating in work-release programs.<sup>17</sup>

**Homeless shelters**—Too often, shelters are the only housing option available to people following release from prison. Because of safety concerns, however, many people referred to large urban shelters will refuse to go to them, preferring to live on the streets or with friends or acquaintances. The 1996 National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers determined that 54 percent of homeless clients have been incarcerated in their lifetime.<sup>18</sup> Even with their less-than-desirable reputation, some homeless shelters have waiting lists, adding to the problems faced by people released from prison.

Many faith-based and nonprofit organizations provide emergency shelter and other basic necessities in small, well-managed facilities staffed by caring volunteers. For example, the Partnership for the Homeless in New York City manages a network of 107 volunteer-operated, faith-based overnight shelters in churches, synagogues, and community organizations. Volunteers help prepare meals under the supervision of the organization’s nutritionist and provide a level of support not normally seen in larger shelters.

**Halfway houses**—These neighborhood-based residential facilities are designed to ease the transition from prison to the community. Typically, they offer drug, alcohol, and mental health counseling; job placement assistance; life skills instruction; and mental health and other services. Residents are usually required to abide by a curfew and are assigned facility maintenance tasks. The recent trends toward harsher

punishment and the abolition of parole have resulted in a decrease in the amount of criminal justice funding for halfway homes. However, many parole agencies grappling with the issue of homeless former prisoners are willing to support halfway house efforts.

**Supportive housing**—Supportive housing helps expand permanent housing opportunities and provides links to comprehensive services for people at risk of becoming homeless.<sup>19</sup> It encompasses three strategies: providing affordable, long-term rental housing; coordinating delivery of supportive services; and building community.

The scope of services made available to tenants in supportive housing reflects the needs of families in the community. Usually, it includes access to substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, job training, parenting skills development, and programs for children. The housing programs also seek to build a sense of community among residents, breaking the social isolation that separates them and empowering them to provide for each other as they become self-reliant.

Supportive housing has an excellent track record of meeting the long-term housing needs of people with mental health, substance abuse, and chronic health challenges—many of whom have been in prison.

While the need for supportive housing may be evident, the ideal model for implementing this strategy is not. Housing for the exclusive use of people who have been in prison may stigmatize its residents, making it harder for them to integrate into the community. And community opposition can make this type of housing difficult to site. Models incorporating the use of work-release prisoners to restore low-income housing, perhaps borrowing from the lessons learned by the HUD-financed Youth Build Program and groups such as Habitat for Humanity, might offer long-term solutions for the current



## supportive HOUSING IN CHICAGO

### St. Leonard's House

A permanent housing site with 42 units, St. Leonard's was developed with the support of a low-rate, long-term loan from the Illinois Housing Development Authority and tax credits from the city's Department of Housing. In addition, developers brought equal amounts of funding to the project, which was further supported by the Federal Home Loan Bank and several foundations.

The Illinois Department of Corrections provides a per diem operating and service payment for 12 units that are occupied by formerly homeless men who are serving a parole sentence. The per diem is collected even if the project earns a rental income from the tenant, providing a stable source of funding for the project. Since government support is not permanent and subject to cuts, an endowment has been created to support rent subsidies.

As a case study, St. Leonard's House demonstrates the complexity of creating supportive housing for this population—it took three years to secure financing—and the value of partnerships with agencies that understand supportive housing. One ally in the process was the Corporation for Supportive Housing, a national agency that helps local organizations gain the financial and technical assistance needed to build housing with services, creates demonstration programs for promising new models, and facilitates the sharing of successful strategies. Information about the Corporation for Supportive Housing can be found by visiting [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org).

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housing shortage while preparing prisoners for jobs that pay a sustainable wage. (The Resources section includes information on one model program—the Prisoner and Family Ministry—a collaboration among the Illinois Department of Corrections, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, and Habitat for Humanity.)

Other models could be generated by *Making Connections* sites. The proposed federal Public Safety Ex-Offender Self-Sufficiency Act of 2003 would help people who have been in prison obtain housing by establishing tax incentives for the private sector

to provide low-cost housing. The act, cosponsored by Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-Ill.) and Rep. Mark Souder (R-Ind.) is based on work done by the Illinois Ex-Offenders Task Force, an organization of civil rights leaders, law enforcement officials, faith-based organizations, businesses, and others. The proposed buildings would have “self-sufficiency centers”—with drug treatment programs, job training and employment services, homeownership and rental counseling, financial management training, and other services—and would be involved with monitoring and compliance.





**Subsidized housing**—Regulations prohibit subsidized housing residency to people with criminal records for drug dealing and other offenses. This restriction is often misunderstood by people who have been in prison and those who seek to help them. Many of these individuals are in fact eligible for housing benefits, and those who have been denied them also have the right to appeal decisions against them by housing agencies. There is a pressing need to provide people returning to their communities from prison with information and advocacy services related to subsidized housing. The information provided should dispel any misconceptions they have regarding their eligibility for public housing, inform them of the rights of family members who seek to add a person released from prison to the household, and provide guidance concerning appeal mechanisms. Since waiting lists for subsidized housing usually are very long, it may also be advantageous to help people begin the application process before their release from prison.

**Private housing**—Private housing represents the largest pool of available housing units in the United States, but the high cost of rentals usually prevents those recently released from prison from using it. These individuals may be able to secure housing within their financial means by renting a single room in a boarding house or sharing a rental with another person. Either case presents a viable option for a formerly incarcerated person who has secured work and does not require the types of support services found in halfway houses. However, parole regulations may prohibit people on parole from living or associating with individuals with criminal records, limiting the pool of housemates who might provide a supportive environment.

Community-based groups can help people who have been in prison identify roommates with whom they can share expenses, work with other partners to

establish a revolving loan fund for security deposits and the first month's rent, and/or extend financial incentives to landlords willing to serve this population.

**Incorporating principles of and lessons from the foster care system**—Some communities with limited housing available for newly released prisoners may want to adapt strategies used by the foster care system. Paying individuals—including former prisoners' own families—to provide housing during the transition out of prison would be one way to adapt the kinship foster care model and would lower the burden on public resources. This approach would also help individuals and families who are living in already stressed social and economic environments to afford the cost of supporting an adult during the transition from prison. Even unrelated individuals or families might be willing to provide housing and fellowship to those who have been in prison if their costs are offset.

### **Mentoring**

Without ongoing support and guidance, the challenges of reentry are likely to overwhelm even the most motivated individual. Mentoring is a strategy intended to provide support for new behaviors and attitudes, leading people to resources they might not find on their own and increasing their problem-solving skills. Although mentoring typically involves the development of one-on-one relationships, group mentoring is also a common practice. In either case, success depends heavily on the ability of mentors to build a supportive relationship and draw people who have been in prison into available programs and services.

Comprehensive evaluations and research indicate that good mentoring programs for high-risk adolescents help improve school attendance and reduce drug and alcohol use. The research also suggests that successful mentoring programs have a strong infrastructure and highly qualified staff who can

ensure that mentors are carefully screened, trained, and monitored throughout their participation in the program.

Although there is growing interest in the use of mentors for adults who have been in prison, this strategy has not been rigorously evaluated. There is, however, little doubt among practitioners that the development of caring relationships helps sustain motivation and build self-esteem, and that mentors can be successfully engaged in supporting these objectives.

Adult programs that involve mentors fall into two categories: (1) informal efforts that link people with volunteers on a short-term basis for guidance and support and that draw mentors from the ranks of former prisoners themselves, members of faith institutions involved in prison ministry, and business people who provide career guidance; and (2) longer-term efforts in which mentors are the backbone of the program, engaging formerly incarcerated people in a formal capacity over a long period of time. Mentors in these programs are screened, trained, and provided with close supervision throughout their involvement with clients, who are matched to their interest and skills.

Mentoring requires a significant investment of time and effort by both program staff and volunteers. For programs involving youth, weekly meetings are generally recommended.

Volunteers engaged in these activities should be aware that any failure to keep an appointment or meet an obligation would be devastating to the participant. Wherever mentors are engaged in long-term relationships, it is essential that paid staff provide screening, training, and supervision. The National Mentoring Network, listed in the Resources section, provides more information about standards and best practices.

**B. SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AFFECTED BY INCARCERATION.** From incarceration through reentry, reach out to locate families of those in prison and assist them in maintaining ties, involve them in the release plan, and provide them with support. Make sure children are not blamed or penalized for their parents' circumstances or behavior.

While every policy, program, and practice affecting prisoner reentry should be viewed through a family strengthening lens, some approaches are more directly focused on the families of those who have been involved in the criminal justice system. The mere fact of separation negatively impacts prisoners and their families, who may also be frightened by the law enforcement system, bewildered by the court system, and insulted by the prison system. They are often hurt or angry at their incarcerated family members both for the underlying behaviors that led to their imprisonment and for the impact of the arrest and incarceration itself—which may include monetary loss due to legal expenses and reduced family income, embarrassment surrounding publicity related to the crime, and additional financial and emotional stress.

The family members of people who are in prison are most often women. When those in prison return home, their children and those who have been caring for their children often have high expectations for the reentering family member to take on a significant level of emotional and financial support. When these expectations collide with reality after release, the potentially supportive role of families in the reentry process can be neutralized or even reversed. For this reason, programs that serve the families of people in prison can offer the most benefit by beginning as soon as the person is incarcerated and continuing through the reentry period.



## CHILDREN of prisoners

Children suffer enormously from their parents' criminal activity and incarceration. The consequences of a parent's incarceration resonate throughout a child's life and may ultimately undermine his or her ability to be a productive adult. More than half of incarcerated juveniles and one-third of adults in jail or prison have immediate family members who have also been incarcerated, suggesting a cycle of destructive behavior and imprisonment that rolls through a family's history.<sup>20</sup>

The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that in the United States today nearly 2 million children under the age of 18 have at least one parent in prison or jail,<sup>21</sup> although this number is likely to be significantly higher. Across America, one child in 40 has an incarcerated father. For black children, it is nearly 1 in 14.<sup>22</sup> Given the churning of prison and jail populations, it is reasonable to estimate that more than 10 million minor children have experienced the arrest, incarceration, or release from jail or prison of a parent or loved one.

For children of prisoners, the consequences of a parent's imprisonment are enormous. As a result of reduced financial means, they may live in poorer housing, have less adequate clothing and food, receive less health care, and have less access to a quality education. They may also have experienced parental substance abuse, high-crime environments, multiple caregivers, or prior separations. In some cases, the remaining parent or caregiver may be unable to secure regular employment, forcing the family onto the margins of economic life.

The depth of the emotional wounds caused by a parent's incarceration is hard to fathom by those who have not experienced it. In a typical family where a parent is incarcerated, the child is beset by guilt, fear, grief, and rage; the remaining parent or other caretaker is angry, overwhelmed, and little able to cope with the child's feelings or the emotional and financial challenge of raising the child alone. By the time the child of a prisoner reaches his or her teens, that youth may have experienced the parent's incarceration a number of times. One study found that 7 out of 10 teens with incarcerated parents had witnessed a family member's, typically a father's, arrest.<sup>23</sup>

Children of incarcerated parents may fear that they have been abandoned, that relationships with significant others are not reliable, or that they cannot count on being taken care of. During the parent's incarceration and upon the parent's release, they may struggle with such additional challenges as "maintaining contact with an incarcerated parent, possibly in a distant institution, . . . and having their basic needs met when their parents face the obstacles that confront all offenders upon release to the community—like exclusions from public housing, benefits, or employment discrimination."<sup>24</sup> Not surprisingly, adolescents with incarcerated parents have been found to be "very likely" to reject rules and limits set by adults in parental roles.<sup>25</sup>

As a result of these challenges, children of prisoners often suffer from a range of behavioral, emotional, health, and educational problems. The National Center on Fathers and Families reports that "children with absent fathers are at greater risk than those whose fathers are present for teen pregnancy, drug use, poor grades, incarceration, and suicide—all of which appear to be magnified when the absence is due to imprisonment."<sup>26</sup>

*(continued)*

*(continued from page 45)*

Some of the impact of this separation may be unavoidable. Communities and community-based programs can reduce or prevent much of it, however, by:

- + Working to reduce the number of parents who are sent to prison by replacing incarceration with restorative models of justice that include treatment and sanctions in the community
- + Eliminating the stigma that children and families experience when a parent or loved one is incarcerated, helping children to understand that nothing a parent might have done is a reflection on his or her value or behavior
- + Demanding that the rights of children of prisoners are human rights that should be recognized

Programs that serve families may be prison based, community based, or both; they may identify their primary focus as people in prison, their children, or families as a whole. Programs serving children and families of people in prison may be specifically designed with that purpose in mind, and they may be either independent organizations or part of larger organizations or agencies, including:

- + Programs sponsored and operated by correctional/government agencies
- + Programs within large or national agencies or fields whose mission is to serve children, parents, and/or families (such as fatherhood programs, child welfare agencies, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, or Girl Scouts)
- + Programs within larger organizations that focus on criminal justice or reentry services
- + Programs within neighborhood-based or faith-based organizations (or congregations that have prison ministries)
- + Programs with the single purpose of serving prison families, many of them founded and led by family members

- + Policy and advocacy organizations that promote family-friendly policies and family-focused practices for people involved in the criminal justice system

Regardless of size or mission, these programs typically share the overall view that providing assistance to parents in prison, supporting children and families of people in prison, and maintaining family ties during and after incarceration (where possible or practical) are beneficial to family members as well as people in prison. In addition to programs that provide direct services and advocacy for families of people in and transitioning from prison, there are networks and resource centers that attempt to create bridges among programs and fields that address family issues. See the Resources section at the end of this guide for examples of exemplary programs and resource organizations that serve prisoners' families in a variety of ways.

#### **Prison-Based Programs**

These programs can serve people in prison, their children and families, or both. Many prison-based services, whether offered by corrections staff, volunteers, or community- or faith-based organizations, focus primarily on strengthening family ties through a combination of parenting education and family counseling.



children of incarcerated parents:

### A BILL OF RIGHTS<sup>27</sup>

1. I have the right to be kept safe and informed at the time of my parent's arrest.
2. I have the right to be heard when decisions are made about me.
3. I have the right to be considered when decisions are made about my parent.
4. I have the right to be well cared for in my parent's absence.
5. I have the right to speak with, see, and touch my parent.
6. I have the right to support as I struggle with my parent's incarceration.
7. I have the right not to be judged, blamed, or labeled because of my parent's incarceration.
8. I have the right to a lifelong relationship with my parent.

Effective programs address issues facing incarcerated parents, offer useful skills to improve parenting from prison, and help prepare parents for the realities of parenting after reentry. While training in parenting skills is valuable, it is most effective when paired with counseling, discharge planning, case management, and connections to the nonincarcerated parent. In addition, prison-based parenting programs that reach out to prisoners' children and improve the quality and quantity of visitation, phone calls, and letters help give incarcerated parents an opportunity to "practice" what they are learning. In some cases, programs engage and serve families directly by improving their access to incarcerated loved ones through such approaches as free or low-cost transportation, children's centers in visiting rooms, hospitality centers in or near prisons that prepare family members for visits, and counseling services before or after visits.

Since distance and lack of time or money often prevent children and families from visiting people in prison, programs may focus on other ways to keep families connected, such as letter writing, birthday and holiday cards, and gifts. Some prisoners are permitted to audio-record stories for their children

and to send them both the book from which they read and the recording. This fairly simple process helps parents and children experience a significant bond. In either case, the goal of the activities is to enable positive family interaction, enlist incarcerated parents in their children's educational development, and motivate parents to return home as positive role models. Family literacy programs also serve to inspire people in prison to improve their own reading skills.

In some states, women who are pregnant at the time of incarceration are permitted to care for their newborns while in prison. In New York, the Bedford Hills Nursery Program allows mothers to keep their children for up to two years if they are likely to be released within that period, which enables mother-child bonding while eliminating the need for foster care. Mothers serving longer sentences are encouraged to make arrangements for their children to be raised in the community.

In general, parenting and child-related programs are more plentiful at women's prisons, and have been operating longer. Not only are women more likely to have been caring for children prior to incarceration, they are also more likely to lose their children

to the foster care system upon arrest. Programs for incarcerated mothers and their children focus on a wide range of needs and services, from transportation and visitation programs to children's centers, parenting education, and legal services that address foster care issues. *Making Connections* site teams and other local partners can visit women's prison facilities (usually, there is one per state), familiarize themselves with efforts to sustain the connections between mothers and their children, and support efforts to ensure that services help prepare both mothers and children for reentry and reunification.

### Community-Based Programs

Because prisoners' families and the neighborhoods in which they live often share the impacts of incarceration and reentry, community-based programs are critical to successful reintegration. Their support takes the form not only of specific programs for the children and families of people who are or have been in prison, but also of efforts to transform neighborhood institutions—from schools and churches to day care centers and health clinics—into places that know and care about how incarceration impacts family functioning.

## the OSBORNE ASSOCIATION

The Osborne Association, a multiservice nonprofit organization serving people affected by incarceration, implemented its FamilyWorks program in 1986 to provide comprehensive family services to incarcerated fathers and their children and families. The program encompasses parenting education, support services for families, and children's centers staffed by trained caregivers (civilians and incarcerated men) for father-child visits at Sing Sing and Woodbourne Correctional Facilities. The program's 16-week fatherhood education curriculum is designed to develop responsible, nurturing parenting behavior, both while fathers are in prison and upon release.

Osborne's Family Ties program offers services for mothers at Albion Correctional Facility, New York's largest prison for women. Because of the facility's distance from New York City, the program airlifts children to visit their mothers.

Osborne's Family Resource Center provides information and support to family members of all people incarcerated in New York through a toll-free hotline and a range of services for and advocacy on behalf of children with parents in prison. At its other sites, the organization provides vocational training, employment placement, substance abuse treatment, HIV/AIDS prevention and case management, and other reentry services for people currently or formerly incarcerated, as well as alternatives to incarceration.

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Neighborhoods can embrace these families in ways large and small: For example, the library can stock books aimed at children with a parent in prison, or the mental health center can post information about family support groups. Youth development programs (such as scouting, after-school programs, church youth groups, or sports programs) also can address the special needs of children of prisoners. At the very least, existing youth and family programs can get specialized staff training to ensure that they deliver competent help to families facing this painful circumstance. Information is available through the Family and Corrections Network ([www.fcnetwork.org](http://www.fcnetwork.org)), whose website hosts a comprehensive library on programs to help the children and families of prisoners.

While youth services such as mentoring can help children with parents in prison or on parole, it is vital that they be designed to support, rather than replace, the relationship between incarcerated parents and their children. They must also address in a straightforward manner the impact of having a parent in prison. Although many mentoring programs are school based, this approach may be much less likely to engage children with parents in prison, both because children are reluctant to disclose this circumstance in a school setting and because older or more troubled children may already be disconnected from their school, formally or informally. Nonetheless, an extra pair of caring and supportive hands can be a tremendous boon to both children and families, a fact acknowledged by a recent multi-million dollar federal initiative that provides new funding for programs that mentor the children of prisoners. Unfortunately, the federal mentoring grants do not support activities designed to strengthen the relationship between the child and the parent who is incarcerated.

Similarly, child welfare agencies should be encouraged to view incarcerated parents, in the absence of concrete evidence to the contrary, as

individuals who have something to contribute to the positive development and upbringing of their children. Some of the 50 Community Partnerships for Protecting Children across the nation operate in neighborhoods with high concentrations of formerly incarcerated parents; these partnerships bring child welfare staff together with neighborhood-based family support programs. They are coordinated by the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

There are a number of ways to support families affected by incarceration, both before and after release. Project SEEK (no longer in operation) used research to isolate the risks faced by children with parents in state prison—and the factors protecting them from negative outcomes. Then, the Michigan initiative provided programs aimed at decreasing the former and strengthening the latter. La Bodega de la Familia, a storefront program in New York City, provides culturally sensitive services to the families of drug users under community supervision. The program is working to improve community-based drug treatment outcomes, reduce the use of arrest and incarceration in response to relapse, and reduce family violence. Many other examples exist and can be found in the Resources section of this guide.

Numerous fatherhood programs have begun to reach out to men in prison and during reentry, encouraging them to fulfill their responsibilities as fathers even if they are no longer in relationships with their children's mother(s). While some efforts seem to be little more than collection agencies for child support, many programs value the emotional support that noncustodial fathers can provide and offer a range of services that help men meet their parental obligations in ways that benefit the entire family.

Communities that want to help families affected by incarceration may have trouble identifying and reaching them. There is no single agency or system

responsible for serving them, and the stigma and trauma of incarceration, combined with the extra financial pressure many families experience, may discourage families from availing themselves of services. One approach to overcoming this resistance has been established by the Osborne Association's Family Resource Center: A toll-free hotline for family members, staffed by volunteers who are also family members or former prisoners, offers information, referrals, and peer support.

### Policy and Advocacy

While family support has a clear impact on successful reentry, outmoded or ineffective policies on incarceration and post-release supervision often limit their impact. The range of issues that arise in the course of efforts to strengthen families suggests that both families and communities will need to advocate on behalf of policies that encourage successful reentry and reunification. One of the most obvious issues is the siting of prisons far from where the families of prisoners live, making them difficult and expensive to visit. And visiting rooms are usually unpleasant and overcrowded.

In addition, visitation policies vary widely from state to state. A few jurisdictions provide extended family visiting and/or private visiting over two or more days. Despite ample evidence that such generous policies have a beneficial impact on both prison discipline and the maintenance of healthy family relationships, they are too often eschewed by policymakers and elected officials who fear being seen as “coddling” criminals. Indeed, recent years have witnessed the growth of more restrictive visitation policies, including shorter or less frequent visits, in many states. These policies are accompanied by more intense searches and regulations stemming from a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that leaves to individual prison systems the critical choice of

how (and even whether) to offer visitation. Embedded in the government's argument against more accessible visitation is the fear that families will become involved in crime, be used to transport contraband, or pose a risk to prison security.

Policies that restrict writing and telephone contact also discourage families. In most states, letters from prison are clearly marked “inmate correspondence” on the outside of the envelope, which can lead some families to avoid correspondence that broadcasts their loved one's whereabouts. While phone calls are generally allowed, families bear the most expensive possible rate for collect calls—something that can also generate a substantial profit to state treasuries. In New York, the multimillion dollar profit from collect calls goes to a benefit fund for the families of people in prison. But only 25 percent of the money covers family-related programs—the rest goes to other corrections expenses. Most states contribute the profit to their budget's general fund, but families are paying excessive amounts to stay connected. The Resources section provides contact information for the Campaign to Promote Equitable Telephone Charges, which works to address injustices within prison systems' telephone practices.

Parole policies also can work against strengthening the families of people who are or have been in prison. For example, visits by parole officers to the families and homes of prisoners about to be released can dampen the willingness of family members to offer a returning prisoner a place to stay. One role site teams and local partners can play in addressing this issue is to facilitate collaborations between parole authorities and communities that provide incentives to rather than stigmatize families willing and able to provide housing for returning family members.



### Family-Generated Programs

Grassroots efforts led by and for the families of prisoners exist in nearly every state in some form and can provide an invaluable support network. Many groups are small and local and provide help such as ride-sharing for prison visits. Some have launched websites with chat rooms and forums to help families share the experience of an incarcerated loved one. Some exist primarily to address isolation and stigma, while others focus more directly on issues and policies that affect prison families, such as the parole system. See the Resources section for examples of various efforts.

Not all family-driven efforts are small and local. Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM) has chapters nationwide and has developed a well-organized and effective approach to advocacy on behalf of families affected by the drug war.

### Other Family Issues

Some people in prison are incarcerated due to domestic violence, child abuse, or other forms of family violence, and many more have histories of abuse—as victim, perpetrator, or both. Policies and programs that attempt to reconcile families during incarceration and ease reentry from prison must consider these histories. Few prisons have programs that adequately address domestic violence, child abuse, and other dynamics that put families and children at risk. *Making Connections* sites can help communities demand pre- and post-release services that are more effective at breaking cycles of abuse and violence. Among the innovators in this area is the Judicial Oversight Demonstration Initiative (see the Resources section), which is piloting coordinated community responses to domestic violence in several counties to determine their effects on victim safety, service provision, and accountability of those who have been abusers.

**C. REDUCE LEGAL AND PRACTICAL BARRIERS TO REINTEGRATION**, including legal barriers to accessing employment, housing, and other benefits and services, as well as the loss of the right to vote.

Prisoners reentering society face a daunting set of legal barriers. Communities can help address these barriers by working with people who have been in prison to find out how, or if, a particular law applies to their circumstances, and by enlisting public and private agencies as mediators or advocates in individual cases. By documenting cases of unfairness or undue hardship, communities can be very effective proponents for legal and policy reforms.

### Access to Education

Former prisoners with drug convictions who try to improve their job prospects by continuing their education may find they are ineligible for federal financial aid. The Higher Education Act of 1988 restricts eligibility for those with prior convictions for possession or sale of controlled substances. Depending on the nature and number of offenses, eligibility for aid may be restricted for one or two years—or indefinitely. People who have been in prison may be able to regain eligibility sooner by completing a drug rehabilitation program or having a conviction invalidated. Many may assume that any prior drug conviction will make them ineligible for federal financial aid, but this is not the case. For instance, someone convicted of marijuana possession over a year ago is eligible for aid if it was a first offense.

More information about the Higher Education Act is available at [www.raiseyourvoice.com](http://www.raiseyourvoice.com). Community groups can play an important role in helping people who have been in prison apply for financial aid by informing them about their eligibility, helping them prepare forms (see [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)), enabling access to drug rehabilitation programs where appropriate, and/or gathering documentation of drug

rehabilitation. Many social justice groups have protested the strict enforcement of the Higher Education Act, because it was originally intended to apply to students who were convicted of drug offenses while receiving financial aid. Community groups can add their voices to this protest, additional information is available from the Raise Your Voice organization.

### **Access to Housing**

People who have been in prison may be prohibited by federal law from admission to subsidized housing, and their eviction from such housing may be required. Public housing authorities can perform criminal background checks on all applicants for subsidized housing, and can deny admission even for very old crimes, minor crimes, misdemeanors, and pending criminal charges. Admission can be denied to whole families for the criminal behavior of one member, or even of a guest. Those evicted from subsidized housing for drug-related criminal activity are ineligible to reapply for admission for three years, unless they can show that they have completed a drug rehabilitation program or that the circumstances surrounding the criminal activity no longer exist.

However, public housing authorities must give an applicant a hearing if they intend to deny admission. Although not required to by law, they may consider mitigating circumstances, such as the applicant's attempts at reintegration, the remoteness in time of the criminal activity in question, or the applicant's lack of knowledge of this criminal activity.

Broad interpretation of the law and the complexity of its accompanying regulations may deter people who have been in prison from even applying for subsidized housing. Community-based groups can help by obtaining information from local public housing authorities about their admission policies, and by

advocating that mitigating circumstances be considered in individual cases. They can also advocate for the law to be changed so that housing authorities are required to consider all of the consequences of eviction or of denying admission.

### **Access to Employment**

Federal law prohibits some people with criminal records from working in certain jobs, such as the armed forces or airport security. State law further restricts employment opportunities in many other occupations, especially those serving vulnerable populations such as children or the elderly. While sometimes the ban is for life, it can also be for a set period of time or until the former prisoner shows evidence of rehabilitation. Criminal convictions can also be considered in awarding licenses necessary for certain jobs. In general, a prospective employer may consider the conviction record of someone who has been in prison, but cannot discriminate against that person unless the convictions are related to the job. However, there is significant evidence to suggest that many employers conduct criminal background checks and exclude individuals from employment based on their criminal records—regardless of whether there is a legal basis for this discrimination.

Community-based groups can inform themselves about state laws on employment of individuals with criminal records through their state's attorney general. They can use this information to help identify jobs accessible to people who have been in prison as well as to help these people make corrections to their criminal records. Where state law permits, they can assist former prisoners in getting their criminal records sealed or expunged and in applying for certificates of rehabilitation. Bringing legal challenges against employers who discriminate against former prisoners is unlikely to be practical, but knowledge of state and federal anti-discrimination laws is helpful in advocating for individuals. The Legal Action



Center’s website ([www.hirenetwork.org](http://www.hirenetwork.org)) is an invaluable source of information for community groups trying to help individuals with criminal records overcome legal barriers to employment.

### **Access to Public Benefits**

Access to public benefits—such as public welfare assistance, Medicaid, Social Security, and food stamps—can be crucial to the self-sufficiency of people returning to the community from prison. In many states, however, former prisoners with felony drug convictions imposed after August 22, 1996, are ineligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and food stamp benefits. In addition, individuals with outstanding bench warrants, or in violation of probation or parole, are ineligible for TANF, food stamps, or Social Security income.

In recent years, some states have lifted or modified the ban on TANF and food stamps for people with felony drug convictions. In states where the ban remains, communities can advocate with state legislators for its modification or removal. On an individual basis, people who have been in prison may need help applying for benefits. Many are unaware that, while banned from TANF or food stamps, they still may be eligible for Medicaid and other state benefits. The laws vary from state to state and are not always well understood. Too many welfare caseworkers, for example, may incorrectly assume that anyone with a drug conviction is to be denied benefits, even if the offense was not a felony or occurred prior to August 1996.

Many people who have been in prison also need help verifying their eligibility for benefits, such as providing proof that they are in compliance with the conditions of their probation or parole or that they have participated in approved welfare-to-work programs. Community-based groups can work with government agencies to establish realistic programs for people who have been in prison and can advocate

for expansion of the list of approved welfare-to-work programs to include drug, alcohol, or mental health treatment.

### **Family Law**

Parents in prison run the risk of losing parental rights. According to federal law, a child should only be removed from his or her parents as a last resort, and states must make reasonable efforts to reunify children with parents. But the law also spells out circumstances in which states can impose strict time frames after which parental rights can be terminated if reunification is not successful. In some states, conviction, incarceration, or failure to pay child support can be considered grounds to terminate parental rights.

The law does allow for flexibility and an individual approach. In almost all states, termination of parental rights cannot occur unless it serves the best interests of the child or there is a compelling reason why loss of rights is necessary or appropriate. States also have discretion not to seek child support. Community-based groups can partner with child welfare agencies and prisons to ensure that incarcerated parents are kept in contact with their children and are not faced with unrealistic child support payments upon release. Communities can also work to ensure that people who have been in prison have access to reunification services, as well as to legal representation if they are facing possible termination of their parental rights. For more information on this issue, see *Every Door Closed: Barriers Facing Parents with Criminal Records*, which is available at [www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org).

### **Right to Vote**

Many people leaving prison will be affected by felony disenfranchisement laws and will need help restoring their voting rights. In all states but Maine and Vermont, individuals lose their right to vote



when convicted of a felony. Some states restore voting rights upon release from prison, after a probation or parole term is completed, and/or after all fines and court costs have been paid. Other states restore voting rights after a specified period of time, which can be reduced after a former prisoner has been granted a pardon or clemency. At present, at least 12 states permanently deny convicted individuals of their right to vote.

State laws vary and are constantly changing. Communities can find out about their state laws at [www.demos-usa.org](http://www.demos-usa.org) or by calling Demos at 212-633-1405. Since many people who have been incarcerated receive inaccurate or inadequate information about their voting rights, community groups can work with prisons, probation and parole officers, and election agencies to ensure that all people with criminal records are properly informed of their rights. If state law does not allow for automatic restoration of voting rights upon release from prison, community groups can help former prisoners apply to have those rights restored. In states where ex-felons are permanently disenfranchised, community groups can advocate for a change in the law. Several states have recently introduced legislation to remove barriers to voting for individuals with criminal records, and neighborhood and community groups in high-incarceration communities, working with former prisoners, have proven influential in lobbying state legislators and local civic leaders.

### **Immigration Issues**

Some people who have been in prison face the possibility of separation from their families through deportation. Community-based groups need to be aware that immigrants who apply for residency or citizenship can be deported if a fingerprint check reveals a criminal history. In addition, legal residents with a criminal history who leave the country to visit relatives could be subject to seizure by immigration

officers on their return and to deportation proceedings. Community-based groups can help put former prisoners who are immigrants in touch with local advocacy groups and agencies versed in this issue to inform them of their rights and connect them to legal counsel.

**D. PROMOTE POLICIES THAT SUPPORT REENTRY OF PRISONERS INTO COMMUNITIES.** Criminal justice/sentencing, diversion, and release policies should reduce reliance on mass incarceration, maximize community-based sanctions and supervision, address the impact of sentencing on children and families, and reduce racial disparities.

The reentry of prisoners in communities where large numbers of residents are involved in the criminal justice system has a collective, long-term impact. In more affluent communities, the experience—while traumatic and stigmatizing—is less likely to generate stress outside of the affected family members. But in neighborhoods where prisoners and former prisoners are concentrated, programs and neighbors struggle to shoulder the load because families are already stressed by poverty, failing schools, and crime. In such communities, the response to prisoner reentry must include systemic efforts to reduce the number of residents revolving in and out of prison.

### **Alternatives to Incarceration**

Long before people are sentenced to and return from prison, numerous systems contribute to the decisions that lead to incarceration. Initially, decisions must be made regarding whether to arrest, whether to detain prior to trial, and whether to convict by trial or plea. Once a person is convicted, depending on the crime, a range of decisions regarding sentencing come into play—including alternatives to incarceration such as fines, restitution, supervision in community corrections programs, mandatory drug treatment, community service, or shortened



sentences in county penitentiaries. Communities that want to reduce high rates of incarceration can take a number of approaches to divert people from entering prison in the first place. (Many of these are described in TARC materials on community safety.)

### **Court and Sentencing Reform**

Many states over-incarcerate because of mandatory sentencing laws, which reduce discretion in individual sentencing decisions. In some states, this has led to abolishing parole and replacing indeterminate sentences—which allow for earlier release through rehabilitation—with longer fixed terms. In many states, such as New York and California, mandatory sentences are imposed on individuals who have previous convictions. Too often, this results in life sentences for relatively minor crimes and reduces the ability of judges to determine whether a person might be better punished or rehabilitated within the community—especially if the defendant has dependent children.

Policymakers are increasingly turning to mandatory sentencing legislation because of perceptions that their communities demand harsh punishments for criminal behavior. To reverse this trend, government officials, advocates, community leaders, and residents must inform and persuade the public that there are less expensive, more efficient responses to crime, which also serve to preserve families and neighborhoods. In some communities, traditional responses to criminal behavior, especially illicit drug use, have been circumvented through community-based courts. Such approaches demonstrate that a more therapeutic court model, one that includes judges and other system officials in the rehabilitative process, can produce more meaningful, long-lasting changes in behavior than either short jail sentences or long prison terms.

Although these approaches represent a more humane approach to many of the crises that precede criminal justice involvement—such as illegal drug

use and mental illness—they do not directly challenge the underlying problem: penal laws that too often serve to criminalize and demonize addicts and the mentally ill. Nor should they replace indigenous community responses to social service needs. However, they do represent an important component of communities' larger efforts to reduce the use of incarceration, ease the reentry of those leaving prison, and support the involvement of family members. (For more information, see the Resources section entries on FARM, the Sentencing Project, and the Center for Court Innovation.)

### **Drug Policy Reform**

Clearly, the strongest factor in the massive enlargement of the prison system during the past 30 years is the nation's response to illegal drug use. As of 2000, those imprisoned for trafficking, possession, and other drug offenses made up 57 percent of the federal prison population. That year, the federal prison population grew by 9,042 people—4,032 of whom had been charged with drug offenses.<sup>28</sup> In state prisons, 20 percent of inmates are imprisoned for the sale and possession of illicit drugs. In addition, a significant number of individuals arrested for prostitution, burglary, and other crimes are addicted to illegal drugs, and many people imprisoned for violent crimes report that they were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at the time they committed the crime. Many people involved in the drug trade are fundamentally drawn to the profits associated with prohibition, which suggests that reducing high rates of incarceration in these communities will require legitimate economic investment as well as investments in education, housing, and community development.

Recently, some states have reformed their legislation governing sentencing for drug convictions. Michigan has eliminated mandatory minimum sentences for some offenses, and several states have



passed new laws that mandate treatment instead of prison for nonviolent drug offenders. Public opinion research suggests that a majority of Americans favor supervised mandatory drug treatment and community service, rather than imprisonment, for most people convicted of drug possession.<sup>29</sup> The Resources section includes a number of national and local advocacy organizations that are using collaborative strategies to encourage reform of drug laws throughout the country.

### **Reform of Parole and Post-Release Supervision Policies**

The history of parole dates back nearly 200 years, when states began to pass laws rewarding inmates for good behavior. In the late 1800s, many states established systems of indeterminate sentencing, which gave each convict a minimum and a maximum sentence. After completion of the minimum sentence, inmates would be eligible for release under supervision.

In theory, indeterminate sentencing and the parole process serve as powerful incentives encouraging people in prison to better themselves. When the parole board recognizes hard work, personal growth and transformation, and genuine remorse, people in prison are more likely to take advantage of programs that can help them gain their freedom and reunite with their children and families. But many states now repeatedly deny parole, especially for violent crimes, regardless of the prisoner’s rehabilitation or lack of history of violence. The sentences imposed by the courts take into account the circumstances of the crime, leaving the parole board to consider and evaluate behavior after a sentence is imposed. Indeed, it can be argued that parole boards are in effect resentencing prisoners. Because the purposes of parole are not well understood by families or communities, and because its processes are

largely hidden behind prison walls, there is little pressure for the release of people who can demonstrate their capacity to live safe, productive lives in the community.

Parole release policy—characterized in recent years by the abolition of parole in some states and lower release rates in many states—has contributed to increased prison populations. In many communities, parole supervision policies can be equally responsible for high incarceration rates. Parole violations—for failure to report, observe curfews, attend counseling, maintain employment, or pay child support—can put people back in prison despite the absence of any criminal activity.

### **Community Reinvestment**

Each of the above reforms saves money by reducing prison populations. But the communities affected by high rates of incarceration are those that will be most affected when people are released from prison. Because of this, many policymakers, advocates, and local leaders argue that communities should benefit directly from these savings through reinvestment. New techniques, such as “mapping,”<sup>30</sup> permit communities to analyze which blocks and neighborhoods are home to significant numbers of prison families and returning prisoners. Rather than use these data only to amplify law enforcement responses, communities should target these blocks and neighborhoods for enhanced services as well. In addition, site teams can explore tax and other incentives for businesses to invest in these communities.

### **Reentry Challenges for Special Populations**

In addition to prisoners with behavioral and physical health challenges, incarcerated and reentering individuals with special needs include juveniles; women; the elderly; those convicted of sex offenses, child abuse, or family violence; and those wrongfully



convicted and exonerated. The families of individuals under sentence of death are also subject to extraordinary trauma and stigma. While this guide does not focus on these groups, the Resources section includes organizations and other resources that address their special reentry needs.

## CONCLUSION

The difficulties faced by formerly incarcerated people, their families, and their communities can be daunting, but strategies and models for successful reintegration are proliferating. These are evidenced by the scores of organizations, publications, websites, and other resources documenting success in this area, some of which are described in the Resources section of this guide.



Many of the most innovative and successful strategies spring from the kind of collaboration exemplified by *Making Connections* communities. In places in which health and human services agencies, justice departments, prisons, religious institutions, schools, business, and other sectors come together to make successful reentry a priority, change is powerful. These efforts are creating an environment in which incarceration need not be an insurmountable barrier to residents working to build safe, healthy, stable communities and families.

# endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Statistics in this paragraph and the next: Adalist-Estrin, A., and J. Mustin. (2003). *Responding to Children and Families of Prisoners: A Community Guide*. Palmyra, Va.: Family and Corrections Network.

<sup>2</sup>*Compendium of Federal Justice Statistics*. (2000). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

<sup>3</sup>Bonczar, T., and A. Beck. (1997). "Lifetime Likelihood of Going to State or Federal Prison." *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report NCJ-160092*, March.

<sup>4</sup>*Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994*. (2002). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>Harer, M. D. (1994). *Recidivism Among Federal Prisoners Released in 1987*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Bureau of Prisons, Office of Research and Evaluation, pp. 27-31.

<sup>6</sup>Hairston, C. (1991). "Family Ties During Imprisonment: Important to Whom and for What?" *Journal of Sociology and Welfare* 18, p. 99.

<sup>7</sup>Nelson, M., P. Deess, and C. Allen. (1999). *The First Month Out: Post-Incarceration Experiences in New York City*. New York: The Vera Institute.

<sup>8</sup>Ambrosio, T., and V. Schiraldi. (1997). *Trading Classrooms for Cellblocks: Destructive Policies Eroding DC Communities*. Washington, D.C.: The Justice Policy Institute.

<sup>9</sup>Lawrence, S., D. Mears, G. Dubin, and J. Travis. (2002). *The Practice and Promise of Prison Programming*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup>The sentence of a drug offender depends on many factors, but certain drug offenses are subject to federal minimum sentencing laws and guidelines in all states.

<sup>11</sup>Where indicated, voting rights are denied former felons even after total fulfillment of the sentence, absent a gubernatorial pardon.

<sup>12</sup>All chart data from *Incarceration Rates by Race*. (2001). Northampton, Mass.: Prison Policy Initiative. Numbers are rounded to the nearest tenth.

<sup>13</sup>Women's Prison Association. (2003). *WPA Focus on Woman & Justice: A Portrait of Women in Prison*. New York.

<sup>14</sup>U.S. Department of Justice Statistics, 1998.

<sup>15</sup>*The Health Status of Soon-to-be-Released Inmates: A Report to Congress*. (2002). Chicago, Ill.: National Commission on Correctional Health Care.

<sup>16</sup>Harer, M. D. (1994). *Recidivism Among Federal Prisoners Released in 1987*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Bureau of Prisons, Office of Research and Evaluation.

<sup>17</sup>*Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2002*. (2002). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup>Burt, M. R. (1999). *Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve*. [www.huduser.org/publications/homeless/homelessness/ch\\_2c.html](http://www.huduser.org/publications/homeless/homelessness/ch_2c.html).

<sup>19</sup>While halfway houses usually provide support services, these facilities do not fall under the category of supportive housing, because stays are short term and no leases are offered.

<sup>20</sup>Butterfield, F. (1992). "Studies Find a Family Link to Criminality." *NY Times*. Jan. 31, at A1, col. 3.

<sup>21</sup>Beck and Karberg. (2001). "Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2000." *Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, March.

<sup>22</sup>Mumola, C. J. (2000). "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children." *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, August.

<sup>23</sup>Johnston, D. M. (1993). "Effects of Parental Incarceration." Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents.

<sup>24</sup>Burke, P. (2001). "The Resource Center for Children of Prisoners: A Proposal Submitted to the National Institute of Corrections by the Center for Effective Public Policy in Collaboration with the Family and Corrections Network, the Osborne Association, Inc., and the Urban Institute." Silver Spring, MD: Center for Effective Public Policy.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>National Center on Fathers and Families. (2001). *Constructing and Coping with Incarceration and Family Re-entry: Perspectives from the Field*. Philadelphia.

<sup>27</sup>San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated Parents. (2004). Copies of the Bill of Rights are available from Friends Outside, 209-938-0727.

<sup>28</sup>*Compendium of Federal Justice Statistics*. (2000). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs.

<sup>29</sup>Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. (2002). "The New Politics of Criminal Justice." Summary of research findings on behalf of the Open Society Institute.

<sup>30</sup>One organization involved in site mapping is the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services, [www.cases.org](http://www.cases.org).



## resources: organizations and websites

This list is a starting point for locating organizations and websites that address reentry of former prisoners into communities. It is by no means comprehensive, but it does represent a cross-section of work being done nationwide. Although most organizations address more than one of the strategies described in previous sections of this guide, each organization is listed under just one strategy below, due to space considerations. The websites listed at the end of this section provide access to useful campaigns, books and other resources, and additional agencies and organizations.

### A. 1. PROVIDE SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR INCARCERATED PEOPLE

**Amicus, Inc.** Carefully screened and trained volunteers visit adult and juvenile inmates and help them prepare release plans, breaking down the psychological wall that separates inmates from their communities and building bridges that lead to a new lifestyle. Connects people who have been in prison to resources in the community.

**Contact:**

*Louise Wolfgramm, President*  
*Amicus, Inc.*  
*100 N. Sixth Street, Suite 529B*  
*Minneapolis, MN 55403-1503*  
*612-348-8570*  
*Fax: 612-348-6782*  
*www.amicususa.org*  
*staff@amicususa.org*

**Amity Rightturn** Provides a 9- to 12-month therapeutic drug treatment program for 200 medium-security inmates and provides a 4-month aftercare component for program graduates.

**Contact:**

*Amity Rightturn*  
*Richard J. Donovan Correction Facility*  
*480 Alta Road*

*San Diego, CA 92179*  
*619-661-6500 ext. 6370*  
*Fax: 619-661-6253*  
*www.amityfoundation.com*  
*amityinfo@amityfoundation.com*

**Boston Reentry Initiative** Community-wide collaboration among social service agencies, faith-based organizations, the Boston Police Department, and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. Targets people in prison between 17 and 34 who are considered to have a high risk of reincarceration. Provides case management, faith-based mentors, and education and substance abuse programs during incarceration and after release.

**Contact:**

*Blake Norton, Operations Director, Public Affairs*  
*Office of the Police Commissioner*  
*Boston Police Headquarters*  
*One Schroeder Plaza*  
*Boston, MA 02120*  
*617-343-4500*  
*Fax: 617-343-4481*  
*www.ci.boston.ma.us/police/*

**Centerforce** Provides a broad spectrum of services to people in prison and their families, including services at county jails, state prisons, and federal correctional facilities throughout northern and central California. Current services pertain to prevention-oriented case management, literacy, family support, health education, parenting, health, and wellness.

**Contact:**

*Barry Zack, Executive Director*  
*Centerforce*  
*2955 Kerner Boulevard, Second Floor*  
*San Rafael, CA 94901*  
*415-456-9980*  
*Fax: 415-456-2146*  
*www.centerforce.org*  
*centerforce@centerforce.org*

**Corrections HIV Education & Law Project (Correct HELP)** Improves the treatment of HIV-positive inmates in California and reduces the spread of HIV in jails and prisons.

**Contact:**

*Glenn Gaylord, Education Director*  
 Correct HELP  
 PO Box 46276  
 West Hollywood, CA 90046  
 323-822-3830  
 Fax: 323-822-3831  
[www.correcthelp.org](http://www.correcthelp.org)  
[glenn@correcthelp.org](mailto:glenn@correcthelp.org)

**Episcopal Social Services of New York** The organization's Network in the Prisons and Network in the Community programs provide prison and post-release services that instill discipline, build self-esteem, teach conflict avoidance, nurture improved performance, and create community. The College Initiative, a collaborative program with the City University of New York, helps people recently released from prison gain admission to post-secondary schools and assists them in completing their studies.

**Contact:**

*Robert H. Gutheil, Executive Director*  
 Episcopal Social Services of New York  
 305 Seventh Avenue  
 New York, NY 10001-6008  
 212-675-1000  
 Fax: 212-989-1132  
[www.essnyc.org](http://www.essnyc.org)

**Family ReEntry, Inc.** Provides counseling and psycho-educational programs to people in prison and their families to help them overcome the challenges of substance abuse, violence, crime, physical and emotional abuse, and poverty. Youthful Offender Mentoring Program matches young males and females who are in prison with volunteer adults

from the community. After release, weekly support groups provide ongoing services in the community.

**Contact:**

*Stephen Lanza, Executive Director*  
 Family ReEntry, Inc.  
 9 Mott Avenue, Suite 104  
 Norwalk, CT 06850  
 203-838-0496  
 Fax: 203-866-9291  
[www.familyreentry.org](http://www.familyreentry.org)

**Friends Outside** Chapters nationwide have provided services to prisoners, former prisoners, and their families and communities since 1955. Offers diversion, intervention, and prevention programs and provides copies of the Children of Incarcerated Parents Bill of Rights, which it conceived (the bill was ultimately created by the San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated Parents).

**Contact:**

*Gretchen Newby, Executive Director*  
 Friends Outside National Organization  
 PO Box 4085  
 Stockton, CA 95204  
 209-938-0727  
 Fax: 209-938-0734  
[www.friendsoutside.org](http://www.friendsoutside.org)

**Gordon Graham and Company** Developed a number of video-based cognitive restructuring programs designed for correctional populations and used in prison and parole settings. Programs such as *Framework for Breaking Barriers* and *Framework for Recovery*, which include participant manuals, can be facilitated by trained correctional staff, volunteers, or incarcerated individuals. The trainers who appear in the videos have themselves been incarcerated.

**Contact:**

*Eve Lenander-Graham, President*  
 Gordon Graham and Company  
 PO Box 3927



Bellevue, WA 98009  
425-637-9992  
Fax: 425-637-0144  
www.ggco.com

**Horizon Communities in Prison** Works with incarcerated men to help rehabilitate them before their return to their communities. At separate housing units in prison, 40 to 60 inmates engage in programs emphasizing spirituality, faith, family reunification, and employability. Activities include mentoring by volunteers from local religious organizations; letter writing to build relationships with families and build anger management, parenting, relationship, and other life skills; and prayer and meditation.

**Contact:**

Mickey Bright Griffin, Director of Programming  
Horizon Communities in Prison  
PO Box 2547  
Winter Park, FL 32790  
407-657-1828  
Fax: 407-629-2668  
www.kairoshorizon.org  
kbcp@kairoshorizon.org

**Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, Inc.** Nonprofit organization that helps inmates of Sing Sing Correctional Facility obtain a college education by linking the prison administration, colleges, and funders (who fund textbook purchases and teacher salaries). Responds to the elimination of Pell grants for people in prison.

**Contact:**

Carol Hagglund, Director  
Hudson Link  
PO Box 862  
Ossining, NY 10562  
914-941-0794  
www.hudsonlink.org  
info@hudsonlink.org

**National Institute of Corrections** Provides classroom and remote training, on-site services, information, and policy and program development assistance to local, state, and federal corrections agencies and professionals. Website provides access to documents, training materials, and video streams; hosts Internet-based networks for corrections; and offers links to major corrections-related websites.

**Contact:**

National Institute of Corrections  
Bureau of Justice  
320 First Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20534  
800-995-6423  
202-307-3106  
www.nicic.org

**National Trust for the Development of African-American Men** For men serving long sentences, offers a self-sustaining approach that builds on assets and engages the men in contributing to their families and communities while incarcerated and following release.

**Contact:**

Garry A. Mendez, Jr., Executive Director  
6811 Kenikworth Avenue, Suite 501  
Riverdale, MD 20737  
301-776-9199  
Fax: 301-887-0100  
mendezjr@msn.com

**Office of Correctional Education** Created by the U.S. Department of Education in 1991, provides technical assistance and information to states, local schools, and correctional institutions.

**Contact:**

Office of Correctional Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
MES 4527  
Washington, DC 20202-7242

202-205-5621

Fax: 202-401-2615

[www.ed.gov/OVAE/AdultEd/OCE/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/OVAE/AdultEd/OCE/index.html)

[ovae@ed.gov](mailto:ovae@ed.gov)

**Osborne Association** Serves people at all stages of the criminal justice system and their children and families at community sites, courts, state prisons, and a local jail. Services include substance abuse treatment, employment placement and training programs, HIV and risk reduction services, transitional planning and reentry initiatives, family services, and services for people in prison who have infectious disease. Safe Landing, a collaboration with state agencies, provides discharge planning and assertive case management for people in prison who have mental health challenges.

**Contact:**

*Elizabeth Gaynes, Executive Director*

*Osborne Association*

*36-31 38th Street*

*Long Island City, NY 11101*

*718-707-2600*

*Fax: 718-707-3103*

*800-344-3314 (Family Resource Center hotline)*

*[www.osborneny.org](http://www.osborneny.org)*

*[info@osborneny.org](mailto:info@osborneny.org)*

**Pioneer Human Services** Provides integrated training, employment, housing, transition, and rehabilitation services for chemically dependent people, people in prison, work release participants, and people on probation and under court jurisdiction. Combines correctional, behavioral health, and substance abuse services; drug- and alcohol-free housing; and training and employment in manufacturing, construction, printing, packing distribution, and food services.

**Contact:**

*Larry Febr*

*Senior Vice President, Community Corrections Division*

*Pioneer Human Services*

*7440 W. Marginal Way S.*

*Seattle, WA 98108*

*206-768-1990*

*Fax: 206-768-8910*

*[www.pioneerhumanserv.com](http://www.pioneerhumanserv.com)*

**Prisoner and Family Ministry—Building Homes: Rebuilding Lives** Trains adults and juveniles in eight prisons to build components of homes for 35 Habitat for Humanity affiliates. Collaboration among Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Corrections, and Habitat for Humanity International.

**Contact:**

*John Holmes*

*Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, Marion Office*

*Prisoner and Family Ministry*

*1616 W. Main Street*

*Marion, IL 62959*

*618-997-9196*

*Fax: 618-997-6843*

*[www.lssi.org](http://www.lssi.org)*

*[john.holmes@lssi.org](mailto:john.holmes@lssi.org)*

**Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises (PRIDE), Inc.** Operates 37 diverse industrial programs in 20 prisons and provides job placement and support services following release. It is a nonprofit corporation authorized by the Florida legislature in 1981 to operate the state prison industries.

**Contact:**

*Esther Knightly*

*PRIDE, Inc.*

*12425-28th Street N., Suite 103*

*St. Petersburg, FL 33716*

*727-572-1987*



Fax: 727-570-3370  
www.pridefl.com  
eknightly@indtc.com

### **Project RIO (Re-Integration of Offenders)**

Provides job placement services to every person on parole in Texas. Staff assess prisoners, develop employment plans, provide job readiness and life skills training, and—after release—place them in jobs that match their skills and temperaments, with over 12,000 employers. The Texas Workforce Commission administers Project RIO with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and the Texas Youth Commission.

**Contact:**

Texas Workforce Commission  
Project RIO Staff  
101 E. 15th Street, Room 202T  
Austin, TX 78778  
800-453-8140  
www.texasworkforce.org

### **Resolve to Stop the Violence Program (RSVP)**

A 16-week program that brings together victims, prisoners, and the community to create opportunities for restitution and prevent future violent crimes. Integrates victim restoration, community restoration and public education on issues of violence, and offender restoration, including post-release education.

**Contact:**

Ramona Massey, Director, RSVP Program  
San Francisco Sheriff's Department  
425 Seventh Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
650-266-9337  
www.sfsheriff.com  
sheriff@sfgov.org

### **Vermont Restorative Reentry Partnerships**

Helps people who have been in prison successfully reintegrate and engages and restores the community through reentry monitoring panels that meet with individuals before and after release. At the start of a sentence, the prisoner is assessed thoroughly and then enrolled in in-prison programs as a response. All participate in an educational curriculum that focuses on restorative justice principles and develop Offender Responsibility Plans, which serve as a basis for community reentry.

**Contact:**

Paul Heath, Community Corrections Project Supervisor  
Vermont Department of Corrections  
50 Cherry Street  
Burlington, VT 05401  
802-863-7450  
www.doc.state.vt.us  
paulh@doc.state.vt.us

### **Women's Prison Association & Home**

Assists women in acquiring life skills needed to end involvement in the criminal justice system and to make positive, healthy choices for themselves and their families. Develops women's independent living skills, self-empowerment and peer support, and involvement in the community. Provides intensive case management for women with substance abuse histories at risk of losing their children. Provides volunteer attorneys for women to consult on decisions regarding care of their children. Runs Sarah Powell Huntington House (see p. 68).

**Contact:**

Ann Jacobs, Executive Director  
Women's Prison Association  
110 Second Avenue  
New York, NY 10003  
212-674-1163 ext. 47  
Fax: 212-677-1981  
www.wpaonline.org  
ajacobs@wpaonline.org

## A. 2. PROVIDE SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR THOSE ABOUT TO BE RELEASED

**AIDS Institute** A program of the New York State Department of Health, this consortium of community-based providers carries out discharge planning, counseling and testing, HIV education, and support groups. Transitional plans connect the person in prison to the consortium provider in the region into which he or she will be released. A collect-call hotline enables any prisoner to request information on prevention, treatment, and services.

**Contact:**

*Guthrie Birkhead, AIDS Institute Director  
Bureau of Community Based Services  
AIDS Institute, New York State Department of Health  
ESP, Corning Tower, Room 342  
Albany, NY 12237  
518-473-7542  
[www.health.state.ny.us/nysdob/aids/index.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdob/aids/index.htm)*

**Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)** Provides alternatives to incarceration and—for technical parole violators awaiting a possible return to state prison—re-incarceration. Offers a plan for parole restoration that includes referrals to treatment or other programs that address the underlying issues leading to technical parole violations.

**Contact:**

*Joel Copperman, CEO/President  
CASES  
346 Broadway, Third Floor  
New York, NY 10013  
212-553-6301  
Fax: 212-571-0292  
[www.cases.org](http://www.cases.org)  
[jcopperman@cases.org](mailto:jcopperman@cases.org)*

**Project Bridge** Provides intensive case management and medical follow-up to HIV-positive prisoners and former prisoners in Rhode Island. A social worker

and a social work assistant contact people 30 to 90 days prior to release, assess their needs, and create comprehensive discharge plans that address barriers to post-release care. Staff follow up after release, seeing former prisoners at home, in shelters, and at substance abuse treatment programs.

**Contact:**

*Leah Holmes  
Project Bridge  
369 Broad Street  
Providence, RI 02907  
401-455-6879  
[holmesleah@aol.com](mailto:holmesleah@aol.com)*

## A. 3. PROVIDE SERVICES AND SUPPORT FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED PEOPLE

**Alliance of Concerned Men** Provides outreach, prevention, intervention, social services, cultural enrichment, and recreational activities for low-income youth and families at risk of or affected by incarceration and/or substance abuse. Men who have rehabilitated themselves use their experiences and spiritual commitment to change the attitudes and value systems of children and youth who are at risk or in crisis.

**Contact:**

*Tyrone Parker, Executive Director  
Alliance of Concerned Men  
1424 16th Street, Suite 103  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-462-9700*

**Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)** Founded by the Vera Institute of Justice (see p. 78), provides structured employment services to people returning from prison, including on-the-job employment training and case management services. Specializes in placement in customer service, food industries, manufacturing, office support, and semi-skilled trades. Day-labor work crews offer immediate,



paid transitional employment. Also provides a range of post-placement support services for a minimum of 12 months.

**Contact:**

*Mindy Tarlow, CEO/Executive Director  
Center for Employment Opportunities  
32 Broadway  
New York, NY 10004  
212-422-4430 ext. 412  
Fax: 212-422-4855  
www.ceoworks.org  
mtarlow@ceoworks.org*

**Community Resources for Justice** Offers reentry programs for at-risk youth and adults involved in the criminal justice system, including residential programs, day programs, and public education and advocacy to enhance justice and quality of life.

**Contact:**

*John J. Larivee, CEO  
Community Resources for Justice  
355 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA 02116  
617-482-2520  
Fax: 617-262-8054  
www.crjustice.org  
crj@crjustice.org*

**Conquest Offender Reintegration Ministries**

Interdenominational Christian organization that provides transitional services including mentoring of children and youth, family reconnection, advocacy and legal support, and spiritual programs. Motivates congregations to serve in the criminal justice area.

**Contact:**

*Louis Jones, President  
Conquest Offender Reintegration Ministries  
PO Box 73873  
Washington, DC 20056  
202-723-2014  
Fax: 202-478-1739  
www.conquesthouse.org*

**Corporation for Supportive Housing** Helps communities create permanent housing with services to prevent and end homelessness. Makes loans and grants to supportive housing sponsors, strengthens the supportive housing industry, and reforms public policy to make it easier to create and operate supportive housing for men and women leaving prison.

**Contact:**

*Richard Cho, Program Officer  
Corporation for Supportive Housing  
50 Broadway, 17th Floor  
New York, NY 10004  
212-986-2966 ext. 249  
Fax: 212-986-6552  
www.csb.org  
richard.cho@csb.org*

**CUNY Catch** A program of City University of New York, provides former prisoners living in New York City with GED preparation, assistance with enrollment in college courses, vocational training, and employment assistance.

**Contact:**

*John Chiarkas, Director  
CUNY Catch  
LaGuardia Community College  
31-10 Thomson Avenue  
Long Island City, NY 11101  
718-482-5326  
Fax: 718-609-2003  
jchiarkas@lagcc.cuny.edu*

**Delancey Street Foundation** Two-year residential education center helping former prisoners and former substance abusers lead independent and successful lives. A complex of stylish stores, town houses, a town hall, a restaurant, and a park serves as home and training center to more than 500 people. After achieving a high school equivalency degree, participants learn skills at one of the foundation's training schools and apply their skills on the job. The businesses are staffed entirely by people who have been

in prison, substance abusers, and homeless people; all proceeds pay for food, housing, and stipends for participants.

**Contact:**

*Mimi Silbert, Executive Director*

*Delancey Street Foundation*

*600 Embarcadero*

*San Francisco, CA 94107*

*415-957-9800*

*Fax: 415-512-5186*

*www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/grassroots/delancey*

**Developing Justice in South Brooklyn** Project of the Fifth Avenue Committee that provides job training and housing assistance to people who have been in prison. Provides community organizing and leadership development to change the criminal justice system. Provides voluntary one-on-one assistance to people returning to South Brooklyn after at least one year in prison.

**Contact:**

*Darryl P. King, Director*

*Developing Justice Project*

*Fifth Avenue Committee*

*621 DeGraw Street*

*Brooklyn, NY 11217*

*718-237-2017*

*Fax: 718-237-5366*

*www.fifthave.org*

*dking@fifthave.org*

**Exodus Transitional Community, Inc.** Faith-based, nonprofit, community-based organization providing services to reintegrate former prisoners into their communities. Services include individual and group counseling, HIV/AIDS education and referrals, résumé writing, job development, computer training, on-site AA and NA meetings, housing and education referrals, volunteer training, and a clothing closet.

**Contact:**

*Julio Medina, Executive Director*

*Exodus Transitional Community, Inc.*

*161 E. 104th Street, Fourth Floor*

*New York, NY 10029*

*917-492-0990*

*Fax: 212-722-6669*

*www.etcny.org*

*jmedina@etcny.org*

**Fortune Society** Provides comprehensive services to returning prisoners, including reentry planning before release, HIV education, counseling and case management, individual and group counseling, job training and placement, court advocacy, substance abuse treatment services, family counseling and parenting workshops, transitional housing, and long-term housing placement and aftercare services. The Fortune Academy, a new residential facility in West Harlem, provides housing to people released from prison.

**Contact:**

*JoAnne Page, Executive Director*

*Fortune Society*

*53 W. 23rd Street, Eighth Floor*

*New York, NY 10010*

*212-691-7554*

*Fax: 212-255-4948*

*www.fortunesociety.org*

*kkidder@fortunesociety.org*

**Free at Last** Serves, among others, individuals who have been in prison, including women. Founded by and largely staffed by men and women who themselves were incarcerated and are in recovery, the program addresses the impact of prison on people's lives and offers a range of services, from housing to technology access.



**Contact:**

*Deborah Vargas, Executive Director*  
*Free at Last*  
*1796 Bay Road*  
*East Palo Alto, CA 94303*  
*650-462-6999*  
*Fax: 650-462-1055*  
*www.freeatlast.org*  
*dlewis@freeatlast.org*

**National GAINS Center for People with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System**

Created in 1995, the center is a national locus for information on effective mental health and substance abuse services for people with co-occurring disorders who come in contact with the justice system.

**Contact:**

*National GAINS Center*  
*Policy Research Associates*  
*345 Delaware Avenue*  
*Delmar, NY 12054*  
*800-311-4246*  
*518-439-7612*  
*www.gainsctr.com*  
*gains@prainc.com*

**Offender Workforce Development Division** Part of the National Institute of Corrections, the division collects and disseminates information about ex-prisoner employment programs and provides training and technical assistance to agencies involved with job training, placement, and retention services. A comprehensive bibliography and descriptions of model programs can be found at the website.

**Contact:**

*Shelly Morelock*  
*Offender Workforce Development Division*  
*320 First Street NW, Room 5007*  
*Washington, DC 20534*  
*800-995-6423*  
*www.nicic.org*  
*smorelock@bop.gov*

**Partnership for the Homeless** Committed to partnering with the faith community, neighborhood-based organizations, business, and government to attack the root causes of homelessness and empower homeless people to leave the city's streets and shelters for lives of independence and financial stability.

**Contact:**

*Arnold S. Cohen, President & CEO*  
*Partnership for the Homeless*  
*305 Seventh Avenue, 13th Floor*  
*New York, NY 10001*  
*212-645-3444*  
*Fax: 212-477-4663*  
*www.partnershipforthehomeless.org*  
*pftb@pftb.org*

**Project Return** Provides substance abuse treatment, GED education, communication classes, life skills classes, job training, and job placement assistance to increase public safety by preventing repeat offenses. Each week, participants take part in GED or general education and addiction education as well as training in computers, job skills, communication skills, and community building. The psychosocial component addresses how to deal with pain and suffering resulting from childhood poverty, abuse, neglect, violence and the adolescent/adult experiences of imprisonment.

**Contact:**

*Robert E. Roberts, Executive Director*  
*Project Return*  
*2703 General de Gaulle Drive*  
*New Orleans, LA 70114-6222*  
*504-988-1000*  
*Fax: 504-988-1019*  
*www.projectreturn.com*

**Safer Foundation** One of the largest community-based providers of employment services for former prisoners in the country, with six locations in Illinois and Iowa. Provides housing, substance abuse treatment,

education, and life skills development at two secured residential sites and several walk-in sites. Target population includes juveniles and adults on probation, people on parole, community corrections residents, and people in the county jail.

**Contact:**

*Diane Williams, President  
Safer Foundation  
571 W. Jackson  
Chicago, IL 60661  
312-922-2200  
Fax: 312-922-0839  
www.safer-fnd.org*

**St. Leonard's House** Provides housing and case management for former prisoners transitioning back to the community, including ongoing addiction counseling relating to life skills and coping skills, job counseling and employment referrals, adult educational programs, educational referrals, aftercare/mentoring services, community networking, and recreational activities.

**Contact:**

*Robert Dougherty, Executive Director  
St. Leonard's House  
2100 W. Warren Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60612  
312-738-1414  
Fax: 312-738-1417  
www.slministries.org*

**Sarah Powell Huntington House** Run by the Women's Prison Association & Home (see p. 63). Provides transitional residential services for homeless, formerly incarcerated women who, if they have children, have custody or a good chance of regaining it. During a 6- to 18-month residency, women receive case management and take part in substance abuse relapse prevention, HIV/AIDS education and services, independent living skills training, education/vocational referrals, and permanent housing placement.

**Contact:**

*Ann Jacobs, Executive Director  
Women's Prison Association & Home  
110 Second Avenue  
New York, NY 10003  
212-674-1163 ext. 47  
Fax: 212-677-1981  
www.wpaonline.org  
ajacobs@wpaonline.org*

**B. SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
AFFECTED BY INCARCERATION**

**Aid to Children of Imprisoned Mothers (AIM), Inc.** Diminishes the impact of mothers' incarceration on family relationships through services for children and other family members, including after-school programming, summer camp, transportation of children for prison visits, and emergency aid for families.

**Contact:**

*Sandra Barnhill, Executive Director/CEO  
Aid to Children of Imprisoned Mothers, Inc.  
906 Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard SW  
Atlanta, GA 30310  
404-755-3262  
Fax: 404-755-3294  
www.takingaim.net  
barnhill@takingaim.net*

**Amachi** For children of prisoners and former prisoners, provides volunteer mentors from more than 40 Philadelphia churches, and has begun to expand the Amachi model nationwide. Mentors are screened, trained, and supervised by Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America. A staff member provided by Public/Private Ventures (see websites, p. 79) connects each congregation with church resources that benefit specific children.



**Contact:**

*W. Wilson Goode, Sr., Director  
Amachi  
2000 Market Street, Suite 600  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
215-557-4497  
wgoode@ppv.org*

**Association of Federal Defense Attorneys**

Provides private online discussions for families of federal inmates nationwide and a support network for Bureau of Prisons family members.

**Contact:**

*www.afda.org  
defense@afda.org*

**Bedford Hills Correctional Facility Children's**

**Center** Nurtures the relationship between mother and child during the mother's incarceration through a visiting-room play area, weekend and summer day visits and overnight stays, and other programs. Women take part in parenting classes, a nursery program for the first year of an infant's life, workshops in navigating the foster care system, and other forms of parenting support.

**Contact:**

*Toni Campamour  
Bedford Hills Correctional Facility  
Children's Center  
247 Harris Road  
Bedford Hills, NY 10507  
914-241-3100*

**Building Bridges with Books**

Trains and encourages parents in reading aloud with children, choosing books, and personalizing the reading experience, and finally reading aloud on a videotape that is sent to the child with the book.

**Contact:**

*Betty J. Moblenbrock, Founder and President  
Family Literacy Foundation  
3525 Del Mar Heights Road, Suite 348*

*San Diego, CA 92130*

*858-481-7323*

*Fax: 858-481-9489*

*www.read2kids.org*

*info@read2kids.org*

**Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents**

Provides research, publications, and services for children of prisoners and their families, including parenting education, family reunification services, therapeutic intervention, a clearinghouse of resources, and curriculum development.

**Contact:**

*Denise Johnston, Executive Director  
Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents  
PO Box 41-286  
Eagle Rock, CA 90041  
626-449-2470  
www.e-ccip.org  
ccip@earthlink.net*

**Center for Family Policy and Practice**

Conducts national-level policy research, technical assistance, training, litigation, and public education in order to focus attention on the barriers faced by never-married, low-income fathers and their families.

**Contact:**

*David Pate, Executive Director  
Center for Family Policy and Practice  
23 N. Pinckney Street, Suite 210  
Madison, WI 53703  
608-257-3148  
Fax: 608-257-4686  
www.cffpp.org  
dpate@cffpp.org*

**Children of Incarcerated Parents Program**

Offers visitation transportation for children in foster care to the city jail and to state and federal correctional facilities in the New York City area, as well as technical assistance, training, and resource development for service providers.

**Contact:**

*Children of Incarcerated Parents Program  
Administration for Children's Services  
150 William Street, 18th Floor  
New York, NY 10038  
212-341-0900  
Fax: 212-676-9916  
www.NYC.gov/html/acs/*

**Families in Crisis, Inc.** Through four offices statewide, provides services to promote families' role in helping people in prison. Rebuilds families, reduces crime, and prepares prisoners to be productive citizens through counseling and support, fatherhood and youth services, transportation, Sesame Street Children's Centers, and a program for domestic violence offenders.

**Contact:**

*Susan Quinlan, Executive Director  
Families in Crisis, Inc.  
30 Arbor Street, North Wing  
Hartford, CT 06106  
860-236-3593  
Fax: 860-231-8430  
www.familiesin crisis.org  
quinlan@familiesin crisis.org*

**Family and Corrections Network** Provides information, training, and technical assistance on children of prisoners, parenting programs for prisoners, prison visiting, incarcerated fathers and mothers, hospitality programs, keeping in touch, returning to the community, the impact of the justice system on families, and prison marriage. Website is a gateway to practice, policy, and research on families of prisoners, including prisoner family program links, a newsletter, and a reading room.

**Contact:**

*Jim Mustin  
Family and Corrections Network  
32 Oak Grove Road*

*Palmyra, VA 22963  
434-589-3036  
Fax: 434-589-6520  
www.fcnetwork.org  
fcn@fcnetwork.org*

**Family Justice, Inc.** Works nationally to improve the success of individuals under justice system supervision and enhance the well-being of their families. La Bodega de la Familia, one of its programs, offers family case management, referral and prevention services, 24-hour crisis support for drug-related emergencies, support groups, and cultural activities to families of substance abusers under criminal justice supervision.

**Contact:**

*Carol Shapiro, Founder and President  
Family Justice, Inc.  
625 Broadway, Eighth Floor  
New York, NY 10012  
212-475-1500  
Fax: 212-475-2322  
www.familyjustice.org  
rfriedman@familyjustice.org*

**Family Matters Program for Children of Incarcerated Mothers** Provides services, support, mentoring, and advocacy for children while a mother is incarcerated in the Arkansas state prison system. Services are provided in community settings, where problems occur and support is needed.

**Contact:**

*Dee Ann Newell  
Family Matters Program for Children of Incarcerated Mothers  
5905 Forest Place, Suite 205  
Little Rock, AR 72207  
501-660-6886  
Fax: 501-666-5997*

**FamilyWorks** Comprehensive parenting program for incarcerated parents and their children, established by the Osborne Association. Offers courses and workshops in prisons, children's centers in three prison visiting rooms, family counseling and case management, and post-release services. Serves women at New York's largest women's prison in Albion; provides community-based family services and reentry support, including a toll-free hotline for families statewide; and provides support services and mentoring for children with incarcerated parents, visitation programs, and reentry support.

**Contact:**

*Carol Burton, Director of Prison, Reentry, and Family Services*

*The Osborne Association*

*175 Remsen Street*

*Brooklyn, NY 11201*

*718-637-6560*

*Fax: 718-237-0686*

*www.osborneny.org*

*cburton@osborneny.org*

**Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners** Gathers information and resources, provides training and technical assistance, and helps raise public awareness about the effects of parental incarceration on children and families. Operated by the Child Welfare League of America in collaboration with the National Institute of Corrections, American Correctional Association, and National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

**Contact:**

*Arlene Lee, Program Lead*

*Child Welfare League of America*

*440 First Street, NW, Suite 310*

*Washington, DC 20001*

*202-638-2952*

*Fax: 202-638-4004*

*www.cwla.org*

*alee@cwla.org*

**Girl Scouts Beyond Bars** Enables children with incarcerated mothers to maintain contact throughout incarceration, with 20 programs in eight states. Combines community Girl Scout meetings with meetings in prison facilities in order to strengthen family ties and allow at-risk youth contact with adult mentors. In addition to the contact listed below, contact local Girl Scouts organizations for updated information.

**Contact:**

*Marilyn Moses, Program Manager*

*National Institute of Justice*

*810 Seventh Street, NW, Rm. 805*

*Washington, DC 20531*

*202-514-6205*

*Fax: 202-307-6394*

**Hope House** Strengthens ties between prisoners from Washington, D.C., incarcerated outside of the D.C. area and their children. Children can go to a Hope House site in Washington to see and talk to their incarcerated fathers using Internet technology. In the summer, for a week, children can spend several hours a day with their incarcerated parents and the rest of the time in summer camp. Provides children with support groups and van service to prisons in South Carolina and southwest Virginia.

**Contact:**

*Carol Fennelly, Director*

*Hope House*

*PO Box 60682*

*Washington, DC 20039*

*202-545-9671*

*www.hopehousedc.org*

**Incarcerated Mothers Program** A program of Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families, works with families affected by maternal incarceration in order to strengthen the family and prevent the children from being placed in foster care. Provides casework, counseling, youth programs,

programs for grandparent caregivers, and reunification support.

**Contact:**

*Incarcerated Mothers Program*  
*Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families*  
 41-51 E. 11th Street, Seventh Floor  
 New York, NY 10029  
 212-598-0050  
 Fax: 212-598-0796  
[www.egscf.org](http://www.egscf.org)

**Legal Services for Prisoners with Children**

Advocates for the civil rights and empowerment of incarcerated parents, children, family members, and people at risk of incarceration, focusing on women prisoners and their families and emphasizing issues of race. Provides information, trainings, technical assistance, litigation, community activism, and development of advocates.

**Contact:**

*Dorsey Nunn, Program Director*  
*Legal Services for Prisoners with Children*  
 1540 Market Street, Suite 490  
 San Francisco, CA 94102  
 415-255-7036 ext. 312  
 Fax: 415-552-3150  
[www.prisonerswithchildren.org](http://www.prisonerswithchildren.org)  
[info@prisonerswithchildren.org](mailto:info@prisonerswithchildren.org)

**MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership**

Advocates for the expansion of mentoring and serves as a resource for mentors and mentoring initiatives nationwide.

**Contact:**

*Gail Manza, Executive Director*  
*MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership*  
 1600 Duke Street, Suite 300  
 Alexandria, VA 22314  
 703-224-2200  
[www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)  
[jdubetz@mentoring.org](mailto:jdubetz@mentoring.org)

**National Center on Fathers and Families**

Provides guidance, practical support, and services to ensure high-quality research and effect positive change regarding father involvement, family efficacy, and child well-being.

**Contact:**

*Vivian Gadsden, Director*  
*National Center on Fathers and Families*  
*University of Pennsylvania*  
 3440 Market Street, Suite 450  
 Philadelphia, PA 19104-3325  
 215-573-5500  
 Fax: 215-573-5508  
[www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu](http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu)  
[vgadsden@ncoff.gse.upenn.edu](mailto:vgadsden@ncoff.gse.upenn.edu)

**National Fatherhood Initiative**

Improves the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers, through public awareness campaigns, research, and other resources. In collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, provides character-based education and support to help incarcerated men develop the skills to become more involved and supportive fathers; the model is used in federal, state, and community correctional facilities in 19 states.

**Contact:**

*Roland Warren, President*  
*National Fatherhood Initiative*  
 101 Lake Forest Boulevard, Suite 360  
 Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
 301-948-0599  
 Fax: 301-948-4325  
[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)  
[info@fatherhood.org](mailto:info@fatherhood.org)

**Patmos Associates, Ltd.**

Provides visiting days and free gate-side hospitality centers in correctional facilities, where family members and friends stay the night before a long-distance visit. Provides hands-on



technical assistance and financial support for the entire process of establishing a free-standing, independently incorporated, self-supporting visitor center.

**Contact:**

*James W. Bergland, CEO*  
*Patmos Associates, Ltd.*  
*62 Park Terrace West, Suite A28*  
*New York, NY 10034*  
*212-569-5120*  
*Fax: 212-569-5120*  
*www.patmoshospitality.org*  
*j.bergland@worldnet.att.net*

**C. REDUCE LEGAL AND PRACTICAL BARRIERS TO REINTEGRATION**

**Brennan Center for Justice** Located at the New York University School of Law, develops and implements a nonpartisan agenda of scholarship, public education, and legal action. Participates in the national Right to Vote Campaign to end felon disenfranchisement and submitted a filing with the Federal Communications Commission on behalf of 61 people and organizations affected by the high cost of phone calls from prison.

**Contact:**

*Kirsten Levingston, Director, Criminal Justice Program*  
*Brennan Center for Justice*  
*NYU School of Law*  
*161 Avenue of the Americas, 12th Floor*  
*New York, NY 10013*  
*212-998-6730*  
*Fax: 212-995-4550*  
*www.brennancenter.org*  
*brennan.center@nyu.edu*

**Center for Law & Social Policy (CLASP)**

National nonprofit conducting research, policy analysis, technical assistance, and advocacy on economic security for low-income families with children.

Co-published *Every Door Closed: Barriers Facing Parents with Criminal Records*, by Amy E. Hirsch, et al. (2002; available on website).

**Contact:**

*Alan Houseman, Executive Director*  
*Center for Law & Social Policy*  
*1015 15th Street, NW, Suite 400*  
*Washington, DC 20005*  
*202-906-8000*  
*Fax: 202-842-2885*  
*www.clasp.org*  
*ahouse@clasp.org*

**Demos** Works nationally to restore voting rights to citizens with felony convictions as part of a larger pro-democracy mission. Provides up-to-date information on the ever-changing state laws governing voting. Launched a citywide Unlock the Block: Release the Vote campaign in New York.

**Contact:**

*Joseph "Jazz" Hayden, Project Director*  
*Demos*  
*220 Fifth Avenue, Fifth Floor*  
*New York, NY 10001*  
*212-633-1405*  
*Fax: 212-633-2015*  
*www.demos-usa.org*  
*www.unlocktheblock.org*  
*jbayden@demos-usa.org*

**National HIRE Network** Increases the number and quality of job opportunities available to people with criminal records by changing public policies, employment practices, and public opinion. Part of the Legal Action Center, it works on state and federal policy and serves as a national clearinghouse for information about best practices, local and state resources, legal issues, and potential funding sources. Provides on-site training and technical assistance to interested stakeholders.

**Contact:**

National HIRE Network  
 Legal Action Center  
 153 Waverly Place, Eighth Floor  
 New York, NY 10014  
 212-243-1313  
 Fax: 212-675-0286  
 www.hirenetwork.org

#### D. PROMOTE POLICIES THAT SUPPORT PRISONERS' REENTRY INTO COMMUNITIES

**Annie E. Casey Foundation** The Foundation's multiyear Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign showcases discussion guides, video and audio clips, and an interactive website that draw attention to policies which help reintegrate men and women leaving prison into their families and communities.

**Contact:**

Annie E. Casey Foundation  
 701 St. Paul Street  
 Baltimore, MD 21202  
 410-547-6600  
 Fax: 410-547-6624  
 www.aecf.org/initiatives/mc/communications/mcmoi/rrc\_over.htm

**California Coalition for Women Prisoners** Raises public consciousness about the conditions under which women in prison live and advocates for positive changes. Promotes women's leadership and gives voice to women prisoners, former prisoners, and their families.

**Contact:**

California Coalition for Women Prisoners  
 1540 Market Street, Suite 490  
 San Francisco, CA 94102  
 415-255-7036 ext. 4  
 Fax: 415-552-3150  
 www.womenprisoners.org  
 info@womenprisoners.org

**Campaign to Promote Equitable Telephone**

**Charges** Addresses the injustice of the telephone practices of the nation's prison system. Coordinated by the Michigan chapter of CURE (see p. 75), it has branches in many states and links to other organizations.

**Contact:**

Kay Perry, eTc Campaign Coordinator  
 MI-CURE  
 PO Box 2736  
 Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2736  
 269-383-0028  
 www.curenational.org  
 kayperry@aol.com

**Center for Court Innovation**

Public-private partnership that enhances the performance of courts in order to reduce crime, aid victims, strengthen communities, and promote public trust in justice. Projects include the Midtown Community Court and the Harlem Reentry Court, in collaboration with the New York Divisions of Criminal Justice Services and Parole. Addresses the needs and risks faced by prisoners returning to east and central Harlem by increasing participation in drug treatment and employment services among those reentering communities under conditional parole supervision after imprisonment for nonviolent drug offenses.

**Contact:**

Greg Berman, Director  
 Center for Court Innovation  
 520 Eighth Avenue  
 New York, NY 10018  
 212-397-3050  
 Fax: 212-397-0985  
 www.courtinnovation.org  
 bermang@courtinnovation.org



**Correctional Association of New York** Works to create a fair, efficient, humane criminal justice system and a safer and more just society through policy and advocacy. Projects address public policy, women in prison, prison visiting, and juvenile justice.

**Contact:**

*Robert Gangi, Executive Director*  
*Correctional Association of New York*  
*135 E. 15th Street*  
*New York, NY 10003*  
*212-254-5700*  
*Fax: 212-473-2807*  
*www.correctionalassociation.org*  
*rgangi@correctionalassociation.org*

**Critical Resistance** Is building an international movement to end the prison industrial complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. Provides conferences, distributes materials, and establishes local chapters.

**Contact:**

*Critical Resistance*  
*1904 Franklin Street, Suite 504*  
*Oakland, CA 94612*  
*510-444-0484*  
*Fax: 510-444-2177*  
*www.criticalresistance.org*  
*crnational@criticalresistance.org*

**Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE)** Nationwide grassroots organization made up of families of prisoners, prisoners, former prisoners, and others that reduces crime through reform of the criminal justice system. Local chapters pursue statewide legislative and policy agendas.

**Contact:**

*Pauline and Charles Sullivan*  
*CURE*  
*PO Box 2310*  
*Washington, DC 20013-2310*  
*202-789-2126*  
*www.curenational.org*

**Drug Policy Alliance** National organization working to end the war on drugs and promote new drug policies based on science, compassion, health, and human rights. Has offices in California; Washington, D.C.; New Mexico; and New Jersey.

**Contact:**

*Ethan Nadelmann, Executive Director*  
*Drug Policy Alliance*  
*70 W. 36th Street, 16th Floor*  
*New York, NY 10018*  
*212-613-8020*  
*Fax: 212-613-8021*  
*www.drugpolicy.org*  
*enadelmann@drugpolicy.org*

**Ella Baker Center for Human Rights** Documents, exposes, and challenges human rights abuses in prison through policy reform, media advocacy, public education, grassroots organizing, direct-action mobilizing, cultural activism, new technology, and legal services. Books Not Bars Family Advocacy Project challenges the growing prison industry in California through statewide media advocacy, local grassroots organizing, and the cultural expression of youth.

**Contact:**

*Van Jones, Executive Director*  
*Ella Baker Center for Human Rights*  
*344 40th Street*  
*Oakland, CA 94609*  
*510-428-3939 ext. 247*  
*Fax: 510-428-3940*  
*www.ellabakercenter.org*

**Families Against Mandatory Minimums** National nonprofit that challenges inflexible and excessive penalties required by mandatory sentencing laws. Promotes policies that give judges discretion to distinguish between defendants and fit the punishment to the crime.

**Contact:**

*Julie Stewart, President and Founder*  
*Families Against Mandatory Minimums*  
 1612 K Street, NW, Suite 700  
 Washington, DC 20006  
 202-822-6700  
 Fax: 202-822-6704  
[www.famm.org](http://www.famm.org)  
[julie@famm.org](mailto:julie@famm.org)

**Innocence Project** Supervised by attorneys and clinic staff, law students provide pro bono legal services in cases in which post-conviction DNA testing of evidence can yield conclusive proof of innocence. Consults with legislators and law enforcement officials, conducts research and training, provides scholarship, and works to prevent wrongful convictions. Innocence Network taps law schools, journalism schools, and public defender offices to assist inmates in cases in which it may not be possible to subject evidence to DNA testing.

**Contact:**

*Innocence Project*  
*Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law*  
 100 Fifth Avenue, Third Floor  
 New York, NY 10011  
 212-364-5340  
[www.innocenceproject.org](http://www.innocenceproject.org)  
[info@innocenceproject.org](mailto:info@innocenceproject.org)

**International Community Corrections Association** Membership organization representing community corrections programs. Provides information, training, and other programs to enhance the quality of services and supervision for people in prison and to promote effective management. Promotes and enhances community corrections as a vital component of the criminal justice system.

**Contact:**

*Peter Kinziger, Executive Director*  
*ICCA*  
 PO Box 1987  
 La Crosse, WI 54602  
 608-785-0200  
 Fax: 608-784-5335  
[www.iccaweb.org](http://www.iccaweb.org)

**John Howard Association** Membership organization dedicated to ensuring fair, humane, and effective correctional programs throughout Illinois. Volunteers monitor prison and juvenile detention centers, help identify problems, and seek support to provide solutions and systemwide reforms. Publishes policy statements on criminal justice issues.

**Contact:**

*Charles A. Fasano, Director*  
*John Howard Association*  
 300 W. Adams Street, Suite 617  
 Chicago, IL 60606  
 312-782-1901  
 Fax: 312-782-1902  
[jhachicago@ameritech.net](mailto:jhachicago@ameritech.net)

**Judicial Oversight Demonstration Initiative** In several counties in Massachusetts, Michigan, and Wisconsin, coordinates community responses to domestic violence to determine their effects on victim safety, service provision, and accountability of those who have been abusers. Strives for focused judicial responses and systematic criminal justice responses to domestic violence.

**Contact:**

*Nancy Cline, Initiative Director*  
*Vera Institute of Justice*  
 233 Broadway, 12th Floor  
 New York, NY 10279  
 212-376-3041  
 Fax: 212-941-9407  
[www.vera.org](http://www.vera.org)  
[ncline@vera.org](mailto:ncline@vera.org)



**Justice Policy Center** Part of the Urban Institute, carries out nonpartisan research to inform the national dialogue on crime, justice, and community safety. Brings prisoner reentry into the public consciousness through Reentry Roundtables, research, and reports.

**Contact:**

*Justice Policy Center  
Urban Institute  
2100 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-261-5587  
Fax: 202-659-8985  
www.urban.org  
jpc@ui.urban.org*

**National Association of Drug Court Professionals** Works to reduce substance abuse, crime, and recidivism by promoting drug courts. Collects and disseminates information, provides technical assistance, and facilitates mutual support among association members.

**Contact:**

*Karen Freeman-Wilson, CEO  
National Association of Drug Court Professionals  
4900 Seminary Road, Suite 320  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
703-575-9400 ext. 12  
Fax: 703-575-9402  
www.nadcp.org*

**National Council on Crime and Delinquency** Promotes effective, humane, fair, and economically sound solutions to family, community and justice problems. Conducts research, promotes reform initiatives, and works with individuals, public and private organizations, and the media to prevent and reduce crime and delinquency.

**Contact:**

*Barry Krisberg, President  
National Council on Crime and Delinquency  
1970 Broadway, Suite 500  
Oakland, CA 94612  
510-208-0500  
Fax: 510-208-0511  
www.nccd-crc.org*

**November Coalition** National network of volunteers who carry out public education, demonstrations, and other programs to end the drug war, release prisoners of the drug war, and restore civil rights.

**Contact:**

*Nora Callahan, Executive Director  
November Coalition  
282 W. Astor  
Colville, WA 99114  
509-684-1550  
www.november.org  
moreinfo@november.org*

**Open Society Institute** Supports initiatives that cover a range of social areas, including reducing overreliance on incarceration and drug policy reform. The After-Prison Initiative focuses on reentry policy issues.

**Contact:**

*Susan Tucker, Director, After-Prison Initiative  
Open Society Institute  
400 W. 59th Street  
New York, NY 10019  
212-548-0135  
Fax: 212-548-4666  
www.soros.org  
stucker@sorosny.org*

**Pennsylvania Prison Society** The oldest criminal justice reform organization in the nation, advocates on behalf of prisoners and provides direct services to prisoners, former prisoners, and their families.

Monitors prisons and advocates for legislative changes to improve conditions.

**Contact:**

*William M. DiMascio, Executive Director*  
*Pennsylvania Prison Society*  
*245 N. Broad Street, Suite 300*  
*Philadelphia, PA 19107*  
*215-564-6005 ext. 113*  
*www.prisonsociety.org*  
*dimascio@prisonsociety.org*

**Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign**

Provides reentry resources and offers media support to local coalitions that are part of *Making Connections*. Website provides access to discussion guides, television and radio video and audio clips, and newsletters, including those in its series *Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Programs*.

**Contact:**

*Denise Blake, Reentry Project Director*  
*Outreach Extensions*  
*7039 Dume Drive*  
*Malibu, CA 90265*  
*770-964-5045*  
*www.reentrymediaoutreach.org*  
*denise@reentrymediaoutreach.org*

**The Sentencing Project** Promotes reduced reliance on incarceration and increased use of more effective and humane alternatives for dealing with crime. Provides criminal justice policy analysis, data, and program information through reports, publications, and technical assistance to the public, policy-makers, and the media.

**Contact:**

*The Sentencing Project*  
*514 Tenth Street, NW, Suite 1000*  
*Washington, DC 20004*  
*202-628-0871*  
*Fax: 202-628-1091*  
*www.sentencingproject.org*

**Vera Institute of Justice** Works with leaders in government and civil society to improve the services people rely on for safety and justice. Develops innovative, affordable programs that often grow into self-sustaining organizations, studies social problems and current responses, and provides practical advice and assistance to government officials in New York and around the world.

**Contact:**

*Michael P. Jacobson, President*  
*Vera Institute of Justice*  
*233 Broadway, 12th Floor*  
*New York, NY 10279*  
*212-376-3163*  
*Fax: 212-941-9407*  
*www.vera.org*  
*mjacobson@vera.org*

**Western Prison Project** Part of Western States Center, builds and strengthens the criminal justice reform movement in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada and publishes a newsletter, *Justice Matters*.

**Contact:**

*Brigitte Sarabi, Executive Director*  
*Western Prison Project*  
*PO Box 40085*  
*Portland, OR 97240-0085*  
*503-335-8449 ext. 201*  
*www.westernprisonproject.org*  
*info@westernprisonproject.org*

**Women Embracing Freedom Together** Advocates for women in prison in Oregon and operates transitional housing in Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington, for women leaving prison.

**Contact:**

*Women Embracing Freedom Together*  
*PO Box 1733*  
*Portland, OR 97202*  
*503-775-5943*  
*womeninprison@aol.com*



## WEBSITES

The following websites provide access to publications, research findings, articles, and links that are relevant to prisoner reentry.

### **American Correctional Association**

[www.aca.org](http://www.aca.org)

### **Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law**

[www.bazelon.org](http://www.bazelon.org)

**California Research Bureau** Includes findings from the Children of Incarcerated Mothers study.

[www.library.ca.gov/html/statseg2.cfm](http://www.library.ca.gov/html/statseg2.cfm)

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

Includes information on HIV and health issues affecting people in prison.

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### **Center on Juvenile & Criminal Justice**

[www.cjcf.org](http://www.cjcf.org)

### **Children and Family Networks**

[www.childrenandfamilynetworks.org](http://www.childrenandfamilynetworks.org)

### **Death Penalty Focus**

[www.deathpenalty.org](http://www.deathpenalty.org)

**Higher Education Act** Two sites provide useful tools for promoting higher education among prisoners. The latter provides government forms needed to make use of the Act.

[www.raiseyourvoice.com](http://www.raiseyourvoice.com)

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

### **Infectious Diseases in Corrections Report, Brown University**

[www.idcronline.org](http://www.idcronline.org)

### **Journal of Prisoners on Prisons**

[www.jpp.org](http://www.jpp.org)

### **Justice Policy Institute**

[www.justicepolicy.org](http://www.justicepolicy.org)

### **National Commission on Correctional Health Care**

[www.nchc.org](http://www.nchc.org)

### **National Correctional Industries Association**

[www.nationalcia.org](http://www.nationalcia.org)

### **National Institute of Corrections Information Center**

[www.nicic.org/webgateway\\_202.htm](http://www.nicic.org/webgateway_202.htm)

### **National Mentoring Center**

[www.nwrel.org/mentoring](http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring)

**Oregon Department of Corrections** Includes booklets for children and families of people in prison.

[www.oregon.gov/doc/index.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/doc/index.shtml)

### **Prison Legal News**

[www.prisonlegalnews.org](http://www.prisonlegalnews.org)

**Prison Ministry Directory** Hosted by the International Network of Prison Ministries.

[www.prisonministry.net](http://www.prisonministry.net)

**Prisoners of the Census** Research and advocacy on how miscounting the incarcerated affects our economy, society, and democracy.

[www.prisonersofthecensus.org](http://www.prisonersofthecensus.org)

### **Public/Private Ventures**

[www.ppv.org](http://www.ppv.org)

**Re-Entry Blog** Posts recent information about transition from prison to community, including meetings, best practices, federal government programs, and news.

*www.tpci.us*

**Reentry Media Outreach Campaign**

*www.reentrymediaoutreach.org*

**Re-Entry Policy Council** Includes the online Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council, containing hundreds of bipartisan recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners.

*www.reentrypolicy.org*

**United States Bureau of Prisons**

*www.bop.gov*

**United States Department of Housing and Urban Development** Provides online access to “Prisoner Housing Re-Entry Options and Challenges” video.

*www.hud.gov/webcasts/archives/training.cfm*

**Urban Institute**

*www.urban.org*

**Work Opportunity Tax Credit**

*www.ows.doleta.gov/employ/tax.asp*



## resource GUIDES

The following Resource Guides are available from the *Making Connections* Technical Assistance Resource Center. Copies can be printed or ordered by visiting the Casey Foundation TARC website at [www.aecf.org/tarc](http://www.aecf.org/tarc). In addition, the TARC Resource Bank provides an online database for all information contained in the printed Resource Guides. Updated regularly, the Resource Bank allows easy searching across all guides simultaneously.

### **Economic Opportunities for Families**

- + Connecting Families to Jobs
- + Building Family Assets
- + Community Investments for Family Economic Success

### **Enhancing Social Networks**

- + Residents Engaged in Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods

### **Building High-Quality Services and Supports**

- + Building More Effective Community Schools
- + Community Safety and Justice
- + Child Care for Communities
- + Meeting the Housing Needs of Families
- + Improving Health Care for Children and Families
- + Developing Community Responses to Domestic Violence
- + Engaging Higher Education Resources
- + Promoting Responsible Fatherhood
- + Reentry: Helping Former Prisoners Return to Communities

### **Techniques for Advancing a Family Strengthening Agenda in Neighborhoods**

- + Using Strategic Communication to Support Families and Neighborhoods
- + Connecting Families to Computers and On-Line Networks



**The Annie E. Casey Foundation**

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