Building Second Chances: Tools for Local Reentry Coalitions

Contents

Introduction

Background

From small towns in rural counties to the most densely populated neighborhoods in America's cities, not a single community is untouched by the process of reentry. Reentry intersects with a range of issues—including public safety, homelessness, economic development, substance use disorders, mental health, and outcomes for children and families—and the knowledge base to address these issues has grown tremendously. With widespread bipartisan commitment, as evidenced by the Second Chance Act of 2008 and followed by the landmark First Step Act, (2018),[1] it is clear that there is momentum for action in this arena.

Purpose

Reentry is multisystemic, multifaceted, and highly complex, and making sense of how best to improve outcomes for people leaving prison and jail be daunting. Policymakers and practitioners have been asking for tools and resources that help them navigate this tricky terrain and keep them on track as they map out the future of reentry for their communities. Regardless of what may happen prior to release from jails and prisons, it is in local communities where reentry outcomes play out; therefore, it is local reentry coalition leaders, community members, neighbors, and families who have the most to gain from successful reentry.

Target Audience

Building Second Chances: Tools for Local Reentry Coalitions is designed specifically for reentry coalition leaders and local city, county, and community leaders who want to play an active role in improving reentry policy, practice, and outcomes. Within this toolkit, readers will find user-friendly references to seminal publications, research findings, and noteworthy examples that provide the foundational knowledge necessary to design new and reinvigorate existing reentry strategies.

How to Use

Local reentry coalition leaders can use this toolkit as a go-to resource to take stock of where their reentry efforts are and how best to move forward. Part I of this toolkit, "Fundamentals of Reentry," covers the essential elements of system change that are necessary to carry out an effective reentry strategy at the local level. Part II presents "Tools for Change" to help advance local reentry priorities through three fronts: linking and leveraging resources, changing policy and practice, and building broad community support. In addition, an online version of the toolkit can be accessed here: www.reentrytoolkit.org.

Throughout this toolkit, you will find the following components:

Questions to consider, which guide local reentry coalition leaders to take stock of their current reentry efforts and help spark additional conversations about where they may want to focus their attention;

Quick references, curated collections of resources to give local reentry coalition leaders easy access to the most useful publications, research articles, databases, and field guides; and

Examples from the field that cover concrete, real-world accounts of how communities throughout the country are working to strengthen the reentry process.

Part I. Fundamentals of Reentry

The scope and scale of reentry policy and practice work varies greatly from place to place. This part defines the building blocks of advancing systemic—not programmatic—efforts to improve the lives of people returning to their communities after incarceration. These fundamentals of reentry were compiled for busy local reentry coalition leaders who may not know where to start and are looking for practical guidance.

Part I of this toolkit is organized into three sections:

Section 1: Driving Systems Change	Section 2: Reducing Recidivism	Section 3: Enabling Personal and Community Transformation
This section reviews how to design comprehensive, strategic, and systemic reentry efforts that improve the likelihood that people will safely and successfully transition from incarceration to the community. For local communities just beginning the process of designing their reentry strategy, this section is a good place to begin.	This section reviews the essential elements of recidivism reduction. For communities seeking advice on how to reduce recidivism, this section offers practical guidance on applying these essential elements to local reentry efforts.	The work covered in previous sections is predicated on the availability of accessible and effective services, supports, and care for people once they return to their communities. This section reviews how local reentry coalition leaders can support the provision of critical health and social service supports for people leaving prison or jail.
In this section, you will learn how to:	In this section, you will learn how to:	In this section, you will learn how to:
• *Establish or reinvigorate a local reentry coalition* • *Create a reentry map* • *Pinpoint opportunities for improvement*	• *Determine what recidivism metrics to track* • *Establish a baseline recidivism rate and set reduction goals* • *Focus resources on the people with the greatest needs who are most likely to recidivate* • *Use evidence-based practices* • *Track your progress*	• Connect people to safe, stable, affordable housing • Ensure access to quality treatment and services for behavioral health needs • Advance economic opportunity and mobility • Promote connections to family and prosocial networks

Section 1: Driving Systems Change

In local communities, a reentry strategy should be more than a few programs knitted together by referrals. Reentry is a dynamic process that requires systems-level thinking to understand and unite the many moving parts involved. This toolkit begins by offering a step-by-step guide on how to drive systems change to improve reentry outcomes. In this section, local reentry coalition leaders will learn how to establish or reinvigorate a local reentry coalition, map reentry services and resources in their community,[2] and use this knowledge base to identify opportunities for improvement.

Establish or reinvigorate a local reentry coalition

Improving reentry in a given jurisdiction requires close collaboration among many organizations and stakeholders—no single agency can achieve lasting impact alone. Establishing or reinvigorating a formal reentry coalition is crucial for encouraging, leading, and implementing the changes that are necessary to address the wide range of local reentry needs. But managing multisystem, collaborative initiatives is a challenge for many local communities.

To be as effective as possible, a local reentry coalition needs to have representatives from key systems and include diverse perspectives without being so large that it becomes cumbersome to convene. These coalitions often are led by steering committees—members who can spearhead the coalition's activities and oversee working groups or subcommittees to tackle specific issues, such as fundraising and sustainability, data, and community engagement. Some local reentry coalitions appoint a reentry coordinator, who is responsible for making sure that the coalition runs smoothly. Regardless of the organizational structure, establishing a clear mission statement can help focus meetings and clarify priorities for the coalition to address. The text box below offers examples of the kinds of people and organizations that might be a good fit for your reentry coalition, as well as sample mission statements from existing coalitions that are supporting their communities' reentry efforts.

Sample Reentry Coalition Member List	Sample Reentry Coalition Mission Statements
• Advocacy and faith-based organizations • Behavioral health care providers • Chamber of commerce members • Community-based reentry providers • Department of health representatives • Department of social services representatives • Housing service providers • Jail administrators • Judges or court administrators • Local businesses and employers • Local defense attorneys and prosecutors	**Austin/Travis County, Texas** The mission of the Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable is to be a robust collaborative that promotes safe and healthy communities through effective reentry and reintegration of formerly incarcerated persons and individuals with criminal histories.[3] **Contra Costa County, California** The Contra Costa Reentry and Rehabilitation Collaborative's primary mission is to engage individuals, families, and communities in supporting formerly incarcerated individuals to become active and impactful members of their communities.[4]

Sample Reentry Coalition Member List	Sample Reentry Coalition Mission Statements
• Local law enforcement • Local mental health authority • Local philanthropic foundations • Local workforce board members, workforce development service providers • Medical providers • People who have gone through the reentry process or family of incarcerated people • People who are survivors of crime or advocates • Probation, parole, and/or community supervision leadership • State department of corrections representatives	**Palm Beach County, Florida** The mission of the local reentry coalition is to increase public safety, reduce victimization and recidivism rates, and create an improved quality of life for Palm Beach County residents.[5] **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** The Philadelphia Reentry Coalition collaborates, coordinates, commits, and communicates to create opportunities for successful reentry using evidence-based practices to reduce—and eventually eliminate—recidivism.[6]

Participation in local reentry coalitions from leaders of court, corrections, and community supervision agencies is critical. Your local reentry strategies, programs, and services must align with the decisions these officials are making about sentencing, release and revocation, and supervision goals. To achieve this alignment, court, corrections, and community supervision leaders must participate in informing what reentry services are priorities, and how and when they are deployed at the case level. In addition, these agencies have the data necessary to understand the needs of the population and the impact of services on people's outcomes.

Once your local coalition is established, consider talking with your state's reentry coalition. Building a relationship between your local and state coalitions will help you elevate the work happening locally and create a pathway for highlighting policy targets and resource needs that will become clear as you complete this toolkit.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Does your local reentry coalition have the authority and commitment to lead reentry efforts?
To influence the systems involved in reentry, coalition members should be decision makers or experts within their agencies or organizations. Ideally, they should be prepared to actively and regularly engage in coalition meetings, and they ultimately should be invested in considering how their agency can shift policy or practice to improve reentry outcomes. In addition, the local reentry coalition should represent the key agencies, organizations, and members of the public involved in reentry in your community. If you are reinvigorating an existing reentry coalition, consider engaging new members who may not have been part of previous efforts or who can offer a different perspective that is not already represented in the group such as those with lived experience.

Does your coalition have the members it needs?
The local reentry coalition should represent the key agencies, organizations, and members of the public involved in reentry in your community. If you are reinvigorating an existing reentry coalition, consider engaging new members who may not have been part of previous efforts or who can offer a different perspective that is not already represented in the group.

Does your coalition have a defined structure?
Beyond having an agreed-upon mission, vision, or guiding principles, your local reentry coalition needs established roles, responsibilities, meeting times, and decision-making protocols. Any group that includes multiple, differing perspectives—as a reentry coalition should do—likely will encounter conflict and differences in opinion. Establish a process to navigate these differences.

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Example from the Field

Building a Collaborative Steering Committee

In 2015, **Palm Beach County, Florida,** became one of two sites in the country to pilot an innovative approach to reducing recidivism and increasing the employability of people returning to the community from prison and jail. Driving the county's initiative was a steering committee led by the Palm Beach County Public Safety Department (PSD) in partnership with the county's sheriff's office, workforce development board, and community-based reentry service providers; the Florida Department of Corrections; and other agencies at the city, county, and state levels. Many of these agencies already had a long history of collaboration as part of the county's reentry coalition, which began in 2001 as a workgroup within the county's Criminal Justice Commission and was later formalized in 2008 and eventually transferred to the PSD.

For the 3-year pilot project, the steering committee structured itself as follows:

A **core planning team** that met monthly and was responsible for ensuring that the project and deliverables were on track

The **full committee** that met quarterly and was responsible for informing the project's strategic plan and carrying out activities

An **executive committee** that met twice a year, held agencies accountable for establishing the policies and procedures necessary to accomplish the project's objectives, and championed the work across the county and state to influence funding allocation and the removal of statutory and regulatory barriers to employment for people with criminal records. This group included members from the State Senate and House of Representatives and local county commissioners.

This structure enabled the county leaders to keep stakeholders well informed, make the best use of each steering committee member's time, and ensure that the pilot project had diverse input and necessary decision makers along the way.

QUICK REFERENCES

Transition from Prison to Community: Reentry Handbook (2008)

The Transition from Prison to Community model is a framework to encourage systemic reentry reform—planned and implemented by a collaborative policy team drawn from law enforcement, corrections and community supervision agencies, paroling authorities, public human services agencies, community-based service providers, and others. See chapter 4 for information on forming teams to support reentry planning.

Transition from Jail to Community: Implementation Toolkit (2013)

This module-based online resource provides detailed guidance for communities seeking to support people leaving jail and improve public safety and reentry outcomes. See module 2 to learn more about cultivating strong leadership, a guiding vision, and organizational culture.

Create a reentry map

Once firmly in place, your local reentry coalition needs to have a clear understanding of how the criminal justice system functions in your community, how it intersects with other human services systems, and who is moving through these systems. One of the most effective approaches is system mapping, which entails documenting the decision points of your community's criminal justice system and how reentry supports and services connect to each one. These intersections are opportunities to optimize services and supports in ways that will have the greatest benefit to a person's reentry into the community.

A reentry map's criminal justice system decision points may include the procedural stages, such as the process that courts use to resolve an accusation of criminal activity; the final outcome of a court case, such as a jail sentence; and/or the transition between agencies, such as the release from prison to parole supervision in the community. It is also important to look for the intersections between segments of the criminal justice system—including police, courts, jails, and supervision agencies—and community-based organizations, reentry programs, and human service agencies, such as mental health, workforce development, and housing to create a comprehensive approach to reentry. Given the extensive variety of structures and resources from place to place, every community's reentry map will look different.

Defining Your Reentry Population

You will see the term "reentry population" used throughout this toolkit. Keep in mind that it is not a one-size-fits-all term. Your local reentry coalition will need to decide how to refine your reentry population into target populations for your reentry strategies. The development of your reentry map will serve as an informational springboard for your coalition. In the broadest view, your reentry population could include people returning from prisons, jails, and federal prisons as well as people on probation or parole. However, you might choose to concentrate your efforts on people returning only from the county jail, and this group could be the target population for your reentry map.

The next step is to learn as much as you can about the target population that navigates through your reentry map. The people who make up the target population in your local community are most likely connected to multiple points on the map. The local reentry coalition should obtain data on the size, demographics, assessed risk level, and/or needs of the people who make up your local reentry population. Knowing this information will enable your coalition to direct its energy and resources appropriately. When system mapping works well, the insights gleaned from developing it likely will encourage your coalition to become increasingly curious about why your system works as it does and what could be shifted to generate better outcomes for more people. You can always repeat the system-mapping process for other segments of your reentry population until you have a comprehensive map of every group of people returning from confinement to your community.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you have the right people in the room?
Developing a system map—especially one that accounts for the multifaceted, interdisciplinary, and ongoing nature of reentry—is no easy feat. To do this process well, representatives from many agencies and organizations need to work together. Keep in mind that frontline staff in criminal justice and human services agencies are well positioned to speak to the day-to-day operations at each decision point. People who have gone through the reentry process are uniquely positioned to shed light on whether the process is occurring as intended. In addition to having the right people participate in reentry mapping activities, you will also need to establish protocols that outline how those participants share the information they have about the reentry process and population. See **Section 3** for more information about developing information-sharing policies.

Have you examined the reentry case planning process?
The reentry process should begin before a person leaves prison or jail. People preparing to leave prison or jail typically receive assistance in building an individualized case plan—a structured plan for reentry that includes goals, relevant programming, and any treatment needs. Use the reentry map to indicate when, where, and how reentry case planning happens in your community.

Have you noted what happens as people move through the reentry map?
As you create your reentry map, ask questions about any patterns that are starting to emerge. You may begin to notice themes across decision points, such as similarities in population characteristics or intervention opportunities that span a number of decision points.

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Example from the Field

Using System Mapping to Chart a Path Forward

Erie County, New York, officials and the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable (RER) partnered to improve services and outcomes for people returning to the county from federal and state prisons and local jails. In 2016, the county requested technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center to conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis of its reentry populations and available resources. CSG Justice Center staff reviewed criminal justice data, hosted focus groups, and conducted surveys and interviews with stakeholders. Several areas of interest—intake processes, caseloads, program data, funding, and interagency communication—were examined, and staff worked with several entities across the county and state, including the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision; the New York Division of Criminal Justice Services; and the county's Sheriff's Office, Probation Department, and Department of Mental Health (DMH). This analysis gave the Erie/RER team a picture of the reentry services available in Erie County, how a person returning to the community receives services, and how funding is obtained and allocated for these services.

One of the findings was that reentry services were not coordinated or delivered consistently across reentry populations (i.e., state, local, and federal). As a result, the CSG Justice Center recommended establishing a reentry hub to improve service coordination. In 2019, the sheriff's office, DMH, and RER announced plans to establish a reentry resource center located in one of DMH's offices and next door to the Erie County Holding Center, with the support of more than 50 partners.

QUICK REFERENCES

In Focus: Collecting and Analyzing Baseline Data (2019)

This brief focuses on how counties can collect and analyze data on the prevalence of people in their jails who have serious mental illnesses and offers helpful insight on how to apply this approach to collect and analyze other data related to reentry.

In Focus: Conducting a Comprehensive Process Analysis (2019)

This brief focuses on conducting a comprehensive process analysis, or a step-by-step examination of how people move through a county's criminal justice and behavioral health systems. Many of the principles of conducting such an analysis apply to creating a reentry map.

Pinpoint opportunities for improvement

The reentry map provides a foundational picture of how reentry works in your community. From this foundation, you can begin to discern what is required to advance positive reentry outcomes. After mapping your decision points and learning about the people flowing through them, it might become clear, for example, that access to behavioral health services is a need across many parts of the map, or that there is duplication of some services, such as résumé building, but not enough of others, such as transitional jobs.

The sheer number of possibilities can be overwhelming, but there are many ways to whittle down potential opportunities for improvement. To start, determine where your efforts can have the greatest impact. You might choose to concentrate on improving reentry for a specific target population (e.g., people with co-occurring substance use disorders and mental illnesses) that, according to the findings of your reentry map, is overrepresented at multiple points along the justice continuum. Alternatively, your local reentry coalition might see that one decision point on the reentry map can be optimized to decrease the use of incarceration in favor of more cost-effective, evidence-based interventions and make that decision point a target for change. A coalition also could fix its attention on a specific area in the community based on what it finds through the mapping process; for example, you could focus your efforts on co-locating services in ZIP codes to which a disproportionate number of people return each year.

In addition, you will need to consider the local political landscape, broader public interest, and other contextual factors to identify opportunities for improving reentry in your community. Engaging community members, especially people who have been incarcerated, in conversations about reentry will be integral to informing your local reentry coalition's approach and ensuring that the improvements you choose to pursue are ultimately well received. These conversations are a two-way process: they give the public an opportunity to learn about and participate in reentry issues and enable your coalition to understand the interests and perceptions of community members. Much of this work will be done through direct communication with community members that requires listening to their unique concerns. This is not simply a matter of obtaining input for input's sake; by informing the larger community about the efforts your coalition is undertaking and soliciting their thoughts and opinions, you can empower community members to be active participants throughout the course of your reentry strategy and develop plans that reflect the priorities and needs of the community.

When identifying opportunities for improvement and considering input from community members, you might find that your local reentry coalition would benefit from a granular analysis of the data collected in developing the reentry map. Return to **Appendix A** to identify and organize any additional sources of information that are required to guide your decision making. **Sections 2** and **3** of this toolkit will guide your coalition through further layers of detail that your coalition must explore in order to hone your approach to improvement opportunities and develop a comprehensive reentry strategy.

As you develop your reentry map, you will be exploring criminal justice system decision points (e.g., courts, jail/prison, probation/parole) as well as systems of services (e.g., housing, behavioral health). See the sample reentry map below for a sample illustration of these dimensions.

Sample Reentry Map Structure

	Law Enforcement	Courts	Jails/Prisons	Probation/Parole	Community
Housing	Homeless outreach unit		Jail transitional housing program	Reentry housing provider partnership with community supervision department	Permanent supportive housing program
Behavioral Health	Crisis intervention team	Mental health treatment court	Jail-based behavioral health services (including release planning and medication management)	Specialized mental health probation caseload	Reentry behavioral health service center
Economic Opportunity and Mobility			Local criminal justice-workforce development initiative; Teaching and tutoring program through area college		Local reentry jobs program; Fellowship program through area college
Prosocial Connections			Parenting classes; Pre- and post-release peer mentoring program	Family case management	Faith-based mentoring program

As you think about your target population and their reentry experience, consider the following questions for each decision point:

☐ How do people come to this decision point?

☐ How are decisions made regarding where people go next (either in or outside the criminal justice system)?

☐ What agency oversees the people who flow through this decision point?

☐ What programs and services are available at this decision point?

☐ What challenges exist at this decision point?[i]

☐ Can your target population access services at each justice system decision point? Where do you notice gaps?

See **Appendix A** for templates to help you take stock of the data required to develop a comprehensive and useful reentry map.

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[i] These questions were adapted from Lore Joplin, *Mapping the Criminal Justice System to Connect Justice-Involved Individuals with Treatment and Health Care under the Affordable Care Act* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections, U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), 8.

What Will You Learn from the Reentry Mapping Process?

How your understanding of the needs of your target population is limited

Where you can optimize the use of evidence-based practices

Opportunities to strengthen coordination within and across systems

Where your system has inefficiencies and/or duplication of efforts

Where you have insufficient services to meet the needs of the reentry population

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are you keeping your reentry map close at hand?
Without the basis of a reentry map, the efforts of your local reentry coalition's efforts risk being driven by assumptions instead of analysis. Make the most of the work you did to develop the reentry map, consistently referring back to the map in order to make informed decisions. You may even add to the map over time as you learn more about reentry in your community.

Have you developed standards to guide decisions about opportunities for improvement?
Defining standards to make decisions can help your local reentry coalition stick to agreed-upon principles and choose activities that are in the interest of the collective rather than individual members of the coalition. These standards might involve considering the level of support in the community, cost, alignment with your coalition's mission statement, and the degree to which the decision can have an impact on recidivism, for example. Upcoming sections of this toolkit will help you further understand and narrow down your improvement opportunities.

Are you using a variety of mechanisms to engage the community in your reentry strategy?
Methods for starting conversations about reentry with the broader community include door-to-door outreach, listening sessions and tours, public forums, letters to newspaper editors, surveys, and distribution of educational materials such as fact sheets. These methods can achieve different goals; for example, fact sheets and letters to newspaper editors can be used to set a baseline understanding of reentry, whereas feedback gleaned through door-to-door outreach and surveys can be formally incorporated into your local reentry coalition's strategic discussions. Culturally competent communication is especially important as your coalition reaches out externally. Establishing a baseline understanding of the disproportionate impact of crime and incarceration on communities of color, especially Black communities, is an essential component of culturally competent communication. Note that disadvantaged groups, including people who have been in prison or jail themselves, may have an inherent distrust of leadership structures, such as the ones represented by members of your coalition. It is important for your coalition to be aware of this potential distrust as a barrier to engagement for some community members. For more information on how your coalition can work with the community to achieve shared goals, see **Section 3**.

QUICK REFERENCES

All-America Conversations Toolkit (2017)

Although not geared specifically toward reentry issues, this toolkit offers helpful tips for holding inclusive conversations to foster civic engagement in local communities.

Developing and Using Criteria and Processes to Set Priorities

Consult this section of the Community Toolbox for guidance on developing standards for decision making.

Section 2: Reducing Recidivism

To advance public safety, it is critical to break the cycle of crime and incarceration for the millions of individuals returning to local communities from incarceration every year. This cycle of repeated criminal justice contact is often called "recidivism." Increasingly, successful reentry has become synonymous with recidivism reduction, or reducing the number of subsequent contacts with the system, and reentry strategies are commonly measured for their impact on recidivism. For reentry strategies to reduce recidivism, they must be designed to address factors that are associated with the likelihood of reoffending.

After completing your reentry map, the next step is to zero in on recidivism reduction. This section provides practical guidance for local reentry coalitions on how to understand and establish measures of recidivism, identify opportunities and align reentry strategies with practices that reduce recidivism, and track your ongoing impact.

Access the Reentry Practice Capacity Assessment in **Appendix B** to self-evaluate your reentry coalitions efforts to reduce recidivism.

Determine what recidivism metrics to track

Local reentry coalitions can play an important role in defining the measures of recidivism that your community will prioritize, interpreting data trends, and making decisions about how to reduce recidivism. This work begins with understanding how recidivism is measured in your community. Though each jurisdiction decides for itself how to define and track recidivism, four measures are most commonly used: rearrest, reconviction, reincarceration, and revocation. You might find that your jurisdiction currently tracks only one or two of these measures. It is ideal to track all four, as each paints a different part of the overall picture of recidivism in your community.

Key Measures of Recidivism

Rearrest is the broadest measure of recidivism. Because not all arrests result in a guilty finding or conviction, this metric may suggest that there is more criminal activity than there actually is. However, it is still an important measure of the volume of people returning to courts and county jails as well as one of the most comprehensive indicators available of a person's interaction with the criminal justice system.

Reconviction provides clear evidence that new criminal activity has been committed by someone with prior involvement in the criminal justice system and is considered the most accurate indicator of recidivism and public safety outcomes.

Reincarceration can be the result of both criminal and noncriminal behavior (e.g., incarceration for certain supervision violations) and generally refers to prison incarceration. Reincarceration is an important indicator of recidivism to track because it generates a significant financial burden for local jurisdictions, which often are responsible for incarcerating people who have been revoked from community supervision. This measure also represents a significant burden to the individual who is reincarcerated, as time in a correctional facility disrupts engagement with treatment, employment, family, and more.

Revocation occurs when people who have been sentenced to probation supervision or who have been assigned to probation or parole after a term of incarceration have their supervision status revoked and are incarcerated as a result. Revocation can be the result of both criminal and noncriminal behavior (e.g., arrest or conviction for a new crime or the violation of supervision conditions). It is a key measure to track because it helps reveal why people are unsuccessful on probation or parole and the associated cost implications for local and state governments.[7]

As described in **Section 1,** completing a reentry map helps your local reentry coalition see patterns in how people move through the criminal justice system and what their return to the community looks like. With an understanding of how recidivism is measured in your jurisdiction, your coalition can further hone insights from the reentry mapping process, beginning to narrow down which type—or types—of recidivism you are best positioned to monitor and have an impact on. Your coalition may find, for example, that the county has consistently measured probation revocations to the local jail for a decade but has struggled to reduce the rate of probation revocations over time. You can use this strong data foundation to focus on reducing that particular type of recidivism.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you know how your state measures and tracks recidivism?
For a high-level view of recidivism trends in your community, it is important to understand the measures your state uses to track recidivism. Often, state corrections and parole agencies publish annual recidivism measures as part of their reporting requirements to state lawmakers or oversight boards or councils. Such reports typically document recidivism measures by county or region. Understanding how recidivism is measured by state agencies also can inform what measure(s) of recidivism your local reentry coalition chooses to track in your local community. See how your state measures recidivism in the Council of State Governments Justice Center's *50-State Report on Public Safety*.

Do you know how your county measures and tracks recidivism?
As the administrators of local jails, county governments often track jail admissions by categories, such as supervision revocation or supervision status at time of jail admission, which can offer insights into recidivism trends in your region. Many counties administer probation supervision and therefore measure arrests, convictions, and jail/prison admissions for people on county probation supervision. You also might explore what, if any, local recidivism data are required to be reported to the state; some states compile regional recidivism data, which enable you to see how your community compares to others using the same definition and calculation of recidivism.

Are local reentry providers evaluated for their impact on recidivism?
Community-based reentry providers may have participated in evaluations or outcome studies that measured their impact on recidivism. Contact these providers and request any evaluations or studies that examined recidivism. Compiling program evaluations will give you a sense of the organizations and programs that have prioritized recidivism reduction as a focus of their work. Local reentry programs that have undergone evaluations often have learned valuable lessons and can be a tremendous resource for your local reentry coalition.

QUICK REFERENCES

Confined and Costly: How Supervision Violations Are Filling Prisons and Burdening Budgets (2019)

Probation and parole are designed to lower prison populations and help people succeed in the community. New data show they are having the opposite effect. This report presents the first complete picture of how probation and parole violations make up states' prison populations.

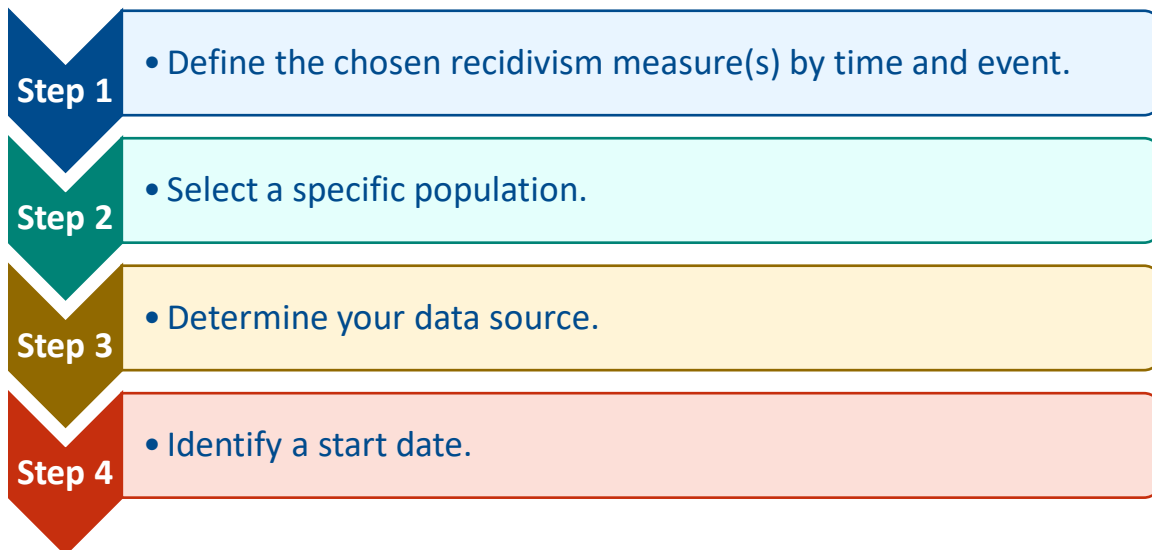50-State Report on Public Safety, Part 2: Break the Cycle of Reoffending (2018)

The report is a web-based resource that combines extensive data analyses, case studies, and recommended strategies from all 50 states to help policymakers address their state's specific public safety challenges. **Appendix C: Part 2** of the report focuses specifically on strategies for breaking the cycle of reoffending at the state and local levels.

Establish a baseline recidivism rate and set reduction goals

Progress in reducing recidivism can be tracked only if you know your starting point. Your local reentry coalition should establish a baseline recidivism rate based on your knowledge of how recidivism is measured in your jurisdiction and the recidivism measure(s) you have chosen to focus on. A baseline recidivism rate communicates the proportion of people who have recidivated according to a defined measure and within a certain time period. Usually, this rate is expressed as a percentage and is attached to a fiscal or calendar year. Having this benchmark ensures that you are comparing "apples to apples" as you monitor recidivism over time.

While there are many ways to establish a baseline recidivism rate, the following outlines the steps most often taken:

Step 1 • Define the chosen recidivism measure(s) by time and event.

Step 2 • Select a specific population.

Step 3 • Determine your data source.

Step 4 • Identify a start date.

Step 1: Define the chosen recidivism measure(s) by time and event. The recidivism measure you intend to track must have a clear, specific, time-bound definition. Based on the information your local reentry coalition already has gathered, you may be able to use an existing definition of recidivism that is measured in your community. If not, you will need to define an event to ground the baseline recidivism rate. For example, reincarceration may be the measure your coalition has selected. Reincarceration could refer to confinement in a local jail or return to state prison; your definition should be clear about the place of confinement (e.g., local jail) as well as the timeframe between release and reincarceration (e.g., return to local jail within 1 year of release). Note that when measuring recidivism, different definitions will provide different data. A 3-year follow-up period, for instance, will yield a higher base rate of recidivism than a 1-year rate because it is a longer time period for people to recidivate.

Step 2: Select a specific population. Your baseline recidivism rate also should be limited to a specific cohort of people. You are likely most interested in tracking the recidivism rate for people returning to the community your local reentry coalition represents; therefore, you might choose to define your population as people returning from local jail to any ZIP code in your city, or another geographic boundary, such as county lines, might be more appropriate.

Step 3: Determine your data source. Your chosen recidivism measure(s) likely will be limited by the practical constraints of available data. For example, your local reentry coalition might hope to establish a baseline recidivism rate for each ZIP code in your city but might only have easy access to data for your county as a whole. Ideally, there is an existing data source (e.g., public annual reports from the department of corrections) that regularly reports on the recidivism measure you are using to establish a baseline recidivism rate; if not, then you may need to partner with the relevant agencies to provide the analysis you need to establish a baseline recidivism rate for your community.

Step 4: Identify a start date. Among other defining factors, a baseline recidivism rate is anchored by a specific point in time against which you can compare future progress. Based on the data source at hand, you may not have much flexibility in the date that marks your baseline recidivism rate. Most likely, you will need to refer to the most recent full year of data from that particular source, which could be a year—or more—prior to when your local reentry coalition efforts begin.

Once you know the recidivism rate according to the parameters outlined above, your local reentry coalition has a solid basis for setting recidivism-reduction goals. These goals can unify and motivate your coalition, community-based reentry providers, and the broader community. They also can help you prioritize the activities that are most likely to help you achieve your goals. The process you use to set your goals should aim to blend aspiration and accountability. It will take time and sustained, dedicated effort to reach recidivism-reduction goals.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Have you developed your recidivism-reduction goals collaboratively?
Your recidivism-reduction goals should reflect input from the different individuals and organizations represented on your local reentry coalition that ultimately will affect whether those targets are met. Using an inclusive process to establish recidivism-reduction goals will increase the backing of organizations that are critical to achieving those goals.

Are your recidivism-reduction targets realistic?
If longitudinal data are available for analysis, consider whether the reduction targets are in line with other changes in recidivism that have occurred in your community in the past. For instance, if the largest recidivism reduction in the last 20 years was a 5 percent decrease between 1992 and 1994, then a 50 percent recidivism-reduction goal over 2 years might be overly ambitious, but a goal of 10 percent might be achievable.

Are your recidivism-reduction targets time-bound?
In order for your local reentry coalition to hold itself accountable for working toward recidivism-reduction goals, you must set clear timelines. You might choose to set both short-term (e.g., over 6 months) and long-term (e.g., over 10 years) goals to check progress incrementally from the date when your coalition implements changes to reduce recidivism.

Focus resources on the people with the greatest needs who are most likely to recidivate

Extensive research issued over the last two decades has found that the risk of recidivism varies significantly from person to person and intersects with criminogenic needs—characteristics or circumstances associated with crime but that a person is able to change. This research has demonstrated that treatment, programming, and supervision resources must be deployed in ways that account for a person's specific risk of recidivism and needs, and that any approach that focuses only on supervision or only on services will have a negligible impact.[8]

Therefore, all individuals in the criminal justice system should be evaluated for their risk of recidivism and needs using a risk and needs assessment tool. When implemented correctly, statistically valid assessment tools enable corrections and community supervision officials to estimate the likelihood that a person under their supervision will reoffend and illuminate the extent of criminogenic needs. Research shows that prioritizing resources for people assessed at a moderate or high risk of recidivism and adequately addressing criminogenic needs can lead to a significant reduction in recidivism. In addition, intensive interventions for low-risk individuals are not an effective use of resources and may even be harmful.[9]

Your local reentry coalition should ensure that the results of risk and needs assessment tools are applied in order to focus resources—including programs, services, and supervision requirements—on the individuals who are most likely to recidivate. Keep in mind that this principle applies not only to corrections and community supervision agencies but also to community-based providers that focus on the reentry population. As a first step, it is

important to understand how results from risk and needs assessment are currently incorporated into court, confinement, supervision, and programming decisions in your local criminal justice system. With this information, you will have the foundation necessary to explore ways to optimize the use of risk and needs assessment in decision making.

Some agencies or jurisdictions administer risk and needs assessments in concert with additional screening and assessment tools to detect other needs. For instance, many local jails administer substance use screening and assessment separately from the risk and needs assessment process. Screenings typically are short questionnaires to evaluate whether further assessment or support is necessary in a given area, whereas assessments are more comprehensive and definitive evaluations that inform treatment, supervision, and case management.

Not all of your reentry population's needs are criminogenic needs; that is, not all of them are shown to be directly related to the likelihood of committing a crime. Some noncriminogenic needs are especially common or acute among people in the criminal justice system and should be addressed in parallel with, or as part of, recidivism reduction efforts. Mental illness and lack of housing, for example, are not traditionally considered criminogenic needs but are widespread challenges among people in the criminal justice system. Left unaddressed, those needs can destabilize a person's progress toward successful reentry. Many corrections and community supervision agencies therefore screen and/or assess for housing and mental health needs and try to connect people with relevant resources accordingly.

Using the results of these screenings and assessments is crucial to developing individualized case plans and directing resources to people who need them the most. Your local reentry coalition can start by finding out which screening and assessment tools are administered at corrections and community supervision agencies in your community and how their results are used. For more information on addressing the individual needs discovered through the screening and assessment process, see **Section 3** of this toolkit.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do corrections agencies in your community use risk and needs assessments to develop case plans for incarcerated people?

A person's assessed risk of recidivism, and the factors that contribute to their risk, should guide pre-release programming and transition planning. Tailoring programming decisions to a person's risk factors and documenting their progress enables corrections agencies to leverage the term of incarceration to reduce the risk of recidivism. Time in prison or jail is an opportunity for corrections agencies to engage people in services that can prepare them for success after release, including treatment for behavioral health needs and education programming.

Do community supervision agencies tailor supervision based on risk level?

People on probation and parole represent a large proportion of the criminal justice population in many communities and therefore can have a significant impact on a given jurisdiction's recidivism rate. Community supervision agencies can amplify their impact on recidivism by tailoring supervision intensity and requirements to assessed risk level and needs. Supervision officers should have the necessary training and resources to develop individualized case plans and carry them out successfully.

What do your risk and needs assessment data tell you about the needs of your target population?

Ask your corrections and supervision agencies to prepare summaries of the risk and needs profile of your target population. How many people are assessed as high risk? What are the most common needs in your target population? How many people indicate a need for behavioral health treatment from screening tools? This risk and needs profile will be very useful as you begin to work through aligning resources in your community to meet these needs.

Do local reentry programs prioritize programming for people assessed as high risk?

Although reentry programs might be tempted to recruit participants based on their willingness to engage in programming, that is not the best way to reduce recidivism. Community-based reentry programs typically are best positioned to reduce recidivism if they partner with a corrections or community supervision agency for participant recruitment, using assessment results to guide recruitment and decision making.

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Example from the Field

Using Screening and Assessment to Tailor Interventions

The **Camden County, New Jersey,** department of corrections partnered with community-based service providers to develop a jail-based program with comprehensive pre- and post-release services and an integrated care approach for people with co-occurring mental illnesses and substance use disorders. These reentry supports include mental health and substance use treatment, employment and job readiness training, and assistance related to housing, health care, public benefits, food, clothing, and transportation.

To help determine the level and types of services, the county began using the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) risk and needs assessment tool, along with screening and assessment tools for mental health and substance use. Staff administer a mental health screening tool with each person sentenced to the jail at the time of their booking. The tool entails 12 initial screening questions that flag whether the person requires a mental health evaluation and an additional assessment for substance use. People who have co-occurring disorders and are assessed with the LSI-R as having medium to high risk of recidivism are prioritized for the program, and the level of risk determines the frequency and intensity of supervision and services in the community. For example, a participant assessed as high risk and high need may receive approximately 300 hours of treatment and intervention compared to 200 for medium risk and 100 for low risk. Depending on their level of need for mental health and substance use treatment, participants may receive outpatient, intensive outpatient, or inpatient care.

Results from the screening and assessments are stored electronically in a system designed for the reentry specialists and service providers to access at any time. The mental health and substance use assessments are readministered to participants throughout the program to determine changes in needs. To ensure quality and consistency in the results, the service providers receive regular training on administering, scoring, and applying the results of the mental health and substance use assessments, and the service providers and jail's reentry specialists and program manager all receive regular training on the use of the LSI-R.

QUICK REFERENCES

In Brief: Understanding Risk and Needs Assessment (2011)

This brief explores how risk and needs assessment tools can help officials to better identify people at a high risk of reoffending, while also pinpointing the types of supervision and services that are most likely to prevent future crime.

Three Things You Can Do to Prevent Bias in Risk Assessment (2016)

When used properly, risk assessments can be a powerful part of your approach to reducing recidivism; however, without careful attention to how this tool is designed and deployed, racial and gender bias can introduce inaccuracies. This piece presents practical tips for determining how the tool is performing and developing a plan to remediate any issues discovered.

Use evidence-based practices

Ensuring that supervision and programming are assigned by risk of recidivism and needs is not enough to reduce the cycle of crime and incarceration. Reentry strategies must incorporate practices that have been shown to be effective at mitigating the risk and needs they are intended to address. These are known as "evidence-based practices." Comprehensive implementation of evidence-based practices requires carrying them out with careful adherence to the proven program model.

Evidence-based prison-, jail-, and community-based supervision and programming are generally designed to address criminogenic needs. In fact, research indicates that the greater the number of criminogenic needs addressed through interventions, the greater the positive impact those interventions will have on reducing recidivism. Factors identified as criminogenic needs include antisocial[10] attitudes, thinking patterns, peers, and family connections; substance use; and low levels of educational or employment attainment.[11]

Part of maintaining an evidence-based approach to reentry involves discontinuing practices that have not been shown to work. For example, unnecessarily strict conditions of probation or parole can set people up for failure, making it nearly impossible to avoid additional contact with the criminal justice system. According to a 2019 analysis, 45 percent of state prison admissions nationwide are due to violations of probation or parole for new offenses or technical violations.[12] To ensure that probation and parole supervision are effective in reducing recidivism, agencies should be equipped to incentivize people for positive behavior, apply sanctions appropriately and in a standardized fashion, and preserve the use of incarceration only for more serious violations.[13]

An important subset of evidence-based practices are core correctional practices. These practices take a cognitive behavioral approach to recidivism reduction; that is, they aim to help people change the patterns of thinking and behavior that might contribute to their chances of recidivating. When corrections and community supervision staff implement core correctional practices properly, they can foster positive, productive interactions with the people under their supervision.

Review the policies and procedures of corrections and community supervision agencies operating in your community, including any community-based programs those agencies contract with, to gauge adherence to and encourage the adoption of evidence-based practices.

Furthermore, it is important to provide connections between pre-release programs and post-release services. These connections help to bridge a person's goals (e.g., starting a career, maintaining sobriety) before and after release. For example, integrating case planning among corrections, community supervision, and community-based services is one strategy to create linkages between pre- and post-release programs and help a person continue to make progress toward their goals after release.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you know what programs are provided before release?
Corrections agencies and local jails offer all kinds of programs. Your corrections and jail leaders can provide a list of the common types of programs designed to prepare people for release. Often the corrections agencies prepare a pre-release summary of all the programs a person started or completed while they were incarcerated. These program summaries can be a useful starting point for beginning to log the types of programs and services commonly offered before release.

Are reentry providers required or incentivized to use evidence-based practices?
Criminal justice agencies often establish contracts with third-party, community-based providers to deliver services both within and outside correctional facilities. Some jurisdictions contractually require that reentry providers use evidence-based practices or meet performance-related outcomes to ensure effectiveness.

Are local corrections and community supervision staff trained and evaluated on the use of evidence-based practices?
For evidence-based practices to become ingrained in criminal justice agencies, frontline staff should receive comprehensive training with booster training at regular intervals. Corrections and community supervision agencies can even build evidence-based practices into staff evaluation and promotion procedures by formally measuring adherence to evidence-based practices as part of performance evaluations.

Do community supervision agencies apply sanctions and incentives appropriately?
Ensuring that probation and parole agencies operating in your community use evidence-based practices will be a critical part of your local reentry coalition's efforts. Incentives—or rewards for positive behaviors—and graduated sanctions—incremental consequences for noncompliant behaviors—give probation officers a range of responses to the people they supervise. These responses can help build accountability and discourage recidivism while ensuring that each officer responds to violations with a level of swiftness and severity that is directly related to a person's assessed risk level and the condition that has been violated. Standardizing responses provides a measure of fairness while giving officers necessary flexibility.[14]

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Example from the Field

Merging Core Correctional Practices with Tribal Values

The **Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe** in Washington State used Second Chance Act funds to develop a pre- and post-release reentry model rooted in evidence-based correctional practices and in the tribe's values and traditions. Its "human dignity model" focuses on individual and community needs and taking rehabilitative, restorative, and culturally appropriate approaches to criminal justice. Risk factors are addressed through tailored case management and comprehensive services covering employment, dispute resolution, mental health, substance use treatment, and tribal values. Graduated sanctions were established to address violations of program requirements, beginning with a verbal warning at the first violation and leading to a 6-month suspension from the program after the fourth violation.

With recidivism reduction as the primary goal of the grant, the tribe established a baseline recidivism rate of 64.5 percent based on the number of tribal members who had returned to jail within 1 year of release in the year before implementation of the grant. For the 44 participants served within the grant period, only 15.9 percent had a new charge within their first year of the program.[15]

To guide its grant project, the tribe convened a monthly coalition composed of tribal elders, representatives from local and state law enforcement and corrections agencies, mental health professionals, community members from Kitsap County, community-based organizations, and local employers. Their efforts set new precedents in collaboration for the tribe and across Kitsap County. Through monitoring of the program's progress, the coalition made several adjustments throughout the course of the grant. For example, seeing the difficulty that program participants were having in obtaining subsidized housing, the tribal housing authority made changes to remove policy barriers to housing for people with criminal records.

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QUICK REFERENCES

CrimeSolutions.gov

This website lists criminal justice programs and practices and assesses the degree to which they are evidence based.

Evidence-Based Practices Resources Guide

Use this collection of resources to browse program models that have been tested in criminal justice settings.

Reducing Statewide Recidivism: Checklist for State Corrections and Community Supervision Administrators (2018)

This checklist helps corrections and community supervision leaders assess recidivism reduction policies and practices to ensure that they are aligned with evidence-based practices. Although intended for state corrections and community supervision leaders, this checklist also can help local criminal justice leaders evaluate their recidivism reduction efforts.

Track your progress

Without diligent tracking among corrections, community supervision, and community-based agencies, your local reentry coalition will not know—or be able to communicate—the impact it has had on recidivism reduction. However, measuring recidivism is usually a long-term process. It can take several years before it is clear whether a particular policy or program is having an impact on recidivism. Tracking indicators of your progress along the way can help ensure that your coalition is heading in the right direction and promoting the use of practices that support recidivism reduction.

Below are a few intermediate measures your local reentry coalition could use to monitor progress:

Percentage of people who receive risk and needs assessments in the local jail

Percentage of people assessed as high risk who complete recidivism-reduction programming before release from the local jail

Percentage of people assessed as high risk who are referred to community-based reentry programming after release from the local jail

Percentage of people who complete community-based reentry programming after release

Percentage of people who attain employment after completing post-release reentry programming

Percentage of people assessed as high risk who are placed on community supervision after release from the local jail

Whether you are tracking intermediate measures or actual recidivism rates, it is important for your local reentry coalition to hold itself accountable and maintain transparency by regularly reviewing and communicating progress.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are you positioning local reentry programs to monitor their progress toward recidivism-reduction goals?

While some community-based reentry providers may have the capacity and funding to track recidivism outcomes for their participants, many of these programs are underresourced. Your local reentry coalition can work to build data capacity among reentry programs by supporting training or funding efforts related to data collection and analysis. With sufficient data capacity, community-based providers can assess whether their activities are having an impact on both short- and long-term recidivism-reduction goals.

Do you have a plan to report recidivism-reduction progress to the broader community?

Communication plans for publicizing progress on recidivism-reduction goals will vary from community to community. Public meetings, newsletters, and reports are all methods for distributing this kind of information. Regardless of the chosen medium, it is important to determine how frequent your progress reports will be. Announcing the planned frequency of public reporting at the outset is a useful way for the local reentry coalition to set expectations among community members and maintain accountability. See **Section 3** for more information on building community support for local reentry strategies.

Are you prepared to adjust your approach based on what you discover?

Tracking progress in an ongoing fashion gives you the ability to course correct. Incremental checks of progress can and should cause your local reentry coalition to reevaluate and revise its strategies as necessary. Continually refer back to your established, long-term recidivism-reduction goals to ground and inform your decision making.

Section 3: Enabling Personal and Community Transformation

For people leaving incarceration, it often is overwhelming and frustrating to find a job and housing, manage community supervision responsibilities, and reconnect with family and friends in an environment that is largely unwelcoming to people with criminal records. Given these complex challenges, recidivism is not—and should not be—the only measure of reentry success. Building on what is gleaned from the screenings and assessments discussed in **Section 2**, this section reviews how local reentry coalition leaders can develop and improve critical behavioral health and community supports for people returning from prison or jail.

The multifaceted nature of reentry requires that local reentry coalition leaders collaborate across agencies and systems to foster success at the individual and community levels. While this collaboration may vary depending on your community's needs, reentry coalitions can provide valuable leadership for implementing components of effective cross-systems collaboration, including coordinating with existing local committees, sharing information among relevant partners in accordance with privacy laws, and using resources efficiently. (See **Section 1** for more information on maximizing resources.)

Your local reentry coalition, with its broad representation and varied expertise, already is equipped to understand and influence reentry outcomes beyond recidivism. Coalition members from organizations other than corrections and community supervision—including behavioral health, housing, and reentry programming providers—can provide information necessary for a comprehensive approach to reentry, such as data about service capacity, participation, and outcomes. At the individual level, this information is essential to provide adequate programming and services. At the community level, it can be used to identify prevalent local needs and capacity to meet them, evaluate the effectiveness of reentry strategies, and determine whether interventions are cost-effective. Any information-sharing policies must comply with applicable federal and state privacy laws and should be developed in consultation with behavioral health, legal, and other community partners for alignment with the needs of the community and cultural responsiveness. Ideally, these policies also should be formalized through memoranda of understanding or letters of agreement, noting the types of information to be shared, methods and mechanisms for sharing that information, where it will be stored, the frequency with which it will be shared, and who will have access to it. The work that your local reentry coalition already has done to identify and organize data sources in **Appendix A** will help you track a variety of outcomes as your reentry strategy progresses.

Collaborative Case Management

Reentry efforts that include individualized case plans developed collaboratively by representatives from a variety of agencies can lead to improved outcomes for people returning to their communities. Compared to case plans developed by a single agency, these Collaborative Comprehensive Case Plans[16] integrate information from criminal justice, behavioral health, and other social services agencies. When continually updated and shared among partners, this case management can be used to ensure that a continuum of care exists to support people after release and that feedback is collected to determine the effectiveness of specific programs and services.

Connect people to safe, stable, affordable housing

Safe, stable, affordable housing is increasingly recognized as a baseline for successful reentry.[17] But finding housing can be one of the most immediate and dire challenges people face upon leaving prison or jail. There already is widespread scarcity of affordable housing. For the reentry population, barriers to shelter usage, collateral consequences related to tenancy, and inability to reside with family members for various reasons—including local regulations, restrictions, and strained relationships—often compound that shortage. Linking people to housing is therefore crucial for your local reentry coalition's efforts and should be a major consideration in composing the coalition and engaging providers and organizations. Many housing and criminal justice professionals are seeking and implementing solutions to make it easier for people in reentry to obtain housing, with the ultimate goal of placing people in permanent housing situations.

As discussed in **Section 2**, results of housing screenings and assessments conducted by correctional facilities should be used to inform case planning and enable housing connections for people returning to your community. The reentry population ideally should be quickly connected to housing with few, if any, preconditions to entry.[18] Communities can work toward this approach by removing barriers to housing and forging partnerships among existing housing-focused agencies, groups, and providers. While broadly prioritizing prompt housing connections, your local reentry coalition can work with housing services providers to explore specific interventions such as permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing. Permanent supportive housing features voluntary services, for which participation is not a condition of residency.[19] Rapid rehousing, designed to help individuals who do not require intensive services and supports, provides a quick exit from homelessness and into permanent housing without preconditions, such as the absence of a criminal record, employment, income, or sobriety. These interventions and others like them can be used to support people returning to your community from prison or jail.

Some communities are also working to improve law enforcement responses to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, hoping to prevent avoidable contact with the criminal justice system in the first place. Formalized partnerships among housing, behavioral health, law enforcement, and other criminal justice agencies have spearheaded efforts to expand street outreach and facilitate connections to services and housing. These efforts can be especially impactful for the reentry population, which—with potential barriers to entering shelters—is often vulnerable to experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

For housing services to address the diverse needs of the reentry population, there also must be a variety of available housing opportunities. But on top of widespread housing shortages, having a criminal record or lacking steady employment may affect the strength of rental applications for the reentry population. Your local reentry coalition can engage local landlords in understanding housing availability, familiarize landlords with the needs of the local reentry population, and potentially increase access to housing units for people returning to your community from prison and jail.

Use the inventory of pre-release and community-based services in **Appendix C: Part 1** to take stock of what housing resources are available in your community and determine where more housing options are needed. Given that your community may struggle with limited resources and funding, this inventory serves as a starting point for developing the creative solutions that may be necessary to address the amount and range of housing needs for your reentry population.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you know what public housing authority policies affect your reentry population?
Public housing authorities are a central provider of subsidized housing and face high demand. At the state and local levels, these agencies exercise broad discretion regarding admission and eviction. Each local public housing authority has an administrative plan that specifies its policies governing criminal background checks and the admission of people with criminal records.[20] Reviewing these policies will enable your local reentry coalition to understand any restrictions that apply to the reentry population in your community. If your coalition develops a strong relationship with the public housing authority, you may be able to work together to institute less restrictive policies and expand housing opportunities for the reentry population.

Are there housing services tailored to specific reentry subpopulations?
Many communities offer specialized housing services for certain populations, including military veterans, people with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders, people with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (LGBTQ) people. If such services are available to the reentry population in your community, familiarize yourself with their eligibility criteria to help ensure that you are maximizing these opportunities.

Are you familiar with your local Continuum of Care's homelessness prevention initiatives?
Your local reentry coalition will benefit from tapping into local housing expertise and resources that are already in place. Every community has a Continuum of Care (CoC)—a partnership of public agencies and community organizations that provide housing assistance and supportive services, leading the community's efforts to end homelessness. Funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), your CoC directs what is known as "coordinated entry," a standardized process by which people experiencing or at risk of homelessness are assessed and referred to available housing and services. Members of the CoC also provide services such as street outreach, housing counseling, emergency shelter, and permanent housing. In recent years, HUD has provided funding opportunities that incentivize CoCs to partner with law enforcement agencies and consider criminal justice

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

populations;[21] therefore, your local CoC may be motivated to focus on the population that is shared between the criminal justice system and homelessness service providers. If members of your reentry coalition are able to attend CoC meetings, they can work to connect the reentry population to the coordinated entry process as necessary.

Have you tried building relationships with local landlords and property managers?
Many communities have formalized partnerships with local landlords and property managers to increase access to housing for people leaving prison and jail. For example, some communities have created risk mitigation funds as a way to help encourage landlords to rent to people who have limited income, poor rental histories, or criminal records.[22] These funds typically are used to cover partial costs to the landlord in the event of a tenant's failure to pay rent or damage done to a building. Usually established by local governments, risk mitigation funds may include collaboration with local nonprofit service providers and landlord groups.

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Example from the Field

Aligning Policies and Resources to Address a Community's Housing Needs

In **Lane County, Oregon**, three local agencies—Lane County Parole & Probation; Homes for Good, the housing agency overseeing the county's public housing and Section 8 program; and Sponsors, the county's leading community-based reentry service provider—have had a long-standing partnership to provide affordable housing for people with criminal records. The close communication and alignment of goals has led to several policy changes to better address housing needs for people on probation and parole. For example, Homes for Good removed all screening criteria that were related to criminal records but not mandated by HUD. Further, they made two changes to their administrative rules that enabled them to serve more Sponsors participants: establishing a local preference[23] for Sponsors clients referred for Section 8 vouchers and public housing units, and updating Low-Income Housing Tax Credit tenant selection plans to prioritize Sponsors referrals.

In 2016, the partners received joint funding from HUD and the U.S. Department of Justice to pilot a 5-year pay-for-success project providing permanent supportive housing for people who are leaving prison without housing and evaluated as being at a high risk of becoming reengaged with the criminal justice system. Housing is located at public housing sites; private-market units subsidized with Section 8 vouchers; and The Oaks at 14th, a 54-unit apartment complex managed by Homes for Good, where Sponsors provides enhanced resident services (including case management and on-site mental health services) and there is an on-site parole and probation office. Sponsors staff provide wraparound services to all participants, regardless of housing placement type. An evaluation will examine the success of the program based on recidivism, housing, and health outcomes over the course of 3 years. Currently, 2 years after the project was launched and began serving participants, the project has placed 93 individuals in permanent supportive housing. In May 2020, the project's independent evaluator reported a 92 percent success rate, as measured by ongoing housing stability and no new felony convictions.

QUICK REFERENCES

Assessing Housing Needs and Risks: A Screening Questionnaire (2017)

This questionnaire helps reentry professionals assess an individual's unique housing needs and risk of homelessness upon returning to the community.

Homeless Assistance Programs

Search through this resource from HUD to find information about homelessness programming and related data in your community.

Justice Bridge Housing Program: A Successful Reentry Program of the Housing Authority of Union County, Pennsylvania (2017)

This toolkit provides local jurisdictions with guidance for developing an effective housing and reentry strategy.

Strengthening Partnerships between Law Enforcement and Homelessness Service Systems (2019)

This brief highlights five emerging, cross-systems strategies that local law enforcement and homelessness response leaders can use to respond to people who experience unsheltered homelessness and have frequent contact with law enforcement.

Infectious Disease Toolkit for Continuums of Care (2020)

This toolkit offers resources for planning and responding to influenza, coronavirus, and other infectious diseases and contains information for CoC leadership, homeless service providers, and partners to plan for and address infectious diseases.

Ensure access to quality treatment and services for behavioral health needs

The proportion of people in the criminal justice system who have behavioral health needs—including mental illnesses, substance use disorders, and co-occurring mental illnesses and substance use disorders—is much higher than it is in the general public.[24] For example, whereas approximately 5 percent of people in the community have a serious mental illness, up to 17 percent of people in prisons and jails do.[25]

As a result, behavioral health care tends to be a critical need among the reentry population. But it is not possible to promote access to the quality behavioral health care that is needed unless your local reentry coalition can quantify the scope of the problem in your community. Effective identification of people with behavioral health needs is an essential first step in the provision of behavioral health care. With information gleaned from mental health and substance use screenings and assessments discussed in **Section 2**, your coalition can better understand the behavioral health needs in your community, develop responses accordingly, and maximize resources while also addressing risk of recidivism.

Treatment and services should be available at various points along the criminal justice continuum according to the demand in your community. Options such as diversion and crisis centers can provide law enforcement officers with alternatives to arrest and jailing for people with behavioral health needs, reducing the chances that they enter the criminal justice system or limiting the time they spend within it. Mental health courts bring together members of criminal justice and behavioral health systems, among others, to work specifically with people with mental

illnesses facing criminal charges. And residential treatment and outpatient treatment programs may be appropriate for people in correctional facilities and in the community. In addition to treatment provided by licensed professionals, people in the criminal justice system may benefit from services provided by paraprofessionals, such as peer support specialists and recovery coaches, as well as assistance from case managers, health care "navigators," and care coordinators.

Once your local reentry coalition determines the availability of the treatment and service options in your community, you also will need to assess whether they are being delivered effectively and are tailored to the unique needs of people in the criminal justice system. There are a number of ways for your coalition to advance the use of evidence-based behavioral health care that has potential to reduce recidivism and promote recovery. Training standards can be developed to enable law enforcement, court, jail, prison, and community supervision personnel to appropriately and effectively respond to people who have mental illnesses, substance use disorders, and co-occurring disorders. Some jurisdictions require behavioral health treatment providers to use evidence-based practices as conditions of funding or contracting, while others mandate training on working with the reentry population, require quality assurance measures, or include observations of program delivery as part of regular evaluations of treatment and services. Your coalition also might consider promoting payment strategies that incentivize behavioral health treatment providers to deliver specialized services for the reentry population.

Complete the behavioral health section of the services inventory in **Appendix C: Part 1** to understand your community's current capacity in this area and see where your local reentry coalition can make improvements.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Is your community working to reduce avoidable contact with the criminal justice system among people with behavioral health needs?
Measures to prevent criminal justice system involvement, as appropriate, among people with behavioral health needs ultimately can help shrink your reentry population and improve individual and community well-being. Your local reentry coalition might seek to expand opportunities to respond to people in behavioral health crisis both before and upon law enforcement contact; such responses can include crisis intervention teams, mobile crisis teams, and co-responder teams. You also might choose to develop a coordinated local approach to diversion, whereby people with behavioral health needs who do not pose a public safety risk may be diverted from the criminal justice system at all decision points and connected to appropriate services and supports in the community.

Is there a process to connect the reentry population to health care coverage?
Continuity of care is uniquely crucial for people leaving prison and jail who have behavioral health needs. Yet lack of access to health care coverage is often a serious barrier to recovery for the reentry population with mental illnesses and substance use disorders. Correctional facilities can offer navigation services upon release, whereby people are connected to health care coverage and services. Medicaid is a primary source of coverage for people leaving prison and jail. A large proportion of Medicaid policy is determined at the state level, so it will be helpful for your local reentry coalition to understand what health care coverage and services are available in your community and whether and how correctional facilities enable enrollment in and continuity of Medicaid coverage.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are you aware of the "high utilizers" in your community?

The definition of "high utilizer" may vary across systems; the term often refers to people who have frequent contact with police, jails, emergency services, and shelters, straining already limited resources. Local behavioral health, law enforcement, and other criminal justice agencies should know who their high utilizers are and work collaboratively to develop creative solutions that address their unique needs. In many instances, these individuals have serious mental illnesses, substance use disorders, or other significant health and social services needs,[26] which can leave them stuck in a revolving door between the criminal justice system and other systems like health and housing.

Is your jurisdiction working to prevent relapse and overdose?

For people with substance use disorders leaving prison and jail, relapse—a normal but preventable aspect of substance use disorder—can jeopardize recovery, increase the risk of recidivism, and lead to overdose and overdose death.[27] As the number of people overdosing on opioids reaches record levels, and reentry professionals learn more about the dangers of alcohol and benzodiazepine withdrawals, first responders and local reentry coalition leaders are seeking options to connect people to life-saving treatment and supports in lieu of incarceration, when appropriate, including during reentry.

For many, the period of transition from incarceration back to the community is a time of great risk for overdose and death.[28] If your jurisdiction does not have an overdose prevention plan in place already, your local reentry coalition is in a good position to help spearhead one; such plans are usually developed by the local health department in conjunction with hospitals, emergency medical services, and local law enforcement, and they offer a comprehensive approach to reducing substance overdoses through prevention, crisis response, treatment, and recovery support. On an individual level, people with substance use disorders leaving facilities in your jurisdiction should receive relapse prevention plans from correctional staff. These plans should account for a person's triggers for relapse, how to avoid these triggers, and how to manage impulses.

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Example from the Field

Facilitating Access to Treatment

In **Champaign County, Illinois,** the sheriff's office works with the service provider Rosecrance to provide mental health treatment services in the jail. To help ensure that more people have access to necessary treatment after they are released, the local mental health board requested that Rosecrance begin facilitating Medicaid enrollment for people while they are incarcerated. Rosecrance recognized that another provider, the nonprofit organization Champaign County Health Care Consumers (CCHCC), has more expertise in Medicaid enrollment, and the board permitted them to partner with CCHCC as a subcontractor.

Through this partnership, jail staff began implementing the Brief Jail Mental Health Screen and the Texas Christian University Drug Screen V at intake. The jail currently has a 97 percent success rate for completing these screenings, the results of which can trigger an automatic referral to a Rosecrance case manager embedded in the jail. (A person also may submit a request to speak with someone about mental health, substance use issues, or health insurance; or a correctional officer may refer a person to Rosecrance based on observation.) The case manager then conducts an assessment that includes questions related to Medicaid benefits and eligibility. If an individual is eligible and interested in enrolling, they are referred to CCHCC to start the application process. CCHCC offers both pre- and post-release Medicaid enrollment services, which enables an individual to continue with their application if they are released before CCHCC staff were able to initiate or complete the process. Everyone who is released receives a handout that details the services provided by CCHCC. Since beginning the program in late 2014, CCHCC has helped nearly 500 people from the jail enroll in Medicaid coverage.

The Champaign County Sheriff's Office, Rosecrance, and CCHCC have worked together to address challenges that arose while developing this new process. One challenge was obtaining the documents necessary for each person's Medicaid enrollment, which could be in the jail's storage room inside a sealed bag of the person's belongings or at their residence. To address this issue, CCHCC works with the sheriff's office to obtain permission from the person for a staff member to retrieve the documents and photocopy them for the application; the person also may provide contact information for a family member whom the CCHCC Medicaid enrollment staff person will contact for documentation.

QUICK REFERENCES

Behavioral Health Diversion Interventions: Moving from Individual Programs to a Systems-Wide Strategy (2019)

This brief provides a conceptual framework for creating a continuum of diversion opportunities that span a community's criminal justice system.

Best Practices for Successful Reentry for People Who Have Opioid Addictions (2018)

This fact sheet describes the best practices that correctional, community-based behavioral health, and probation and parole agencies can implement to ensure safe and successful reentry for people who have opioid addictions.

Critical Connections: Getting People Leaving Prison and Jail the Mental Health Care and Substance Use Treatment They Need—What Policymakers Need to Know about Health Care Coverage (2017)

Regardless of the scope of Medicaid coverage in your state, you can use this discussion paper to ensure that prisons and jails are positioned as effective hubs for helping eligible people get public health care coverage and social security and veterans' benefits. This assistance can facilitate access to treatment and help reduce recidivism as part of a comprehensive reentry effort.

How to Reduce Repeat Encounters: A Brief for Law Enforcement Executives (2020)

This brief provides four practical steps for addressing the needs of the people whom law enforcement officers frequently encounter while reducing their contact with the criminal justice system over time.

Police-Mental Health Collaborations: A Framework for Implementing Effective Law Enforcement Responses for People Who Have Mental Health Needs (2019)

This publication is designed to help jurisdictions advance comprehensive, agency-wide responses to people who have mental health needs through criminal justice and behavioral health system collaborations.

Preparing People for Reentry: Checklist for Correctional Facilities (2020)

Created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this checklist guides reentry planning to ensure the health and well-being of people who live and work within a facility, particularly people with behavioral health or chronic health conditions.

Relapse Prevention Plans (2020)

This web page explains why relapse prevention plans are a critical part of Collaborative Comprehensive Case Plans and provides information on how to create and implement these plans to promote recovery and ensure successful reentry for people who have a substance use disorder.

Stepping Up Strategy Lab

This is an interactive library of programs, policies, and practices that jurisdictions across the country have implemented to help reduce the prevalence of people with mental illnesses in their jails. Users are able to filter examples of local strategies by various categories, including recidivism reduction and reentry.

Advance economic opportunity and mobility

For people who have been incarcerated, financial stability can mean the difference between thriving in the community and returning to prison or jail. However, barriers to economic opportunity and mobility—i.e., a person's chances for improving their economic status—are an enduring reality for the reentry population. To begin with, education,[29] literacy,[30] and numeracy[31] levels tend to be lower on average for incarcerated people than they are for the general population, and access to education in correctional facilities can be limited.[32] Not only does incarceration often disrupt formal education and diminish skills, but it also significantly affects future employment and earning potential. In fact, the existence of a criminal record reduces the likelihood of an employer calling an applicant back for an interview by 50 percent on average, rising to 60 percent for Black male job candidates with a criminal record.[33] And the cumulative economic effects of incarceration can be lasting: people who have been incarcerated earn 40 percent less annually than they earned before incarceration and are likely to have less upward economic mobility over time than those who have not been incarcerated.[34]

As with the other service areas discussed in this section, specific economic mobility issues and challenges in your community can be identified and addressed by applying the results of related screenings and assessments covered in **Section 2.** Depending on what you learn from those results, your local reentry coalition likely will have a variety of avenues for promoting educational attainment, workforce development, and overall economic mobility among the reentry population.

Providing education and training for in-demand skills and credentials—both before and after release—is a key component of improving economic opportunity and mobility for the reentry population. Research has linked correctional education with reduced recidivism[35] and highlighted how to achieve the greatest impact on employment outcomes: by ensuring that education and training result in credentials, such as completion of a GED, a postsecondary degree, or an occupational license.[36]

But facility-based education and training cannot be provided in a vacuum; any such offerings must be designed with an eye toward the realities that exist beyond the walls of prisons and jails. Nationally, there are nearly 14,000 legal provisions that restrict the workforce participation of people with criminal records. These collateral consequences of conviction[37] can severely limit job prospects, among other opportunities and benefits. Use the National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction (listed in the **Quick References** box at the end of this section) to learn about the codified, employment-related consequences that apply in your jurisdiction. For example, you might find out that people with criminal records are barred from becoming licensed electricians according to your state's laws; if that is the case, it is neither cost-effective nor practical for a prison in your state to offer an electrical training course. With knowledge of relevant collateral consequences, your local reentry coalition will be equipped to promote correctional education and training for jobs that are legally attainable for the reentry population.

Building upon facility-based education and training, community-based employment programming that supports the development of social skills; aligns training and preparation with high-growth industries; and leads to recognized, stackable credentials will increase the job readiness of people returning to your community. To make the most of facility- and community-based programming that promotes economic mobility, it is important for your local reentry coalition to understand your community's unique labor and industry demands. Engage local business leaders to inform educational and training programs, including members of your coalition who represent local chambers of commerce, workforce development boards, and the like.

Even with the right preparation and training, members of your community's reentry population may still face a number of less formal barriers to participating and advancing in the local job market. Common practical issues that arise upon release from prison or jail—such as a lack of transportation, vital records or valid identification, or child care—can limit a person's ability to apply for, enter, or succeed in employment. To combat these challenges, some communities have implemented transitional support services such as programs that connect people with identification[38] and provide transportation to job interviews after release.[39]

Further, exclusionary business practices are prevalent but often rooted in misinformation or stereotypes of people with records. Use conversations with local employers as an opportunity to address the stigma related to criminal records, which often intersects with racial stereotypes.[40] You might find, for instance, that employers are hesitant about hiring people with criminal records due to preconceptions that these job applicants are unproductive and untrustworthy or may even behave in a manner that endangers other employees or customers.[41] Members of your task face can reinforce the benefits of hiring people with criminal records, who have been found to stay in jobs longer[42] and demonstrate more productivity than people without criminal records.[43]

Fair chance laws and policies are another way to counteract exclusionary hiring practices at the state and local levels; they delay employer inquiries about job applicants' criminal records and/or limit the extent to which employers are able to consider arrest and conviction records in the hiring process. In an effort to reduce the impact of collateral consequences, some policymakers across the political spectrum are also considering policies to expand the clearance of certain types of criminal records. Criminal record clearance removes a person's criminal record information from public access, most often with the goal of improving employment and other outcomes. Your local reentry coalition should be attuned to any clearance policy conversations that are happening at the state level and ensure that the reentry population is using existing pathways to record clearance in your community, including assistance from legal service providers. Recent support for occupational licensing reform also has the potential to affect career prospects for the reentry population; policymakers in many states are considering amending licensing laws so they do not unnecessarily limit licensure for people with criminal records.

Return to **Appendix C: Part 1** to take stock of what pre-release and community-based services are available in your community and help refine your local reentry coalition's efforts to advance economic mobility for the reentry population.

Meeting Financial Obligations

People often leave prison and jail with significant debt. Among many other advantages, stable employment helps them meet the financial obligations that may pile up during or result from their time in the criminal justice system. For example, some people convicted of crimes receive court orders to repay victims for losses or expenses incurred as a direct result of the crime. These payments, also called "restitution," often follow people into the community after they have served a sentence in prison or jail. Many people returning to their communities from prison or jail are also parents facing the obligation of child support payments and related debts—known as "arrears"—that accumulate during incarceration. People may face additional, lasting financial obligations, including fines and court fees. Awareness of how such financial obligations affect members of the reentry population in your community will enable your local reentry coalition to pursue activities that promote economic mobility while being realistic about the lingering costs of criminal justice system involvement.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are there opportunities for the reentry population to earn immediate income?
Communities around the country are implementing models that connect people to work-based income as soon as they are released from prison or jail, with the goals of improving long-term employability and reducing recidivism. Transitional job programs, for example, typically provide temporary employment coupled with on-the-job training and other support, such as soft-skills development. Nontransitional subsidized employment programs pay a portion of participants' wages for a trial period, during which participants receive training. Unlike transitional jobs, which generally are time limited, nontransitional subsidized employment placements often can lead to permanent jobs with the same employer after the subsidy period ends.

Are local employers incentivized to hire people with criminal records?
Beyond federal programs that offer tax credits and protect against financial loss, some states and cities have established incentives for businesses to hire people with criminal records. Find out if such programs exist in your locale; if not, this could be an activity for your local reentry coalition to explore.

Is your local reentry coalition aware of local collateral consequences?
Although occupational licensing laws are imposed largely at the state level, cities and counties are also able to dictate licensing processes and requirements. Learning about any such local licensing restrictions can put your coalition in a position to not only understand what career paths present barriers but also work to repeal local licensing laws that may disproportionately burden the reentry population.

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Example from the Field

Paving the Way for Post-Release Employment

Headquartered at the sheriff's office, the Middle Tennessee Rural Reentry (MTRR) program in **Franklin County, Tennessee,** created a job training initiative to increase job readiness and employability among people incarcerated at the jail and to connect them to employment opportunities after their release. The training program filled a gap in the community: because the closest technical school is approximately 50 miles away from the jail, technical colleges in the area have 6- to 12-month waiting lists for enrollment, and access to vocational programming is limited. Soon after automotive industries moved into the surrounding area, MTRR met with the heads of the companies, learned that positions in automotive computer-machining and injection molding needed to be filled, and then focused on training program participants for those jobs. The program also facilitated job opportunities for participants by connecting them with the employers and, to further increase participants' chances of success after incarceration, provided comprehensive services, such as cognitive behavioral treatment; job-readiness training, including interviewing tips and how to prepare a résumé; parenting classes; substance use and mental health treatment; and classes in which participants earn industry and community college certificates.

Of the 54 program participants who entered the program and were released from jail between January 2016 and June 2017, approximately 80 percent were not rearrested during that period. "The reentry program saved my life," said Haley George, a program graduate who earned an industry-recognized certificate in injection molding. MTRR staff used their connections to set her up with an interview at a car-part manufacturing plant, where she landed a job and was later promoted.

The program benefited not only the MTRR program participants but also the employer partners. The car-part manufacturing plant worked with MTRR and a state probation program to recruit employees and reported a lower turnover rate among the employees from the reentry programs compared to all other employees.

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QUICK REFERENCES

Hosting an Employer Engagement Event

This toolkit, which features sample agendas, talking points, and other resources, is designed to help businesses, public agencies, and community organizations plan and execute local dialogues about hiring people with criminal records.

Laying the Groundwork: How States Can Improve Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System (2020)

This report presents detailed findings from a 50-state study to help state and local leaders determine whether their state is making sufficient efforts to improve educational and employment outcomes for incarcerated people by providing postsecondary education opportunities.

National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction

This website is a database of the more than 40,000 federal and state legal and regulatory provisions that prohibit people convicted of crimes from accessing employment, housing, and other rights, benefits, and opportunities.

Opportunity Index

Use this online resource to see how your county scores with respect to opportunity levels, including economic and educational opportunity indicators.

Seeking Assistance to Address Collateral Consequences

This infographic, created specifically for people who have been in tribal justice systems, explains resources for understanding and coping with collateral consequences.

Self-Assessment for Employment-Focused Reentry Programs (2019)

This self-assessment tool helps reentry practitioners identify opportunities to build the capacity of their employment programming and services.

Promote connections to family and prosocial networks

Social ties are yet another aspect of life that is diminished by incarceration but vital to success after release. Incarceration is a deeply isolating experience that can tear families and communities apart. Beyond physically removing a person from their social support system for a period of time, a prison or jail sentence often strains their personal relationships because of factors such as the expense of phone calls and emotional withdrawal associated with incarceration.[44] However, it is widely accepted that prosocial relationships—those that have a beneficial impact—enable positive behavior change and correlate with favorable reentry outcomes.[45]

Among the most essential personal relationships are those with family members; people returning to their communities often rely on relatives for help with housing, transportation, job connections, and finances, in addition to emotional support.[46] Your local reentry coalition should be aware that "family" can include people beyond blood relatives for many individuals and communities. In fact, research has shown that it is effective to use a broad definition of family that encompasses significant supportive relationships in addition to biological family.[47] Screenings and assessments discussed in **Section 2** may be used to help criminal justice agency staff identify

supportive family members. Programs that focus on cultivating strong family relationships can improve outcomes for both incarcerated people and their families by engaging them in the reentry process and offering pre- and post-release services. With more than half of incarcerated people being parents of minor children,[48] these services often include parenting workshops, support from fellow parents who also have been in the criminal justice system, and organized family visits to correctional facilities.

Prosocial networks beyond family also can be critical to reentry, especially given that some people simply may not have sufficient family supports when they enter prison or jail, and periods of incarceration can erode family relationships that existed previously. Your local reentry coalition can promote broader social supports by ensuring that policies and practices are in place to cultivate their development both during incarceration and after release. Reentry programs often incorporate mentoring, which provides prosocial benefits such as access to a reliable listener and association with someone who is outside of one's existing social network.[49] Some even argue that facility visitation—whether it be from mentors, community volunteers, or clergy—is effective enough to be recognized as a correctional intervention in and of itself;[50] one meta-analysis found that people who had been visited in prison had a 26 percent reduction in recidivism compared to people who had not.[51]

As beneficial as interpersonal relationships are, it is also important to remember that some people may have to navigate safety concerns for themselves and others as they reconnect with loved ones. Addressing any domestic violence that may have occurred before incarceration can help not only with preventing victimization of family members but also with reducing the risk of related reincarceration. Strategies that support harm and violence reduction include restorative justice, conflict transformation approaches, and well-designed "batterers intervention programs" that address how power can be abused in relationships.

In addition, people in reentry often are victims of violence themselves.[52] The trauma that stems from experiencing violence can affect personal relationships by undermining survivors' sense of trust, safety, and self-worth.[53] A study in one state found that 75 percent of women in prison had survived domestic violence as adults,[54] and many women continue to face the threat of violence when they return to their communities after serving a jail or prison sentence.[55] And while young men—particularly young men of color—are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, they also disproportionately experience violent crime.[56] Therefore, trauma-informed supervision and care must be part of your approach to supporting prosocial connections in reentry.

Complete the final section of the services inventory in **Appendix C: Part 1** to understand the landscape of social support services in your community and determine where improvements might be needed.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are families and other people in an individual's support system actively engaged in reentry planning?
Family-inclusive case management engages relatives in the planning process for a person's transition from prison or jail to the community, providing formalized opportunities to maintain connections with family members. This type of case management ideally starts when a person is incarcerated and continues after release.

Are facility policies conducive to visitation?
Correctional facility visitation policies and practices greatly affect the degree to which incarcerated people are able to maintain and make prosocial connections. While it is imperative to have safety protocols to protect the well-being of people in custody, visitors, and facility staff, visitation also should be encouraged, such as through family-friendly visitation areas and transportation programs for families who may face difficulties in getting to the facility. Some visitation policies indirectly limit the practice of peer mentoring—which pairs people with mentors who also have experience in the criminal justice system—because of restrictions on facility entry for people who have criminal records. Ideally, correctional facilities in your community will permit entry of peer mentors so that they can lay the groundwork for a mentoring relationship before release. Another practice that is becoming more common is video visitation. Video visits can provide connections for people who are unable to travel or who live far from the correctional facility. Even if video visitation is available, more research is needed to determine whether its use is a feasible alternative, and it should not be treated as a replacement for in-person contact.

Are community supervision officers trained on identifying signs of and addressing domestic violence?
Because of their regular contact with people navigating through reentry, probation and parole officers are uniquely positioned to identify and address domestic violence among the people they supervise and their families. Supervision officers in your community should be equipped not only to build trust with people on their caseload and their family members,[57] but also to understand how conditions of community supervision potentially can contribute to vulnerability to domestic violence.[58]

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Example from the Field

Bridging the Connection to Family Support in Reentry Planning

In Montana, the **Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes**' Flathead Reservation Reentry Program (FRRP), operated by the Tribal Defenders' Office, serves tribal members and their families through a comprehensive, client-centered approach. The program focuses on serving people with co-occurring mental illnesses and substance use disorders, though any person returning to the Flathead Reservation from incarceration is eligible. Clients are referred from tribal, state, or county correctional facilities, and clients and families also may request services directly. FRRP provides comprehensive services and integrates behavioral health considerations into the pre-release and post-release case management and reentry processes. In addition to treatment for substance use disorders and mental illnesses, services include legal aid, including identifying the collateral consequences that the client has based on their conviction and making sure the client is aware of them; assistance with obtaining transitional and long-term housing, employment, or public benefits; and mentoring and mediation that focus on reconnecting with the tribal community and practices. Program staff are incorporating two scales designed to measure historical trauma among Native peoples—the Historical Loss Scale and the Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale—into their risk and needs assessments. This information can help the treatment provider better understand the source of the client's trauma and tailor their treatment, and it can help case managers facilitate discussions about culturally specific resources available to clients.

FRRP provides a bridge of communication between family members, incarcerated clients, and different agencies in the state and tribal systems. Staff often discuss reentry planning with family members who are preparing for a return home. For example, family members might have questions about sending letters of support to the parole board, what they need to do to prepare for visits from probation and parole officers, where to find sober living or housing that meets the parole requirements, or how to connect their loved one to counseling or treatment upon their return to the community. Family members and friends often work with clients to support their needs by contacting outside systems (e.g., courts, child support agencies, housing) and by directly providing housing or other support upon return to the community. Family support is a significant factor in success for FRRP clients.

Program graduates emphasize the significance of the help they have received through FRRP in their continued reentry success, and staff work to build a sense of trust and community so that participants have a greater chance of complying with the requirements of community supervision, thereby lowering their overall risk of recidivism. FRRP staff attribute much of the program's success to allowing clients and families to determine their own needs and goals.[59]

QUICK REFERENCES

Mentoring as a Component of Reentry: Practical Considerations from the Field (2017)

This publication offers five field-based considerations for incorporating mentoring into reentry programming for adults.

Model Practices for Parents in Prisons and Jails (2019)

This resource, geared toward local reentry coalition members or other community leaders who can influence correctional facility policies, presents jail- and prison- based practices that support parent-child relationships.

Reentry Considerations for Justice Involved Women (2016)

Consult this resource for information about best practices in supporting women through incarceration and reentry, including gender-responsive programming that addresses family reunification and domestic violence.

Toolkit for Developing Family-Focused Jail Programs (2015)

This toolkit, which distills practical experience from two local jails, provides guidance on designing and implementing family-focused programming that facilitates relationships between parents in jail and their children.

What Courts Should Know: Trends in Intervention Programming for Abusive Partners (2017)

This report covers the latest in program models geared toward people who have been convicted of domestic violence.

Part II: Tools for Change

Part I of this toolkit led you to assess whether your reentry strategy has the right foundations in place. In **part II,** you will see how to put what you have learned into action to meet the specific needs of your community. For local reentry coalition leaders who already have a firm grasp on how the local reentry process operates, these Tools for Change are a good place to start.

Keep in mind that applying these tools will not necessarily be a linear process; many of them will come into play concurrently, so you might find yourself flipping back and forth through **Section 1** through **Section 3** as your coalition embarks on its chosen set of reentry improvements.

Also note that the **Quick References** in this part of the toolkit differ slightly from those in **Part I:** they are provided at the end of each section and encourage you to take change-oriented lessons from other fields outside of reentry.

Part II of this toolkit is organized into three sections:

Section 1: Linking and Leveraging Resources	**Section 2: Changing Policy and Practice**	**Section 3: Building Broad Community Support**
Your reentry strategy can succeed only if it has the resources to do so. This section covers how to harness the full potential of available resources and seek new resources as necessary. In this section, you will learn how to • *Assess existing resources and gaps* • *Leverage existing resources to maximize impact* • *Identify new sources of funding*	Policy and practice change are the most effective ways to make a real difference in how reentry works on the ground in your community. This section will guide your local reentry coalition through developing and carrying out a policy and practice agenda. In this section, you will learn how to • *Develop priorities and goals for change* • *Collectively pinpoint the right mechanisms* • *Compile a strategic plan* • *Cultivate buy-in to enact policy and practice changes* • *Monitor policy and practice implementation*	Community members are valuable partners in furthering your local reentry coalition's policy and practice agenda. This section explains how you can engage the community to advance reentry priorities. In this section, you will learn how to • *Identify community members and networks to influence key decision makers* • *Develop strategic messaging* • *Promote broad-based support for policy, practice, and funding changes*

Section 1: Linking and Leveraging Resources

The success of any reentry strategy hinges on having sufficient resources to operate and sustain it. While "resources" often refers to actual dollars from various funding streams, such as federal grant programs and city budget line items, it also can apply to in-kind support such as donated equipment, physical space, services, and supplies.

Meeting the needs of your reentry population requires understanding what funding streams are currently being tapped to support reentry efforts, whether these resources are being used effectively, where there are gaps that need to be filled, and what additional resources might be leveraged to fill them. Even if your reentry strategy is already well resourced, there may be opportunities to use what you have more effectively.

In addition to seeking new funding opportunities and donated goods and services, your local reentry coalition should maximize the reach of available funding by ensuring that it is spent on effective programming and practices that meet your community's needs, cutting down on duplicative efforts, and reallocating resources as necessary. Going through this process ultimately will help your coalition crystallize its plans for policy and practice change, improvements that are closely tied to the availability of resources and will be covered further in **Section 2**.

Assess existing resources and gaps

Working with members of your local reentry coalition who represent public agencies (e.g., corrections, mental health agencies), your coalition should first review what resources are already available to support the reentry population in your community. Talk directly with the agencies that administer the resources supporting behavioral health, workforce development, and housing in your community to understand how these resources are or could be used to meet the needs of your reentry population. This is an important starting point to ensure that you are operating with the most up-to-date information and making strategic decisions about how to invest time, effort, and funds. It is important to remember that resources serving the reentry population might stem from agencies, organizations, and programs that are not explicitly or exclusively focused on people who are or have been in the criminal justice system. Entities that specialize in health, housing, transportation, and employment, among others, may provide resources that benefit the reentry population even if they are not specifically designed for them. For example, local communities receive funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the nation's primary source of federal funding for workforce development. This funding stream is broadly geared toward employment services for a number of economically disadvantaged populations and can be used in a variety of ways that specifically support people with criminal records.

Identifying available reentry resources and how they are being used at different stages of the criminal justice system also will position your local reentry coalition to identify gaps in services that point to a need for resources. To help spot these gaps, examine the following:

Services that are not filled to capacity, which may indicate that resources could be better used elsewhere

Services that have the longest waitlists, which may reflect a need for greater service capacity

Services that have demonstrated a positive impact, which may warrant expansion to serve more people who need them

Services that lack an evidence base, which may warrant their elimination

With a firm sense of how resources are currently being expended, how service capacity compares to the assessed needs of the reentry population in your community, and where improvements can be made to address unmet needs, your local reentry coalition can make informed resource allocation and fundraising decisions.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you know how much federal, state, and private funding is available for local reentry efforts?
It is possible that your community is not taking full advantage of the funding resources that are available to you. "Scanning Available Funding Resources" in **Appendix C: Part 2** will help your local reentry coalition organize the details of available funding and understand its scope.

Do you know how local agencies and organizations are expending available funding?
Before seeking additional funds to meet your community's reentry needs, you first should assess how local agencies are spending existing funds on reentry efforts. "Cataloging Resources that Support Pre-release and Community-Based Services" in **Appendix C: Part 2** will guide your local reentry coalition through this assessment so that you can determine how current resources meet your reentry population's needs and what further changes are necessary to make smarter investments in reentry. For a comprehensive understanding of how resources are used, be sure to consider in-kind resources as well as actual funding.

Do expenditures align with what you discovered in the reentry mapping process?
Refer back to the reentry map you completed in **Section 1** to compare how current expenditures align with the reentry supports and services that are connected to each of the decision points on the map. Take note if there are points on the map where programs and services are unavailable but needed, or if there are under- or overutilized services at any point in the map. This information will help you determine whether you need to reallocate existing resources and identify where additional funding could have the biggest impact.

Leverage existing resources to maximize impact

Maximizing the reach of existing resources is one way for your local reentry coalition to fill identified gaps and serve the reentry population as efficiently as possible. Using data that you already have collected on the size, demographics, assessed risk level, and needs of your population in **Appendix A,** you can work to align existing resources with the needs of your reentry population and direct funding away from underutilized or ineffective programs or practices.

A central part of leveraging existing resources is putting them to use effectively. Providing programming that is not specific to your community's needs is wasteful, and poor-quality programming not only wastes money—including taxpayer dollars—but also can actually increase recidivism.[60] As discussed in **Section 2,** the way programs are delivered, and to whom, is critical to improving outcomes for the reentry population. Your local reentry coalition can help your community get the most out of current investments in reentry by ensuring that programs and services are targeted to people who need them the most and requiring quality assurance measures. However, jurisdictions typically devote few resources to establishing quality assurance measures, which involve regularly reviewing program delivery, training staff on an ongoing basis, and ensuring that any screening and assessment tools are implemented properly. Accomplishing the effective use of existing resources likely would mean making adjustments to policies and practices in one or more agencies; see **Section 2** for more information about how your coalition can support policy and practice change. You also should periodically reassess the needs of your reentry population to determine whether and how program and service offerings should be adjusted. If your coalition identifies ineffective or superfluous programs in the course of these efforts, you may decide to eliminate them and reallocate resources toward programs that better serve your community's reentry population.

Further, agencies that serve the reentry population—including both criminal justice agencies and other service systems—each have their own priorities, practices, and budgets. This compartmentalization, whether intended or not, can lead to duplication of efforts, conflicting practices, and competition for the same resources. Your local reentry coalition therefore should seek to enable regular collaboration among these agencies. As you review your reentry map and complete **Appendix C: Part 2**, you may find opportunities to pool resources among local agencies and reallocate funding from duplicate or underutilized activities to services that can better serve your reentry population, including ones that produce positive outcomes but do not currently have enough capacity. For instance, a local community with a limited mental health clinical workforce may leverage funding across both criminal justice and mental health systems to pay for shared staff to respond to identified treatment needs in the jail and the community.[61]

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are you prioritizing resources for people assessed as high risk and high needs?
As discussed in **Section 2**, providing the most intensive programming and services for people with the greatest needs who are at a high risk of reoffending can have the biggest impact on reducing recidivism. Reviewing program and service eligibility policies and comparing them to actual data can help determine whether programs are serving people assessed as high risk and high needs.

Have you compared the needs of your population with the resources available?
In **Section 2**, you were encouraged to complete a summary of the risk and needs of your target population. Comparing the needs of your population to the resources available in your community will give you a sense of the gaps in resources.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Is funding of programs and services contingent upon their effectiveness?

Any public funding for programs and services should be contractually contingent upon their demonstrated effectiveness. Programs that do not improve outcomes ultimately should be discontinued or have their contracts canceled. Awarding future contracts and incentive payments can be useful ways to motivate organizations to use effective programs and practices.

Are you maximizing available funding streams?

Your local reentry coalition should understand what federal, state, local, and private resources are available to support the reentry process in your community. To get the maximum value from each funding stream, it is best to follow a particular sequence that accounts for the relative flexibility of each funding stream. Both federal and state funding typically have strict requirements for how dollars can be spent. Use these and any other restrictive funding sources first to pay for programs and services that your reentry population needs, and reserve funding with more flexibility regarding what goods and services can be purchased to fill in remaining gaps.

Are you using funds from multiple agencies where possible?

Combining funds from multiple agencies can support existing or new reentry efforts without depending entirely on one source to raise the total funds that are needed. While pooling funding, where possible, can help broaden the reach and impact of programs and services, it is important to consider each funding source's specific goals, target populations, conditional requirements, and performance measures as you determine whether combining resources will work for a given program or service.

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Example from the Field

Redirecting Funding to Needed Services

The **Lorain County, Ohio,** Sheriff's Office leveraged state and county funds to address gaps in services for people released from jail without secure housing. The county had received a grant through the state's Targeted Community Alternatives to Prison (T-CAP) program, which focused on diverting people convicted of low-level, nonviolent offenses from prison and could be used broadly to enhance criminal justice services at the local level. In conjunction with this project, county officials conducted a system mapping exercise and noted a gap in linkages to community-based services—particularly housing services—for people leaving the county jail. To address these issues, they successfully worked with Lorain County Adult Probation to reallocate some of the T-CAP funding to support a new case manager position. This new case manager benefited not only the T-CAP project but also reentry support services by assessing people in the jail for housing needs at intake and coordinating housing placements and community-based treatment services.

Part of the case manager's duties is working with the local coordinated entry system, the process mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for localities to ensure that people have access to housing and homelessness services if they need them. The sheriff's office found that some people in need of housing were released from jail at times when the coordinated entry's service provider was not available.

Identify new sources of funding

After maximizing existing resources, your local reentry coalition will want to identify additional funding opportunities that can support the most impactful, cost-effective, evidence-based approaches that align with your reentry strategy. **Section 2** will guide your coalition through the process of identifying and prioritizing policy and practice changes to strengthen your reentry strategy. These improvements may have additional associated costs, such as training, equipment and technology, and staffing. Once your coalition has settled on the policy and practice improvements that it would like to pursue, you can determine what additional resources are required and determine how best to obtain them. Estimate the costs for each of these changes, the number of people who will be served, and the projected impact of each additional program or service.

With an idea of where new funding can be most impactful, your local reentry coalition can explore local, state, federal, or private funding opportunities. Think creatively about how and where to obtain new funding. For example, you might explore whether there are opportunities for regional partnerships wherein neighboring communities pool funding to develop programs and services that serve the regional reentry population. Fundraising can be time consuming and requires specific skills, so your coalition may want to designate one or more people to lead this effort and ensure that it remains a priority and that funding is sustained over time.

Revisit and update **Appendix C: Part 2** on a regular basis, examining the impact of new investments and reallocating resources as necessary.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you have fundraising targets?
You will need defined fundraising targets to ensure that everyone on the local reentry coalition understands the goals you are trying to achieve and whether or not you have achieved them. To set and reach these targets, you will want to be as specific as possible about the amount of money that is needed by a certain date and its potential impact.

Have you designated a person or group in your local reentry coalition to lead funding sustainability efforts?
This person or group—potentially a subcommittee on your local reentry coalition—should identify new funding opportunities, coordinate funding proposals, and advocate to policymakers to direct or set aside additional resources to support your reentry strategy, as necessary. Local policymakers may not know how additional funds can serve the reentry population; designating people who are strong storytellers and skilled writers can increase your chances of being awarded funding. Even after you receive any new funding, the designated coalition member or subcommittee will need to work toward financial sustainability such that activities can continue after grant awards run out or as budgets change.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are local budgets tied to your local reentry coalition's recidivism-reduction goals?
The local budget may need to be adjusted to accommodate the policy and practice changes your local reentry coalition will identify in **Section 2**. To shape the local budget, your coalition will need to educate local reentry coalition leaders about its recidivism-reduction goals and how strategic investments can help increase public safety.

Are you leveraging community members and networks?
Engaging community members and other supportive networks can open doors to additional funding opportunities. With community support for your reentry strategy, you will have a better chance of convincing policymakers to allocate more funds for reentry programming and services. Keep in mind that community members themselves can be a valuable resource; if they are engaged in your reentry strategy, they might volunteer their time, expertise, and services or donate needed goods. For more information on building a base of support among local community members, see **Section 3**.

QUICK REFERENCES

Financing the Future of Local Initiatives (2020)

This set of tools helps jurisdictions plan for the financial sustainability of criminal justice initiatives.

Integrated Funding to Reduce the Number of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails: Key Considerations for California County Executives (2018)

Consult this brief to learn more about how some localities are maximizing funding to serve people in the criminal justice system who have mental health needs.

Twelve Tactics for Sustainability

This worksheet from the Community Toolbox can be used to think through opportunities for sustaining your reentry strategy.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: What Corrections and Reentry Agencies Need to Know (2017)

This brief introduces corrections and reentry professionals to the basics of WIOA funds and how they can be used to support the reentry population.

Section 2: Changing Policy and Practice

This section will guide your local reentry coalition through the culmination of your efforts to understand and improve reentry in your community: changing policy and practice.

While "policy" and "practice" are terms that often go hand in hand, there is an important distinction between the two. "Policy change" refers to formal measures made by government officials through laws, regulations, budget allocations, and administrative standards. These measures are not the end goal—their success depends largely on how they are carried out. "Practice change," while less formalized, is also essential; it applies to the routine activities of personnel in local agencies and organizations within and outside of government. Due to their less formal nature, practice changes may be more immediate and accessible than changes in policy, but they often require a significant amount of effort in the form of training and procedure development.

Developing and carrying out a policy and practice agenda is by no means easy. What it takes to effect these changes differs from one community to the next, and each jurisdiction presents its own challenges. But when systemic reentry policy and practice changes are implemented well, they can positively affect individuals and the whole community well into the future.

As your local reentry coalition works through **Appendix D,** you will be prompted to break the monumental task of policy and practice change down into manageable, actionable pieces.

Develop priorities and goals for change

Everything you have learned about the local reentry landscape in previous sections of this toolkit—from your reentry map to your inventory of services and assessment of resources—should inform your determination of priorities for policy and practice change. By now you should have a clear understanding of your community's criminal justice system, including who is cycling through it, what is and is not working well, and what it will take to make lasting improvements to the reentry process. Your local reentry coalition may come up with a long list of potential improvements, but it is not possible to tackle everything at once. Therefore, a critical first step to putting these ideas into motion is setting your priorities, which ultimately will determine the policy and practice agenda for your reentry strategy.

Arriving at these priorities requires your local reentry coalition members to work together to weigh various courses of action, consider their potential impact, gauge their relative attainability, and make decisions. Collective decision making can be difficult, especially among a large group of people who represent different agencies, organizations, and interests. There are a variety of methods for leading your coalition to a point of general agreement. Some groups strive to reach consensus through formal discussions that follow a specific formula, while others hold votes and move forward with decisions as long as a majority of the members support them. If your local reentry coalition is newly established, look to other communities and even other collaboratives, such as police-mental health

collaborations[62] and Continuums of Care, for examples of best practices in group deliberation. Coalition meetings are an ideal setting for carrying out your chosen collective decision-making process to determine which priorities to pursue and how to pursue them.

Once you have identified priorities, translate them into actionable goals: statements of the critical milestones you will need to reach to address your local reentry coalition's reentry priorities. Although these goals may range in duration, scope, and impact, each of them should be specific, time bound, and measurable. For example, if one of your priorities is to ensure that people leaving prison and jail have access to safe, secure, stable, affordable housing, a corresponding goal might be to increase referrals to local housing providers by 20 percent over the course of a year. Crafting this goal would involve identifying the need for more housing referrals, the extent of that need, and what would constitute a realistic increase in referrals for the chosen timeframe. Among your coalition's goals will be the recidivism-reduction targets you identified in **Section 2** of this toolkit. See **Appendix D** for further details on building and reaching goals through action steps, performance measures, and responsible decision makers.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Is there an established process for arriving at decisions as a group?
Local reentry coalition members should have structured opportunities to voice their opinions. Your coalition might consider instituting a group voting process or designating a neutral facilitator to lead the group to consensus. Regardless of the specific decision-making approach, be sure to include people directly affected by crime and incarceration in the development of priorities; they are best suited to speak to the real-life impact of reentry policy and practice in your community.

Do you understand how external factors may affect your priorities?
Factors such as current policy campaigns, high-profile incidents, or politicized budget negotiations can have an outsized impact on the success of your efforts. By considering these types of external influences, you can better determine how to enhance your chances of success or opt to focus on different priorities if these factors will impede your efforts.

Do you have a mixture of short- and long-term goals?
Define your goals with an eye toward the timeline. While some of your goals—such as those related to recidivism—will necessarily be long term, others should be achievable within months or a year. Having a combination of short- and long-term goals will help maintain momentum among local reentry coalition members and provide opportunities to report successes publicly throughout the course of your activities.

Collectively pinpoint the right mechanisms

With agreed-upon goals, your local reentry coalition can move on to proposing improvements that you hope to make through policy and practice changes—this is the transition from the "what" to the "how" of your reentry strategy.

Each of your goals likely will be associated with a number of different policy and practice improvements, and there are a host of different mechanisms your coalition can explore to bring about these proposed improvements.

It is important to understand the available options in order to select the appropriate path for each potential policy and practice change. Policy change mechanisms include legislative measures and budgetary modifications, as well as administrative policy, which dictates how agencies operate. Administrative policies sometimes involve interagency agreements, whereby two or more agencies or organizations formally commit to collaborating in some way. For example, if one of your local reentry coalition's goals focuses on increasing referrals to necessary mental health treatment for people leaving jail, an interagency agreement between the local jail and a community-based treatment provider could be a useful way to streamline information sharing and facilitate treatment connections.

Practice change mechanisms, on the other hand, can take a number of different forms. Many day-to-day functions of agencies and organizations that serve the reentry population can be changed without formal policies. Providing professional development and training, modifying procedures, eliminating redundancy, and adjusting staffing are all examples of potential practice change mechanisms.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Have you established criteria for selecting policy and practice mechanisms?
In some cases, it will be very clear which mechanism is most appropriate for a given policy or practice change. In others, it might be possible to achieve the same outcome with different mechanisms. Your local reentry coalition should be prepared to evaluate the relative merits of different types of policy and practice mechanisms to determine which ones to pursue. It might be difficult, for example, to pursue certain changes in a local election year, depending on the context. When making these decisions, consider what policy and practice mechanisms your jurisdiction has successfully implemented in the past. Looking to other jurisdictions for examples of reentry policy and practice mechanisms also can be a useful exercise.

Do you understand the process for instituting each type of mechanism?
Different communities have different procedures for effecting change. As you are selecting policy and practice mechanisms, it is important to understand what it will take to carry them out in your specific jurisdiction. For example, if your local reentry coalition seeks to pass a local ordinance, you should be familiar with the local government's public hearing schedule, if applicable, and the governing body's voting process. As discussed in **Section 1**, policy and practice changes are inextricably linked to the availability of resources. The strategic planning worksheet in **Appendix D** will prompt you to consider the resources necessary to accomplish each mechanism.

Are you dividing this work among local reentry coalition members?
Selecting the appropriate mechanisms for each of your local reentry coalition's proposed improvements can be a daunting and time-consuming effort. Consider tasking designated, topic-specific subcommittees or working groups in your coalition with determining mechanisms for relevant policy and practice changes. Mechanisms chosen by subcommittees can then be elevated to the full coalition for discussion.

Compile a strategic plan

Proposed policy and practice changes—and how to implement them—should be captured in a strategic plan that articulates clear, deliberate steps for making improvements and tracking progress. Building on the priorities, goals, and change mechanisms your local reentry coalition has formulated together, use the worksheet in **Appendix D** to plot out the components of your strategic plan, including the action steps needed to achieve each proposed improvement.

A well-constructed strategic plan is beneficial for a number of reasons. For one, it memorializes your local reentry coalition's reentry strategy in a way that is practical, organized, and easy to refer back to as necessary. Having this plan in place will help ensure that all members of your coalition are on the same page and positioned to sustain the activities of the coalition over time as its membership inevitably evolves. A strategic plan is also a useful tool for evaluating the success of your reentry strategy. Establishing progress or performance measures for each policy or practice change will help you determine whether you are on track or need to course-correct.

As with other local reentry coalition efforts, putting together a comprehensive strategic plan likely will require input from many different players, so it might be time consuming to complete. Keep in mind that, once your strategic plan is fully fleshed out, it will be helpful to publicly release it to inform the community and maintain accountability. Some coalitions, for example, post their annual goals and progress against those goals on government websites.

Building Blocks of a Strategic Plan

Priorities are the key issues that your local reentry coalition seeks to influence.

Goals are statements of the critical, measurable milestones you will need to reach to address your reentry priorities.

Proposed improvements are the policy and practice changes your coalition has identified to meet your goals. Each goal likely will be attached to multiple proposed improvements.

Mechanisms are the methods by which the policy or practice changes will be carried out (e.g., legislative policy, administrative policy).

Primary stakeholders and decision makers are the people from whom your local reentry coalition needs to focus on obtaining buy-in to make the policy or practice change happen successfully.

Performance measures are the indicators your coalition will monitor to track the progress of each proposed improvement.

Action steps: These are time-bound, achievable activities that can be used to maintain accountability and help the local reentry coalition monitor progress.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are you accounting for the resources needed to carry out your priorities?
A crucial part of the strategic planning process is determining what resources you will need to carry out each item in your strategic plan. The work you have done to assess existing resources in **Section 1** will serve as a useful basis for identifying resources, and the strategies covered in **Section 3** can be used to drive fundraising efforts if more resources are required.

Is your strategic plan flexible?
Establish a process to regularly revisit your strategic plan, check your progress, and make adjustments as necessary, including when any elements of the landscape change or as you encounter obstacles. Use reentry coalition meetings to review progress made and troubleshoot any issues hindering your advancement.

Are all of your action steps in service of your local reentry coalition's goals?
In cases where there are many opportunities for improvement, it is common to slip into activities that do not clearly correspond with the stated goals of your local reentry coalition. The worksheet in **Appendix D** is designed to focus your efforts and help ensure that each discrete activity in your strategic plan is consistent with your coalition's overall reentry goals.

Cultivate buy-in to enact policy and practice changes

What it means to institute policy or practice change will vary depending on the type of change and the chosen mechanism. But one constant of policy and practice change is that it requires identifying who the relevant decision makers are and generating support from them as well as the people who will be affected by proposed improvements.

Enacting a new policy takes significant commitment from local elected officials. While a few of these officials might be on your local reentry coalition, it is likely that outreach to others will be required to advance your policy agenda. Enthusiasm from members of the public can be especially influential in securing commitment from elected officials, as can examples from programs that show compelling and positive outcomes, even if those outcomes are preliminary. Testimonials, face-to-face interactions, and roundtable discussions can go a long way toward obtaining buy-in from officials who may not have as much information about what reentry looks like on the ground in your community. Refer to **Section 3** for more information on advancing your reentry strategy through support from community members.

Administrative policy change involves less public awareness than the passage of laws and budgets. Instead, it requires support from people within the agencies and organizations themselves. Entities that serve the reentry population often are overburdened and underresourced, making the introduction of new procedures especially taxing. Even without such challenges, new administrative policies can be difficult to implement if personnel—from local reentry coalition leaders to frontline staff—are not in favor of them. The active participation of local agency

leaders on your coalition will enable them to feel a sense of ownership of identified administrative policy changes, which in turn can be beneficial as those leaders promote the value of those changes among their staff.

As with policy changes, successfully instituting new practices invariably requires buy-in from the top down, regardless of the process each agency uses for rolling out practice changes. Promoting adherence to new practices entails helping leadership and frontline staff understand how these changes will improve agency functions overall, make them more effective in their jobs, and yield better outcomes for the people they serve. Effectively introducing practice changes also involves providing the people who are implementing them with sufficient support, such as coaching and training.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Have you projected the impact of proposed policy and practice changes?
To cultivate buy-in for any proposed improvement, your local reentry coalition will need to be equipped with data that demonstrate the need for change and the anticipated impact of each change. Be prepared to communicate how proposed policy and practice changes will affect your identified goals, and project the financial impact of policy and practice changes.

Have you shared the strategic plan with local decision makers and stakeholders?
Acquainting community members, neighborhood organizations, people who have been in or affected by the criminal justice system, policymakers, advocates, and nonprofit leaders with your strategic plan is an important step toward ensuring that your efforts are well informed and ultimately well received by key constituencies. For more information on building this kind of community support, see **Section 3**.

Are you familiar with principles of organizational culture change?
Change is difficult for any organization. Some of the policy and practice changes spearheaded by your local reentry coalition likely will meet resistance among the personnel who will be responsible for carrying out those changes in their day-to-day work. If your coalition understands and acknowledges the challenges associated with organizational change, you might have more success engaging agency and organization leaders to effect proposed improvements.

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Example from the Field

Generating Support for Organizational Change

The Adult Probation Department in **Maricopa County, Arizona,** used Second Chance Act grant funding to strengthen its Thinking for a Change (T4C) program by addressing inconsistencies in the ways that staff were implementing the cognitive behavioral intervention. The department leaders hosted a meeting of all T4C facilitators in the county, including community-based service providers who offer T4C programming. The facilitators first collaborated to identify specific procedural inconsistencies and then created work groups to address those problem areas. The groups took several weeks to explore and develop ideas for program standardization and then reconvened with recommendations, which subsequently were adopted formally throughout the county. Through this process, the facilitators were able to see what was happening across the department and partner agencies, hear others' perspectives, provide input on the resolution, and take ownership of the procedures that resulted from the collaborative process. The probation department continues to sustain consistent and effective T4C programming by regularly providing staff with the opportunity to give feedback on how the program operates.

Monitor policy and practice implementation

The enactment of policy and practice changes is not the end of your local reentry coalition's work. In fact, the lasting effectiveness of policy and practice changes hinges upon proper implementation. While members of your coalition may not be directly responsible for implementing policy and practice changes, they still can play an important role in maintaining accountability and facilitating adherence to system improvements.

Seeing policy and practice changes through will involve continuing to meet as a local reentry coalition, ensuring that quality assurance measures are in place, collecting and analyzing data to understand the progress and impact of improvements, updating your strategic plan as necessary based on data, and maintaining open lines of communication with community members. Revisit each of the appendices in this toolkit to help guide your coalition through the implementation stage of your reentry strategy, which will be a continuous and ongoing process.

You might consider charging local reentry coalition subcommittees with monitoring the implementation of policies and practices that relate to their specific focus areas or creating a specialized implementation subcommittee. Either way, it is particularly important to think ahead about implementation given that the timing of policy and practice changes will vary.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do local reentry coalition members know what their implementation responsibilities are?
Given that your local reentry coalition members represent a variety of different agencies and organizations that serve the reentry population at different levels, they likely are seeing how policy and practice changes play out on the ground. Thus, they are uniquely positioned to monitor the implementation stage of policy and practice change. Articulate roles and responsibilities to ensure that policies and practices are carried out as intended, and use coalition meetings as an opportunity for members to report out how changes are going in the agencies and organizations they represent.

Do you have a strategy to assess the impact of policy and practice changes?
Your strategic plan is a helpful starting point for measuring the success of policy and practice changes. A data subcommittee on your local reentry coalition or research departments within local government agencies can be engaged to track progress against the performance measures set forth in your strategic plan.

Are you prepared to report out on the effectiveness of enacted policies and practices?
Report-outs should be open and accessible to the public and should refer back to the performance measures identified in your strategic plan.

Example from the Field

Preparing Staff to Carry Out New Programming

The **Somerset County, Pennsylvania,** Board of Commissioners established a day reporting center (DRC) with two on-site probation officers to increase capacity for delivering specialized supervision to remote communities in the rural county. The DRC was built upon several foundational practices to address criminogenic needs and reduce recidivism, including using risk and needs assessments to inform targeted interventions; encouraging motivation to change; and applying incentives and rewards in response to positive behavior, and fair and graduated sanctions for negative behavior. Further, county leaders invested in staff training to ensure knowledge of and adherence to evidence-based practices. DRC staff and service providers received multiple days of training in motivational interviewing and facilitating change, including booster trainings to maintain the practice. In addition, first-line supervisors received training from Carey Group Publishing on the Supervisor's EBP BriefCASE, a collaborative coaching model, to help them provide ongoing support and mentorship to their staff.

Program leaders developed several tools to assess whether DRC programming was being implemented as intended. To support the implementation of motivational interviewing, they drafted a policy outlining the procedures, trainings, and performance measures for the staff who were conducting motivational interviewing, as well as a feedback form to collect and consider supervisor and peer observations in a standardized way. The program leaders also administered surveys to both program participants and instructors to gain insight on the strategies that people found beneficial and engaging.

QUICK REFERENCES

Changing Policies: An Overview

This section of the Community Tool Box discusses how to determine whether the political climate in your community is ripe for policy change.

Five Ways to Engage County Elected Officials in Your Justice Initiatives (2019)

This brief presents practical tips for keeping local elected officials sufficiently involved in your community's efforts related to criminal justice.

Franklin County Reentry Coalition 2016 Strategic Plan: A Community-Wide Commitment (2016)

Review this document to learn how one local community's reentry coalition approached strategic planning. See **Appendix G** for a useful example of translating goals into action steps.

How Counties Can Use Evidence-Based Policymaking to Achieve Better Outcomes (2018)

This report introduces the concept of evidence-based policymaking at the local level, part of which requires measuring the effectiveness of government programs.

Second Chance Cities: Local Efforts to Promote Re-Entry Success (2018)

Read this report for examples of methods that cities around the country have undertaken to change reentry policy and practice.

Successful Change Management Practices in the Public Sector (2016)

Based on findings from a survey of government employees, this report presents successful strategies for implementing organizational change as well as the most common roadblocks to change.

Section 3: Building Broad Community Support

Ultimately, your local community members benefit the most from a successful reentry strategy. But without their buy-in and commitment to improving the reentry process, the policy, practice, and funding changes described in **Section 1** and **Section 2** cannot be accomplished effectively. Your local reentry coalition will need widespread support to maintain momentum and funding, sustain policy and practice improvements, and achieve the ultimate goal of any reentry strategy—safer, stronger communities.

Members of your community should be encouraged to feel that they too hold responsibility for the success of your reentry strategy. A sense of shared ownership not only boosts community buy-in but also ensures that there is a broad coalition determined to see the reentry strategy through in the long term. Keep in mind that, by including community members in your decision-making process from the beginning, your local reentry coalition has actively been building good will toward its efforts. Now you can build on that good will to engage the community to help advance your coalition's priorities.

Community engagement can mean different things to different people. For the purposes of this toolkit, community engagement means making sure that local residents are supportive of the reentry strategy and empowered to push policy and practice changes forward—in addition to informing the strategy as a whole.

In some communities, there already may be an organized and active movement to improve reentry; in others, the concept of successful reentry might not be a top-of-mind concern for the average community member; and some places may have residents who are actively resistant to the local reentry coalition's efforts. Depending on what policy, practice, and funding changes your coalition intends to pursue, you likely will have a variety of different voices to consider and audiences to target for change, including correctional facility leaders, probation and parole agency administrators, local elected officials, and community-based service providers.

As with other local reentry coalition activities, it may be helpful to establish a subcommittee that focuses exclusively on community engagement in order to lead these efforts in an organized and consistent fashion. This section presents your coalition with action steps for garnering and operationalizing the support of your community members to effect change.

Identify community members and networks to influence key decision makers

You will need to conduct outreach beyond the local reentry coalition to engage people who can help obtain commitment from the relevant decision makers. To start building a list of potential community members and networks, look to people who are well positioned to influence key decision makers, including politically active constituents; religious leaders; health care providers; educational leaders; employers, chambers of commerce, and business associations; local media; initiatives or advocacy organizations; and, most importantly, people who have personal experience with the justice system, including family members of incarcerated people and victims of crime.

It will be important for your local reentry coalition to get the endorsement of local legislators who can serve as "champions" of policy change and help get other decision makers on board. These policymakers can be easy to pinpoint if they already have made a public commitment to improving the reentry process or improving the criminal justice system. Securing the backing of champions in various political parties can be beneficial, especially given that changes in political leadership occur over time.

In addition to political leaders, identify other spokespeople who can appeal to a variety of audiences—from faith-based groups to the local media—and communicate the need for identified policy, practice, and funding changes. For example, the stories of people with personal experience in the criminal justice system can be invaluable; consider engaging them to speak on behalf of your local reentry coalition to help illustrate the connection between proposed system improvements and the everyday lives of people in your community.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are there existing community networks you can partner with to advance your priorities?
It is unlikely that your local reentry coalition will be starting from scratch when it comes to galvanizing social will for improvements to the reentry process. Be sure to research whether there are any nonprofits, governmental organizations, or grassroots groups whose goals might dovetail with your coalition's priorities. Partnering with such entities can be helpful not only for making inroads with decision makers but also potentially for sharing resources, including marketing materials and community volunteers. Doing so also can help you avoid duplicating efforts and connect with people who initially may have been skeptical of your coalition's work.

Have you identified a representative group of community members to engage?
Carefully consider geography, demographics, and interests to ensure that you are focused on engaging a diverse, representative group of people and developing a broad base of support. To be as inclusive as possible, make sure that you are connecting with "hard-to-reach" groups in your community, such as young people, elderly people, and marginalized groups. Tapping into existing community networks can help with this particular aspect of engagement.

Are you including people without traditional leadership experience?
Although you might be inclined to engage people who have had formal leadership training or experience, broadening the scope beyond established leaders can lead to the inclusion of important perspectives.[63] Community members who are not currently in leadership roles might be able to provide insight that your local reentry coalition has not considered and help you understand the level of support for the reentry strategy among people who exercise less public influence in your community.

Develop strategic messaging

For your local reentry coalition to successfully engage the public, you will need to create messaging that reaches each of the influential community members and networks you identified in the previous step. Having a

coordinated communication plan can help your coalition organize and streamline strategic messaging; maintain energy behind the reentry strategy; manage the narrative surrounding proposed policy, practice, and funding changes; and hold reentry coalition leaders publicly accountable for making change. Refer to **Appendix E** for a blueprint that your coalition can use to develop a robust communication plan.

In general, it is best to avoid jargon and use accessible terminology in any verbal or written communication with the broader community. Your local reentry coalition's messaging also should be appropriately tailored to the audience at hand. Depending on the audience you are speaking to, it will be helpful to clarify why improving the local reentry process is relevant for them and their neighborhoods and networks in order to foster a sense of shared responsibility.

As you develop strategic messaging, consider that you might encounter a spectrum of opinions about the criminal justice system, depending on the experiences of people in your local community. Some community members might have complaints about shortcomings of reentry services based on their own involvement with the system. Others may resist the idea of supporting people in reentry if they do not consider the success of people who have been in prison or jail as relevant to the well-being of the community as a whole. Preparing for challenging or negative feedback will equip your local reentry coalition and its supporters to respond appropriately and keep the conversation going in a constructive way.

?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Have you established a set of talking points?
A successful awareness campaign about reentry hinges on succinct and persuasive expression of the challenges you are seeking to address. See **Appendix E** for sample talking points that can be adjusted to reflect your unique context. As you tailor talking points for your community, be sure to articulate a problem statement that will resonate widely.

Are you using information that you already have gleaned from community members?
If your local reentry coalition has engaged members of the public from the beginning, you likely have accumulated a lot of information about what is on the minds of people in your community. Think about what you have heard from local residents throughout this process to help anticipate concerns and reactions that your coalition and its supporters might encounter.

Are you prepared to monitor the impact of advocacy efforts?
As your local reentry coalition engages community members to advocate for policy, practice, and funding changes, it will be helpful to know which of their tactics are most effective and should be expanded and which tactics are less impactful. Use your communication plan to track how community members' advocacy efforts are received by decision makers and which efforts yield positive results.

Promote broad-based support for policy, practice, and funding changes

Once you have laid the groundwork for community engagement, your local reentry coalition must deploy its supporters to serve as messengers and actively campaign for proposed policy, practice, and funding changes. To maximize impact, organize messengers' efforts based on the skills, expertise, and community connections that each of them bring. A corrections official might speak with media about the budgetary impact of improved reentry outcomes, and an advocacy organization leader might make in-person visits to local elected officials. All of your messengers should be prepared to communicate specifically about why and how the coalition's proposed changes will benefit a variety of constituencies.

With this promotional work, it is important to engage both decision makers and members of the public who will be affected by their decisions. Your local reentry coalition can deploy messengers in a number of ways to help persuade decision makers to adopt proposed policy, practice, and funding changes and to convince community members about the merits of those changes. Phone calls to local legislators, comments at public hearings, reentry program tours for council members, and rallies that gather community members are all examples of tactics to advance your coalition's reentry priorities. Providing messengers with the talking points you have developed for various audiences can help them conduct outreach—from minimal-effort tactics such as social media posts to more substantial engagements such as town hall meetings—while staying on message.

As you engage messengers to advocate for proposed changes, you likely will find that you meet even more potential messengers whom you did not know before, or that some people you engaged initially are not able to commit as much time as they expected. The process of community engagement can be unpredictable, and your local reentry coalition will need to be adaptable in order to respond nimbly as participation from messengers fluctuates. Despite its unpredictability, community engagement done well cements your entire strategy together.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are you employing a variety of tactics to advance your reentry priorities?
Communication tactics largely fall under the categories of direct outreach, education and awareness building, in-person meetings and visits, social media campaigns, and traditional media outreach. Each of your chosen tactics should have a clear objective. The Communication Tactics chart in **Appendix E** will prompt you to determine the purpose of each communication, as well as timing and target audience. Keep in mind that different audiences may respond to varying types of communication tactics. Local elected officials, for example, will be more likely to follow through with policy, practice, and funding changes if they feel pressure from their constituents through a number of avenues. Members of the public may be more influenced by social media messaging and letters to local newspaper editors from their peers. Ideally, decision makers and community members should be receiving a steady drumbeat of communication from messengers.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you have realistic expectations for messengers' participation?

Your local reentry coalition likely will develop a host of activities to carry out in service of mobilizing support for proposed improvements. It is important to recognize that the level of participation among your supporters may vary. While some community members may be willing to lead or speak at events, for example, others may prefer to play a more passive role through occasional phone calls to local reentry coalition leaders or attendance at events. Although it is important to maintain flexibility in your community engagement strategy, asking for messengers' anticipated level and preferred methods of participation at the outset will help you plan your outreach.

Are messengers encouraged to maintain accountability?

In addition to pushing for the enactment of policy, practice, and funding changes, community members play a pivotal role in holding decision makers accountable. Consider planning opportunities for messengers to make continued contact with local reentry coalition leaders to ensure that the changes they worked hard to promote are being implemented and sustained as intended and leading to the desired results.

QUICK REFERENCES

Community Capacity Toolkit (2016)

This toolkit contains helpful cues for identifying existing community engagement resources.

Community Planning Toolkit (2014)

This toolkit provides an overview of several different engagement methods that your local reentry coalition might consider.

Meaningfully Connecting with Communities in Advocacy and Policy Work (2019)

Consult this resource to help define what "meaningful connections" with the community means for your coalition.

Appendix A. Reentry Mapping: A Deeper Dive

How to Identify Data Sources

Different agencies will have access to the data required to create a reentry map. Gathering an aggregate (i.e., summarized), de-identified (i.e., without personal information) sample will be sufficient for these purposes. It is helpful to get data from the same timeframe and geography for each decision point; that said, the level of precision must be flexible to respond to realistic data collection and analysis constraints. It also is useful to talk with local universities or research divisions within government agencies that may have conducted past studies of specific decision points. Assembling these past studies and talking with both government and nongovernment researchers can be a good start for understanding what analysis already may be available to give you a sense of your reentry population and the broader reentry map.

Use this template to pinpoint the various data sources you will need to tap in order to chart your reentry population through your local justice system decision points.

Data Type (e.g., Number of Probation Revocations)	Reentry Map Decision Point (e.g., Probation/ Parole)	Geographic Area (e.g., ZIP Code, City Limits, County Limits)	Timeframe (e.g., Calendar Year 2018)	Data Source(s) (e.g., County Probation)	Who collects the data? (e.g., Probation Officers)	When are the data collected? (e.g., Revocation Hearing)	How are the data collected? (e.g., Form XYZ)

How to Analyze Population Characteristics

As you begin to refine the focus of your reentry strategy, it will be important to understand the characteristics of your reentry population—the people who are returning to your local community from prison and jail. At a minimum, you will benefit from understanding the demographics, risk of recidivism, and needs of

*your reentry population. To complete this table, you will aggregate data from risk and needs assessments; specialized assessments, if available; and other information about your reentry population. See **Section 2** and **Section 3** for more information on these assessments and related needs. Note that not all criminal justice agencies use the same types of risk and needs assessments, so information about your reentry population's needs may vary from one data source to another or may be incomplete.*

Population Demographic Characteristics	Number/Percentage (as Applicable)	
Total reentry population		
Age		
Gender	M F X	
Race/Ethnicity		
Parents		
Veterans		
Number/percentage assessed as moderate to high risk of recidivism	# %	
Population Needs Number/percentage assessed as moderate to high risk of recidivism and moderate to high need for:	**Number/Percentage Need Services**	**Number/Percentage Receive Services**
• Substance use treatment	# %	# %
• Mental health treatment	# %	# %
• Housing	# %	# %
• Employment	# %	# %
• Other areas (add rows as needed)	# %	# %

Appendix B. Reentry Practices Capacity Assessment

The Reentry Practice Capacity Assessment (RPCA) is an online tool designed to assess your juvenile or adult reentry coalition's readiness to implement reentry evidence-based practices, identify strengths and needs areas for improvement, and guide planning and further implementation. The following provides an overview of the RPCA.

RPCA Overview

1. Your reentry coalition can access the RPCA at www.reentrytoolkit.org.

2. Create an account for your reentry coalition. Once an account has been created, your reentry coalition will be able to access the online RPCA, download the full assessment, and use the planning templates provided.

3. Ideally, the reentry coalition coordinator and other members of the coalition should complete the RPCA to ensure that diverse perspectives can be captured. If this is not possible, the reentry coalition coordinator should complete the tool and share the results with the other members for discussion and consensus. Please note: If you currently do not have a developed reentry coalition, the RPCA can be used as a planning checklist to ensure your coalition is developed with an evidence-based foundation.

4. Because the RPCA is comprehensive, please ensure that your reentry coalition has sufficient time to collaboratively complete the assessment. Information entered into the RPCA should be based on the reentry coalition's current understanding, not on data review or progress reports from others on individual items.

5. The RPCA identifies capacity levels (High-, Medium, and Low- Capacity), strengths, and areas that may need to be strengthened to improve implementation of reentry best practices.

6. The RPCA will automatically calculate the total ratings for each section of the assessment. The reentry coalition can use the capacity levels provided in your results report to help prioritize your reentry coalition's areas of focus for implementation of reentry best practices and strategic planning. Rerating the reentry coalition periodically (annually, for example) will highlight changes and accomplishments achieved throughout the implementation process.

Appendix C. Part 1: Taking Inventory of Pre-release and Community-Based Services

This appendix will help you develop an inventory of services that catalogs the eligibility criteria, capacity, and alignment with evidence-based practices for services under each domain highlighted in **Section 3**. This is not an easy undertaking; it requires gathering information from a variety of different agencies, organizations, and people. Therefore, your local reentry coalition might consider designating a specific subcommittee to carry out this task.

Ultimately, completing this inventory will help your coalition identify what currently exists in your community and identify where there may be treatment and service gaps across systems. Just because your community lacks a specific program or service does not necessarily mean that it is needed; it depends on the needs of your reentry population and other local contextual factors.

The inventory is organized by the domains addressed in **Section 3**. Add rows as necessary to account for each program, intervention, or service available in your community.

Connect people to safe, stable, affordable housing						
A. **What is the name of the program/intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		

Connect people to safe, stable, affordable housing						
A. **What is the name of the program/intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		

Ensure access to quality treatment and services for behavioral health needs						
A. **What is the name of the program/intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		

Ensure access to quality treatment and services for behavioral health needs						
A. What is the name of the program/intervention/ service?	**B.** Who is the provider?	**C.** Is it offered before or after release?	**D.** Is it evidence based?	**E.** Is placement based on a screening or assessment?	**F.** How many people does it serve annually?	**G.** What are the eligibility criteria?
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		

Advance economic opportunity and mobility						
A. What is the name of the program/intervention/ service?	**B.** Who is the provider?	**C.** Is it offered before or after release?	**D.** Is it evidence based?	**E.** Is placement based on a screening or assessment?	**F.** How many people does it serve annually?	**G.** What are the eligibility criteria?
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		

Promote connections to family and prosocial networks						
A. **What is the name of the program/intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		
		Pre-release/ Post-release/ Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No If yes, who administers the screening or assessment?		

Appendix C. Part 2: Taking Inventory of Resources

Scanning Available Funding Resources

Take a high-level look at the funding sources that are currently being used to support the reentry population in your community. Once you have filled in the table below, consider what funding is available and how much of that funding is being used.

Funding Program/Name	Funding Source				What can/does the funding cover?	Administering Agency	Dollar Amount		Funding Period	Conditional Requirements
	Federal	State	Local	Private			Available	Used		
Example: Jail reentry programming budget line item	☐	☐	☒	☐	☒ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☒ Staffing ☐ Other:	*County Department of Corrections*	*$400,000*	*$380,000*	*FY2020– FY2021*	
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:					

Funding Program/Name	Funding Source				What can/does the funding cover?	Administering Agency	Dollar Amount		Funding Period	Conditional Requirements
	Federal	State	Local	Private			Available	Used		
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:					
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:					
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:					

Funding Program/Name	Funding Source				What can/does the funding cover?	Administering Agency	Dollar Amount		Funding Period	Conditional Requirements
	Federal	State	Local	Private			Available	Used		
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:					
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:					
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:					

Cataloging Resources That Support Pre-release and Community-Based Services

The tables below are designed to build on information that your local reentry coalition already has gathered about pre-release and community-based services. Using the tables from **Appendix C: Part 1** as a starting point, now complete columns H through K for each of the services that you listed. By reviewing how funding is allocated, your coalition can determine whether your community is optimally leveraging resources to serve the reentry population.

Connect people to safe, stable, affordable housing										
A. **What is the name of the program/ intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**	**H.** **How is it funded?**	**I.** **How much does it cost annually?**	**J.** **What can/does its funding cover?**	**K.** **Does it utilize any in-kind resources (e.g., supplies, volunteers, space)?**
		Pre-release/Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	
		Pre-release/Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	

Connect people to safe, stable, affordable housing										
A. **What is the name of the program/ intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**	**H.** **How is it funded?**	**I.** **How much does it cost annually?**	**J.** **What can/does its funding cover?**	**K.** **Does it utilize any in-kind resources (e.g., supplies, volunteers, space)?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	

Ensure access to quality treatment and services for behavioral health needs										
A. **What is the name of the program/ intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**	**H.** **How is it funded?**	**I.** **How much does it cost annually?**	**J.** **What can/does its funding cover?**	**K.** **Does it utilize any in-kind resources (e.g., supplies, volunteers, space)?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	

Ensure access to quality treatment and services for behavioral health needs										
A. **What is the name of the program/ intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**	**H.** **How is it funded?**	**I.** **How much does it cost annually?**	**J.** **What can/does its funding cover?**	**K.** **Does it utilize any in-kind resources (e.g., supplies, volunteers, space)?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	

Advance economic opportunity and mobility										
A. **What is the name of the program/ intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**	**H.** **How is it funded?**	**I.** **How much does it cost annually?**	**J.** **What can/does its funding cover?**	**K.** **Does it utilize any in-kind resources (e.g., supplies, volunteers, space)?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	

A. **What is the name of the program/ intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**	**H.** **How is it funded?**	**I.** **How much does it cost annually?**	**J.** **What can/does its funding cover?**	**K.** **Does it utilize any in-kind resources (e.g., supplies, volunteers, space)?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	

Advance economic opportunity and mobility

Promote connections to family and prosocial networks										
A. **What is the name of the program/ intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**	**H.** **How is it funded?**	**I.** **How much does it cost annually?**	**J.** **What can/does its funding cover?**	**K.** **Does it utilize any in-kind resources (e.g., supplies, volunteers, space)?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	

Promote connections to family and prosocial networks										
A. **What is the name of the program/ intervention/ service?**	**B.** **Who is the provider?**	**C.** **Is it offered before or after release?**	**D.** **Is it evidence based?**	**E.** **Is placement based on a screening or assessment?**	**F.** **How many people does it serve annually?**	**G.** **What are the eligibility criteria?**	**H.** **How is it funded?**	**I.** **How much does it cost annually?**	**J.** **What can/does its funding cover?**	**K.** **Does it utilize any in-kind resources (e.g., supplies, volunteers, space)?**
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	
		Pre-release/ Post-release/Both	Yes/No/Unsure	Yes/No					☐ Programs/ Services ☐ Training ☐ Equipment/ Supplies ☐ IT ☐ Staffing ☐ Other:	

Appendix D. Strategic Planning Worksheet

The purpose of this worksheet is to help you organize the goals of your reentry strategy and the action steps you will need to take to achieve those goals.

To get started, discuss with your local reentry coalition the priority focus(es) of your reentry strategy—the key issues that you hope to address. The purpose of this discussion is to identify the goals that will guide your activities. Depending on the scope of your strategic plan, it might be helpful to form subcommittees or teams who will be responsible for refining the goals into clear statements and identifying the activities that will be necessary to achieve each goal.

Priorities are the key issues that your local reentry coalition seeks to influence.

Goals are statements of the critical, measurable milestones you will need to reach to address your reentry priorities.

Proposed improvements are the policy and practice changes that your local reentry coalition has identified to meet your goals. Each goal likely will be attached to multiple, proposed improvements.

Mechanisms are the methods by which the policy or practice changes will be carried out (e.g., legislative policy, administrative policy).

The primary stakeholders and decision makers are the people from whom your local reentry coalition needs to focus on obtaining buy-in to make the policy or practice change happen successfully.

Performance measures are the indicators your local reentry coalition will monitor to track the progress of each proposed improvement.

For each proposed improvement, your local reentry coalition should develop a set of action steps: time-bound, achievable activities that can be used to maintain accountability and help the coalition monitor progress. Create enough clarity within the action steps so that related tasks can be assigned easily to staff within relevant agencies and organizations to carry out.

The person, people, or team responsible should have the authority, capacity, and expertise to carry out the task.

The timeframe should be reasonable but aggressive enough to encourage momentum and signal how important each step is to the overall goal.

For each step, it is likely that resources or input from multiple people or organizations will be required. Document the types of resources or inputs that are necessary to o potential barriers, delays, or inefficiencies that may accompany each step. For example, if several action steps require the input of another agency or division, then it might be helpful to form a team that includes the agency/division as part of the "person/people/team responsible" for the activity.

*The **current status/progress** column should provide a brief summary of progress made and should note any factors that may cause a delay in completing the action step on time.*

EXAMPLE PRIORITY 1: Ensure that people leaving prison and jail have access to safe, secure, affordable housing

GOAL 1: Increase referrals to local housing providers by 20 percent by January 2022.

Proposed Improvement:	Institute a brief housing needs screening in the local jail
Mechanism:	Practice change
Primary Stakeholders and Decision Makers:	Jail administrator, jail reentry program staff, jail case managers
Performance Measures:	1. All frontline staff in the jail's reentry program are trained on the housing needs screening tool. 2. Screening tool results are consistently used to make referral decisions to housing providers.

Action Step	Person/People/Team Responsible	Timeframe	Resources or Input Needed	Current Status/Progress
Research and identify a validated housing needs screening tool	Local reentry coalition's housing subcommittee	~ 4 months	Meeting time for housing subcommittee	In progress; narrowed options down to two tools
Incorporate screening questions into the jail's information management system	Jail IT staff member and jail reentry program	~ 4 months	Staff time	Not yet started
Provide initial training for frontline staff on how to implement the housing needs screening tool	Jail reentry program coordinator, training academy administrator	~ 12 months	Staff time	Not yet started
Establish a schedule for booster training	Jail reentry program coordinator, training academy administrator	~ 12 months	Staff time	Not yet started
Define quality assurance procedures for implementation of screening tool	Jail reentry program coordinator in consultation with local reentry coalition housing subcommittee	~ 6 months	Staff time	Not yet started

GOAL 1: Increase referrals to local housing providers by 20 percent by January 2022.

Proposed Improvement:	Establish contracts between the jail and local housing providers
Mechanism:	Administrative change (interagency agreements)
Primary Stakeholders and Decision Makers:	Jail legal counsel, jail administrator, leaders of local housing providers
Performance Measures:	Contracts are signed with housing providers that have demonstrated success with the reentry population.

Action Step	Person/People/Team Responsible	Timeframe	Resources or Input Needed	Current Status/Progress
Identify local housing providers that have demonstrated success with the reentry population	Local reentry coalition's housing subcommittee	~ 4 months	Meeting time for housing subcommittee	In progress; collecting evaluation data from local housing providers
Partner with the local Continuum of Care	Local reentry coalition's housing subcommittee	~ 4 months	Meeting time for housing subcommittee	In progress; outreaching to Continuum of Care leads
Draft and sign contracts with chosen providers	Jail administrator and legal counsel in consultation with representatives from chosen providers	~ 8 months	Federal grant award to support subcontracts with providers	Not yet started
Draft policies/processes for chosen providers and/or the Continuum of Care to conduct pre-release inreach in the jail	Jail administrator	~ 6 months	Staff time to draft procedures, meeting time to discuss procedures	Not yet started
Evaluate established contracts on an ongoing basis	Jail administrator	Every 1–2 years	Reports of housing providers' effectiveness, meeting time with frontline staff who work directly with housing providers	Not yet started

PRIORITY 1:

GOAL 1:

Proposed Improvement:	
Mechanism:	
Primary Stakeholders and Decision Makers:	
Performance Measures:	

Action Step	Person/People/Team Responsible	Timeframe	Resources or Input Needed	Current Status/Progress

GOAL 1:

Proposed Improvement:	
Mechanism:	
Primary Stakeholders and Decision Makers:	
Performance Measures:	

Action Step	Person/People/Team Responsible	Timeframe	Resources or Input Needed	Current Status/Progress

PRIORITY 2:

GOAL 1:

Proposed Improvement:	
Mechanism:	
Primary Stakeholders and Decision Makers:	
Performance Measures:	

Action Step	Person/People/Team Responsible	Timeframe	Resources or Input Needed	Current Status/Progress

GOAL 2:

Proposed Improvement:	
Mechanism:	
Primary Stakeholders and Decision Makers:	
Performance Measures:	

Action Step	Person/People/Team Responsible	Timeframe	Resources or Input Needed	Current Status/Progress

PRIORITY 3:

GOAL 1:

Proposed Improvement:	
Mechanism:	
Primary Stakeholders and Decision Makers:	
Performance Measures:	

Action Step	Person/People/Team Responsible	Timeframe	Resources or Input Needed	Current Status/Progress

GOAL 2:

Proposed Improvement:	
Mechanism:	
Primary Stakeholders and Decision Makers:	
Performance Measures:	

Action Step	Person/People/Team Responsible	Timeframe	Resources or Input Needed	Current Status/Progress

Appendix E: Building a Communication Plan

This appendix provides your local reentry coalition with a blueprint for a robust communication plan to help achieve the goals of your reentry strategy.

Sample Talking Points

Establishing a core set of talking points will equip your local reentry coalition and its messengers to articulate a problem statement, capture how your work can help combat the problem, and maintain consistency across various forms of communication. Customize the sample talking points below to fit the particulars of your community and your coalition's reentry priorities, goals, and action steps. These talking points can then be used by members of your coalition and messengers from the community to help advance policy, practice, and funding changes.

How to Explain Reentry

Reentry is the process of returning to one's community from prison or jail. For years, success in reentry was narrowly defined as staying out of prison or jail.

But we now know that reentry is more than that: reentry is reuniting families, eliminating barriers to employment, finding stable housing, and much more.

Only by addressing all of the factors that contribute to successful reentry can we enable a safe and healthy transition from prison or jail to the community.

To realize this vision, we need everyone—from jail administrators to business leaders, mental health professionals, and community members—to come together.

The Reentry Population

Two decades ago, communities in [*insert state*] were building more and more prisons and jails, resigned to the assumption that we could do little more than incapacitate a person under correctional supervision.

Today, government agencies and their community-based partners are employing strategies to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. They recognize that pursuing anything short of this objective compromises public safety and wastes taxpayer dollars.

Despite this progress, millions of people return to their communities from prison and jail each year. When they do, they face a harsh reality.

Finding housing can be extremely difficult, the job market is largely unwelcoming to people with criminal records, conditions of community supervision can be overwhelming, and it is often challenging to reconnect with family members and friends.

The proportion of people with behavioral health needs in the criminal justice system is much higher than it is in the general public.[ii]

Education,[iii] literacy,[iv] and numeracy[v] levels tend to be lower on average for incarcerated people than they are for the general population, and access to education in prisons and jails can be limited.[vi]

The existence of a criminal record reduces the likelihood of an employer calling an applicant back for an interview by 50 percent on average, rising to 60 percent for black male job candidates with a criminal record.[vii]

People who have been incarcerated earn 40 percent less annually than they had earned prior to incarceration.[viii]

[*Add specific talking points about the reentry population in your community.*]

Impact on the Community

The ripple effects of reentry challenges are not limited to people who have been in prison and jail.

Reentry touches the whole community, from police officers to business leaders to educators.

When the reentry population is positioned to succeed, the entire community is better off.

Successful reentry leads to less crime, saves taxpayer dollars, and benefits the well-being of families and the community as a whole.

[*Add information about how your community specifically could benefit from an improved reentry process. Cite local corrections costs, data about violations of probation and parole, how many people incarcerated in your community are parents of young children, etc.*]

Messengers

Your strategic messaging is only as good as its messengers. Ideally, your local reentry coalition should assemble a group of spokespeople who represent a variety of different perspectives and can speak to your talking points through the lens of their own experiences. Use this chart to take stock of your coalition's messengers—the

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[ii] Blandford, Alex M., and Fred Osher, *Guidelines for the Successful Transition of People with Behavioral Health Disorders from Jail and Prison* (New York: CSG Justice Center, 2013); and Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, *Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2015 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2016).

[iii] Bobby D. Rampey et al., *Highlights from the U.S. PIAAC Survey of Incarcerated Adults: Their Skills, Work Experience, Education, and Training* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2016), 5, table 1.1, https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016040.pdf. Note that the PIAAC survey is of people incarcerated in state and federal prisons.

[iv] Rampey et al., *Highlights from the U.S. PIAAC Survey of Incarcerated Adults*, 6, table 1.2.

[v] Rampey et al., *Highlights from the U.S. PIAAC Survey of Incarcerated Adults*, 7, table 1.3.

[vi] Gorgol, Laura E., and Brian A. Sponsler, *Unlocking Potential: Results of a National Survey of Postsecondary Education in State Prisons* (Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2011), 3, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED521128.pdf.

[vii] Devah Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record," *American Journal of Sociology* 108, no. 5 (2003): 937–975.

[viii] The Pew Charitable Trusts, *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility* (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010).

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champions and spokespeople who can advocate to decision makers and community members about various proposed policy, practice, and funding changes.

Name	Organization/Expertise/Experience	Political Affiliation (if known)

Communication Tactics

Use this chart to strategically plot out communication tactics, what they aim to achieve, and whom they target and when. Tactics are organized into the following categories: direct outreach, education and awareness building, in-person meetings and visits, and social media campaigns.

Tactic	Objective	Target Readership/Audience	Timing
Direct outreach (e.g., phone calls, petitions)			
Education and awareness building (e.g., fact sheets, infographics)			
In-person meetings and visits (e.g., town hall meetings, visits to elected officials)			

Tactic	Objective	Target Readership/Audience	Timing
Social media campaigns (e.g., organized Twitter chats, scheduled Facebook posts)			

Use the following chart to flesh out ideas for traditional media outreach, including pitching stories to news outlets, preparing press releases, developing op-eds, and writing letters to newspaper editors.

Traditional Media Outreach				
News Stories				
What is the topic?	**What makes it relevant and timely?**	**Which outlets or reporters are you targeting?**	**When is the target release date?**	
Press Releases				
What news are you sharing?	**What makes it relevant and timely?**	**Which outlets or reporters will you send it to?**	**When is the target release date?**	
Op-Eds				
What is the main argument of this piece?	**What makes it relevant and timely?**	**Who is the author(s) and why?**	**What is the target outlet?**	**When is the target release date?**

Traditional Media Outreach				
Letters to the Editor				
What is the main argument of this piece?	What makes it relevant and timely?	What motivates the author to speak on this issue?	What is the target outlet?	When is the target submission date?

Endnotes

1 First Step Act, H. R. 5682, 115th Cong. (2018). https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/5682/text

2 Note that this toolkit alternates between the terms "community" and "jurisdiction" depending on the context. "Community" is used generally to refer to an area where people live. "Jurisdiction" is used when referring more specifically to an area defined by government authority.

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10 In this context, "antisocial" refers to behaviors that deviate from social norms and cause harm or distress to the broader community.

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14 See Fabelo, Nagy, and Prins, *A Ten-Step Guide to Transforming Probation Departments*.

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