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April 7, 2011

Community Corrections Advisory Board
Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street
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RE: Toolkit for Jail Reentry

Dear Members:

Attached please find "The Elected Official's Toolkit for Jail Reentry" prepared by the Urban Institute Justice Policy Center.

I found their information to be most interesting and I think it makes recommendations your board should discuss and hopefully identify public policy changes the Legislature, Sheriff, and/or County Executive may want to consider.

Thank you for your attention to this reentry toolkit.

Sincerely,

Maria R. Whyte

Maria R. Whyte
6th District Legislator
Majority Leader

8E-5

The Elected Official's Toolkit for Jail Reentry

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Overview of Jail Reentry

Every year, millions of people are released from incarceration, and the vast majority—about 9 million individuals—exit from local jails. Within this population, recidivism rates are high, resulting in a damaging cycle of incarceration, release, and reincarceration. Recidivism harms local communities and places a tremendous burden on local governments trying to maintain public safety and manage costs.

Local governments spent an estimated $109 billion on criminal justice in 2006, a 17 percent increase over the 2003 level and 138 percent more than was spent on criminal justice functions in 1992.[1] These criminal justice expenditures reflect in part the cost of failing to reintegrate individuals returning from our nation's prisons and jails. Many released inmates face serious problems that contribute to the commission of new crimes, including drug and alcohol addiction, mental illness, unemployment, and homelessness. Neglecting these issues not only raises criminal justice costs but increases the demand for social services, such as homeless shelter beds and emergency rooms. It also carries social costs that are difficult to quantify, including harm to victims, strain on communities, and hardships imposed on the families and social networks of released inmates.

Focusing on jail reentry is an opportunity for local governments to reduce recidivism and associated costs. Jail reentry initiatives encourage jails, social service providers, and other agencies to work together to identify and address factors that increase the risk that inmates will recidivate. Jail reentry initiatives also focus on changing the behavior of returning inmates and promoting accountability. Such initiatives help local communities strategically deploy limited resources to reduce harm and maximize community benefit.

Local elected officials play a vital role in jail reentry initiatives by bringing diverse stakeholders together in a shared effort with a common mission and vision. Local governments are well-positioned to coordinate the reentry process. Not only do they operate law enforcement and jails, they run health and human services, housing authorities, workforce development boards, and local schools, which are key partners in any comprehensive reentry effort. Elected officials also have standing with community service providers and faith-based organizations that already provide many of the social services urgently needed by those leaving jail.

Jail reentry initiatives offer numerous benefits for communities in addition to improving outcomes for individual inmates. Jail reentry initiatives have the potential to reduce crime; affect community problems, such as homelessness; and increase public health, safety, and well-being. Reentry initiatives can also improve system performance by increasing coordination and information-sharing among criminal justice agencies, community-based organizations, and other groups. This can reduce duplication of efforts and enhance the impact of existing resources. Taxpayers ultimately reap the benefits of smaller jail populations, reduced need for new jail facilities, and lower costs across the criminal justice system.

Jail reentry initiatives have found support from a broad array of stakeholders, including law enforcement, corrections, social service providers, the faith community, and victims' groups. These groups increasingly recognize their role in the reentry process and are looking to elected officials for support and leadership. Jail reentry initiatives supported by elected officials bring these groups to the table and encourage them to work together to develop effective interventions. By spearheading a cooperative reentry effort, elected officials foster shared responsibility and ensure a common approach to addressing this problem.

This toolkit is designed to help elected officials meet the challenges of addressing jail reentry in their communities. It provides information and tools to improve the jail-to-community reentry process, whether that involves implementing a jail reentry initiative for the first time or expanding an existing initiative.

It is important to note that the toolkit is not meant to be a comprehensive guide to developing a reentry initiative. While we have sought to include the most significant information for elected officials who want to get involved in jail reentry, the reader should treat the toolkit as a starting point rather than a final destination. To this end, we have included a short directory of more extensive and in-depth resources that address the process of implementing a jail reentry initiative as well as specific needs of returning inmates. Many helpful reentry resources covering a wide range of topics are easily accessible online. We encourage readers to access these resources for more information about the topics introduced here, as well as for detailed guidance on the particular challenges their communities may face.

[1] U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2008. "Justice Expenditure and Employment Extracts." http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=1022.

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Using the Toolkit

This toolkit is designed for elected officials and other policymakers looking to implement or build on a local jail reentry initiative. It is intended for a diverse audience, including mayors and county supervisors, elected and appointed officials, and those representing small towns and urban counties. (We use the umbrella term "elected official" throughout the toolkit for convenience.) Elected officials are ideally situated to lead jail reentry initiatives. By doing so, they have the opportunity to improve reentry outcomes, reduce victimization, and save money.

The toolkit contains several one-page handouts providing information, tools, and resources for developing a reentry initiative. Rather than present this information in a report or paper, we have provided elected officials with a binder that is part briefing book and part implementation guide.

The toolkit is divided into two sections:

SECTION 1
Fact sheets on jail reentry and the key components of reentry initiatives

SECTION 2
Tools and resources for implementing or expanding a reentry initiative

Each handout is intended to stand alone, so readers can pick and choose the ones they need. Jurisdictions in the early stages of developing a reentry initiative will most likely want to pay close attention to the background materials on the left-hand side of the folder. Those who are further along may find the resources on the right-hand side more helpful. To get started, each handout is briefly described below.

Section 1: Background Information

Overview of Jail Reentry
Introduces jail reentry initiatives and explains why elected officials should care about them.

Jails and the Jail Population
Highlights the unique challenges and opportunities presented by jails and the jail population.

The Jail-to-Community Continuum
Describes how a jail reentry initiative should operate at each point on the continuum from jail to community.

Stakeholders
Lists stakeholders with a vested interest in jail reentry and describes the roles they play in improving reentry outcomes.

Support for Reentry
Lists groups that have expressed their support for jail reentry initiatives, including associations of elected officials, law enforcement officers, community-based providers, and jail administrators.

TJC Overview
Describes the Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) initiative, which provides a model for local jail reentry initiatives.

Second Chance Act
Summarizes the 2008 law designed to improve outcomes for people returning to communities from prisons and jails.

Section 2: Tools and Resources

Get Involved
Provides an overview of ways in which local elected officials can get involved in jail reentry initiatives and the unique role that elected officials play in improving reentry outcomes.

Profiles of Reentry Champions
Profiles local elected officials who have championed jail reentry initiatives.

Examples of Reentry Initiatives
Presents case studies of jurisdictions that have successfully implemented jail reentry initiatives.

Local Legislation
Provides examples of legislation authorizing jail reentry initiatives and establishing coordinating bodies.

Getting Started
Describes tools for starting a reentry initiative, including guidance for assessing local needs and building a framework for a local approach.

Talking Points

Presents talking points on jail reentry for use in interactions with constituents, stakeholders, the media, and other policymakers.

PowerPoint Template

Provides a template for a PowerPoint presentation that can be modified for use at legislative hearings, community events, and other meetings.

Resources

Lists national resources on jail reentry.

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Jails and the Jail Population

Jails present many opportunities and challenges for inmate reintegration. Those planning jail reentry initiatives should take into account the unique characteristics of jails, as well as the risks and needs of the individuals who cycle through them.

Jails

Jails house a varied population. They hold individuals awaiting arraignment, trial, or sentencing, as well as those serving short sentences. Over 60 percent of jail inmates across the country are in pretrial status. Jails also hold individuals who have violated probation or parole conditions, inmates from overcrowded state and federal facilities, and inmates awaiting transfer to another facility. The jail population is split almost evenly among inmates held for public-order, drug, property, and violent offenses, and most inmates are held for misdemeanors. This diverse population, with its often unpredictable release dates, poses a planning challenge to any reentry effort.

The jail population is growing. The jail population in the United States has roughly doubled over the past two decades, growing even faster than state prison populations. Several factors have contributed to this growth, including increases in the numbers of pretrial detainees, felony offenders sentenced to jail, and probation and parole violators. Rising jail populations have obliged many communities to either build costly new jails or overcrowd facilities.

Inmates have short lengths of stay. Many jail inmates are detained for only a few hours or days, and less than one-fifth remain incarcerated for more than a month. These brief and often unpredictable lengths of stay present a challenge to jail reentry initiatives, which have a limited window of time to work with inmates before release. This makes postrelease interventions in the community particularly important for jail reentry efforts.

Jail capacity for service provision is low. While a majority of jails provide at least some services, such as basic mental health care, substance abuse programs, or educational programming, these services are rarely offered to all inmates who need them. A failure to address the risk factors that lead to incarceration will result in recidivism for many released inmates. Partnerships with social service providers and faith-based organizations allow jails to expand the services that they offer and facilitate continuity of care after inmates are released.

Coordination with community services is lacking. Services in the jail and in the community after release are rarely coordinated. Compounding this problem, most jurisdictions do not have any single agency responsible for providing postrelease services or supervision. Many community-based organizations have preexisting relationships with inmates and can continue to work with inmates after release. Collaboration and information-sharing between jails and community organizations are essential to ensuring a smooth transition for released inmates. Transition plans facilitate this collaboration and information-sharing across the point of release.

Jail Inmates

High incarceration and recidivism rates are related to broader social problems that many communities face. Jails often act as crisis intervention centers for people struggling with serious difficulties, such as addiction or mental illness. Common obstacles that put released inmates at risk for reoffending include the following:

Substance abuse. Drugs and alcohol play a central role in incarceration and recidivism, with two-thirds of jail inmates meeting criteria for substance abuse or dependence. Substance abuse treatment, if begun during incarceration and continued in the community, reduces both substance use and recidivism. However, only a small proportion of inmates struggling with substance abuse problems receive treatment while incarcerated.

Employment. Research has shown a strong relationship between unemployment and crime, and large percentages of jail inmates report having been unemployed prior to their arrest. Low educational attainment, limited professional skills, and a criminal history pose significant challenges for released inmates seeking work.

Housing. Homelessness and housing instability put people at risk for incarceration. In fact, one out of seven jail inmates is homeless upon entering jail. Research suggests that released inmates who have stable housing are less likely to return to jail or prison. However, released inmates must overcome many obstacles to obtain housing, including limited financial resources, lack of affordable housing options, public housing ineligibility, and the stigma associated with a criminal record.

Mental health. People who are unable to get adequate treatment for mental illnesses and problems frequently wind up in jail. A study by the Council of State Governments' Justice Center and Policy Research Associates found that about 17 percent of the jail population admitted to two jails in Maryland and three in New York met the criteria for a serious mental illness. In fact, jails sometimes serve as a community's largest mental health service provider. Even a brief stay in jail can disrupt community-based mental health treatment and put individuals at risk of missing medication and losing benefits.

Physical health. The jail population experiences much higher rates of chronic and infectious diseases than the general population, and over a third of jail inmates report a current medical issue needing attention. Individuals passing through jails account for a substantial share of the total U.S. population infected with tuberculosis, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS, presenting a significant opportunity to improve public health. However, fewer than half of all jail inmates nationally receive medical examinations when admitted, and few of those living with infectious diseases receive care after release.

Key Sources

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The Jail-to-Community Continuum

Before implementing or expanding a jail reentry initiative, elected officials should work with the stakeholders involved in the reentry process to identify existing resources and assess current policies and programs. It may be helpful to consider the various points along the jail-to-community continuum and the responsibilities of the jail and community-based organizations at each point. Interventions focused on changing behavior and reducing recidivism should be used at each stage to improve reentry outcomes. Elected officials play a critical role by providing the overall vision and guidance and by holding the partners in the collaborative effort accountable for working together and doing their part at each point.

Jail-Based Interventions

Jails hold a diverse population, and inmates' stays are usually short. Still, the period of incarceration is a valuable opportunity to begin the work of successful reentry. Jails should begin by assessing inmates to determine who is at the highest risk to recidivate and what issues need to be addressed to best prevent that from happening. At the level of the individual inmate, this assessment is the basis for effective release planning. At the organizational level, assessment information helps identify needed services and how many people need them. It also allows the system to direct the most intensive interventions to the highest-risk inmates.

Jails can deliver a full range of interventions, from information on community resources for low-risk or short-term inmates, to more intensive interventions to address substance abuse or criminal attitudes among higher-risk inmates. During their incarceration, inmates may receive needed mental and physical health services for the first time.

Community In-Reach

The incarceration period is also a critical time to introduce inmates to service systems they will need to access upon release. Jails can facilitate this process, as well as expand the reentry services they offer, by allowing community-based organizations to enter the facility. This approach is known as "in-reach." By collaborating with the faith-based community, social service providers, employers and workforce development boards, housing and health agencies, and other organizations, jails can offer programs that they might otherwise be unable to provide. As these community-based organizations often work with populations prone to incarceration, they may already have relationships with many inmates, and they may regard in-reach as a valuable way to serve their client population. Community in-reach allows inmates to begin or maintain these critical relationships and reduces treatment interruption. Jails should therefore develop partnerships with community-based organizations, giving them access to inmates and sharing information with them. Elected officials can be instrumental in encouraging jails to support in-reach and encouraging community organizations to take advantage of the opportunity to serve incarcerated clients.

Moment of Release

Community in-reach into the jail is especially critical immediately prior to release. In the first few days after release, returning inmates are particularly susceptible to drug use, homelessness, going off psychotropic medication, and other problems that may lead to reoffending. Interventions focused on bridging the time of release and the return to the community are crucial to preventing recidivism. Jails and community-based organizations should work together to prepare inmates for this transition, with a focus on keeping them engaged in changing the behaviors that led them to jail. Elected officials can help to foster a sense of shared responsibility for inmate success to encourage this coordination between the jail and the community.

Ideally, all inmates should leave jail with a resource guide that explains how to access community-based services, such as drug treatment or housing assistance, as well as with applications for obtaining identification, medication, and government benefits, if appropriate. For higher-risk inmates, it is important to develop a discharge plan, laying out what they need to do to avoid reoffending. Such plans can include prearranged service appointments, an assigned case manager, transportation from the jail, a means of obtaining necessary medications, and prepared applications for identification documents and the reinstatement of any government benefits.

Community-Based Interventions

Without follow-up in the community, jail-based services will have little impact on behavior. Most inmates, however, are not legally required to participate in community programs. (Those sentenced to probation are the exception.) It is therefore vital that, prior to an inmate's release, jails and community-based organizations arrange treatment and service appointments, offer case-management services, share information across agencies, and engage the informal social networks that are influential in the inmate's life,

such as family, friends, employers, and the faith community. This increases the likelihood that released inmates will access formal services, such as substance abuse counseling, mental health treatment, housing assistance, and job training.

Putting It All Together

The importance of increasing collaboration and coordination between the jail and community-based organizations cannot be overstated. Even the most well-intentioned effort, incorporating interventions at each of these four points along the jail-to-community continuum, can fail if there is not a concerted effort to identify shared goals, strategically allocate institutional and community-based resources, conduct joint reentry system planning, and support and sustain collaboration. A jail reentry initiative can serve as the nexus for this collaboration, allowing jails, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to develop partnerships and share information. Elected officials play a key role in building and sustaining this shared effort by bringing stakeholders to the table and monitoring their progress. A great deal of work is required to achieve this high level of collaboration, but the benefits that jail reentry initiatives provide to participating stakeholders, inmates and their families, and the community can be substantial and far-reaching.

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Stakeholders

A wide range of groups have a stake in jail reentry. Crime and the use of public resources by individuals who fail to successfully transition from jail affect the entire public. Reentry affects various components of the criminal justice system, including law enforcement, jails, probation, and parole. It also affects the families and communities to which released inmates return and the inmates themselves. Elected officials should be aware of the impact of jail reentry on these groups, as well as how the reentry process affects their community as a whole. Some of the stakeholders with the greatest investments in jail reentry are listed below.

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement's interest in protecting public safety gives it a clear stake in jail reentry initiatives that prevent reoffending. Law enforcement personnel also have a particular interest in interventions to stabilize the relatively small number of habitual offenders who cycle in and out of jail many times each year. This chronic offending is often the result of public order offenses arising from such problems as homelessness, substance abuse, and mental illness. Law enforcement agencies spend disproportionate resources arresting these habitual offenders—resources that would be better directed to more serious crimes.

Community Service Providers

Most community-based service providers, including faith-based organizations, already serve many individuals returning from jail, simply because many in the jail population need the services they provide. Jail reentry initiatives help these organizations work more effectively with jail-involved clients by improving collaboration, resource allocation, and information-sharing among providers and criminal justice agencies.

Victims

Victims of crime, and the groups that represent them, are an important constituency in the reentry process. Most jail inmates are charged with misdemeanors, such as possession of drugs or public misconduct, but others are charged with more serious offenses involving another person. Victims understand firsthand the importance of protecting the public from future offending. In some instances, such as domestic violence situations, there is a great risk that a past victim could be victimized again. By focusing on inmate behavior change and risk reduction, jail reentry efforts also support the long-term interests of victims, preventing new crimes and reducing the likelihood of revictimization.

The General Public

The high rates of recidivism among released inmates make us all stakeholders in the jail reentry process. Along with improving public safety, a reentry initiative can lead to healthier neighborhoods by addressing homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse, and infectious diseases. Curbing recidivism can also lower criminal justice costs. At the same time, there may be concerns within the general public about the jail reentry initiative. While individuals have always returned from jail to the community, a jail reentry effort may bring this dynamic to the public's attention for the first time and cause anxiety. Education on the public safety and resource issues involved, coupled with extensive outreach to the community, can help allay this anxiety. A joint education and outreach approach that includes many stakeholders, particularly from law enforcement, may be the most effective way to gain the public's support.

Employers

Employers are a critical stakeholder in any reentry initiative. Because many jail inmates are only incarcerated for a few days, or even a few hours, some can return to previously held jobs. Many others, however, need assistance in finding a job or learning vocational skills. Ensuring that released inmates have stable employment is an important way to keep them from returning to jail. Reentry efforts should therefore involve employers, some of whom may already employ formerly incarcerated individuals or even current inmates under work-release programs. Elected officials can be instrumental in garnering employer support and establishing incentives, such as tax breaks, for hiring former inmates.

The Courts

As jail inmates are in various stages of the criminal justice process, the courts have tremendous interest and sway in what happens with the jail population. Pretrial service programs operated by the courts have contact with the jail population early in the process. These programs can conduct assessments and play an important role in release planning. Many judges are interested in utilizing any potentially effective behavior-change intervention, and their sentencing decisions can determine what in-jail programming individuals can complete, and even what programming is mandatory.

Probation and Parole

Many individuals admitted to jail are probation or parole violators. Some will again be under supervision upon release. These supervision agencies have valuable information to share about many jail inmates, and they can play a key role in brokering—and requiring—services and treatment upon release.

Released Inmates and Their Families

Many people end up in jail repeatedly because they struggle with serious and frequently co-occurring problems, such as substance abuse, housing instability, joblessness, and mental illness. After release, these individuals face significant obstacles, and as a result, many will return to jail within a short time. This cycle causes serious hardship to their families. The absence of a spouse, parent, or adult caretaker disrupts families and creates financial difficulties. Children of incarcerated parents are particularly vulnerable. Providing formerly incarcerated men and women with the services they need helps to break this cycle of recidivism and allows them to live more stable and productive lives. Families are key supports for inmates' eventual success and are perhaps the greatest beneficiaries of that success.

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Support for Reentry

Elected officials who get involved in jail reentry are likely to find broad support for reentry initiatives in their communities. According to a 2006 Zogby poll conducted for the National Council on Crime and Delinquency,[1] the U.S. voting public is in favor of providing reentry services to nonviolent offenders by almost an eight to one margin. In fact, 70 percent support providing services both while inmates are incarcerated and after their release.

Reflecting this public sentiment, a wide variety of local, state, and national organizations have voiced support for efforts to improve reentry outcomes. More than 200 organizations supported the passage of the Second Chance Act, a 2008 law designed to improve outcomes for people returning to communities from prisons and jails. This included diverse groups, such as the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, American Conservative Union, Children's Defense Fund, Christian Coalition, NAACP, and American Bar Association—organizations that represent many different interests and come from both sides of the political aisle. What unifies them is an understanding that reentry provides a major opportunity to increase public safety and reduce criminal justice costs.

Reentry initiatives have also found extensive support among the various stakeholders directly involved in the jail reentry process. These groups favor greater collaboration on the reentry issue and are ready and willing to work with elected officials to improve reentry outcomes. Key groups that have been particularly strong advocates of reentry efforts are profiled below.

Elected Officials

Several groups representing state and local elected officials have been active in reentry issues, including the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, the Council of State Governments, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Governors Association. For example, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has established the Ex-Offender Reentry Task Force to highlight strategies for improving reentry outcomes. In February 2008, the task force (in partnership with the nonprofit organization Public/Private Ventures) convened the Mayor's Summit on Reentry and Employment to discuss the impact of reentry on cities and to share information on effective reentry programs across the country. At the federal level, members of Congress gave broad bipartisan support to the Second Chance Act.

Community-Based Organizations

Community-based organizations, which provide such services as substance abuse counseling and mental health treatment, are critical to the success of any reentry initiative. These groups tend to be strong supporters of reentry efforts and have often taken the lead in local reentry initiatives. For this reason, national organizations such as Goodwill Industries, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, along with many local service providers, strongly supported passage of the Second Chance Act. A number of faith-based groups also supported the law, including the Salvation Army, Lutheran Services of America, and Catholic Charities USA. Across the United States, the faith community provides both crucial reentry services and informal social support to people returning from jails. Faith-based organizations are key stakeholders in jail reentry and are often active participants in reentry initiatives.

Jails

The American Jail Association, the professional association representing jail administrators, recently passed a resolution stating that "re-entry programs are in the best interest of society because they help prepare offenders for community life, help reduce future criminal behavior, remove the barriers that make it difficult for offenders to re-enter their communities and develop necessary community support."[2] The American Correctional Association, which represents both jail and prison professionals, has adopted a similar position on reentry efforts, and both organizations fully supported passage of the Second Chance Act.

Probation and Parole

The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), an organization representing probation officers and administrators, actively supports reentry initiatives. In the words of Carl Wicklund, the executive director of the APPA, "Jail reentry is an often overlooked process—one that requires the attention of local leadership because of its complexity and the large number of stakeholders involved in the process. Jail reentry initiatives that facilitate a smooth transition for people leaving jail can reduce the need for costly interventions later in the process and allow probation officers to focus on the individuals who pose the greatest risk to public safety."[3]

Law Enforcement

Several law enforcement associations have supported reentry legislation, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Sheriffs' Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). IACP (2007) published a comprehensive resource guide, "Building an Offender Reentry Program: A Guide for Law Enforcement," which outlines ways for law enforcement to participate in reentry initiatives.[4] PERF has also sought to expand the involvement of law enforcement in reentry initiatives. In 2008, PERF partnered with the Council of State Governments Justice Center to develop a report, "Planning and Assessing a Law Enforcement Reentry Strategy,"[5] and selected four law enforcement agencies to serve as sites for implementing the report's recommendations.

Prosecutors and Defenders

In 2005, the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA), a professional association for prosecutors, adopted a resolution calling for an increased role for prosecutors in reentry issues. The resolution states that "America's prosecutors should, where practicable, be participants in addressing this issue in an effort to reduce recidivism and ensure the safety of victims and the community."[6] The resolution emphasizes providing programs for inmates both during and after incarceration. The American Bar Association (ABA) also favors greater attorney involvement in promoting successful reentry. Through its Reentry and Collateral Consequences Committee, the ABA provides reentry education and resources for its members.

The Federal Government

The federal government is actively engaged in reentry efforts that include a variety of grants to organizations, states, and local governments. Most prominently, the 2008 Second Chance Act authorized funding for grants to help local and state governments and Indian tribes develop comprehensive reentry initiatives, as well as for nonprofit organizations to provide mentoring services to released inmates. Funding for Second Chance Act programs increased from $25 million in fiscal year 2009 to $100 million in fiscal year 2010.

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[1] Krisberg, Barry, and Susan Marchionna. 2006. "Attitudes of U.S. Voters toward Prisoner Rehabilitation and Reentry Policies." *Focus: Views from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.* http://nccd-crc.issuelab. org/research/listing/attitudes_of_us_voters_toward_prisoner_rehabilitation_and_reentry_policies_focus.

[2] Adopted May 3, 2008, by the AJA Board of Directors in Sacramento, CA: http://www.aja.org/resolutions.aspx#re_entry_of_offenders.

[3] Personal communication with the authors, August 5, 2009.

[4] International Association of Chiefs of Police. 2007. "Building an Offender Reentry Program: A Guide for Law Enforcement." http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/pdf/Reentry_LE.pdf.

[5] Swarzfeld, Matt, Deirdre Mead Weiss, Martha Plotkin, and Laura Draper. 2008. "Planning and Assessing a Law Enforcement Reentry Strategy." Prepared by the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Police Executive Research Forum for the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center. http://reentrypolicy.org/jc_publications/LE_toolkit_ final/LE_Reentry_Strategy.pdf.

[6] National District Attorneys Association. 2005. "Policy Positions on Prisoner Reentry Issues." http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/policy_position_prisoner_reentry_july_17_05.pdf.

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TJC Overview

The Transition from Jail to Community initiative (TJC) was launched in 2007 through a cooperative agreement between the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and the Urban Institute to develop and implement an effective jail-to-community transition model. Rather than a discrete reentry program, TJC is a comprehensive systems approach for improving public safety and reintegration. TJC solicits partnerships among criminal justice agencies, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders. Under the TJC model, these agencies use a collaborative, data-driven approach to provide services and supervision to the inmates who need them most.

At the system level, the TJC model focuses on

- **Leadership, vision, and organizational culture** to set expectations and empower stakeholders and staff;
- **Collaborative structure and joint ownership** by both jail and community stakeholders to develop and share responsibility for joint outcomes of interest;
- **Data-driven understanding of the local issue**, including characteristics of the returning population and local barriers and assets;
- **Targeted intervention strategies** to assess individuals, plan for release, and provide services and training in jail and in the community; and
- **Self-evaluation and sustainability** to guide and improve the effort.

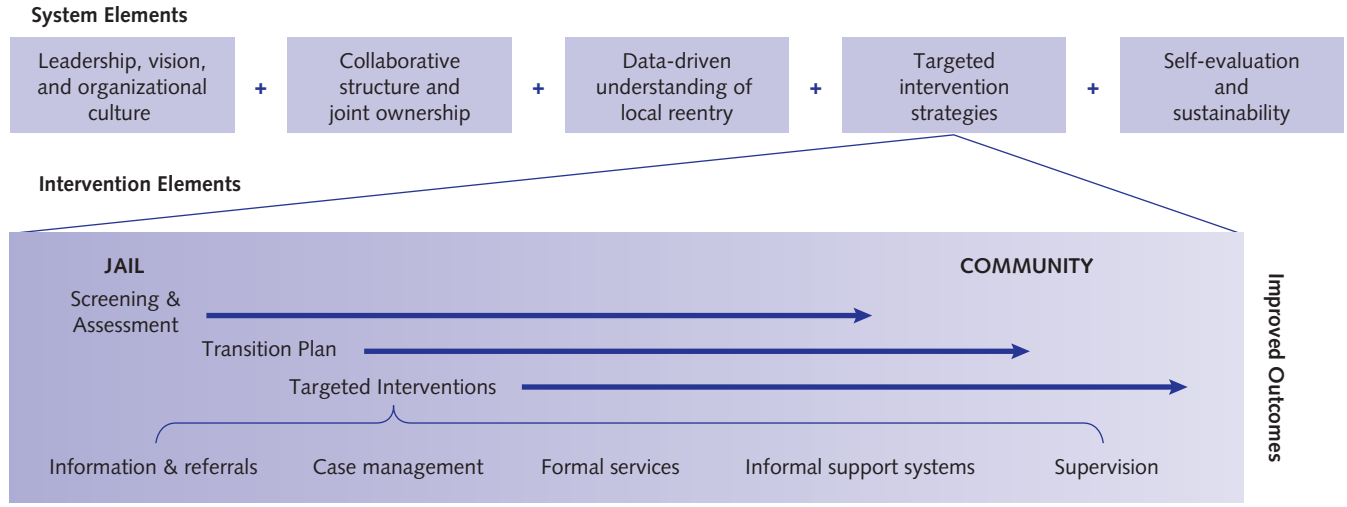
At the level of targeted interventions for individuals, the TJC model includes

- **Screening and assessment** to quickly determine an inmate's risks and needs and guide transition planning and service provision;
- **Transition case plan development** to prepare individuals for release and reintegration; and
- **Tailored transition interventions** that begin in jail and continue after release. Interventions should
  - Enlist multiple service sectors;
  - Involve community in-reach to build relationships before release;
  - Use low-cost interventions, such as reentry resource guides;
  - Involve informal support networks; and
  - Enhance the role that supervision can play, when applicable.

The TJC Sites

Two TJC learning sites—Denver, Colorado, and Douglas County, Kansas—began implementing the model in September 2008. Under the guidance of NIC and the Urban Institute, these sites have built a collaborative structure among criminal justice agencies and community organizations in which jail reentry is a central, and shared, focus. Both sites are also in the process of implementing a

The TJC Model



screening and assessment system to strategically allocate intervention resources to the highest-risk and highest-need individuals.

These sites have used TJC participation to add greater focus and direction to their preexisting reentry efforts. The need for a reentry effort in Douglas County became especially clear when the county's relatively new jail, built in 1999 to deal with a growing number of inmates, became full after less than 10 years. Realizing that continuing to build new jails was neither financially feasible nor sustainable, Douglas County decided to pursue a systems change effort focused on improving reentry outcomes and reducing recidivism.

In both Denver and Douglas County, elected officials have played a key role in the TJC implementation process.

- **Mayor John Hickenlooper of Denver,** concerned about recidivism and jail overcrowding, created a Crime Prevention and Control Commission (CPCC), which brings together individuals from criminal justice, service provider, and other agencies to address these issues. The CPCC has taken a lead role in Denver's TJC work. As Mayor Hickenlooper said, "Technical assistance from the National Institute of Corrections and Urban Institute on the Transition from Jail to Community initiative will enhance our comprehensive model and maximize cost-effective reintegration of our citizens into our community."[1]
- **Charles Jones, Douglas County Commissioner,** was interested in both increasing individual reentry success and reducing criminal justice costs at the time of TJC selection. "In addition to advancing an enlightened manner of dealing with jail inmates and increasing the likelihood of their healthy return to the community, the reentry initiative holds our best hope for reducing the spiraling costs associated with incarceration and recidivism."[2]

The TJC initiative expanded in September 2009 with the selection of four additional sites: Orange County, California; Kent County, Michigan; La Crosse County, Wisconsin; and Davidson County, Tennessee. These four sites have mirrored the progress made in Denver and Douglas County by implementing screening and assessment processes, expanding evidence-based interventions for the jail population, enhancing collaboration between correctional agencies and community service providers, and developing orgaizational structures to carry forth reentry efforts over time.

More Information and Resources

For in-depth information about all six sites and about the elements and structure of TJC, please visit the TJC web site at **http://www.jailtransition.com**. The TJC Implementation Toolkit, a free, interactive web resource for starting a TJC initiative, is also available at **http://www.jailtransition.com/Toolkit**.

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[1] Personal communication, September 17, 2008.
[2] Personal communication, September 12, 2008.

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Second Chance Act

In April 2008, President George W. Bush signed Public Law 110-119, more commonly known as the Second Chance Act. This landmark legislation, which has both symbolic and practical value, authorizes the federal government to make substantial investments in reentry initiatives at the local level. Federal grant funding for reentry efforts is appropriated by Congress and administered by the Departments of Justice and Labor. In fiscal year 2009, the Second Chance Act funded reentry demonstration grants to state, local, and tribal governments for the development of comprehensive reentry initiatives. A separate grant program provided funding to nonprofit organizations to provide mentoring. Those grant programs have been supplemented in fiscal year 2010 with new grant programs in the areas of reentry courts, correctional education, technology careers training, and substance abuse programming.

The Second Chance Act is intended to[1]

- break the cycle of criminal recidivism, increase public safety, and help states, local units of government, and Indian tribes better address the growing population of criminal offenders who return to their communities and commit new crimes;
- rebuild ties between offenders and their families, while the offenders are incarcerated, and after reentry into the community, to promote stable families and communities;
- encourage the development and support of, and expand the availability of, evidence-based programs that enhance public safety and reduce recidivism, such as substance abuse treatment, alternatives to incarceration, and comprehensive reentry services;
- protect the public and promote law-abiding conduct by providing necessary services to offenders, while the offenders are incarcerated and after reentry into the community, in a manner that does not confer luxuries or privileges upon such offenders;
- assist offenders reentering the community from incarceration to establish a self-sustaining and law-abiding life by providing sufficient transitional services for as short of a period as practicable; and
- provide offenders in prisons, jails, or juvenile facilities with educational, literacy, vocational, and job placement services to facilitate reentry into the community.

For fiscal year 2009, Congress appropriated $25 million for Second Chance Act programs, including $15 million for state and local reentry demonstration projects. In fiscal year 2010, the appropriation amount increased to $100 million. Future appropriations will provide an excellent opportunity for local jurisdictions to expand existing reentry initiatives or develop new and innovative programs.

Before jurisdictions can apply for Second Chance Act funding, they must meet several criteria. Elected officials in interested jurisdictions should be aware of these criteria and work with the appropriate stakeholders to ensure that the community is well-positioned to secure a grant. The Second Chance Act criteria are key components of any effective reentry initiative, and adhereing to them will ensure a stronger and more successful effort.

Among the criteria for Second Chance Act reentry demonstration grant funding are the following:

- **Reentry Task Force:** Grant applicants are required to have a reentry task force that will be responsible for coordinating the reentry initiative. This task force must be composed of local leaders (such as elected officials) and representatives from relevant agencies, such as jails, community-based organizations, law enforcement, probation and parole, health and human services, housing agencies, and workforce development boards.
- **Involvement of Jails and Community Corrections:** Applicants are expected to provide a thorough accounting of the role of corrections in the reentry initiative to ensure the support and buy-in of key stakeholders, such as jail administrators, sheriffs, pretrial services, and probation and parole.
- **Strategic Plan:** Applicants must submit a comprehensive strategic plan that includes annual and five-year performance goals. This plan should provide performance measures, an implementation schedule, plans for continuing the initiative once funding has ended, and a description of each organization's role in the initiative.
- **Performance Measures:** Applicants must detail how the outcomes of their initiative will be monitored. Elected officials should guide the development of the measures they will use to hold the reentry initiative accountable for performance.
- **Regulatory Barriers:** Applicants are required to submit a plan for analyzing the statutory and regulatory barriers that face ex-offenders. Examples include the loss of government benefits, including Medicaid eligibility; restrictions against enrollment in affordable housing, education, or employment programs; and voter disenfranchisement.

Although these are the major criteria that applicants must meet, the law includes other requirements and suggestions for those seeking a grant. The National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC), established by the Second Chance Act to provide information and support services to reentry efforts nationwide, can help jurisdictions meet these guidelines and prepare successful applications. Launched in October 2009, the NRRC provides information, tools, and resources on its web site, **http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org**. The NRRC is administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, and is a project of the Council of State Governments Justice Center, with key project partners the Urban Institute, the American Probation and Parole Association, and the Association of State Corrections Administrators.

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[1] U.S. Congress. 2008. Public Law 110-199. 110th Congress, Apr. 8.

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Get Involved

Jail reentry initiatives need the support of local elected officials to be successful. Despite broad interest in reentry initiatives among the agencies and organizations that serve the jail population, these groups often work with this population in isolation from one another. Many communities have not established processes for cross-agency information-sharing, continuity of services between the jail and community, or performance measurement.

The role of elected officials is to provide vision and leadership, harness community interest, promote sustainable collaborations, and provide ongoing support for effective reentry programs and practices. The active involvement of elected officials lends credibility to reentry initiatives, and they are in a unique position to convene the necessary stakeholders to launch a reentry effort. Once such an effort is under way, elected officials can sustain partnerships, make decisions for the group, hold stakeholders accountable for accomplishing the goals of the initiative, and spread the word about the importance of the problem—and, ultimately, about the success of the initiative.

Below are some of the ways in which elected officials can strengthen a reentry initiative and ensure its continued success.

Leadership and Vision

With so many stakeholders involved in the jail reentry process, building a consensus on goals, strategies, and resource allocation is an ongoing challenge. Leadership from elected officials is critical in developing an elevating vision, mission, and direction across a range of groups. Elected officials should establish objectives, build the necessary buy-in among stakeholders, and set a vision for change that motivates others.

- Articulate a vision of how the jail reentry initiative will benefit the community.
- Develop a mission statement.
- Engage the community and become a public voice for reentry initiatives.

Collaboration

Successful jail reentry initiatives require participation from local jails, community-based organizations, law enforcement, courts, probation, and government service providers. Building collaboration, coordination, and a sense of shared responsibility among these organizations is key to the success of any reentry initiative. Elected officials have a variety of tools at their disposal to support the development of necessary partnerships. They are well-positioned to bring stakeholders together and facilitate collaboration among diverse groups.

- Establish a local reentry coordinating council or similar governing body. If one already exists, get actively involved.
- Emphasize collective ownership over jail reentry among participating organizations.
- Encourage stakeholders to communicate, cooperate, share resources, and jointly resolve problems.

Ordinances, Policies, and Legislation

Perhaps the most obvious way for elected officials to get involved in a jail reentry initiative is through the legislative process. In fact, many jurisdictions have established reentry coordinating councils through authorizing legislation (see the *Local Legislation* page for an example). Legislation can also be used to reduce barriers to successful transition. A recent survey of the mayors of 79 cities found that 36 percent of the cities have made changes in ordinances or policies to improve the odds that ex-offenders can successfully transition back to the community.[1] Among these cities, 77 percent made changes related to employment, and 58 percent made changes related to housing accessibility. Elected officials also hold the power of the purse and should use it to support programs that work.

- Develop legislation to formalize a reentry coordinating council.
- Assess barriers to successful reentry that can be addressed through legislation or executive action, such as employer discrimination against those with a criminal record or restrictions on where former inmates can reside.
- Provide fiscal incentives and reward successful reentry programs.

Oversight and Accountability

Given both the promise and the complexity of jail reentry initiatives, evaluation and performance measurement should be a top priority to determine whether the effort is working. As part of this

process, elected officials should require reentry programs to collect and report data on released inmates' outcomes. They should provide ongoing oversight to ensure that resources are being used efficiently and that ineffective strategies or programs are modified or terminated.

- Ensure that agencies continuously work to sustain, evaluate, improve, and expand their reentry efforts.
- Develop performance measures related to recidivism and hold agencies accountable for meeting specific goals.
- Establish performance-based contracts for community providers that work with the jail population.

[1] U.S. Conference of Mayors. 2009. "Status of Ex-Offender Reentry Efforts in Cities: A 79-City Survey." Washington, DC: City Policy Associates. http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/REENTRYREPORT09.pdf.

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Profiles of Reentry Champions

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York City

During Michael Bloomberg's tenure as mayor, New York City has made enormous strides in addressing the needs of people returning from jail. Since he was first elected in 2001, Mayor Bloomberg has provided the vision, leadership, and monetary support necessary develop an extensive range of reentry initiatives and programs.

One such effort is the New York City Discharge Planning Collaboration, a network of roughly 40 local government agencies and community-based nonprofits. It began in 2003, when Commissioners Martin Horn of the Department of Correction (DOC) and Linda Gibbs of the Department of Homeless Services discovered that a large proportion of individuals who frequent the jail were homeless. Recognizing their common ground, the two commissioners embarked on a project to effect system-wide change by increasing coordination between the criminal justice and social service spheres. In 2004, Mayor Bloomberg signed legislation codifying the collaboration's efforts into law and mandating that the DOC take several steps to improve reentry, including data collection, information-sharing, and provision of services to inmates. According to collaboration members, Mayor Bloomberg fostered an organizational culture conducive to a collaborative approach, encouraging city agencies to "think beyond [their] four walls" and providing a "vision from the top" that was key to the effort's success.[2]

> *"All too often, [released inmates] come back to a world with limited opportunities . . . We have a responsibility to . . . help more of them take full advantage of the second chance they've been given."* [1]

Another reentry effort that has benefited from Mayor Bloomberg's support is the Rikers Island Discharge Enhancement Program (RIDE). Initiated in 2003, RIDE facilitates a seamless transition from jail, providing inmates with prerelease discharge planning, transportation to housing or social services on the day of release, and continuing postrelease case management. As Mayor Bloomberg describes RIDE, "instead of simply opening the cell doors and letting people fend for themselves, we work with them beforehand to assess their needs and create a plan for where they will go and what they will do after they're discharged. If they don't have a plan, then they don't have a chance."

Along with supporting and encouraging these efforts, Mayor Bloomberg has publicly championed the importance of reentry. In 2008, as part of the keynote address at the Mayors Summit on Reentry and Employment, Mayor Bloomberg explained that focusing on reentry "is much more than simply a public safety imperative. It's also an opportunity to strike a blow against poverty," noting that those who return from incarceration are "the same people who depend on our Human Resources Administration for food stamps and rental subsidies… [and] who visit our public hospitals and clinics for drug treatment and emergency care." Finally, he emphasized that reentry efforts remain critically important even in difficult economic times: "Right now, all of us are facing tough budgets—but we can't let that be an excuse for failing in our responsibility. We can't let a life of crime become the default option."

Commissioner Lisa Naito, Multnomah County, Oregon

Lisa Naito served on the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners from 1998 until 2008. During her 10 years on the Board, Commissioner Naito was actively involved in improving the jail reentry process in Multnomah County. In her capacity as an elected official, Commissioner Naito assumed a leadership role on the issue, brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, championed reentry initiatives in the community, and worked to pass local legislation that would improve reentry outcomes.

> *"We know that linking supportive services, such as housing, jobs, addiction treatment, health and mental health programs, goes a long way in preventing recidivism. With these kinds of supports, people are far less likely to end up in our County jail again."* [3]

While on the Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Naito also served as the chair of the National Association of Counties' Justice and Public Safety Committee as well as the chair of the Multnomah County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council. By serving in these roles, Commissioner Naito established herself as a local and national leader on criminal justice reform issues, including jail reentry. As a result, Commissioner Naito was among a select group of lawmak-

ers and advocates invited to the White House in April 2008 to attend President George W. Bush's signing of the Second Chance Act.

In fall 2008, Commissioner Naito convened an informal work group to discuss strategies for improving reentry outcomes in Multnomah County. The work group included the Multnomah County sheriff and other representatives from the Sheriff's Office, a representative from the U.S. Department of Justice, and other key stakeholders. Under Commissioner Naito's leadership, the work group issued a report[4] outlining several recommendations for improved reentry in Multnomah County, including the following:

- Establish a **reentry council** to oversee and coordinate reentry services.
- Articulate a **mission statement** on jail reentry to reflect Multnomah County's commitment to promote positive change.
- Adopt a validated **risk and needs assessment tool** to ensure that reentry planning begins at jail booking.
- Bring **community programming** into the jails to link inmates to programs prior to release.
- Increase the **connections** between the jail and community programs.
- **Plan for inmate transition** to the community to prevent recidivism.
- Establish a prerelease **work release center** to increase stable employment opportunities prior to returning to the community.
- Institute a community-based **one-stop reentry center** to support ex-offenders.
- **Evaluate** the outcomes of the reentry programs by using performance measures and quality assurance evaluations.

In December 2008, less than two months after the work group released its final report, the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners established the Council on Successful Reentry from Jail to Community to implement the work group's recommendations.

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[1] All quotes from Mayor Bloomberg given here are from his 2008 keynote address at the Mayors Summit on Reentry and Employment, http://www.ppv.org/ppv/initiative.asp?section_id=0&initiative_id=44.

[2] Montero, Gabriel. 2007. "Mapping the Universe of Reentry: The New York City Discharge Planning Collaboration." New York: New York City Department of Correction. http://www.nyc.gov/html/doc/downloads/pdf/discharge_planning.pdf.

[3] Naito, Lisa, et al. 2008. "Transitioning from Jail to Community: Improving Reentry Outcomes in Multnomah County, a Report." http://web.multco.us/sites/default/files/documents/transitioningfromjailtocommunityareport10-30-08.pdf.

[4] Ibid.

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Examples of Reentry Initiatives

Hampden County, Massachusetts

In Hampden County, three-quarters of inmates released from the jail return to inner-city neighborhoods, and half are released with no community supervision. Since the 1990s, the Hampden County Sheriff's Department has worked to address these individuals' needs through a comprehensive reentry initiative and a nationally replicated health program. The Sheriff's Department and its partners have implemented a variety of efforts that advance the county's vision of reentry as a continuum from jail to the community. Services are provided in the jail, concentrated at the moment of release, continued after release, and coordinated with existing community services.

> *"Sometimes I think that because we at the Hampden County Sheriff's Department believe in inmates answering the bell each morning for productive activities, people confuse us with being soft. Quite the opposite—allowing inmates to hang around all day with nothing to do is my idea of being soft."*[1]
>
> ~ Hampden County Sheriff Michael Ashe

Key elements of the Hampden County initiative include the following:

- **Partnerships and collaboration.** The Sheriff's Department partners with other criminal justice agencies and over 200 service providers in its reentry efforts.
- **Assessment of needs.** Every inmate undergoes a risk and needs assessment that informs programming, case management, classification, and release planning.
- **Mandatory in-jail programming and services.** While incarcerated, inmates are required to attend certain programs depending upon their identified risk level and needs. The jail also provides inmates with mentors to support their rehabilitation.
- **Community in-reach.** Community organizations provide programming and case management in the jail, and inmates meet with service providers, including an education counselor and case workers, while incarcerated.
- **Service and transition planning.** Individualized treatment plans guide services both in the jail and after release. Inmates leave jail with a release plan that contains referrals, contact and appointment information, and other information.
- **Post-release services in the community.** After release from jail, inmates can continue to receive services through the After Incarceration Support System (AISS) program. Released inmates have access to case management, support groups, drop-in hours with counselors, and follow-up with mentors.
- **Lower-security options.** In 1986, Hampden County established the nation's first day reporting center, which allows individuals to continue serving their sentences while living at home. Jail inmates can work toward lower security classifications, including day reporting, by participating in programs and demonstrating an interest in addressing their needs. This process saves jail bed days and connects inmates to community providers.
- **Self-evaluation.** Since 1998, Hampden County's reentry initiative has been monitoring its progress by tracking recidivism rates and other key indicators among sentenced inmates. For example, since making program participation mandatory in 2001, Hampden County has seen the percentage of offenders released from lower security increase from 38 percent to 66 percent in 2008.[2] The one-year reincarceration rate declined from 31 percent in 2001 to 23 percent in 2007.[3]

While reentry services originally focused on sentenced inmates only, the Sheriff's Department decided to provide these services to the full jail population in 2009. Sheriff Michael Ashe, Jr., who was determined to keep reentry efforts from falling victim to a 10 percent cut in the department's budget, chose instead to expand the program by using department resources more strategically. Sheriff Ashe recognized that, along with helping inmates, this expansion would save costs by reducing the length of time inmates remain in the facility. A pilot test of the program expansion, in fact, found that unsentenced, pretrial inmates were released an average of 17 days earlier due to participation in programs that target their individual needs (and thus prepare them for lower security levels, and release, sooner than business-as-usual).

A part of Hampden County's widely recognized reentry initiative involves its nationally replicated model for improving public health. This model, which has evolved into Community Oriented Correctional Health Services (COCHS), pairs inmates diagnosed with chronic illnesses with a case manager and a physician, who are dually-based in the jail and a community health center.

Together, they treat and educate inmates in the jail and set up appointments for them upon release. A 2004 evaluation found that the program significantly improved released inmates' physical and mental health outcomes and that continuing with the same health provider after release from jail increased the use of health care services in the community.[4]

An important element of any reentry initiative is being open to trying new ideas, tracking the effectiveness of new programs, and retaining those that work. The Hampden County initiative has implemented several innovative measures, including

- Mentors in the jail and community, many of whom are volunteers and ex-offenders;
- A portfolio of documents (including identification, health card, and résumé) provided to all inmates;
- A requirement that inmates spend 40 hours per week in programs and work assignments;
- Job placement by Sheriff's Department job developers; and
- Special reentry and intervention services for two groups: the highest-risk offenders and those with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse problems.

Denver, Colorado

Jail reentry in Denver is a collaborative effort, relying on strong partnerships among criminal justice agencies, local government, and community-based organizations. Denver, which operates two separate jail facilities, has undertaken a variety of initiatives to tackle recidivism and related problems among its jail population. These efforts have been spearheaded by the Crime Prevention and Control Commission (CPCC), in close collaboration with the Denver Sheriff Department. The CPCC is a body formed in 2005 to reduce crime and recidivism and to make better use of jail resources.[2] Funded by the City and County of Denver and established under Mayor John Hickenlooper's leadership, the CPCC brings together 32 representatives and top officials from criminal justice agencies, government, and the community. CPCC initiatives include re-visioning and implementation of Denver's Drug Court, implementation of a comprehensive gang prevention and reduction model, jail-based mental health transition units, and efforts to identify and address causes of racial and gender disparity in the adult and juvenile justice systems in Denver.

The CPCC acts as the central hub of, and provides leadership and support for, Denver's reentry process. Since 2006, the CPCC's Community Reentry Committee has worked to establish a reentry process that includes both pre- and postrelease components. Within the Denver County Jail, the Life Skills Program offers a range of classes and case management services for eligible inmates. The program offers cognitive-behavioral classes and courses in job readiness, healthy lifestyles, treatment readiness, parenting, and other areas. In addition to the Life Skills program, the jail offers classes in GED preparation, anger management, domestic violence, and substance abuse to all inmates.

As part of the transition process, staff at Denver's Community Reentry Project (CRP) work with jail-based Life Skills case managers to facilitate the classes and build relationships with those soon to be released to the community. Participants in the Life Skills program are encouraged to receive continued services after release at the CRP, which opened in 2007 and provides case management, job readiness, housing assistance, referrals, and other services to individuals transitioning from jail. Funded by the CPCC, the CRP relies on its staff and community-based organizations to provide the many services it offers. Jail and CRP staff share client information and work closely together to ensure a seamless reentry process.

> *"Our Crime Prevention and Control Commission has made great strides to reduce overcrowding in our jails by implementing alternatives to incarceration, expediting case processing, and targeting mental health and reentry efforts."*[1]
>
> **~ Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper**

The CPCC was critical to Denver's selection in 2008 as a learning site for the Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) initiative. The CPCC's collaborative structure provided a strong base for the initiative, which seeks to improve the jail transition process through a systems change approach. TJC has helped to shape Denver's reentry strategy by emphasizing joint ownership of the issue by the jail and community, better matching of inmates to services, effective use of data, and evidence-based programming. In 2009, Denver began implementation of a system to prioritize those inmates most in need of help, as identified by screening and assessment. Denver has also worked to evaluate the content of both in-jail and CRP programming to determine how to better integrate evidence-based practices and make programs more consistent between the two locations.

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[1] Excerpt from his National Correctional Officers Week Address, http://www.hcsdmass.org/excerptnatcorr.htm.
[2] Personal communication with Martha Lyman, director of research, Hampden County Sheriff's Department, February 5, 2010.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Hammett, Theodore M., Cheryl Roberts, Sofia Kennedy, and William Rhodes. 2004. "Evaluation of the Hampden County Public Health Model of Correctional Care." Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates.
[5] Personal communication, September 17, 2008.
[6] For more information about the CPCC, please visit http://www.denvergov.org/crimeprevention.

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Local Legislation

New York, New York

In December 2004, the New York City Council enacted legislation codifying into law the efforts of the city's Discharge Planning Collaboration, a jail reentry working body consisting of representatives from government agencies, service providers, and other organizations.[1] The law specifies that the city's Department of Correction must track repeat offenders who are homeless; collect information on inmates' housing, employment, and substance abuse needs and provide that information to social service providers; make applications for government benefits available to inmates and assist certain inmates in preparing the applications; and provide a report to the mayor and the Council on the department's discharge planning efforts and on rates of recidivism among those who have received discharge planning services. The last item, in particular, allows these elected officials to provide oversight of the department's efforts and determine whether those efforts are effective at reducing recidivism. The following is an excerpt from Local Law No. 54:[2]

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to discharge planning services.

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Declaration of legislative findings and intent. . . . The Council finds that assisting inmates in accessing social services and government benefits will improve their ability to re-integrate into the community. The Council further finds that codifying into law recent initiatives of city agencies will ensure the long-term continuation and expansion of such efforts. Accordingly, the Council declares that it is reasonable and necessary to mandate the provision of certain discharge planning services.

2. Title 9 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding new sections 9-127, 9-128 and 9-129 to read as follows:

§ 9-127 **Housing, employment and sobriety needs.** a. The department of correction and the department of homeless services shall develop a process for identifying individuals who repeatedly are admitted to city correctional institutions and who, in addition, either immediately before their admission to or after their release from such institutions, are housed in shelter provided by the department of homeless services.

b. The department of correction shall collect, from any sentenced inmate who will serve, after sentencing, ten days or more in any city correctional institution, information relating to such inmate's housing, employment and sobriety needs. The department of correction shall, with the consent of such inmate, provide such information to any social service organization that is providing discharge planning services to such inmate under contract with the department of correction.

For the purposes of this section and sections 9-128 and 9-129 of this title, "discharge planning" shall mean the creation of a plan for post-release services and assistance with access to community-based resources and government benefits designed to promote an inmate's successful reintegration into the community.

§ 9-128 **Applications for government benefits.** a. The department of correction shall make applications for government benefits available to inmates by providing such applications in areas accessible to inmates in city correctional institutions. b. The department of correction shall provide assistance with the preparation of applications for government benefits and identification to sentenced inmates who will serve, after sentencing, thirty days or more in any city correctional institution and who receive discharge planning services from the department of correction or any social services organization under contract with the department of correction, and, in its discretion, to any other inmate who may benefit from such assistance.

§ 9-129 **Reporting.** The commissioner of correction shall submit a report to the mayor and the council by October first of each year regarding implementation of sections 9-127 and 9-128 of this title and other discharge planning efforts, and, beginning October first, two thousand eight and annually thereafter, regarding recidivism among inmates receiving discharge planning services from the department of correction or any social services organization under contract with the department of correction.

Miami-Dade County, Florida

In November 2005, the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners created a Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee to develop recommendations for ways to improve jail reentry outcomes. This committee was made up of representatives from the

criminal justice, social services, workforce, and education communities, as well as elected officials. In April 2009, in accordance with the committee's recommendations, the Board of County Commissioners adopted legislation creating the Miami-Dade County Reentry Council. This legislation outlines the role of the committee and mandates that its membership include certain office-holders in criminal justice, government, and community organizations, as well as two former inmates. An excerpt from the legislation follows.[3]

Resolution creating the Miami-Dade County Reentry Council

WHEREAS, the Second Chance Act of 2007, signed into law on April 11, 2008, is a federal law designed to ensure safe and successful return of prisoners to the community; and

WHEREAS, the Second Chance Act provides grants to states and local governments that may be used to promote the safe and successful reintegration of prisoners into the community, for programs such as employment services, substance abuse treatment, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims services, and methods to improve release and revocation decisions using risk-assessment tools; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned recommendations in the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee's Final Report are perfectly in line with the Second Chance Act in its mission to facilitate the successful transition of formerly incarcerated persons back into the community; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 675-08 directed the Mayor to apply for, receive and expend any and all grants made available under the Second Chance Act of 2007 for local reentry programs of the type recommended in the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee's Final Report, and by Resolution No. 1064-08 directed the County's federal lobbying team to assist the Mayor in identifying and applying for such grants; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs requires local government seeking grant funding from its Second Chance Act to establish a local reentry entity comprised of relevant agencies, service providers, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, foundations, and other key stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the DOJ's Office of Justice Programs requires such local reentry entities to plan, develop, and establish a local re-entry strategy and a five-year reentry strategic plan

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that:

Section 1. The Board herby creates the Miami-Dade Reentry Council to provide a forum for ongoing planning and coordination of local reentry services and to prepare a plan for implementing the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee Final Report, dated March 28, 2008, as well as the aforementioned requirements of the Second Chance Act of 2007 and United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. The plan shall include a five-year reentry strategic component, which will be updated as appropriate, and as required by the United States Department of Justice. The plan shall provide for evidence-based methodology and outcome measures for evaluating the efficacy and impact of the programs. The plan shall be submitted to the Board within less than a year from the effective date of this resolution.

Recommendations of the Miami-Dade County Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee

- Measure outcomes in pilot programs, and expand services based on demonstrated needs and effectiveness
- Convene academic partners to conduct local reentry research, including data collection and analysis
- Develop a plan for securing local reentry demonstration grants through the Second Chance Act
- Remove barriers that restrict the employment of former inmates in county government, and reduce housing barriers
- Adopt standardized processes for assessment, case management, and information sharing
- Engage community-based service providers prior to release; develop individual release treatment plans; develop interagency agreements to share medical information; and increase funding for critical support services, including mental health

[1] See the profile of Mayor Michael Bloomberg on the Profiles of Reentry Champions page for more information.
[2] Full text of Local Law 54, Introductory Number 310-A, can be accessed at http://legistar.council.nyc.gov, by searching for "310" in year 2004.
[3] The full text of this bill, Resolution Number 321-09, is available by searching for "reentry council" at http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/searchleg.asp.

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Getting Started

Once the decision has been made to launch a collaborative jail reentry initiative, attention should turn to building a solid foundation for the effort. Bringing disparate stakeholders together, garnering support for a new initiative, assigning roles and responsibilities, and making sure that everyone follows through on their commitments are difficult tasks, no matter how small the undertaking. Listed below are a number of steps[1] that elected officials can take to begin the work of getting started.

Encourage Collaboration among Key Stakeholders

Elected officials have unique convening power to bring together diverse stakeholders around the issue of jail reentry.

- **Recognize the complexity of existing systems**: Effective reentry requires contributions from distinct and overlapping systems, including criminal justice, mental health, substance abuse, and workforce development. The vantage point of elected officials may give them a greater understanding of the systems involved than the other stakeholders, allowing them to facilitate mutual understanding and broad approaches to problem-solving.
- **Identify key stakeholders and engage them in a discussion regarding reentry**: Identifying, let alone including, all the relevant local stakeholders in a jail reentry initiative is very challenging. Elected officials, with their broad and deep knowledge of the constituent elements of the communities they represent, are uniquely qualified to identify and engage these key stakeholders. This list will contain, at a minimum, the sheriff, jail administrator, chief of police, probation officials, government social service agencies (state and local), community-based organizations, victim advocates, and other elected officials.
- **Define the scope of the problem**: The issues related to jail reentry can be daunting to the point of paralyzing an effort attempting to address them all immediately. An important role of leadership in establishing the initiative may be to focus the effort on a manageable piece of the problem, either in terms of issue area (e.g., housing, mental health, employment) or target population (e.g., frequent jail users, female inmates).

Develop a Knowledge Base

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to jail reentry, and reentry initiatives must be designed to address the problems and resources that exist locally. Developing a common knowledge base enhances the effectiveness of jail reentry efforts by increasing the likelihood that they will focus on the most pressing issues and respond to them based on a thorough understanding of the underlying dynamics involved.

A useful tool for developing this knowledge base is the SARA (**S**canning, **A**nalysis, **R**esponse, and **A**ssessment) model.

- **Scanning**: Scan the local jurisdiction to identify the problem on which efforts will be focused.
- **Analysis**: Analyze the data to identify the underlying cause of the reentry problem being addressed; discover *who, what, when, where, why,* and *how* to narrow the focus of the initiative.
- **Response**: Develop a response that is clearly linked to the results of the analysis.
- **Assessment**: Once a response is developed and implemented, evaluate it to determine whether and the extent to which it achieves its goals and was implemented according to plan.

Analysis is the main focus of developing a common knowledge base. The analysis component of the SARA model as applied to reentry includes:

- Understanding *who* is entering and being released from the jail;
- Identifying *what* state and local policies influence and govern reentry;
- Identifying *where* released inmates are returning and understanding the characteristics and service capacities of those communities;
- Understanding *why* released inmates are re-offending; and
- Understanding *how* inmates are prepared for release and transition to the community.

With this information in hand, the jail reentry effort will be ready to devise the specific strategies and activities that will reduce recidivism and improve community reintegration for the jail population.

Choose a Framework for the Effort

Successful jail reentry is a complex endeavor composed of many interrelated parts. Devising or adapting a comprehensive framework for the effort situates all the parts within a single "big picture" that will help each involved partner understand how their contributions fit within the whole. An example of such a comprehensive framework is the Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) model, which consists of five system-level elements:

- Leadership, vision, and organizational culture
- Collaborative structure and joint ownership
- Data-driven understanding of the local issue
- Targeted intervention strategies
- Self-evaluation and sustainability

Detailed information on the TJC model is available at the TJC project web site, http://www.jailtransition.com.

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[1] The first two subsections are adapted from Reentry Policy Council. 2005. "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community." Washington, DC: Council of State Governments.

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Talking Points

A prepared set of talking points will be helpful in explaining a complex jail reentry undertaking to concerned citizens, the media, and various stakeholder groups. Several talking points covering the basics of jail reentry are listed here.

Elected officials should adapt this list to their community's needs and modify it based on their target audience. These talking points should also be enhanced with local data on reentry and the jail population. Once a reentry initiative is under way, talking points will expand to include measures of the initiative's effectiveness, such as recidivism rates, jail population figures, and correctional spending. Anecdotal evidence can also illustrate an initiative's successes. This could include examples of released inmates who have benefited from reentry programming or employers who have incorporated inmates into their workforce development plans. Elected officials may also want to develop additional talking points describing the current strengths of and gaps in the local jail reentry process.

- **Jail reentry affects everyone in the community.** Along with released inmates and their families, jail reentry directly affects government and community-based service providers, employers, law enforcement, probation and parole, and other groups. Ultimately, improving the jail reentry process is in the best interest of everyone in the community.
- **Jail reentry initiatives increase public safety by reducing recidivism.** Nearly three-quarters of jail inmates have previously been sentenced to either probation or incarceration. Jail reentry initiatives can reduce recidivism rates by matching the right services to the right people and by increasing information-sharing across the agencies that interact with the jail population.
- **Jail reentry initiatives make strategic use of scarce resources.** Increasing collaboration among jails, community-based service providers, and other groups requires little in the way of new funding and holds great potential for improving outcomes. Under a jail reentry initiative, jails and social service providers collaborate, share information, and avoid duplication of effort to ensure that inmates have access to the services they need.
- **Many community problems intersect with the jail.** People who suffer from mental illnesses, substance abuse and dependence, unemployment, homelessness, and other problems often wind up in jail. In fact, jails are the largest mental health providers in many communities. The jail population also experiences much higher rates of chronic and infectious diseases than the general population.
- **By improving outcomes for released inmates, we can create a stronger and healthier community.** People leaving the jail are members of our community. They are our fathers and sons, sisters and neighbors. Most were arrested for misdemeanor offenses and were not incarcerated for very long, and many pass through the jail without being convicted of a crime. Reentry initiatives help these people access the services and treatment that they need, thereby strengthening families and making the community a better place to live.
- **The availability of services in jails is limited.** While in the jail, most inmates do not receive the treatment they need or the services that will increase their chances of success in the community. For example, less than one-fifth of convicted inmates who struggle with substance abuse problems receive treatment while incarcerated.[1] By expanding programming, assessing inmates' risks and needs, identifying appropriate interventions, and developing reentry plans, jails can improve inmates' reentry outcomes.
- **Community-based services should be offered *inside* the jail.** Jails can greatly extend their service capacity by providing opportunities for community-based organizations to bring services into the jail. This approach can also reduce interruptions in treatment for inmates who were undergoing care in the community prior to their incarceration.
- **Jails and community-based organizations should work together as a network of providers.** Jails and service providers interact with many of the same individuals, and they have a common interest in the success and rehabilitation of their clients. Given that jail-based services are far more effective at reducing recidivism when they are coordinated with services in the community after release, it is important for jails and community providers to collaborate on reentry efforts and share information on clients.
- **Even modest reductions in recidivism will save taxpayers money.** An Urban Institute analysis[2] of the costs and benefits of providing jail reentry services suggests that reentry programs need only reduce recidivism rates by 2 percent to offset the cost of providing programming. Further reductions in recidivism beyond that level represent the potential "profit" to the public from the investment in jail reentry programming.

- **The federal government is making substantial investments in jail reentry initiatives.** With the passage of the Second Chance Act, the government has signaled that it plans to make a long-term investment in reentry. For fiscal year 2009, Congress appropriated $25 million for grants to local reentry programs, and $100 million was appropriated in fiscal year 2010.
- **A comprehensive jail reentry model has been developed to help communities build a reentry initiative.** The Transition from Jail to Community initiative focuses on systems change and on developing collaborative relationships between the agencies and organizations involved in the reentry process. This model offers communities a comprehensive strategy for improving reentry outcomes and increasing public safety.

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[1] Karberg, Jennifer, and Doris James. 2005. "Substance Dependence, Abuse, and Treatment of Jail Inmates, 2002." NCJ 209588. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/sdatji02.pdf.

[2] Roman, John, and Aaron Chalfin. 2006. "Does It Pay to Invest in Reentry Programs for Jail Inmates?" Paper presented at the Jail Reentry Roundtable, June 27–28, 2006, Washington, DC. http://www.urban.org/projects/reentry-roundtable/upload/roman_chalfin.pdf.

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PowerPoint Template

As elected officials become more involved in jail reentry work, stakeholders will look to them for leadership and vision. This may involve chairing a reentry coordinating body, and it will almost certainly involve becoming a champion for the effort. Regardless of whether elected officials play a formal leadership role in the initiative, they will have many opportunities to make presentations on local efforts to improve reentry outcomes. Whether these presentations are given before the local governing body, the state legislature, stakeholder groups, or national research and advocacy organizations, they offer a chance to educate others, generate support, and promote the initiative.

For these presentations, elected officials may find it helpful to have a standard set of talking points and a consistent method for delivering the information. PowerPoint presentations are an especially effective tool for condensing complex information and making sure that key messages get across to one's audience. Using a standard PowerPoint presentation, tailored to jurisdiction priorities, can also save time and effort.

Included in this toolkit is a PowerPoint template that elected officials can use as a starting point for their reentry presentations. This template covers the main issues related to jail reentry, and it may be useful for those who need to assemble a presentation quickly. The template leaves space for elected officials to craft their own presentation using local data and information. Brackets are used to show where local information should be inserted.

An electronic version of this template is available from http://www.jailtransition.com.

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Resources

This toolkit serves as a starting point for building or expanding a jail reentry initiative. However, it is by no means an exhaustive guide to all elements of the complex jail reentry issue. Listed below are several key web sites and publications that provide further information for creating and sustaining successful jail reentry initiatives.

Web Sites

National Reentry Resource Center

http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org

The National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) offers an extensive collection of reentry information, tools, and resources. Established by the Second Chance Act and launched in fall 2009, the NRRC is an ongoing project of the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center and several partner organizations, with support from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. The NRRC provides training, technical assistance, and education for reentry efforts across the country and has a subcommittee on local government co-chaired by CSG and the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Transition from Jail to Community Initiative

http://www.jailtransition.com

This web site provides information on the Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) initiative, a joint effort of the National Institute of Corrections and the Urban Institute. The web site features information on the TJC model and how it has been implemented in six sites, the TJC implementation toolkit, and links to other jail reentry resources.

Jail Reentry Roundtable

http://www.urban.org/projects/reentry-roundtable/roundtable9.cfm

The Jail Reentry Roundtable, an undertaking of the Urban Institute, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and the Montgomery County (Maryland) Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, was held in 2006 with support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Several papers, presentations, and reports from the Roundtable Initiative are available from this web site.

Documents

TJC Implementation Toolkit

Guides readers through the implementation of a comprehensive jail reentry initiative based on the Transition from Jail to Community model, which emphasizes systems change, interagency collaboration, and effective allocation of services according to individual needs. (The Urban Institute, 2009, http://www.jailtransition.com/Toolkit)

Life After Lockup: Improving Reentry from Jail to the Community

Presents a picture of jail reentry in America, examining opportunities, challenges, strategies, and examples of successful initiatives. (The Urban Institute, 2008, http://www.urban.org/publications/411660.html)

Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community

Provides extensive and detailed information on the reentry transition process and effective social service provision, and offers numerous suggestions for planning and implementing a comprehensive reentry initiative. (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2005, http://www.reentrypolicy.org/Report/toc)

Reentry Resource Guide

Offers an extensive list of reentry resources, organized into subtopics. (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2009, http://www.reentrypolicy. org/resources/jc_resources)

Reentry Partnerships: A Guide for States and Faith-Based and Community Organizations

Reviews strategies for developing reentry partnerships between criminal justice and community agencies and for making the best use of limited resources in a reentry effort. (Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2008, http://www.reentrypolicy.org/jc_ publications/reentry_partnerships_guide/Reentry_Partnership_Web.pdf)

Partnering with Jails to Improve Reentry: A Guidebook for Community-Based Organizations

Introduces CBOs to the importance of jail reentry work, guides them in developing and sustaining a partnership with the jail,

and provides useful resources. (The Urban Institute, 2010, http://www.urban.org/publications/412211.html)

Reentry for Safer Communities: Effective County Practices in Jail to Community Transition Planning for Offenders with Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders

Briefly discusses the components of jail reentry planning for inmates with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders and describes several examples of successful programs focusing on this population. (National Association of Counties, 2008, http://www.ojp. usdoj.gov/BJA/pdf/Reentry_Safer_Comm.pdf)

Decriminalizing Mental Illness: Background and Recommendations

Outlines strategies for integrating mental health services with the justice system and for diverting mentally ill offenders away from jail. (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2008, http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Issue_Spotlights&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=67126)

Getting out with Nowhere to Go: The Case for Re-Entry Supportive Housing

Provides a brief introduction to the issue of housing in reentry efforts and summarizes a few successful reentry housing programs that have been implemented in cities across the country. (Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2008, http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=document.showDocumentList&parentID=53)

Building an Offender Reentry Program: A Guide for Law Enforcement

Offers an overview of the ways in which law enforcement can be involved in a reentry effort. (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2007, http://www.theiacp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ocK1XtwlyIA%3d&tabid=253)

The Jail Administrator's Toolkit for Reentry

Covers each step of developing a reentry initiative, including examples of useful tools and effective strategies. (The Urban Institute, 2008, http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=411661)

Status of Ex-Offender Reentry Efforts in Cities: A 79-City Survey

Presents results of a survey on how mayors in the United States are responding to the needs of inmates returning to their communities and describes successful reentry initiatives that cities have pursued. (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2009, http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/reentryreport09.pdf)

A Best Practice Approach to Community Re-entry from Jails for Inmates with Co-occurring Disorders: The APIC Model

Outlines the APIC (Assess, Plan, Identify, Coordinate) model for improving the reentry of jail inmates suffering from co-occurring disorders. (National GAINS Center, 2002, http://www.gainscenter.samhsa.gov/pdfs/reentry/apic.pdf)

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