Rebuilding Lives.

Restoring Hope.

Strengthening Communities.

Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration and Building Brighter Futures in Chicago

Final Report of the Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry

January 2006

City of Chicago • Richard M. Daley, Mayor

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Message from the Mayor

The issue of prisoner reentry has taken on new urgency in recent years, as tens of thousands of formerly incarcerated individuals have returned to our city seeking a fresh start. For too long, the challenges facing these individuals were largely ignored. But recently, the City of Chicago convened the Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry, a groundbreaking effort to bring together government and community leaders, business owners and executives, foundations, social service professionals, policy advocates and people with criminal records to discuss better ways to prepare and assist formerly incarcerated individuals as they try to lead positive and productive lives. This report is the result of those discussions.

The dimensions of the problem are clear. This year alone, more than 21,000 people will return to Chicago after their release from prison. Many will return to their same neighborhoods, often jobless, without a place to live and lacking the basic skills they need. Few receive any help in turning their lives around. We need to promote and develop concrete, pragmatic measures that will address the challenges they face every day.

When we talk about lending a hand to these individuals, we do so always with the understanding that some have committed serious crimes. Their problems often are not high on most lists of priorities. And there are certainly citizens who believe that these former criminals do not deserve our attention or concern.

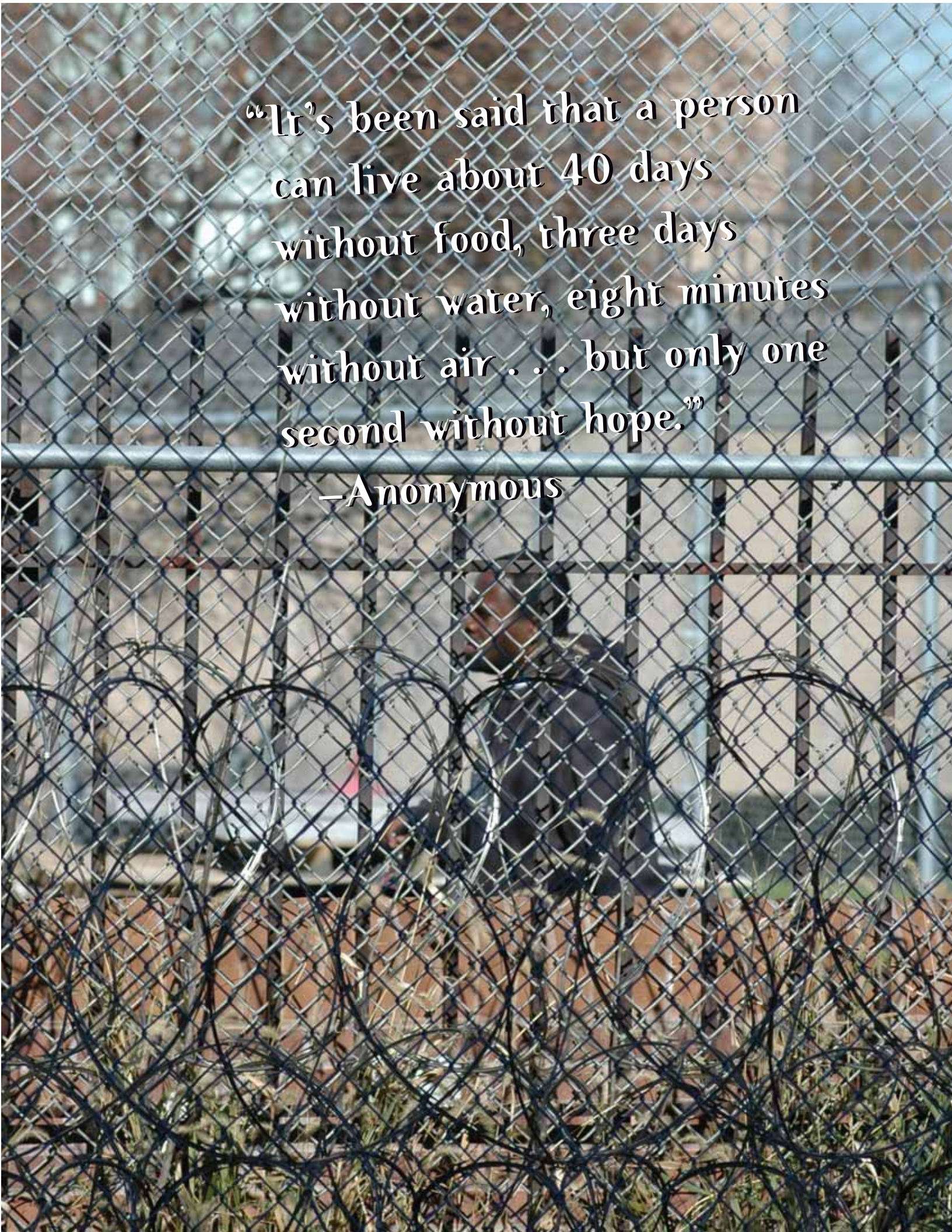
But the approach we have been taking has not worked. If we expect the 14-year drop in our city's crime rate to continue, if we expect to keep our city strong and growing, we must make a renewed commitment to successfully reintegrate the formerly incarcerated into our communities.

These individuals have paid their debt to society and are looking forward to contributing to their families and neighborhoods as law-abiding, hard-working, tax-paying citizens. They are entitled to be treated fairly in issues of employment, education, health care, housing and all other areas of daily life, and we should not hesitate to make sure that they have the necessary tools to succeed.

The fact is that when people with criminal records succeed, we all succeed. Our families, our neighborhoods and our city's economy all benefit when formerly incarcerated individuals achieve their independence and lead healthy, responsible, crime-free lives. With more and more men and women coming to our city after their release from the criminal justice system, we must all do a better job at recognizing their special challenges. The recommendations in this report are a critical first step in that process.

I commend all the members and participants in the Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry for their hard work and tireless effort on this important issue. Thank you for making a lasting contribution and for making Chicago a better, safer place to live for all its citizens.

Richard M. Daley
Mayor



"It's been said that a person can live about 40 days without food, three days without water, eight minutes without air . . . but only one second without hope."

—Anonymous

Introduction

The Reality of Reentry

Every year, the United States sets two prison records—one we talk about and one we don't.

Most Americans are quite familiar with our penchant for putting people into prison. The number of individuals incarcerated in state and federal correctional institutions has risen exponentially in the past three decades. In 1980, there were just over 300,000 people in state and federal prisons; in 2003, there were nearly 1.4 million people.[1] The total now exceeds 2.2 million when you combine state and federal prisons with local jails and other types of confinement.[2] According to the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics, about 5.6 million adults have served time in state or federal prison.[3] If this current rate remains unchanged, nearly one in 15 persons born in 2001 will be imprisoned during his or her lifetime.[4]

But most Americans have typically paid little or no attention to people coming back from prison.[5] At least 95 percent of all state prisoners will be released at some point.[6] This year, our country's prisons will release nearly 650,000 individuals, an increase from 170,000 in 1980.[7] This number does not even include the millions who will finish up jail terms.[8] And they all go in and come out faster than most Americans realize; the average felony sentence is approximately three years.[9] The use of probation and parole has exploded to correspond with these statistics; more than 4.1 million individuals were on probation and another 765,000 were on parole at the end of 2004—almost a three percent increase in just one year.[10]

Following national trends, Illinois has seen its prison population soar in the last 30 years. Between 1970 and 2003, the Illinois prison population increased by more than 500 percent, from 7,326 to 43,418 prisoners.[11] To keep up with this growth, the state built an average of one new prison every year between 1980 and 2000.[12] Yet Illinois prisons are more overcrowded today than they were in 1980; more than 44,000 prisoners are housed in facilities designed for 32,000.[13] Illinois currently has 27 correctional facilities, seven work camps, two boot camps, and eight adult transitional centers operating throughout the state and employs 14,000 staff to oversee the secure detainment of the state's convicted prisoners.[14]

Meanwhile, Illinois has seen its prison exits rise as well. Within just a few years, from 2000 to 2003, the number of people released from Illinois state prisons jumped from 28,876 to 35,372—an increase of more than 22 percent.[15] Approximately 53 percent of prisoners (15,488 individuals) released from all Illinois prisons in 2001 returned to the City of Chicago alone.[16] Based on current estimates, more than 21,000 will have settled within the city limits in 2005.[17] As the *Chicago Tribune* recently pointed out, that is enough "to fill the United Center, about 10 city bus loads rolling in each week."[18]

Add up all the people under correctional supervision in Illinois—those behind bars, on probation, or on parole—and the figure would surpass 244,000.[19] If they were all placed in one location, it would be the second largest city in the state.[20]

So What?

For many Chicago citizens, one initial response to these statistics may be total shock. Another possible response may be "so what?" These individuals broke laws. They bought drugs, sold drugs, stole, cheated, beat, raped, robbed, murdered, assaulted, vandalized, embezzled. The thinking may be, they did the crime, they do their time, they get out. That's the price they pay. But there is an emerging sense that there also is a price being borne by society.

Money

Incarceration carries a huge price tag for taxpayers. In Illinois, it costs approximately $22,000 per year per adult prisoner and $60,000 per year per youth prisoner.[21] By comparison, the state's poorest school districts spent just $4,964 per pupil in 2004.[22] The total amount spent by Illinois on the state prison system has risen by more than 300 percent from just over $377 million in 1980 to $1.3 billion in 2000.[23] Today, one of every 20 dollars in the Illinois general revenue budget is spent on corrections.[24] However, these figures only scratch the surface. Many other costs are attached to incarceration, like the personal and financial costs of the crime itself, the costs of investigation, arrest and prosecution, the cost to the victim and the victim's family, and the potential costs for the welfare and foster care systems.

Outcomes

It is not clear what impact spending this enormous amount of money has had. There has been a marked drop in the crime rate over the last several decades, and indeed, some crimes may be prevented simply by keeping people who break the law off the street. However, it is difficult to measure the correlation between higher lockup rates and lower crime rates.[25] Furthermore, time spent in a correctional institution, by itself, does not necessarily deter former prisoners from getting into trouble again. Two-thirds of those released from prison are rearrested within three years of their release, a percentage that has not improved in the past 30 years.[26] More than half are reincarcerated.[27] Still, resources are continually spent on the current system without adequately demonstrated returns on the investment.

Safety

One of the most troubling aspects of incarceration is that far too many individuals leave prison or jail worse off than when they went in. A criminal justice system that has not prepared incarcerated individuals for life outside of prison has failed not only them, but also the public at large. In Illinois, men and women who are released from the state correctional system leave their cells for the last time with a few dollars and the clothes on their backs. Many landlords will not take them. Many employers will not hire them. Many probation officers and parole agents cannot help them. Families, friends, and neighbors may not welcome them home. Health care, treatment, counseling, and job training programs are limited. With no money, no job, no housing, and little support, their futures seem bleak. Against such odds, chances are they will return to a life of crime. Of course, some with exceptional desire, skills, or support systems may reenter society with a will to do the right thing, surmount all obstacles, and succeed. Unfortunately, most will be unprepared, make bad decisions, succumb to old behaviors, commit a new crime or violate the terms of their release, and return to prison.

Communities

Too many communities are devastated by prisoner reentry. A large number of prisoners return to a small number of neighborhoods. Communities in Chicago bear the brunt of this situation. More than half of all prisoners released from Illinois prisons in 2001 returned to Chicago, and 34 percent of these individuals returned to only six of Chicago's 77 communities.[28] Many of these communities are already strained by crime, drugs, gangs, poverty, illiteracy, homelessness, and unemployment. People in these communities may want to help steer formerly incarcerated individuals onto a more positive course, but they often do not have the resources to do so. Communities are not insulated. When one community experiences lack of opportunity or hope, neighboring communities are impacted and the entire city may feel the effects.

Families

Rising incarceration rates for men and women impact parent-child relationships, networks of familial support, and the emotional, psychological, developmental, and financial well-being of millions of children across the country. Between 1991 and 1999, the number of children with a parent in a state or federal prison increased by more than 50 percent, from approximately 900,000 to 1.5 million.[29] In 1999, 10 percent of all minor children across the country—a total of 7.3 million children—had a parent in prison or jail, or on probation or parole.[30] In 2001, more than half of the 1.4 million adults incarcerated in state and federal prisons were parents of minor children,[31] with mothers more likely to have been the primary caregiver to children than fathers. After states across the nation began implementing mandatory sentences for drug offenses in the early 1980s, the number of incarcerated women grew from 410,300 in 1986 to 852,800 in 1996—an increase of more than 100 percent in just 10 years.[32] Children of incarcerated parents are six times more likely than other children to become involved with the criminal justice system.[33]

Race

It is impossible to discuss prisoner reentry without mentioning race. Simply put, most of the people sentenced to prison are black.[34] The disparity of incarceration rates by race is stark: black men are about seven times more likely to be incarcerated than white men, and black women are about four times more likely to be incarcerated than white women.[35] On any given day in 1995, the Sentencing Project in Washington, D.C., discovered that nearly one-third of black men in their twenties across the country were under the supervision of the criminal justice system—either behind bars, on probation or on parole.[36] If current incarceration rates remain unchanged, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that nearly one in three black males are expected to enter the prison system at some point in their lives compared to one in 17 white males, and one in 19 black females compared to one in 118 white females.[37] In Illinois, where 15 percent of the state's population is black, 61 percent of the state's prisoners are black.[38] The state's incarceration rate for blacks was 1,550, compared to 127 for whites, per 100,000.[39] A stream of African-Americans are filling our prisons . . . and then coming back home.

Invisible Punishments

Punishment is not over when individuals fulfill the obligations of their prison term or mandatory supervision. There are many "invisible punishments" that continue to plague prisoners long after. Both the federal and state governments have enacted a number of laws that create practical barriers for individuals with criminal backgrounds to access public benefits, housing and education, and make it more likely that these individuals will return to a life of crime.[40] Licensing and employment restrictions also may hinder these individuals in their attempts to obtain legitimate, better-paying jobs. So the very avenues that many released prisoners could use to straighten out their lives are stripped away. Plus, general and pervasive societal stigma may simply envelop them as they strive to become productive, law-abiding members of communities. Today, a criminal record functions like a "modern-day scarlet letter," ensuring that formerly incarcerated individuals are saddled with what *The Economist* once called "The Stigma That Never Fades."[41]

The Evolution of U.S. Criminal Justice Policies Over the Past 30 Years

1974	After studying rehabilitation programs across the country, sociologist Richard Martinson concludes that "nothing works"—prisoners can't be rehabilitated.
1976	Sixteen states, including Illinois, vote to end discretionary parole, making it more difficult for prisoners to receive sentence reductions.
1980s	The use of crack cocaine skyrockets, and the war on drugs begins.
1984	The Federal Sentencing Reform Act imposes mandatory sentences for specific crimes, ensuring that prisoners will serve longer prison terms and taking away the ability of federal parole boards to release prisoners early.
1986	The Anti-Drug Abuse Act appropriates $1.7 billion to fight drug crimes by building new prisons, educating the populace about drug use, and treating drug users. The bill also sets minimum sentences for drug offenses.
1993	The State of Washington passes the first "three strikes and you're out" law; by 2004, 26 states and the federal government have laws mandating life sentences after three felony convictions.
1994	The Violent Offender Incarceration Act/Truth-in-Sentencing Act authorizes increases in federal funding for states that adopt laws requiring individuals convicted of violent crimes to serve at least 85 percent of their prison sentences. Since 1996, the Justice Department has spent over $1.3 billion on this incentives program.
1995	Illinois passes truth-in-sentencing legislation that requires prisoners to serve a specified percentage of their sentences for committing certain crimes. By the end of 1998, 27 states and the District of Columbia require individuals convicted of violent crimes to serve at least 85 percent of their prison sentences, up from five states in 1993. Another 13 states have adopted truth-in-sentencing laws requiring these prisoners to serve a substantial portion of their sentence before being eligible for release.
2000	Over 1.3 million people are incarcerated in state or federal prisons, up from 218,000 in 1974. Over the same time period, the number of state-run confinement facilities has risen 70 percent, from slightly fewer than 600 to over 1,000.

Sources: Frontline, "Thirty Years of America's Drug War: A Chronology," Online resource; Huppke, Rex, "Rethinking America's Prisons: Record numbers of ex-cons return to Illinois Streets," Chicago Tribune, *June 19, 2005; Lawrence, Sarah and Jeremy Travis, "The New Landscape of Imprisonment: Mapping America's Prison Expansion" (Washington D.C.: Urban Institute, 2004); U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "State Sentencing Law Changes Linked to Increasing Time Served in State Prisons," January 10, 1999.*

A National Movement, A Nonpartisan Issue

Remarkably, in a relatively short span of time, an impressive array of efforts have been launched at all levels of government—by Republicans and Democrats alike—to build more effective and innovative responses to the myriad of challenges presented by prisoner reentry.

Over the last five years, the Urban Institute of Washington, D.C., has built a robust portfolio of projects and publications around the issue of prisoner reentry.[42] The organization has hosted a series of Reentry Roundtables to gather leaders in the field and examine special dimensions of this topic. The Urban Institute also organized the Reentry Mapping Network to stimulate community-based change through the mapping and analysis of neighborhood-level data related to reentry and community stability.

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC), a division of the U.S. Department of Justice, launched the "Transition from Prison to Community Initiative" to offer technical assistance to a number of states to transform their systems governing reentry.[43]

In 2001, the U.S. Department of Justice and other federal agencies forged a partnership known as the "Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative" to allocate $100 million in grant funding across all fifty states to address reentry planning and programming for individuals convicted of serious, violent, felony crimes.[44]

The National Governor's Association formed the Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy in 2003 to facilitate the formation of a high-level interdisciplinary work team (e.g., public safety, workforce, health and human services) under gubernatorial leadership in selected states to develop a vision, strategy, and work plan regarding reentry.[45]

President George W. Bush in his 2004 State of the Union address urged Congress to allocate $300 million over four years to support the reentry of prisoners. He called for job training and placement services, transitional housing, community and faith-based programs, and mentoring programs. "America is the land of second chances," he said, "and when the gates of prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life."[46]

The Council of State Governments partnered with ten other national organizations to coordinate the Re-Entry Policy Council. It released a landmark report in January 2005 that offered a comprehensive set of bipartisan, consensus-based policy recommendations related to employment, public safety, housing, health, families, faith-based initiatives, and victims for policymakers and practitioners to consider in their local jurisdictions.[47]

The Second Chance Act of 2005 was introduced in Congress to reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and address the growing population of prisoners returning to communities.[48] Both the House and Senate versions include provisions to fund reentry demonstration projects over two years with a particular focus on jobs, housing, substance abuse, mental health, and children and families; establish a grant program for mentoring and transitional services; establish a national reentry resource center to collect and disseminate best practices; create a federal interagency reentry taskforce; authorize the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics to conduct reentry-related research; and modify the ban on federal financial aid for individuals with drug convictions.

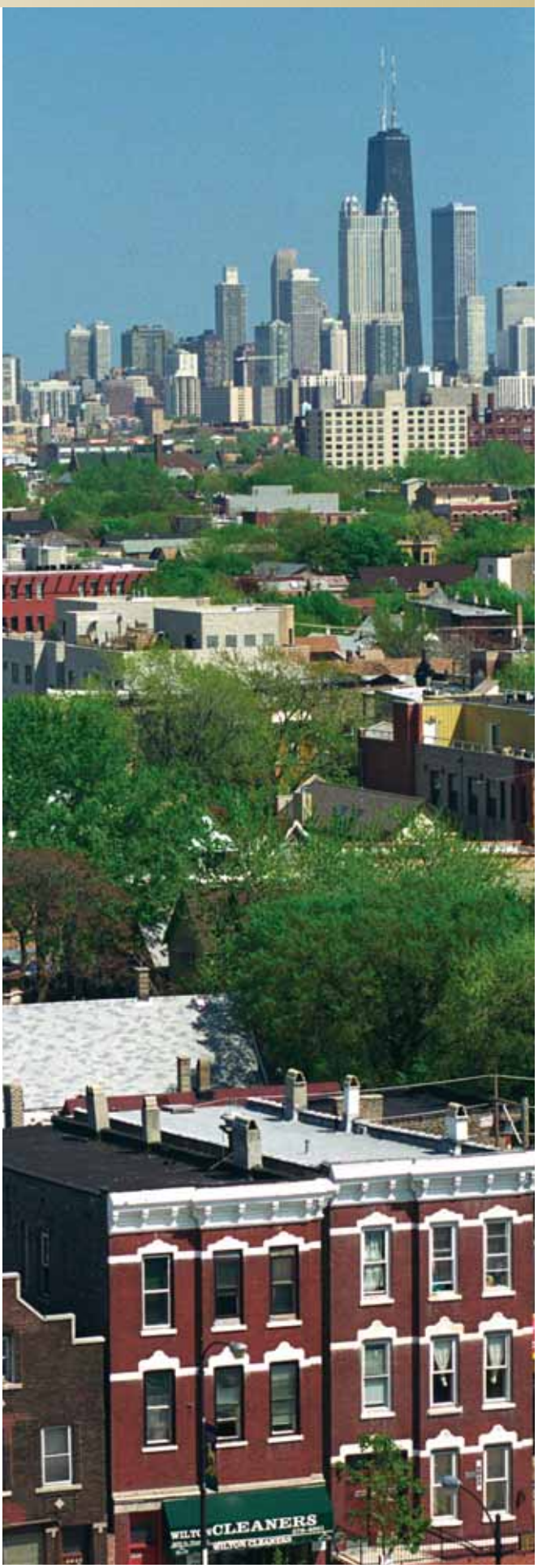
This coming year, the U.S. Conference of Mayors will launch a Reentry Resource Network to create a forum for peer-learning among 13 selected cities. The U.S. Conference of Mayors, together with the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Labor, will provide expert training and technical assistance to the cities participating in the Network to help jurisdictions access resources and program funding. The City of Chicago has been asked to serve as a mentor city to develop this effort.

Chicago Takes the Lead

Under the leadership of Mayor Richard M. Daley, the City of Chicago has been one of the first cities to take significant steps towards tackling the challenge of prisoner reentry. Demonstrating a strong commitment to address this issue locally, the Mayor established a special position on his staff in 2003 to spearhead the city's reentry efforts and develop meaningful, feasible measures. According to Cheri Nolan, a Deputy Assistant Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice, Mayor Daley was the first mayor in the country to have created a position exclusively for this issue.

Two years later, Chicago was supporting a variety of programs and initiatives for formerly incarcerated individuals. For instance, a city program called TIFWorks, which helps companies defray the cost of training their employees, has been modified to give special consideration to employers who train or hire people with criminal backgrounds. Chicago's Alternative Policing Strategy office, also known as CAPS, has been working closely with a neighborhood church and local hospital in East Garfield Park to offer health screenings, counseling supports, computer usage instruction, and job training and placement services to formerly incarcerated individuals. The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development has provided seed money to a North Lawndale organization to build on the growing urban agriculture movement, start a honey-farming social enterprise, and help people with criminal records develop business skills in beekeeping, food processing and sales and distribution. The City also has awarded a capital grant to a Near West Side organization to help build a new education and employment center for their formerly incarcerated residents. The Chicago Workforce Board has held classes for parole agents to inform them about available services for parolees at the five Chicago Workforce Centers. These are just a sampling of recent developments.

Meanwhile, Governor Rod Blagojevich created the state's first Office of Reentry Management. He also made substantial investments in two centerpiece initiatives. Sheridan Correctional Center was reopened in 2004 as a fully dedicated therapeutic community. It provides prisoners with intensive drug treatment, cognitive skills development, vocational education and job preparation in a correctional setting and follows them in their reentry back into their communities through extensive case management and heightened parole supervision. Operation Spotlight is a plan to fundamentally overhaul the state's parole system. This reform calls for doubling the number of parole agents over a four-year period from 370 to 740, reducing caseloads, increasing mandatory minimum contacts with parolees, and providing parole agents with improved training on risk assessment and case management.



The Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry

Mayor Daley convened the Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry in May 2004. Serving in an advisory capacity, the Caucus included leaders from government, business, civic associations, community and faith organizations, foundations, universities, social service agencies, and advocacy groups, as well as formerly incarcerated individuals and their relatives. Their charge was to assess and recommend reforms and innovations to facilitate successful reentry for Chicagoans with criminal records. During the year they met, they tapped local and national resources and experts, as well as their collective knowledge, judgment and insight, to identify priorities and develop recommendations. The Caucus process was inclusive and designed to foster participation of people from across the city with a breadth and depth of experience in the field. The process also was driven entirely by the members.

From the outset, the Caucus made some choices to narrow the scope of discussion. First, members chose to concentrate on four specific priority areas: Employment, Health, Family and Community Safety. Many subjects, including the particular challenges facing youth or women and the overall importance of stable housing, deserve more exploration. But the Caucus did not, and could not, fully address every topic related to reentry.

Second, the Caucus focused primarily on individuals who have been incarcerated in state correctional facilities, though the members raised concerns pertinent to county jail where appropriate. The Caucus recognized that every person convicted of a crime might not be sent to prison. Thousands of individuals return to our communities from Cook County Jail (and some people may have a criminal record without serving any time in prison or jail). Although the range of problems facing individuals returning from the county jail facility and a state correctional facility are similar, the issues may not be quite as aggravated for jail returnees, given the shorter amount of time in custody and other methods of supervision utilized at the county level.

Finally, the Caucus focused primarily on "reentry." Reentry is, of course, the last phase of a complicated continuum of issues that includes crime prevention, sentencing, and "entry" into the system. While the Caucus recognized the need to appreciate these connections and their implications, it was impractical and strategically unwise to take on all of these issues at once. Revisiting the workings of the entire criminal justice system, from beginning to end, was beyond the capacity of the Caucus.

As a committee convened by Mayor Daley, the Caucus paid concerted attention to what the City of Chicago could do to improve reentry outcomes. However, the Caucus agreed that discussions should not be limited only to those reforms which fell under the jurisdiction and control of the Mayor. If the core mission was to really rethink and revamp the reentry process, the Caucus needed to consider all aspects of the process, from pre-release well past post-release.

Serving as "ambassadors" to their own communities, the Caucus members also hosted informal dialogue groups with Chicago residents. During two months, 35 dialogue groups were conducted with individuals with criminal records, probation officers, police officers, foundation officers, church members, block club members, victims' advocates, employers, attorneys, doctors, public housing residents, city employees, corrections staff, and social service providers.

In early 2005, Governor Blagojevich launched a statewide Community Safety and Reentry Commission and Working Group to make recommendations targeting the state's top 10 regions that contain 84 percent of the state's reentering parole populations, including the Chicago region. Though the process established for the City's Caucus and the State's Commission and Working Group were distinct, the substance naturally overlapped. It was a pivotal moment in history to have two eminent public leaders in Illinois focused on this critical issue.

Organization of the Final Report

This final report follows the order of the Caucus sessions. Chapters One through Four concentrate on the four specific areas of Employment, Health, Family and Community Safety. Within each chapter, the recommendations are divided into two categories—Reforms with Statewide Impact and Reforms with Citywide Impact. Reforms with Statewide Impact are presented first because, on the whole, they address issues that chronologically occur first as a person moves through the criminal justice and penal systems. These recommendations will affect all incarcerated individuals, not just those coming back to Chicago. Reforms with Citywide Impact typically encompass issues that individuals may tackle as they are transitioning out of prison, or after they have already returned home. These recommendations will mostly benefit those individuals within our city limits.

Included at the beginning of each chapter are stories of formerly incarcerated individuals. They are the real experiences of real people. These snapshots are meant to highlight the daily challenges that men and women with criminal records face as they try to restart and rebuild their lives. They are also intended to provide context for the recommendations proposed in each chapter.

All assembled, this report sets forth concrete, pragmatic measures. The recommendations presented are numerous, complex and meant to provide solutions that will endure. These are not temporary fixes, because we cannot look to short-term answers for such a long-term problem. They try to attack the root causes of the problem itself. And, for some issues, the recommendations completely overhaul a discrete part of the existing reentry process.

Obviously, not all of these recommendations will be implemented at once. In fact, some of them may not be implemented at all if there is not enough public will, desire and commitment. This work is not free or easy. Some of these recommendations will be implemented within a year; some of them will require more planning and time to put into practice. And some may be refined as they are rolled out when practical issues and lessons are factored into the equation. It is important to recognize that not every recommendation may be right for every Chicago community and that not every individual coming back from prison will need each and every recommendation. These recommendations were developed to galvanize advocacy and action to advance change in Chicago and Illinois. They are intended to serve as a suggested roadmap, shaped by evidence and focused on outcomes, to guide the City as it strives to plan, design and execute strategies to tackle the challenge of prisoner reentry.

Many of these recommendations build off relationships already formed. And many of them will require collaboration, coordination and sustained linkages. Collaboration may need to occur between government agencies and community organizations involved in the reentry process, sometimes involving money, sometimes involving open dialogue. Coordination may need to occur among recommendations to leverage existing resources and avoid duplication.

Ultimately, the Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry—and this final report—is about providing a second chance to individuals who have been incarcerated, and the children and families that depend on them. It is about reducing crime, rebuilding lives, strengthening communities and restoring hope. It is also about accepting responsibility for our shared future. It is a task for all of us.

Theresa W.

Real life

Theresa W. is a 25-year-old Caucasian woman.

Theresa grew up in Joliet, Illinois, with her father, who was abusive and a drug addict, her mother and four siblings. "My mother was never around because of my father," Theresa explains. "She stayed away because my dad would beat her."

Theresa reflects back on her younger days. "I attended school when I felt like it. And by the time I was thirteen, I started partying and drinking, following in my father's footsteps. Then my father introduced me to cocaine. He assumed I had already tried it, but I hadn't. I got addicted immediately." Theresa had a son when she was 15 years old. Her parents divorced soon thereafter, and she began living at a friend's house in a nearby town.

At 16 years old, Theresa moved back in with her mother and "started hanging around with the wrong crowd." She gave up custody of her son and sent him to live with his grandmother when he was two. "I didn't want to deal with him anymore," she admits. "I just kind of left him."

From this point, Theresa got "deeper and deeper into the wrong crowd." She dropped out of school and as she remembers, "I was just running the streets. I was drinking and doing cocaine. Eventually I was introduced to crack and then my life just fell apart." She was living in alleys, crack houses and abandoned buildings. "Basically," she recalls, "anywhere I could lay my head down."

At 17 years old, she began living with a man in his van. According to Theresa, "his hustle was burglary." One evening, Theresa knew a specific homeowner was out of town, so together they broke into his house and robbed him. After Theresa was arrested for residential burglary, she was taken to Will County Jail and was brought before a judge in Will County's newly opened "drug court." "I was given the opportunity to be one of the first ones participating in the drug court program," she explains. She was put on probation and sent to a community-based treatment program. Although she went through community-based treatment twice, her addiction remained. "I didn't want to quit. I was doing it for everyone else. I wasn't dealing with some of the underlying issues from when I was younger." After a stint in a halfway house and a "three-quarters" house, her situation hadn't improved. "I couldn't find a job. I got frustrated with it, and I messed up." She relapsed. Because she violated her probation, she was incarcerated at Decatur Correctional Center for four years.

Once in prison, she resolved to do something productive with her time. Because she had completed her GED while she was detained at the Will County Jail, she decided to get involved with school, to "keep her mind focused on something else." She received her Business Management certificate, and as her release date approached, she was transferred to the Fox Valley Adult Transition Center (Fox Valley). Theresa spent two years at Fox Valley, and was employed at a fast food restaurant during this time. "I just went with the flow and did my work. I had it in my mind that drugs were not going to be a part of me when I got out," she recalls. After her release, she found an apartment in Aurora, which she describes as a "new environment for me."

Not even two months later, "the bills started to come in. I never had to pay bills before. I had no social life. I just gave up. I went looking for the wrong crowd." She was 23 years old. She quickly started doing crack again. "I lost everything—my job, my car, my apartment. I was living in the streets with the same addiction that I just left." However, in Aurora, miles away from her friends and family, "no one knew anything about me, so no one could help me," she explains. "My mom was there for me—'she had my back.' But none of my family or friends [back in Joliet] knew how deep I was into my addiction."

She started moving from crack house to crack house, and met a man whose "hustle" was writing stolen checks and using stolen credit cards. "He hooked me up on how to do it, and taught me everything I knew," Theresa describes. "He would steal the checks and credit cards. I would buy the merchandise and sell it, or get cash back." This financed their intense drug habit. But as Theresa tells it, this man was extremely controlling, and without drugs, was also very violent. "He would keep me hostage

"This taught me who I really am and what my work ethic is. I like to work hard."

with him, and was nearly killing me. He nearly drove me insane. One day, I put a knife to his throat." At that point, Theresa says, she called her mother, who got her out of Aurora and took her to a state mental hospital for an evaluation. There she received counseling and group therapy for about one week.

When she was released from the state mental hospital, she wasn't welcome in her stepfather's home. So Theresa returned to Aurora to her "new crack family." "I had no other choice but to go back to the streets," she explains. "I went back to the same situation with the same man, who had the right kind of money at the right time."

A few months later she was caught at a grocery store with a stolen check. "I was sick and tired. I saw the cashier go to the phone, I knew she was calling the police, but I just gave up. I was done. I didn't want to do it anymore."

At 24 years old, she spent one more year at Decatur Correctional Center. She received her sanitation license and took additional college classes in culinary arts, but was not able to complete them because her "time was up." When planning for her release, she chose to go to a recovery home, and then she later moved to a supportive housing residence for formerly incarcerated women. "My life did a 360," she recalls. "I knew that the life I was living wasn't me. I didn't want to run the streets anymore. I wanted a relationship with my son. I didn't want to be who I used to be." During her time in the supportive housing residence, she took advantage of treatment, outpatient therapy and job training programs. She also attended a job readiness preparation course at another community-based social service agency and participated in their social enterprise program. "This taught me who I really am and what my work ethic is. I like to work hard."

Theresa currently is employed at a Chicago museum performing maintenance work. "I like my job, but it is not the job I really want. I could do better. But with my background, I don't have much choice. Many employers just turn their cheek and give me an excuse about why they can't hire me when they see an 'X' on my back," she describes.

Theresa moved into her own rent-subsidized apartment three months ago through a referral from her caseworker, where she pays 30 percent of her monthly income. She is hoping to get into school to pursue an Associate's Degree in a business-related field, when she can save enough money. She also speaks about her background upon requests from advocacy organizations.

"My biggest obstacle right now," she says, "is finances and time. I'm just not used to all of life's responsibilities. But I sit back and look at my apartment, and I feel good. I feel good about how I earned it. I'm going for that number one spot, and I'm not going to stop before I get there. I want to have my own business, be happy and stay clean."

Real Life

Ramon C. is a 51-year-old Hispanic male.

Ramon C.

Ramon grew up in Puerto Rico. His parents separated when he was a young boy. He dropped out of school in the tenth grade, worked for a while, and then moved to Aurora, Illinois to live with his father when he was 20 years old. Once he got settled, he sent for his mother to join him.

In spite of his language barriers, Ramon was able to find employment relatively easily after his move to the United States. He landed a good position at a steel manufacturing company with a variety of responsibilities, although primarily as a forklift operator, and he spent 13 years there. During this time, Ramon got married, had two daughters, and bought a house. However, he also got involved, as he recounts, with "drugs and drinking and partying with his friends." He quickly began using and selling drugs all the time. His wife divorced him.

In 1991, Ramon was convicted of delivery of controlled substances, and sentenced to Vandalia Correctional Center for three years. While in prison, he completed a GED course and received his certificate. Then he was transferred to the Fox Valley Adult Transition Center (Fox Valley) in Aurora. "My time there allowed me to do what I needed to do to improve my life," Ramon recalls. At Fox Valley, he got his state identification card, and ultimately secured employment in shipping and receiving at a local meat packing plant.

After his release, Ramon continued working at the meat packing plant. With this salary and his savings from Fox Valley, he was able to rent his own apartment. But shortly thereafter, he remembers, "I started drinking again, getting high, and resumed the lifestyle that I knew—selling drugs. I was missing days at work and coming in late. It was hard to keep a job when you are living this way. I was tired, and I didn't take care of myself." He quit.

In 1996, he was incarcerated for narcotics distribution and spent two years at Jacksonville Correctional Center (Jacksonville). When he was discharged, he hopped on a bus back to Aurora and cashed his paycheck. Since he had not earned much money in prison, he couldn't afford his own place. He stayed at a mission for a few months. "I needed to work," he explains, "but the rules of the mission didn't allow me to have a job. I soon moved in with a friend."

Ramon's job search became more difficult at this point. He relied on "temp agencies" for assistance. Although he was no longer selling drugs, he was still using them. Because of his addiction, he kept "jumping from job to job" as employers would fire him or he would quit. "I kept doing the same thing that I was doing," he says. "It led me right back to prison."

In 2001, he was arrested again and sent to Jacksonville for another three-and-a-half years. Before his release, he talked to his prison counselor. "I had no place to go and I knew I had to change this time for real." His counselor referred him to a supportive housing residence in Chicago. "I could start over here. I kept myself busy," Ramon explains. "I took advantage of various programs—job readiness, anger management, support groups, drug treatment. They showed me how to fix my life. I was doing day labor jobs to earn a little income, and the staff worked with me to find stable employment."

Ramon has been clean for four years now. He recently found a position at a plastics factory, although it is in the suburbs, and is low-paying, with no overtime or benefits. "I have a two-hour commute to the factory. I leave my apartment at 5:30 a.m. and make three different transitions —I catch a bus, then a train, then another bus to arrive on time at 8:00 a.m.," he describes.

According to Ramon, the biggest challenge for former prisoners like him is "finding places that will give us a chance. We need more opportunities. Although there are good jobs out there, they are hard to find, especially for someone with a record." But he says, just as important, "you must work to stay clean and, to succeed, you have to want to help yourself stay out of trouble."

> "You must work to stay clean and, to succeed, you have to want to help yourself stay out of trouble."

Recommendations

Reforms with Statewide Impact

- Expand access to in-prison education programming by increasing capacity and removing barriers and restrictions to participation.
- Ensure pre-release vocational training corresponds to post-release employment opportunities, and expand access to vocational programs by removing barriers and restrictions to participation.
- Restructure and expand Illinois Correctional Industries.
- Review occupational licensing restrictions on formerly incarcerated individuals that do not promote tangible public safety goals.
- Improve basic pre-release preparation by enhancing Pre-Start services.

Reforms with Citywide Impact

- Adopt internal guidelines for the City of Chicago's personnel policies regarding criminal background checks, and advocate for fair employment standards.
- Develop more community-based employment centers that use a comprehensive approach and provide long-term support.
- Expand curriculum for work readiness "soft skills" training.
- Encourage more "demand-side" approaches to job training designed in partnership with employers and customized to meet their needs.
- Engage employers to devise effective hiring incentives and retention strategies.
- Promote and support transitional jobs programs.
- Promote and support social enterprise initiatives.
- Foster more opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures.
- Offer professional development to existing education and employment agencies to better serve individuals with criminal records.
- Expand access to and availability of legal resources to formerly incarcerated individuals for assistance in expunging and sealing their criminal records.

Chapter 1: Employment

Formerly incarcerated individuals face many barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment. They often enter prison with limited education and employment histories, and lack the qualifications needed to compete in a tight labor market. During the time they spend in prison, they may see their skills deteriorate, miss the opportunity to gain work experience, and lose interpersonal relationships that could provide connections to jobs. After release, finding a job is just one of the many challenges facing most formerly incarcerated individuals. The additional stigma of their criminal record makes a job search even more difficult. They may not have a safe, stable place to live, and family relations may be strained. Addiction and mental illness plague many. And almost all are returning to the environment that contributed to their hopelessness and criminal behaviors in the first place.

The link between unemployment and crime is undisputed. In 1997, 31 percent of state prisoners nationally were unemployed during the month prior to their arrest.[1] By comparison, that year, the overall unemployment rate for the general population was 4.9 percent.[2]

Finding and keeping a job can have a significant impact on whether formerly incarcerated individuals remain crime-free. In fact, those with jobs—and with the associated economic resources, structure and self-esteem that stable employment provides—are three times less likely to return to prison than those without jobs.[3] Unfortunately, 60 percent of former prisoners are still unemployed one year after their release from prison.[4]

The barriers to securing employment are significantly higher for formerly incarcerated individuals, more so than any other vulnerable, job-seeking population.[5] With few exceptions, job applications typically ask about prior convictions. By law, individuals with criminal records are specifically barred from a number of occupations. Moreover, employers generally express a reluctance to hire individuals who were formerly incarcerated, either out of fear they may commit another crime against their business or other employees, or simply because they think they are less desirable job candidates. Today, research shows that more than 60 percent of employers would not knowingly hire someone who had been incarcerated.[6] By comparison, eight percent of those employers would not hire a current or former welfare recipient, and 17 percent would not hire someone who had been unemployed for a year.[7]

Clearly, employment is an important first step in the reentry process. Though the concerns and needs of formerly incarcerated individuals are complex, gainful employment can become the single most critical factor in determining what direction an individual's reentry process will take.

Expand access to in-prison education programming by increasing capacity and removing barriers and restrictions to participation.

Recommendation

Issue

Low educational attainment is a major issue for many prisoners. High school credentials are their most common educational need. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, about 41 percent of individuals in state and federal prisons and local jails had not received a high school diploma or its equivalent in 1997, compared to 18 percent of the general population.[8] The Bureau of Justice Statistics also found that in 1997, 14 percent of state prisoners had an educational level below eighth grade and 29 percent had an educational level between ninth and eleventh grades.[9]

Studies have shown that the lack of a high school diploma is associated with higher incidence of criminal activity.[10] Research has further demonstrated that educational achievement during incarceration has an appreciable impact on recidivism rates.[11] Even for those who do not complete a full class while in prison, significant benefits exist for merely participating in educational programming; in fact, one national study found that prisoners who participated in any educational program in state prison had a 29 percent reduction in reincarceration rates from those who did not participate in such programs.[12] Education provides individuals with basic skills to enter the job market and helps develop a sense of self-worth and accomplishment.

Because the education level of prisoners was well below the average for the general population, in 1972, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) began providing educational programs within its facilities. These currently operate as part of Corrections School District 428, which has established primary, secondary, vocational adult, special and advanced educational programs, specifically designated for the prison population. School District 428 serves approximately 11,000 prisoners in its programs monthly.

Most Illinois prisons have educational programs ranging from coursework to vocational training. However, limited slots and enrollment restrictions enable only a small proportion of prisoners to participate. In fact, only 42 percent of released prisoners surveyed by IDOC participated in any educational programming during their incarceration.[14]

By state statute, any prisoner whose achievement falls below a sixth-grade level—determined by IDOC's Reception and Classification Unit after taking the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) at intake—is required to attend a 90-day Adult Basic Education (ABE) class.[15] ABE classes teach basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. Prisoners may choose to continue their studies beyond the ABE classes, but are not required to do so, even if they do not achieve above a sixth-grade level after 90 days.

The current need for IDOC's educational programs far exceeds its capacity. School District 428 estimated that approximately 38 percent of prisoners tested at intake scored below the sixth-grade level, and thus needed ABE classes.[16] Because of the limited number of teachers at each correctional facility and the mandate for all prisoners scoring below a sixth-grade level to take ABE classes, there is a large waiting list. In 2003, 2,846 prisoners were on a waiting list for ABE classes.[17]

GED (General Educational Development) classes to prepare for the GED test also are in high demand.[18] The percentage of prisoners who need to obtain a GED is harder to determine, according to School District 428, because prisoners self-report this academic need.[19] The Literacy Council, however, indicates that 75 percent of all prisoners in Illinois have not completed high school, and 36 percent have not even completed ninth grade.[20] In 2003, 1,801 prisoners were on a waiting list for GED classes.[21]

Access to and participation in all these educational classes is limited for several reasons. The lack of teachers has restricted educational programming, the state's Early Retirement Initiative doubled the number of personnel vacancies, and budget cuts have made replacing these individuals difficult.[22] The frequent transfer of prisoners between facilities, short length of some prisoners' sentences, and conflicts with other activities also may result in low enrollment.

But prisoners reentering society without significantly improving their education level likely will only find employment in entry-level, low-paying, high-turnover jobs.[23] This situation, in turn, increases the likelihood that these individuals will return to prison.

Solution

Educational classes are among the most basic rehabilitative programs that prison can offer. Appreciating the role that education can play in reducing recidivism, Governor Blagojevich increased School District 428's budget to nearly $32 million in 2005 and promised to undertake a major initiative to eliminate waiting lists for GED classes.[24] Since the governor's directive, GED waiting lists have been reduced by nearly 50 percent. This is progress. However, the state should commit to eliminating waiting lists for ABE classes as well, and should aim to increase the number of prisoners receiving GEDs annually to over 10 percent of the total prison population by 2010.

Additional funding to increase capacity is only part of the solution. Prisoners must understand the importance of education as a fundamental tool to become prepared for a competitive labor market upon release. To this end, IDOC should develop institutional incentives for program participation. One such incentive is "good conduct" credit; that is, a reduction in prisoners' sentences for good behavior or participation in certain programs. Under good conduct rules, prisoners can earn credit (e.g., their sentence reduced by one half day) for every day they participate in educational programming.[25]

However, currently, any person who has served more than one prior sentence for a felony in an adult correctional facility is ineligible to receive good conduct credit,[26] effectively preventing more than 25 percent of the prison population from utilizing this incentive.[27] To better promote educational opportunities within a correctional setting, good conduct credit should be revised or expanded, either legislatively or administratively, to include more of the prison population.

This past year, Mayor Daley proposed legislation in the Illinois legislature, which was signed by the Governor in July 2005, that charged IDOC to double the percentage of prisoners who enroll in GED classes and simultaneously created an incentive for prisoners to pursue their education by offering 60 additional days of good conduct credit for earning a GED in prison.[28] Passage of this bill was a significant step forward, but the eligibility restrictions of this credit must be eliminated for maximum impact.

Finally, IDOC should consider innovative ways to expand educational options without significantly expanding School District 428's staff. For example, City Colleges of Chicago has considerable experience providing GED preparation to prisoners in Cook County Jail,[29] and is a large provider of distance learning worldwide.[30] Combining these two resources (with the teachers union's consent), City Colleges could broadcast GED courses over the correctional institutions' existing closed circuit television network or through a web-based stream, increasing the number of prisoners who would have the opportunity to obtain their GED. City Colleges could provide the teachers; IDOC would simply need to provide facilitators in prison classrooms. IDOC's existing teaching staff could, then, devote resources to prisoners who need more personalized instruction to successfully complete a GED course.

"I have seen what an education can do for inmates. It opens their minds to opportunities. It gives them hope for a better life for themselves and their loved ones. Society benefits because they become taxpayers and not tax burdens."

Dr. Michael Elliott
Executive Director of the Department of Human and Community Renewal, Roosevelt University

Ensure pre-release vocational training corresponds to post-release employment opportunities, and expand access to vocational programs by removing barriers and restrictions to participation.

Recommendation

Issue

Job training, prison industries, and placement programs connect former prisoners to work, thereby reducing their likelihood of rearrest and reincarceration. In fact, individuals who have participated in vocational training in prison have better reentry outcomes. A study conducted by the Illinois Council on Vocational Education found a recidivism rate of 13.8 percent for those prisoners who had earned a vocational degree and a rate of 6.2 percent for those prisoners who had earned more than one vocational degree or certificate.[31]

In partnership with local community colleges, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) offers 50 different vocational programs within its correctional institutions.[32] Each facility varies slightly in the focus of the vocational programming it offers due to the community college with which it collaborates, as well as financial and staffing resources that are available. Approximately 10,000 prisoners participate annually in IDOC vocational programs leading to either vocational certificates or degrees.[33] In 2004, however, only 2,062 prisoners completed college vocational programs and only 203 completed School 428 vocational programs.[34]

Many factors hinder greater participation in vocational training throughout correctional facilities. Enrollment in an accredited vocational program has historically required a high school diploma or GED and TABE score of 8.0 or higher.[35] Only a small percentage of the prison population meets both of those requirements and is therefore eligible for vocational education. Further, although 50 different vocational courses exist throughout IDOC, prisoners usually have access only to the ones available at their specific institution—giving prisoners little flexibility to choose training in an area of interest to them. Similar to educational programming, much vocational training exceeds the length of prisoners' sentences, and prisoners' frequent transfers between institutions often impede continuity of training.

There also is a mismatch between the vocational training opportunities inside prison and good employment opportunities outside prison. IDOC's vocational programs usually correspond to what community colleges near a given correctional facility are able to provide, rather than what job opportunities exist in high-demand industries or in the communities to which prisoners will return. Through a collaborative effort by the Illinois Governor's Office and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Critical Skill Shortages Initiative (CSSI) was designed to align regional workforce strategies with economic development to provide qualified workers for critical skill shortage occupations. Under the CSSI, the workforce boards of the northeast region of Illinois found that health care, manufacturing, transportation, warehousing and logistics were the industry sectors expected to have the greatest need for workers in the coming years.[36] However, computer technology, business management, commercial custodian, construction and food service were the most commonly offered courses throughout IDOC facilities.[37]

Without linking vocational programs to high-demand industries, employment outcomes from participating in and completing such programs can vary significantly.[38]

Inspiration from the Field:

Corrections Clearinghouse in Washington

The Corrections Clearinghouse (CCH), a unit of the Washington State Employment Security Department, provides a continuum of services to prisoners that begins with an employability assessment during incarceration and ends with job placement and ongoing assistance after release.

One of CCH's initiatives is the Trades-Related Apprenticeship Coaching Program. CCH persuaded three unions—carpenters, laborers and ironworkers—to fund and staff a pre-apprenticeship program for prisoners in the women's correctional center. Women who successfully complete the in-prison program are guaranteed membership in one of the three unions, greatly improving their chances of being hired after they are discharged.

Source: Finn, Peter, "Washington State's Corrections Clearinghouse: A Comprehensive Approach to Offender Employment," (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, 1999), 10-11, http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/174441.pdf.

Solution

Given the low levels of educational attainment among prisoners, academic and vocational programs are greatly needed. Increasing the applicability of and enrollment in these programs will improve the employability of prisoners upon release.

IDOC should complete a comprehensive review of its vocational offerings on a regular basis to determine which programs provide useful credentials for post-release job opportunities. The Illinois Department of Employment Security has already started to compile information along these lines.[39] After this review, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and IDOC, in partnership with local workforce boards, workforce development professionals and organizations throughout the state, should identify and develop appropriate vocational training programs that correspond to available post-release job opportunities in industries that pay decent wages.[40] Community colleges near IDOC institutions should modify the curriculum options for the prison population, after the requisite input and approval from ICCB, to ensure IDOC's vocational offerings are specifically tailored to meet the needs of this population.[41] A few other states have begun a similar process in an effort to link prison vocational training to more specific market demands. In Indiana, for example, the Department of Corrections now designs its vocational training programs for industries that the Indiana Department of Workforce Development classifies as having a low supply of personnel and a high demand for new workers.[42]

With the 2004 reopening of the Sheridan Correctional Center, IDOC adopted a new administrative directive—the GED waiver—that allows certain prisoners who do not have their GED to qualify for available and accredited vocational programs. IDOC should consider expanding the use of this waiver to all IDOC facilities to substantially increase the percentage of prisoners who are eligible for, and could benefit greatly from, vocational training.

"Our vocational programs at Sheridan Correctional Center combine an industry which is looking for people [residential building and construction] with people who are looking for better-paying jobs. Vocational training gives individuals a potential for making a meaningful wage, instead of a minimum wage. Former prisoners need a chance for employment that has a future to it. I tell my guys, 'Don't just serve time. Let time serve you. Participate. Leave here with more than you came here with.' "

Cornell Hudson
Project Coordinator, Homebuilders Institute Project at Sheridan Correctional Center

Restructure and expand Illinois Correctional Industries.

Recommendation

Issue

Work programs administered in prison provide prisoners with experience and skills that increase their employability upon release. Illinois Correctional Industries (ICI) does just that, operating "factories with fences," farms and service programs in many of the adult prisons. ICI currently operates 38 such programs in 19 different correctional facilities throughout the state.[43] The goods and services produced through ICI include wood furniture, food products, city and highway signs, clothing, maintenance supplies, bedding, eyeglasses, asbestos abatement and service dog training.

Historically, prisoners who work in ICI programs have lower recidivism rates than the general prison population. According to ICI's 1998 Annual Report, 235 individuals who had participated in ICI programs were released in fiscal year 1993, and only 36 percent returned to prison during the subsequent five years.[44] Illinois' recidivism rate for that same five-year period was approximately 50 percent.[45]

However, few prisoners are able to take advantage of this employment opportunity. In 2003, only 1,078 prisoners participated in ICI jobs throughout Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) facilities.[46]

Several factors may explain this low participation rate. First, to obtain an ICI placement, prisoners must have a GED; this is an education level many prisoners have not achieved. Second, the work experience and skills that are gained from these jobs may be somewhat limited. These businesses produce goods and provide services used primarily by local and state government agencies and IDOC. Accordingly, many of these jobs are not directly relevant to employment opportunities outside of prison. Third, due to loss of staff during recent years, capacity within ICI to expand job offerings is lacking.

Solution

ICI is a self-supporting business; that is, it does not receive any state appropriation, but rather generates revenue from the sale of goods and services. Therefore, expanding ICI offers a relatively low-cost way to increase opportunities for prisoners to develop good work habits and trade skills during their incarceration, and likely increase their workforce participation after release. IDOC should strive to increase the number of jobs available through ICI, and double the percentage of prisoners who have access to these jobs by 2010. To that end, IDOC should consider reevaluating the eligibility criteria to obtain an ICI job.

In expanding ICI, however, it is critical to assess the applicability of ICI jobs to employment opportunities outside of prison. ICI jobs should expose prisoners to work experience and skills training for long-term employment with upward mobility. Given the success of ICI jobs in reducing recidivism, ICI should collaborate with large employers, business associations, unions and job placement agencies to develop correctional industry jobs applicable to and correlated with employment in high-demand industries.

Inspiration from the Field:

Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises in Florida

Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Diversified Enterprises, Inc. (PRIDE) is a private, not-for-profit manufacturing and services corporation. In 1981, the Florida legislature authorized the company to manage and operate the state's correctional industries. PRIDE provides prisoners with vocational and on-the-job training in a variety of fields as well as limited post-release support.

Studies indicate that PRIDE placed 88 percent of its workers in relevant jobs in 2001 and, during this same year, only 17.3 percent of its former workers returned to prison. In 2004, PRIDE generated $65.7 million in sales of prisoner-made products and services. PRIDE pays a portion of its earnings to defray the cost of incarceration, cover restitution to crime victims, and provide post-release job placement services to prisoners.

Source: www.oppaga.state.fl.us/profiles.

Review occupational licensing restrictions on formerly incarcerated individuals that do not promote tangible public safety goals.

Recommendation

Issue

Many state statutes restrict licensure or re-licensure in jobs based on an individual's criminal background. In Illinois, of the 98 state statutes regarding professional licensing, 57 contain restrictions for applicants with a criminal history, impacting over 65 professions and occupations.[47] Of those professions, 22 statutes automatically bar employment for individuals convicted of crimes of dishonesty or directly related to the practice of the profession involved.[48]

These restrictions may, in certain cases, reflect reasonable safety concerns. Obviously, society would not want a child molester to drive a school bus or a former drug addict to work in a pharmacy. But no rationale exists to prevent someone who stole a car from cutting hair. While these laws were passed to increase public safety, they often have the exact opposite effect. According to the Legal Action Center in New York, New York, these laws may actually "endanger public safety by excluding people with criminal records from mainstream society and opportunities to lead law-abiding lives."[49]

In some cases, prisoners participate in vocational training through the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and then become qualified for professions that they cannot practice once released due to licensing restrictions. Stateville, Menard, and Vienna Correctional Centers all offer vocational training in barbering, for example, but Illinois state law prohibits individuals with a felony record from obtaining a barber's license. "The situation might be best described as a 'Catch-22,'" says Glenn Martin, Co-Director of the National HIRE Network in New York, New York. "The very fact that someone has been in prison causes him to fall short of the state licensure standards for the same trade that the state itself trained him for in prison."[50]

If the goal is to move individuals from criminal activity to legal employment, the proliferation of licensing restrictions impedes that goal because it effectively diminishes the number of legitimate jobs that a formerly incarcerated person could pursue upon release. These restrictions, then, more often extend punishment than serve society.

Solution

Through recently passed legislation, the State now offers two certificates—Certificates of Relief from Disabilities (CRD) and Certificates of Good Conduct (CGC)—which attempt to reduce the number of barriers prohibiting individuals with criminal backgrounds from obtaining their professional license.[51] The major differences between the certificates relate to the main purposes underlying the certificates, who is eligible, and how one applies.[52]

In effect, both types of certificates remove bars that would result automatically from a non-violent felony conviction. Basically, the certificates create a presumption of rehabilitation in the licensure process, and licensing bodies must consider them when reviewing the license application of an individual with a criminal record.[53]

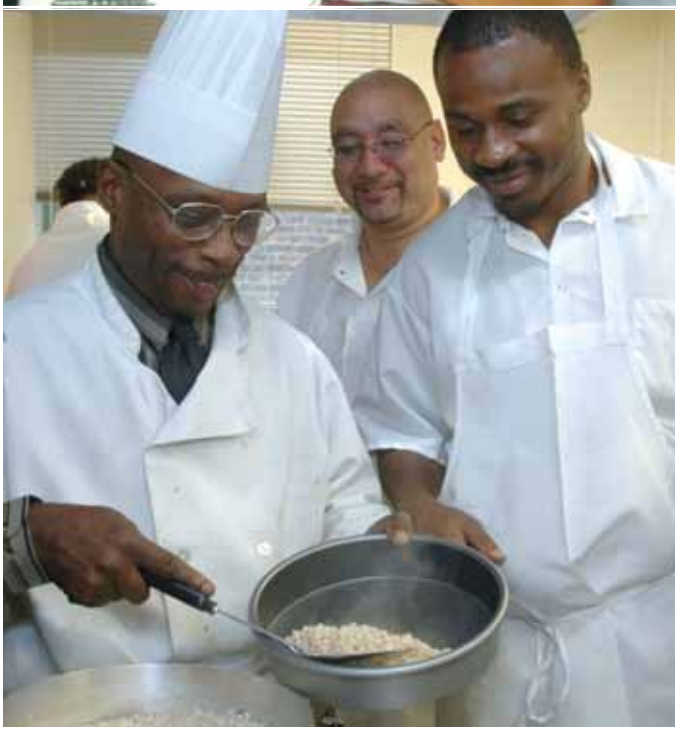
"Change needs to happen. More than 52 percent of former prisoners go back to prison because they have no other thing that they know. They can't get jobs. So they go back to what they do know [criminal activity]. I don't ask about criminal backgrounds. The former prisoners who work for me appreciate the jobs that they are given. This provides a foundation where they go on with their lives and make a better life for themselves. They are trying to make a transformation. We [as employers] need to give them that credit and not slap them down."

James Andrews
President and Owner, Andrews Paper Company

While the passage of this legislation marks significant progress, challenges to the implementation and impact of these certificates remain. As of August 2005, the Prisoner Review Board had only issued one Certificate of Relief from Disabilities and had not issued any Certificates of Good Conduct.[54] Although very little was done initially after this law went into effect to promote and implement these certificates, IDOC,[55] the Prisoner Review Board,[56] the courts,[57] and the Illinois Department of Finance and Professional Regulations[58] have increased their efforts to build awareness and make these certificates a viable option for former prisoners. Additionally, a Certificate Implementation Advisory Group was formed in October 2004 to develop a strategic plan of action, monitor progress, track problems, and share feedback with relevant state agencies.[59] The State should continue to work with this group to ensure that released prisoners are able to obtain and benefit from these certificates.

Once implementation has been streamlined, the State should convene a taskforce to recommend further changes to the law and to expand the certificates' applicability to as many licensing statutes (and professions) as possible.[60]

The Illinois General Assembly also should explore other avenues to address occupational licensing restrictions by tackling the substance of statutes themselves. In 2004, Delaware's governor, for example, signed legislation that eliminated automatic felony bars to 37 professional occupational licenses in the state.[61] The new law requires licensing boards to make individualized determinations about an applicant's specific qualifications, including the relevance of an applicant's criminal record to the license being sought.



Improve basic pre-release preparation by enhancing Pre-Start services.

Recommendation

Issue

Prisoners must access community programs and resources within a relatively short period of time after their release, before they become desperate or tempted to revert back to criminal behaviors. These same individuals, upon discharge, often are less attached to jobs, their families, and the communities to which they return. And they likely are not aware of, or do not know how to access, the myriad of social services their communities can provide. Left on their own, most prisoners fail to connect with all the services they need.

In 1991, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) developed a specifically designed pre-release program, known as Pre-Start, to provide prisoners with a "crash course" on life after prison.[62] Pre-Start was designed as a one-to-two week, 15-hour per week, specialized curriculum focusing on reentry preparation, such as employment, housing, transportation, budgeting and family reunification. It is offered to prisoners within approximately one month of their release date.[63] Various components of Pre-Start differ slightly depending on the correctional institution.

Many challenges exist within the current structure of the Pre-Start program. First, the substance of the material presented in Pre-Start is general, and the local resource information is often outdated and inaccurate. Second, Pre-Start is structured mainly as lecture-type classes (with some use of workbooks), and does not provide any opportunity for individualized discharge planning for prisoners. This is the responsiblity of Field Services, though the two activities should be better integrated. Prisoners may complete the Pre-Start program with a broad understanding of what to expect after their release, but are not given referrals for specific services. It is, then, primarily up to the prisoners themselves to locate and establish contact with community-based agencies upon discharge.

Further, community-based agencies are not included in the Pre-Start program; rather, correctional staff primarily teaches these classes without assistance from the organizations that may be receiving these prisoners later. Lastly, the same Pre-Start curriculum (and workbook) serves all prisoners, whether they read at a fourth-grade level or a college level and whether they have been incarcerated for six months or ten years. Very little individual attention is provided through Pre-Start.

The usefulness of this pre-release program is questionable. In a 2004 study, the Urban Institute found that although 79 percent of Pre-Start participants reported receiving some training about job searches, only 25 percent reported receiving actual referrals to potential jobs, less than ten percent received actual referrals for health care, housing and counseling, and only 22 percent reported contacting a community program after their release using an actual referral from Pre-Start.[64]

Solution

Similar to health care services, prisoners need continuity of employment services to sustain the benefits of their in-prison education and training after their release. Because prison programs do not (and should not) extend past prisoners' release, community-based agencies must devise ways to reach prisoners during their incarceration to provide a continuum of services and to be effective in reducing recidivism.

Pre-release programs such as Pre-Start should provide specific information about reentry support services, focusing on employment and retention issues. Pre-Start, in conjunction with IDOC's Placement Resource Unit (PRU), should assist prisoners with preparing a detailed reentry plan and discharge summary and should directly link prisoners to community-based agencies, including job placement centers, faith-based organizations, supportive services, and health care providers in the local neighborhoods to which they are returning. Further, each prisoner should leave prison with appropriate referrals coordinated through PRU.

IDOC is currently re-examining the Pre-Start curriculum, and developing a pilot course focused primarily on job preparation skills and resources.[65] IDOC should take advantage of its current review of Pre-Start to completely overhaul the existing structure and substance of this pre-release program.

Community-based agencies should be immersed in Pre-Start to connect with prisoners during their incarceration, before they return to society with little, if any, professional support. Despite some geographic barriers, community-based agencies should be encouraged to participate in and teach part of the Pre-Start curriculum, or at least help to develop a more tailored curriculum that emphasizes partnerships with service providers in the community.

Further, professionals teaching Pre-Start should provide resources that are current and comprehensive, yet customized for the different needs and circumstances of individual prisoners in order to provide the full benefit of information through this curriculum.

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) offers Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) training to professionals in corrections as well as staff from other state departments and community-based agencies that provide pre-release services, specifically employment. This training incorporates a comprehensive curriculum that teaches necessary skills for working with prisoners and helping them to make informed decisions about employment, retention and career advancement. OWDS training also instructs participants in how to train other education and employment service providers in the field to increase their basic knowledge and abilities in workforce development and career facilitation.[66]

Currently, only one team of four individuals has been trained as Offender Workforce Development Specialists in Illinois, although the State is planning to send two additional teams to the NIC training in 2006.[67] The State should organize more teams to become Offender Workforce Development Specialists every year, thus bringing additional pre-release reentry resources into prisons and the community.

Inspiration from the Field:

Project RIO in Texas

Project RIO (Re-Integration of Offenders) is a comprehensive pre-release program that operates through the Texas Workforce Commission, serving over 16,000 parolees every year.

Project RIO specialists begin working with prisoners who are within two years of their release. The specialists assist with gathering personal documents, developing employment plans, and providing job readiness training. When RIO participants are within six months of their discharge date, they participate in a life skills program. After their release, the specialists work with the participants to place them in jobs that match their skills and temperament, and train parole officers about the program.

An independent evaluation of the program in 1992 found that nearly 70 percent of RIO participants found employment compared to 36 percent of non-participants and that RIO saved the State of Texas over $15 million in 1990 alone due to reduced recidivism.

Source: www.texasworkforce.org.

Adopt internal guidelines for the City of Chicago's personnel policies regarding criminal background checks, and advocate for fair employment standards.

Recommendation

Issue

The availability of criminal records online, and changing public policies regarding access to those records, make it easier for employers to conduct criminal background checks on potential employees.[68] Approximately 80 percent of employers across the country conducted background checks in 2003, up from 51 percent in 1996, the Society for Human Resource Management found.[69] In 2004, in this state alone, Illinois State Police conducted 693,439 background checks, up from 546,015 background checks in 2003, a 27 percent increase in one year.[70] Generating background checks through private companies has become an industry in itself with little oversight—no standardized way to request or retrieve information, no regulations to determine whether the information is valid (or even for the correct individual), and no uniform presentation of the information acquired.

A recent study commissioned by the National Association of Professional Background Screeners (NAPBS) raised concerns about the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal database, noting that it lacked proper identifiers, missed records, and generated false positives.[71] According to the NAPBS, employers who rely on the FBI files can be "lulled into a false sense of security that they are availing themselves of the most accurate and comprehensive search available."[72]

Even more troubling challenges arise once employers actually obtain a criminal history; it is unclear how employers use the information from background checks once they have acquired it. Currently, no guidelines exist about how to read a "rap sheet" or how to interpret this information fairly and appropriately. Advocates worry about the unintended consequences of this information, and the difficulty in adequately protecting people from mistakes and misuse. "People's lives can be ruined by information that may well be erroneous or misinterpreted or just taken out of context," explains Maurice Emsellem, Soros Justice Senior Fellow of the National Employment Law Project in Oakland, California.[73]

Often, employers obtain the results of a background check and presume that any involvement with the law (even an arrest which may eventually be dismissed) implies that the applicant is a bad person who cannot be trusted to do a good job. Some employers have adopted discriminatory blanket policies that categorically reject people with criminal histories from employment, ultimately denying formerly incarcerated individuals the opportunity to provide for themselves and their families, and to become productive, law-abiding citizens.

"After criminal background checks became common practice in the mid-1990s, Advocate Health Care began looking at its hiring practices in Chicago. Rather than simply dismissing applicants with any kind of criminal record, we review the type and severity of the offense as well as the length of an applicant's criminal history, and allow applicants to explain their criminal record. We wanted to have a well defined process to follow, rather than just barring people with criminal histories. We didn't feel that would have been fair, and it would have been contrary to the mission and value of the organization."

Valerie Johnson
Director of Recruitment Systems, Advocate Health Care

Solution

To increase employment opportunities available to all Chicago residents with a criminal record who are struggling to successfully reenter society and remain crime-free, the City should review its own personnel policy regarding background checks to lead by example for other public and private employers.

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)—the agency responsible for enforcing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—has implemented policy guidelines governing the consideration of arrest and conviction records in the hiring process, and advises employers not to use criminal records as an absolute bar in hiring decisions.[74] The EEOC's guidelines do not allow employers to deny people employment because of a criminal record unless there is a "business necessity" for doing so. A business necessity can be established by looking at the following factors: nature and circumstances of the offense, length of time that has passed since the conviction, the individual's employment history, and the individual's efforts at rehabilitation.[75] If an individual lies about his or her criminal history, the employer can refuse to hire, or later fire, that person.

The City should adopt fair employment standards modeled after the EEOC guidelines, and establish a "balancing test" in its hiring process: that is, the City should only consider convictions related to the job in question, and should take into account factors such as the applicant's age at the time of the offense, length of time that has elapsed since the conviction, and efforts at rehabilitation.

Through its own actions, the City should encourage employers to adopt similar standards and make individualized determinations about a person's specific qualifications, rather than imposing flat bans against hiring people with criminal records.[76] With approximately 38,000 employees, the City is one of the largest employers in the metropolitan region. "It would send a strong message," said Jodina Hicks, the Safer Foundation's Vice President of Public Policy and Community Partnerships, "if the City publicized its policy, meticulously enforced the guidelines in its own hiring, demanded that any city contractor enforce similar guidelines and encouraged other employers to follow its lead."[77]

Along the same lines as the EEOC guidelines, a number of states have enacted statutes or issued guidance to prohibit employment discrimination against qualified people with criminal histories. Thirty-three states, in fact, have laws that prohibit denial of a job or license "solely" on grounds of a criminal conviction.[78] Such state anti-discrimination laws encourage the employment of people with criminal records by ensuring that qualified people with criminal records are given fair and equitable opportunities to obtain gainful employment, while simultaneously promoting public safety. These laws do not require employers to hire people with criminal histories. Although the laws vary in the 33 states, most require employers to consider whether a conviction is "reasonably related" to the particular occupation before termination or refusal to hire is permitted.

The City should advocate for state legislation modeled after these existing statutes. Employers should be required to make individualized determinations about a job applicant's specific qualifications and criminal history, and should be prohibited from imposing categorical bans on qualified people with a criminal record.

Develop more community-based employment centers that use a comprehensive approach and provide long-term support.

Recommendation

Issue

In some Chicago neighborhoods, community-based education and employment agencies have helped formerly incarcerated individuals find work for many years. They have developed sophisticated, comprehensive strategies for serving this population, and they have tapped into private and public funding streams to support the necessary array of services. In these communities, a person leaving prison will usually hear by word of mouth that a certain neighborhood organization is "the place to go" for formerly incarcerated individuals seeking a job.

However, there are not enough such agencies in Chicago. Those that do exist do not always have the capacity to meet the need in their communities, and many community-based agencies, although employment-focused, do not have experience serving formerly incarcerated individuals.

Chicago is home to five One-Stop Career Centers, also known as Chicago Workforce Centers, which provide employment and employment-related services to low-income individuals. But because of the specific federal funding source for these centers (usually Workforce Investment Act funds), there are placement and retention benchmarks, program constraints and eligibility requirements which do not always make the Chicago Workforce Centers effective for former prisoners. Formerly incarcerated individuals, by virtue of their substance abuse histories, emotional, mental and physical health challenges, academic deficiencies, or limited employment experience, often need access to a variety of services over a long period of time. Further, family issues frequently are intertwined with prisoners' issues as they reenter society and must be addressed concurrently. The Chicago Workforce Centers, by and large, have not provided an environment conducive for former prisoners to discuss these issues and do not have resources to sufficiently handle them.[79]

Similarly, many traditional community-based education and employment agencies are not adequately equipped to assist individuals with criminal records in finding gainful, long-term employment. These agencies' services also may contain funding limitations, programmatic constraints or eligibility requirements that prevent them from serving

formerly incarcerated individuals. For example, some agencies provide technical training as part of job preparation that requires participants to read and compute at a ninth-grade level. Many former prisoners cannot meet this requirement, and consequently may not benefit from these agencies' services and programs.

These agencies must do more than assist released prisoners in obtaining skills and connecting with employers. Formerly incarcerated individuals present complicated, multi-layered barriers to employment. Agencies serving these individuals need to address changes in attitudes, behaviors and lifestyle from prison culture and criminal activity and encourage positive engagement in the community. These agencies must do more than teach marketable skills; they must help reestablish connections. Moreover, low-wage, unskilled workers will often cycle through several different jobs.[80] The first job placement often is the beginning of a long progression, which may be disrupted as former prisoners struggle to meet demands of the workplace along with emotional and practical adjustments of life outside prison.[81] Organizations that address only employment will not successfully meet the needs of these individuals. A more comprehensive, long-term approach integrating supportive services is necessary.

Solution

To be most effective, education and employment agencies with extensive experience serving formerly incarcerated individuals need to be community-based, and community-based education and employment agencies need to be proficient in serving formerly incarcerated individuals.

Agencies already exist in Chicago that employ a comprehensive, long-term approach and work with large numbers of formerly incarcerated individuals. The City should identify these agencies and assist them in developing new funding sources to expand their efforts in this area. At the same time, the City should determine which communities have high concentrations of formerly incarcerated individuals and lack agencies with sufficient resources and capacity to provide support specific to this population. The City should then help to foster the development of new agencies to fill this unmet need by directing potential agencies to federal, state and city funding sources.

Community-based education and employment agencies should apply a holistic approach in their case management and job search assistance. Case managers must assess individuals and provide referrals to treatment centers, family counseling providers and other service agencies when needed. Staff must understand their clientele and appreciate that individuals returning from prison may need numerous placements to find an appropriate job, may need to repeat job readiness classes or vocational training, may need a mentor for additional emotional support during their job search, or may need extensive follow-up and retention services.

"Securing good employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals requires a variety of strategies. It is not enough to polish their resumes and send them to the employer's doorstep. You have to attend to their basic human needs, so they are in a proper emotional state to seek employment. You have to help them develop their education, technical skills and "soft skills" so that once they are in the work place, they have the tools to succeed. And then, you have to be there for them when that first or second job doesn't work out. Because if you are not, they may end up right back where they started."

Brenda Palms-Barber
Executive Director, North Lawndale Employment Network

Because of the large need for reentry services at the local level, the City should partner with community-based agencies and lobby at the federal and state levels for more flexible funding sources to assist formerly incarcerated individuals. The Workforce Investment Act is the largest funding source for workforce development programs nationally. However, the use of this funding source is constrained by numerous performance measures focusing on job placement and retention, and does not lend itself to serving the formerly incarcerated population.

To effectively reduce recidivism and help formerly incarcerated individuals with obtaining and retaining gainful, long-term employment, the City must support, expand and strengthen programs proven effective in assisting them.

Expand curriculum for work readiness "soft skills" training.

Recommendation

Issue

Work readiness training traditionally has been focused on ensuring that individuals master "soft skills"; that is, the non-technical, intangible, interpersonal skills needed to succeed in the workplace. These skills include punctuality, reliability, good communication, teamwork, working with supervisors, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Employers often emphasize that these "soft skills" are essential, and sometimes even more important than technical skills to the success of their business.[82] However, as the 21st century workplace has become more complex, employers often look for expanded work readiness skills to be competitive for a job.

Solution

Cities, counties and states across the country are adopting work readiness credentials in response to employer experiences with large numbers of job seekers and workers lacking basic employability skills. When an individual completes the requirements for a work readiness credential, he or she receives a certificate that covers competencies like reading comprehension, technology proficiency, problem solving, team building, business math and many others. These credentials are nationally portable for job seekers, legally defensible for employers, and have been developed in cooperation with agencies like the National Skill Standards Board (NSSB). They represent employer consensus on what "work readiness" means for workers across industry sectors and across the nation. Once formerly incarcerated individuals have achieved these credentials, they will have the foundation for success in the workplace.

The City should form a taskforce comprised of representatives from the Chicago Workforce Board, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, the City Colleges, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, World Business Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, local businesses and other stakeholders to determine how work readiness credentials could meet the needs of employers in the Chicago area. This taskforce should review and evaluate the models of "work readiness" credentials that are currently being used throughout the United States.[83]

Once a model has been selected that fits the needs of Chicagoland employers, a pilot program should be developed for formerly incarcerated individuals, high school students, immigrants and/or public housing residents. Although the concept of a work readiness credential is being discussed in several different venues locally, one model should be chosen to be implemented across Chicago's workforce and education systems, thereby ensuring uniformity and consistency for job seekers and employers.

Inspiration from the Field:

San Diego Workforce Partnership in California

In 1998, the San Diego Workforce Partnership and community employers established a focus group to determine which work readiness skills would best serve both job seekers and local businesses. The group created a list of 24 skills, and contracted with the school district to develop a program for each skill set. The program's curriculum is available to a variety of training organizations throughout San Diego, including One-Stop Career Centers and community organizations.

Upon completion of the program, participants earn a "Work Readiness Certificate." The certificate is accepted by a majority of San Diego employers, and represents work readiness skills that are commonly demanded by the targeted industries. This certificate enables job seekers to show potential employers they have the skills to succeed in the workplace, and gives employers some assurance that hiring these individuals will be a worthwhile investment.

Source: Cindy Perry, (Director of Special Operations, San Diego Workforce Partnership), interview with Tim Michaels, August 19, 2005.

Encourage more "demand-side" approaches to job training designed in partnership with employers and customized to meet their needs.

Recommendation

Issue

A significant number of industries currently are experiencing labor shortages due to an aging workforce, changes in workplace requirements, and lack of a skilled employee base.[84] These shortages provide formerly incarcerated individuals with opportunities to find jobs after participating in education and employment programs, and for employers to hire trained and qualified employees. Unfortunately, training programs and employer demands are not always aligned.

To strengthen local businesses and help formerly incarcerated individuals obtain and retain jobs with advancement possibilities that lead to self-sufficiency, training programs and employer demands must be better matched.

To this end, work readiness training must be followed by industry-specific training based on employer demands. "Potential employees must have the requisite skills and a solid understanding of a particular field to increase their chances of being hired," stated Diane Williams, President and CEO of the Safer Foundation.[85] Without a strong link between training programs and employer demands, limited public resources will be spent on training that does not result in long-term retention of quality jobs for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Solution

Community-based education and employment agencies must link their job training to the evolving needs of Illinois industries through direct partnerships with specific employers. "What we have realized is that customized training works only to the extent that it creates the opportunity for real dialogue between the company and the training provider," said Will Edwards, Director of the Workforce Solutions Unit for the Chicago Mayor's Office of Workforce Development. "This dialogue demands that the company is a true partner. When a company is not fully engaged in the training process, there is less of a chance that they will actually hire individuals who successfully complete the training."[86]

Community-based education and employment agencies should collaborate with businesses to identify career opportunities in high-demand, high-growth industries,[87] assess which industries would be good matches for individuals with criminal backgrounds, and develop customized training that goes beyond traditional education and employment programs. Such partnerships would provide potential employees with specific industry skills and chances for career advancement, and would provide employers with a stable workforce that contributes to their business profitability.

Inspiration from the Field:

North Lawndale Employment Network and Advocate Healthcare Partnership in Chicago

The North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN) and Advocate Trinity Hospital (Trinity) have developed a partnership to help formerly incarcerated individuals secure jobs in local hospitals.

Participants who graduate from NLEN's "U-Turn Permitted" reentry program and qualify under the Illinois Healthcare Worker Background Check Act spend three weeks of unsubsidized training in Trinity's Environmental Services or Nutritional Services Departments. Upon completion of the training, participants are placed into available positions at Trinity. Starting hourly pay is $9.00 to $10.50 with full benefits; Trinity also provides a work-school program that assists employees in acquiring education to advance in a medical career.

To date, all 15 participants that have enrolled in the training have completed it. Trinity directly hired 12 trainees and two were placed in other jobs. Of the 12 individuals hired at Trinity, 11 still work there after three years. One study showed that these employees have a 25 percent reduction in absences and time off compared with other employees, which provides the hospital with a direct cost savings. NLEN plans to replicate the program at Mount Sinai Hospital and Advocate Bethany Hospital.

Source: Brenda Palms-Barber (Executive Director, North Lawndale Employment Network), interview with Julie Wilen, October 24, 2005.

Engage employers to devise effective hiring incentives and retention strategies.

Recommendation

Issue

To successfully place released prisoners into jobs as soon as they leave prison, education and employment agencies must have established strong relationships with employers. Many employers are admittedly hesitant to hire former prisoners, but some indicate a willingness to do so with appropriate incentives (e.g., insurance against any potential legal liability) and interventions (e.g., case managers)[88] to work with the employee and help avert any problems. These incentives and interventions need to address concerns of employers about the perceived risks of hiring individuals who were formerly incarcerated and provide former prisoners with necessary job training, placement and supports.[89]

If employers are not incorporated into the workforce development discussion—if they are not asked what works and what does not work from a business perspective—then they will continue to be reluctant to employ released prisoners.

Solution

Listening to and learning from employers on issues ranging from job readiness to retention concerns is a critical step in crafting long-term solutions.

The City, through the Chicago Workforce Board, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, the Department of Business Affairs and Licensing, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, World Business Chicago, the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club, and other partners, should solicit employer feedback (either through surveys or focus groups) to better understand and manage issues of hiring and retaining formerly incarcerated individuals.

As a result of these conversations, the City should form a "Business Leadership Group" with private employers to identify potential strategies for employing these individuals. This group could serve as an incubator for innovative ideas, act as a peer exchange network, and host educational forums for the broader business community.

This employer group, along with City departments (e.g., Budget, Law, Planning and Development, Procurement, Revenue, Business Affairs and Licensing, and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development) should explore options of creating local business incentives to supplement the Federal Bonding Program and the Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit. Under the Federal Bonding Program, the Illinois Department of Employment Security issues bonds of $5,000–$10,000 with no deductible for up to one year in case of theft or damage by an "at-risk" employee.[90] Under the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, employers receive up to a $2,400 federal income tax credit for each low-income person on their payroll who has a felony record and who is within one year of conviction or release.[91] More employers should be urged to take advantage of these existing incentives. During fiscal year 2004–05, only 34 bonds were issued[92] and approximately 579 individuals were certified as former prisoners for tax credit purposes in Illinois.[93] Employers should provide advice as to what supports are needed, what financial and business incentives should be provided to encourage them to hire qualified men and women with criminal records, and what rewards and recognition should be given to employers willing to hire these individuals.

"Sustained employment keeps me from going back to street crime. It's about learning to love what you do . . . you can't say that about dealing. You may love the money, but you don't really love what you're doing for it. But my biggest accomplishment goes beyond my paycheck. I have an 18-year-old daughter. I missed out on six years of her life, but she's proud of me now. That's the best."

Lafayette Haynes
Spent seven years in prison for drug crimes and currently has been employed for over one year with a wood design company

Promote and support transitional jobs programs.

Recommendation

Issue

Employers rely on their perceptions—and oftentimes misperceptions—during the hiring process. Many employers may doubt that a former prisoner has the skills and values needed to succeed in the workplace. With other job candidates, employers look to a person's prior work experience or job performance, often contacting previous employers or receiving letters of recommendation. But most formerly incarcerated individuals have no recent work history. Furthermore, employers may be concerned that these individuals are contending with addiction issues, emotional adjustments, or family crises, which could undermine their productivity and reliability as an employee. These factors often act as a powerful disincentive to hiring former prisoners.

To combat this situation, formerly incarcerated individuals need to develop work experiences that help to eliminate these unknowns, and this should occur in an environment that allows them to develop good work habits, learn from mistakes, and build their confidence and skills.

"This is a forgotten about population. Former prisoners are put back on the streets to be productive members of society, with nothing offered to be of benefit to them. If there are no organizations that can offer alternatives to former prisoners, we will continue to see the same devastation in the community as we have been seeing. These individuals have to eat, have to live somewhere, have to put shoes on their kids' feet, and they can't get a job. We will be faced with continued tragedies if there are no plans or alternatives for former prisoners to get a way out of their criminal lifestyle."

Rev. Henry Barlow
Pastor, Christ Tabernacle Baptist Church and President, New City's Ministers Coalition. Rev. Barlow also runs an automotive technology training program in collaboration with Ford Motor Company

INSPIRATION FROM THE FIELD:

CENTER FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN NEW YORK

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is a non-profit agency that provides a highly structured set of employment services to about 1,800 former prisoners returning to New York City under community supervision.

CEO's Neighborhood Work Project (NWP) provides immediate, paid, short-term employment through day-labor work crews that perform custodial services to government buildings, maintain nature trails, paint classrooms, and clean up roadways. During this program, CEO staff works with individuals on vocational and interpersonal skills and helps them secure long-term jobs. CEO's program is 90 percent funded by revenue it generates from agencies for which it conducts work.

CEO has developed an expansive employment network and has placed participants with over 150 public and private sector employers. Approximately 60 percent of its graduates find full-time jobs within two to three months. A 1997 study by the Vera Institute found that only 15 percent of participants that CEO placed in jobs were reincarcerated within three years.

Source: www.ceoworks.org

"The way businesses are successful is by minimizing risk. If there is an issue of a potential applicant with a conviction, that's sometimes an additional risk. Most employers today do a background check, and, if they find a criminal record, it's goodbye. And the social consequence of that is that any kind of major conviction now becomes a life sentence. Even though someone may have a criminal record, they may ultimately be a better employee than someone who doesn't."

Willie Cade
President of the Chicago Office, Computers for Schools

Solution

Transitional jobs programs have proven to be effective because they provide real work experience to formerly incarcerated individuals while addressing the personal issues these individuals face upon their return to society. In fact, research has shown that intensive transitional jobs programs are even more successful than traditional employment and training models. A study by Mathematica Policy Research found that 81 to 94 percent of the individuals who completed short-term work assignments found permanent unsubsidized employment.[94]

Transitional jobs provide temporary publicly subsidized employment that combines real work, skill development, and supportive services. These programs rapidly place recently released prisoners into paid work experience assignments. Coupled with case management, job readiness and basic training, individuals can gain valuable skills and experience needed to obtain steady, unsubsidized employment.

Policymakers realize the benefits of these programs, and consequently, more public funding has been targeted for transitional jobs programs to assist hard-to-serve populations (e.g., individuals with disabilities, mental illnesses, limited English proficiency, and welfare recipients). Currently, more than 40 transitional jobs programs operate in states around the country, including Washington, Pennsylvania, New York, and Wisconsin.[95]

In July 2004, Chicago's Mayor's Office of Workforce Development launched a pilot transitional jobs program for people with felony backgrounds using publicly subsidized paid work experience with private employers. These formerly incarcerated individuals developed valuable work experience, and even those who were not immediately hired at the end of the subsidized employment period had a marketable work history and an improved understanding of the job search process.

Although Chicago is home to a few emerging programs, a more ambitious effort is needed and the City should explore several options for expanding the current pilot. While transitional jobs programs can be expensive, the high rate of job retention and the low rate of recidivism among participants make them a valuable investment. The City should consider the possibility of using state or federal government funding for expanding the two current transitional jobs programs to several sites throughout Chicago, especially in neighborhoods with a high concentration of returning prisoners.[96]

Promote and support social enterprise initiatives.

Recommendation

Issue

For individuals leaving prison, the competitive and often unforgiving nature of a structured work environment may not be conducive to their unique circumstances. While many are dedicated to finding and maintaining a job, this process will not involve the same formula for everyone. Formerly incarcerated individuals initially may require a more supportive work setting as they acclimate to life outside of prison and develop a new set of skills.

> ***"Social enterprises are stepping stones to sustainable employment and are the building blocks for self-sufficiency. Through training and participating in real world work experiences, individuals obtain job skills (leadership and problem-solving), identify gaps in basic skills (reading and math) and get opportunities for higher level training (computer literacy). Social enterprises give participants an opportunity to build self-esteem and self-confidence in an environment that is structured and demanding, yet set up for them to succeed."***
>
> *Lauri Alpern*
> *Executive Director, The Enterprising Kitchen*

Solution

Social enterprises offer an opportunity for people with criminal records to gain significant work experience in a business environment with standard practices and procedures sensitive to their individual needs and personal circumstances.

Social enterprises usually are businesses within a non-profit entity that produce goods (e.g., soaps and honey) or provide services (e.g., landscaping and street cleaning) and directly link that trade to a specific social mission. By and large, social enterprises strive for what is commonly referred to as a "double bottom line"—they deliver on both financial and social performance targets. Funding for social enterprises comes from grants as well as business revenue, and generally the profits get channeled back into the organization for case management and other social services.

The Delancey Street Foundation, originally founded in San Francisco, California, has a national reputation for its innovative social enterprise ventures as well as the successful outcomes achieved by its participants. At its core is the belief that behavior can be changed in a structured, supportive market-driven environment in which individual responsibility and accountability are emphasized. During an individual's participation in the organization's two-year program, they work to achieve a high school equivalency degree. Afterwards, participants learn skills at one of the Foundation's training schools: a moving and trucking company, a restaurant and catering service, a print and copy shop, wholesale and retail sales, paratransit services, and an automotive service center, among others.

Inspiration from the Field:

Cleanslate in Chicago

Cleanslate is a non-profit neighborhood beautification business that cleans sidewalks, parkways, and vacant lots; provides light landscaping and snow removal services; and helps to promote Chicago's recycling programs to community residents and businesses.

An outgrowth of The CARA Program in Chicago, Cleanslate employs "difficult to place" individuals, mostly those with a criminal background. The participants learn critical work and life skills as they perform their tasks, and a detailed curriculum and evaluation process have been established to teach them about workplace expectations.

The pilot program launched in June 2005 with one work crew focused on the commercial streets of the Auburn-Gresham community on Chicago's south side. After only the first three months of operation, Cleanslate achieved marked success. Seven of the original ten Cleanslate interns have found permanent jobs with benefits in the private sector. Cleanslate will be expanding to operate four work crews in 2006.

Sources: Eric Weinheimer (Executive Director, The CARA Program) and Mark Carroll (President, Cleanslate), interview with Julie Wilen, October 17, 2005.

Most of the funds generated by the Delancey businesses support the Delancey community; in return, the residents receive food, housing, and a small stipend. According to the organization, more than 14,000 individuals have successfully graduated from the program and are leading independent lives.[97] The City should consider investing in a similar model to house and train formerly incarcerated individuals.

In Chicago, a small number of social enterprises specifically focused on helping formerly incarcerated individuals already exist. The City should explore options to provide seed money to foster the growth of additional social enterprises for this population. The City also should encourage existing social enterprises to expand their business operations as well as mentor new and developing ones.

Moreover, the City should help to cultivate government-to-business and business-to-business networks for products manufactured and services delivered by these social enterprises.

For instance, social enterprises could qualify as vendors for the City, producing goods and delivering services used by the City to help departments operate more effectively and efficiently. Government dollars would directly translate into training support for formerly incarcerated individuals, giving them exposure to standard business practices and environments. The City would be providing crucial workforce development opportunities for an often-overlooked population by contracting for products or services that it already needs.

The City currently has a few such initiatives underway. The Department of General Services and the Department of Transportation have contracted with the Chicago Christian Industrial League, a non-profit organization serving low-income and homeless people, to perform landscape services. The Department of Fleet Management is contracting with the Chicagoland Youth and Adult Training Center, an automotive training program for young adults with criminal records, to perform light preventative maintenance and repairs on City vehicles. Using these two experiences as a guide, the City should survey departments to assess other appropriate contractual opportunities.

Foster more opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures.

Recommendation

Issue

Many released prisoners confront multiple barriers that compound their struggle to find employment, including limited education, little work experience, lack of job skills, stigma, hiring restrictions, and substance abuse or other health issues. For these individuals, traditional employment may not be a feasible option. Since many of these individuals have been successful entrepreneurs (albeit in illegal enterprises), they simply need to rechannel and redirect their abilities.

Solution

Self-employment allows an individual flexibility, freedom and control, and avoids institutionalized barriers to traditional employment. Therefore, creating mechanisms to encourage and support entrepreneurial ventures for individuals with criminal records can provide more job opportunities than conventional employment models.

Individuals seeking to become entrepreneurs may need information about starting a business, available resources, and encouragement. The City has established the Small Business Assistance Center (SBAC), an office specifically designed to help small businesses succeed. SBAC provides answers to common business questions, such as permit and license requirements, zoning regulations, and business inspections. SBAC's website posts useful resources, such as information about funding sources and business development programs as well as a guide on starting a business and a glossary of frequently used business terms.[98] After online users complete a short questionnaire regarding their business goals and their immediate needs, the website generates customized resource listings.

In November 2004, the City announced the creation of a new Department of Business Affairs and Licensing, which plans to consolidate several functions from the Departments of Revenue, Planning and Development, and the Mayor's License Commission. The new department will essentially serve as a point of contact and partnership for businesses, providing assistance with licensing, regulatory requirements, and business development. This department plans to create online applications and licensing renewals, as well as provide extra support for start-up and existing businesses. The department became fully operational at the end of 2005.[99]

The City, through the Department of Business Affairs and Licensing, Small Business Assistance Center, and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, should expand its small business initiatives to provide resources specifically tailored for formerly incarcerated individuals who wish to become self-employed. The City, in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), should work through IDOC's Pre-Start program to promote such resources before prisoners' release, and to encourage individuals leaving prison to consider self-employment as a viable, more flexible alternative to traditional employment.

Inspiration from the Field:

Prison Entrepreneurship Program in Texas

The Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP) is a non-profit organization that leverages the skills of senior business executives to equip prisoners and former prisoners with entrepreneurial training. PEP's key initiatives include an in-prison business plan competition, work readiness program, executive mentoring program, entrepreneurship school and access to small business financing.

PEP has engaged 120 prisoners in two Texas prisons. Under PEP's guidance, two prisoners filed provisional patent applications with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; three prisoners have obtained funding commitments from seed investors; and three former prisoners currently run their own businesses on a full-time basis.

Source: Prison Entrepreneurship Program, Executive Summary.

Offer professional development to existing education and employment agencies to better serve individuals with criminal records.

Recommendation

Issue

Many former prisoners rely on community-based organizations, churches and other faith-based organizations, One-Stop Career Centers, and community colleges for employment assistance upon reentry. Working with formerly incarcerated clients involves a nuanced understanding of their criminal record, situation, emotional state, and multiple and interconnected barriers. Too often, however, professionals in these agencies are not well-informed about the specific needs of formerly incarcerated individuals, are not well-equipped to assist with their employment preparation or job search, and do not appreciate their unique circumstances.

In some cases, staff at education and employment agencies may not possess the specialized skills or be adept at working with formerly incarcerated clients, and may be perceived as not wanting to work with them. For example, job developers and case managers may not understand how to read an individual's criminal history record ("rap sheet") and may misinterpret what such a record means for future employment. They also may not fully know how to navigate the intricacies of the criminal justice system and obtain crucial judicial remedies (e.g., expungement and record sealing, or Certificates of Relief from Disability or Certificates of Good Conduct) for their clients.

Solution

Community-based education and employment agencies provide one of the best avenues for reentering prisoners to obtain needed job placement assistance on their road to economic self-sufficiency.

The City should coordinate with professionals who have expertise in both workforce development and prisoner reentry to design and conduct trainings specifically tailored to serving formerly incarcerated individuals. These trainings should encompass interactive workshops to infuse sensitivity toward reentry issues in order to help job developers better understand the prison culture and the unique circumstances of former prisoners, and give job developers concrete tools to help their clients. Advocacy organizations in Chicago have formed the Criminal Records Collaborative, and have already devised an innovative curriculum with various modules along these lines.[100]

In 2004, the City worked with the Collaborative and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to provide technical assistance to staff of nine LISC-funded employment resource centers. They facilitated a workshop to educate staff about criminal records and the reentry process, covering topics such as the stages of the criminal justice process, potential judicial remedies

"My son was placed in a halfway house after prison, but couldn't find work. It wasn't long before he could no longer afford even the small monthly rent demanded of him, and the halfway house asked him to leave. How is he going to pay rent when he doesn't have a job? That right there is pressuring him to go out and do wrong."

Carolyn Nance
Mother of formerly incarcerated son

(e.g., expungement, sealing of records, reading a rap sheet), and the challenges of working with this population.[101] This training could easily be expanded to include any social service provider or economic development organization.

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) has partnered with the Chicago Jobs Council to develop and maintain a website for frontline staff who serve individuals with criminal records. The site was launched in October 2005 on IDES' website and features four sections: (i) "Working with Clients" includes information on intake and assessment, job readiness, and job retention; (ii) "Working with Employers" includes common misperceptions regarding hiring people with criminal records, ways to demonstrate rehabilitation to employers, and descriptions of the benefits and incentives available to employers who hire the formerly incarcerated; (iii) "Resources" includes information on criminal records and rap sheets, occupational bans and waivers, public benefits and work supports, common terminology, a bibliography, and helpful links; and (iv) "RESP" includes information about IDES' Reentry Employment Service Program, including workshop tools, presentations, and a contact list.

> ***"I value honesty the most. Although I may look at an individual's record, if they are honest about their criminal background, the criminal history most often becomes a non-issue."***
>
> *Bill Conway*
> *Human Resource Manager, Cameo Container*

According to Lisa Hampton, Senior Policy Associate of the Chicago Jobs Council, "Our goal is to encourage workforce development frontline staff, job seekers and employers to use the website as a basic resource. However, we want communities to expand their use of this website to examine local needs and gaps in providing information to employers and job seekers, and to consider how services get accessed and what supports locally are available."[103]

Expand access to and availability of legal resources to formerly incarcerated individuals for assistance in expunging and sealing their criminal records.

Recommendation

Issue

Any person who has ever been arrested has a record of their criminal history ("rap sheet"). The state and federal governments compile this information into comprehensive repositories. The Illinois State Police maintains the state's criminal record repository, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation maintains the federal one.

Thousands of Chicagoans have rap sheets with only minor misdemeanor convictions or with no convictions at all. Rap sheets include arrests where the person was never charged, charges that were later dismissed, or charges where the person was found not guilty. These rap sheets are public record and may be preserved indefinitely. They are accessible to employers, and may significantly impact an individual's employment prospects.

Under Illinois law, some individuals are eligible to have part or all of their arrest or conviction history sealed or expunged.[104] Both of these processes require that the criminal history be made confidential, essentially removing the individual's criminal history from public view. Sealing of records protects the information from public access; however, it is still available to law enforcement agencies. Expungement requires that the arresting agency, the Sheriff's Office, the State's Attorney's Office, and the courts physically destroy the records.

The process for sealing or expungement is complicated, time consuming, and potentially expensive. Applications must be filed with the local and state police, the State's Attorney's Office and the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County. In some cases, the process takes over a year to complete.

Few people can navigate this process successfully without some sort of legal assistance, and even fewer can afford an attorney. Currently, Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic (CGLA) is the only private agency in Chicago that provides this service for free, and it is over capacity. Between 400 and 500 former prisoners visit this clinic each year, and only 200 individuals are able to obtain assistance with legal proceedings. In an attempt to serve more clients expeditiously, CGLA set up a help desk at the Clerk's office, three days a week, so lawyers can file petitions on-site for clients.[105] But it still cannot meet the need.

"Most of the people we [the Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic] see have been denied jobs due to their criminal backgrounds. They are unemployed or underemployed. This perpetuates economic hardship and poverty. They have served their sentences and want to move forward. They want to improve their lives and their families' lives."

Margaret Soffin
Attorney and Director of the Criminal Records Program, Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic

Solution

Free or low-cost legal services and resources should be more accessible to individuals with criminal histories seeking expungement or sealing.

In July 2005, more than 3,000 people attended an "Expungement Summit" sponsored by the Honorable Dorothy Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, in conjunction with Congressman Danny Davis, State Representative Connie Howard, other elected officials, and an array of community organizations. The summit was intended to bring expungement services directly to the community. Volunteer attorneys assisted participants in preparing applications for filing petitions for expungement or sealing. The State's Attorney, Chicago Police Department, and Illinois State Police explained their petition review process. The Illinois Prisoner Review Board discussed Certificates of Relief from Disabilities and Certificates of Good Conduct, as well as how to prepare letters for clemency and/or pardons from the Governor. Other agencies shared information on employment, training, health care, housing and other services specifically for people with criminal records.

In addition to sponsoring these types of summits, the City should collaborate with the Chicago Bar Association, the Illinois State Bar Association and local law schools and legal clinics to increase access to appropriate legal assistance and advice for judicial remedies for formerly incarcerated individuals. For many individuals, these actions could be the first step on their road to employment, self-sufficiency and successful reentry into society.

Real life

Sandra S. is a 38-year-old African-American woman

Sandra S.

After graduating from high school in Chicago's Garfield Park neighborhood, Sandra had her sights set on college. She enrolled in a computer training program that she hoped would help her to prepare. But then, out partying with her friends one evening, she tried crack cocaine. After that, she doesn't remember what happened with the computer training class, or thoughts of going to college, or plans for getting a job. Except that it all went away. She was 19 years old.

"I had just finished high school, and I just wanted to try things," Sandra recalls. "And that's how I ended up where I'm at today. They say you only have to try crack cocaine one time to be addicted, and I guess it's true."

When she realized she had a drug problem, she tried to regain control of her life. At the age of 21, pregnant with her first child, she managed to stay off crack for an entire year. But soon after her child was born, she relapsed. She became pregnant with another child less than two years later. Although her second child was born drug-free, she again relapsed quickly after her birth.

As her habit grew, Sandra started selling drugs to support her addiction. In 1999, she was arrested for the first time. Now, a crack cocaine addict for more than 10 years, Sandra was charged with possession and intent to deliver. She spent 17 days in county jail. She remembers mainly watching TV with fellow inmates—and waiting to get out.

Sentenced to probation, she was placed under house arrest. She wore an electronic band around her ankle and had to report to her parole agent every month, but she was not required to take drug tests or undergo treatment. According to Sandra, "Probation was just something I had to do every month. So long as I reported in, then I could sail on through." Sandra continued to use and sell crack during her probation. Soon she was getting high "24 hours a day."

In February 2003, narcotics police apprehended Sandra with a large quantity of crack—within 1,000 feet of a public park. Under Illinois drug laws, Sandra knew, a conviction of intent to sell near a public park could carry a severe sentence. While in Cook County Jail for five days, she became increasingly desperate and depressed. Shortly after being released on Sheriff's Furlough, she attempted suicide. "It was my attempted suicide that saved my life," she explains.

As soon as she was released from the hospital, she was picked up by Sheriff's police and returned to Cook County Jail. This time, however, she enrolled in a drug treatment program for the first time in her life. She kept to a daily schedule of group therapy meetings and other structured activities. At the end of her three months of treatment, she was eligible for Sheriff's Furlough again and she returned to house arrest status. She was able to spend time with her daughters, even attending her youngest's graduation from grammar school.

Gradually, as her court date was postponed over and over, Sandra began to feel the strain of her uncertain circumstances. "I was really on a rollercoaster at this time," she explains. "I was so grateful to be back home that I had no intentions of using drugs. But for me to come home each day, I had to pass the same block where I used to hang out and get high."

After her conviction and sentencing, a full year after her initial arrest, Sandra was transferred to Decatur Correctional Center, where she continued to attend daily group therapy meetings. With each day that passed, she felt a little more in control. "I didn't think I had a bad drug habit until I was in these places, because I wasn't doing some of the things that I had seen other people doing out there," Sandra says. "Now, in treatment, I was getting control of myself and my life. I was realizing that getting high was not what I wanted to do anymore. But there were other woman there with the same problems as me who didn't want to be in these programs. They just wanted to do their time and get back on the street. And they ended up getting rearrested."

"Now, in treatment, I was getting control of myself and my life."

Because she was a first-time offender and had not been convicted of a violent offense, Sandra was able to transfer to the Fox Valley Adult Transition Center (Fox Valley), near Aurora, after three months. Here, for the first time in her life, she began the arduous process of finding and holding a job. It was a difficult period, Sandra says. Although she found work at a fast food restaurant, the work was more challenging than she had expected, and after a few months, she was fired. Sandra was then hired to work full-time in the kitchen at Fox Valley.

Sandra approached her release day with trepidation. She felt her chances of finding and holding a job outside of prison were remote, and she began to worry about regaining custody of her children, as her sister had been given temporary custody while Sandra was in prison. Around this time, a recruiter from a community-based service provider visited Fox Valley looking to enroll women in a new transitional jobs program. Sandra was one of just eight women selected to participate.

But Sandra left Fox Valley with $200 cash, no job, and no place to live. She couldn't stay with her mother because her mother's landlord would not tolerate the presence of someone with a felony record and she couldn't stay with her sister because of their turbulent relationship. Meanwhile, Sandra found out that she would need to pay $300 to initiate the legal proceedings necessary to regain custody of her children. And her job leads, mostly far away from her community in either cleaning or fast food industries, seemed to be going nowhere.

Things began to turn around when Sandra reconnected with a community-based service provider with which she had worked after her first arrest. Staff at this agency began a search for affordable housing and employment, and informed Sandra that she could get the legal fee for her custody proceedings waived. A few days later, the transitional jobs program sent Sandra on an interview. She was hired as a case manager to organize and lead group therapy sessions for drug addicts and conduct individual evaluations. "I feel important being a case manager. It feels good helping people. And I can do it, because I've been in so many groups like this myself. I know what they're going through," explains Sandra.

Each paycheck feels like an important milestone on Sandra's road to recovery. "I feel grateful today. There are places where people with felony records can find work, but there aren't many. I'm grateful that I'm out of the situation I was in this time last year."

Marvin A.

Real Life

Marvin A. is a 64-year-old African-American man.

For the past 35 years, Marvin has been suffering from a chronic mental illness—paranoid schizophrenia—and because of this illness, he has been repeatedly involved in the criminal justice system. His arrest record goes back to 1969. He has been arrested 151 times for crimes including retail theft, criminal trespassing, battery, armed robbery, and public indecency. He has been hospitalized 33 times in state psychiatric facilities, plus multiple additional times in private psychiatric hospitals.

While not on medication, Marvin gets excessively nervous and paranoid, and cannot function in society. Fearing contamination, he has stolen clothing rather than let a clerk handle the merchandise. Fearing people will hurt him, Marvin has been unpredictable, on at least one occasion attempting armed robbery.

Before his illness, Marvin served in the Air Force, had his own apartment, and held a job as a stock clerk in a department store. However, during the onset of his illness, he began becoming suspicious and was afraid to go places, thinking strangers would harm him. As Marvin says, "I was confused, and couldn't adjust myself too well." He simply couldn't bring himself to allow others to help him with his medication or therapy. Marvin cycled in and out of nursing homes, state hospitals, YMCAs, group homes, shelters, and spent much of his time homeless. He also cycled in and out of jail, with one prison term for theft. Over the last 30 years, Marvin spent more than one-third of his life either in hospitals or jail.

Marvin did receive social security benefits to help pay for his mental health treatment. However, each time he was sent to jail, his disability checks stopped and he had to reapply for eligibility after his release. During this time, he was often without medication, money, or stable housing.

Throughout the years Marvin has received medication and treatment, it was never quite intensive enough. Even involvement in a program five days a week did not keep him stabilized. Marvin needed someone to help him take medication even on weekends and holidays. While Marvin acknowledges that medication helps him, symptoms still make it very difficult to take the medication each day.

In 2000, the last time Marvin was in jail, he became involved with an "assertive community treatment team" designed to work with mentally ill individuals in Cook County Jail. This agency arranged in court to have Marvin released to its care. They helped him to obtain housing immediately in a large North Side rooming house that offered communal meals. Once out of jail, case managers visited him once a day to ensure that he was taking his medication as well as helped him build a support network in the community.

He has now moved and is living independently in a small apartment. Case managers still visit him daily. He is following his treatment regime, compliant with supervision and, in his words, "trying to keep straight, get a job, get a puppy, and stay on my medication." He can now function in the community without any institutional care. Since beginning this therapy five years ago, Marvin has not been arrested, he has not been back to jail, and he has not returned to any state hospitals.

"[I am] trying to keep straight, get a job, get a puppy, and stay on my medication."

Recommendations

Reforms with Statewide Impact

- Ensure that prisoners receive a comprehensive health assessment at intake as a basis for treatment plans.
- Increase availability of effective in-prison substance abuse and mental health treatment.
- Streamline continuity of care from prison into communities.
- Develop information-sharing programs to streamline portability of records both into and out of prison.
- Ensure timely access to Medicaid and SSI/SSDI benefits for eligible individuals released from prison.

Reforms with Citywide Impact

- Increase access to and availability of community-based treatment programs to address prisoners' health-related issues.
- Create and expand diversion programs for individuals who commit non-violent offenses and need substance abuse or mental health treatment.
- Create more positive social structures and peer support groups to assist with recovery and difficult psychological adjustment during prisoner reentry.

Chapter 2
Health

Chapter 2: Health

By most measures, individuals in correctional facilities are struggling with infectious disease, chronic illness, addiction, and mental disorders at levels far higher than the general public. There are a number of broad cultural factors that contribute to these health challenges and health disparities of people with criminal records, such as low socioeconomic and employment status, lack of adequate health care services and racial discrimination.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, over 75 percent of state prisoners and 80 percent of federal prisoners are drug- or alcohol-involved.[1] More than two-thirds of people in jail meet the criteria for substance dependence or abuse.[2] The use of drugs and alcohol is linked to 80 percent of crimes committed in the United States.[3]

Serious mental health disorders such as schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder among prisoners are two to four times higher than the general population.[4] Up to 16 percent of the nation's prison population suffers from at least one serious mental disorder and is in need of treatment.[5] Undeniably, there are individuals living behind bars because they have committed crimes that may not have occurred had they received treatment. Some of our nation's correctional institutions house more people with mental illness than do our country's mental health institutions; Cook County Jail, for instance, is the largest mental health care facility in the country today.[6]

In 1997, prisoners constituted considerably less than one percent of the country's total population. However, that year, nearly one-quarter of people living with HIV or AIDS, nearly one-third of people with hepatitis C, and more than one-third of those with tuberculosis were released from a prison or jail.[7] Prisoners also have a higher incidence of asthma, high blood pressure and diabetes than the general public.[8]

Virtually all of these prisoners will return home, bringing their health concerns with them, and they will face a range of obstacles as they make that adjustment. Health care services play an important role in facilitating a smooth transition back to the community. Unfortunately, despite the tremendous growth of Chicago's community-based safety net system in recent years, there still remains a significant gap between the need for and the availability of basic health care services. Access issues often are exacerbated for returning prisoners who likely had their Medicaid benefits terminated while incarcerated.

But health concerns affect not only returning prisoners. If their health needs are not managed appropriately, they also jeopardize the well-being of their family and the community at large. They are at an elevated risk for falling into a destructive cycle of arrest, incarceration, release, deterioration, negative social outcomes, rearrest, and reincarceration.

Addressing prisoners' health issues—substance abuse, mental and physical health, chronic illness and infectious diseases—is an essential component of successful reentry, increasing the likelihood that they will find and keep jobs, secure stable housing, and forge positive, lasting social relationships with family and friends after release.

Ensure that prisoners receive a comprehensive health assessment at intake as a basis for treatment plans.

Recommendation

Issue

Although most prisoners develop their health problems before being incarcerated, most people sentenced to prison lack health insurance and have rarely, if ever, seen a doctor in the community.[9] In a sense, then, prison is potentially the first point of access to diagnose and treat a variety of physical, behavioral and mental health conditions affecting these individuals and threatening public health. As the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) contends, adequately treating people in prison can serve society at large by minimizing transmission of communicable diseases, reducing health care costs in the community, lightening the emotional burden on families, and diminishing the potential for future crimes committed by people whose untreated mental health problems or substance abuse drives them to criminal behaviors.[10]

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) conducts health screenings during prisoner intake. Correctional health staff interviews each incoming prisoner about individual and family medical histories, mental illnesses, drug use, chronic ailments and histories of physical or sexual abuse.[11] Diagnostic tests and physical examinations are used to screen for hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, chronic alcohol and drug use, hepatitis and other diseases.[12]

However, this screening is limited.[13] IDOC's Reception and Classification Unit (the division of IDOC responsible for intake and processing of prisoners) lacks a validated, science-based assessment tool that serves as a basis for the development of a treatment plan. Reception and Classification's screen for substance abuse does not lead to a comprehensive diagnosis of an individual's clinical needs. This unit does not have sufficient capacity to adequately screen for, let alone assess, all prisoners' clinical needs. Mental health screens are self-reporting and only identify people who are currently experiencing or exhibiting symptoms. The screens are primarily aimed at identifying suicidal or homicidal prisoners who need to be segregated from the general prison population. Similar to mental illness, testing for HIV and hepatitis C is provided only for symptomatic prisoners and for those whose histories indicate an elevated risk.

Undiagnosed illnesses are problematic both for the affected individual and society as a whole. Health conditions are generally easier and less expensive to treat when they are detected early in the progression of a disease or the cycle of addiction.[14]

Treatment plans differ widely between institutions and are dependent on several factors. First, public safety and security concerns dominate a prison setting. Wardens, not doctors, manage and control institutions, and often make decisions (e.g., if and when a prisoner can be taken to an outside specialty appointment or when medications can be delivered) that normally would be made by medical personnel. Second, the quality and breadth of medical care after screening can fluctuate depending on the entity administering health services at a particular correction institution. In recent years, complaints have surfaced that some private contractors who deliver prison health services in Illinois have not provided adequate medical supplies, or have restricted treatment for seriously ill prisoners.[15] Third, health services provided by corrections departments across the country are not consistent with the standard of care provided outside prison, and are considered to be "20 years behind the state of practice" in the medical industry.[16]

Solution

Capacity of correctional health and medical staff must be expanded to perform thorough assessments, and correctional facilities must be equipped to do them. There are opportunities during intake and incarceration to screen, manage and treat many physical, behavioral and mental health conditions that signficantly impact the well-being of prisoners, their families and the community. Because institutionalized health care may be the only health care option for many individuals involved in corrections, it is important to make the most of these opportunities.

IDOC should routinely administer a validated, science-based assessment tool to diagnose various health-related issues of physically and mentally ill prisoners. This tool should provide sufficient information to develop a clinical health plan and treatment program that can follow prisoners throughout the prison system and be used to continue services after they are discharged. For example, prisoners with serious chronic illnesses must receive proper treatment during incarceration, those with HIV, hypertension or diabetes must receive regular checkups, and mentally ill prisoners must receive treatment that prepares them to function in the community after release.[17]

Similar to the medical community outside prison, the health staff at correctional institutions should serve their prisoner patients within a uniform standard of care. Sufficient guidelines and oversight should exist to guarantee that prisoners do not receive substandard medical care, but rather a standard of care that ensures individuals leave prison physically and mentally healthier than when they arrived. NCCHC's Standards for Health Services offer a guide which Illinois can use to create model standards. Designed by independent experts from the fields of health, law and corrections, the NCCHC standards provide comprehensive guidelines for improving the health of prisoners.[18]

A number of states are experimenting with innovative ways to provide oversight and accountability for prison health systems. The Governor of Texas has appointed a committee comprised of physicians, university representatives and correctional facility administrators to provide independent oversight of the prison health care system according to quality standards.[19] Oregon is attempting to keep prison health care consistent with community standards by requiring prisons to provide quality services similar to health care available to the insured poor in the community.[20]

"This is the best chance to locate customers. They are in front of you and they aren't going anywhere. You can talk to them, and you can get them all the resources they need. Otherwise, in the community, they might not find these resources on their own."

Dr. Nader Tobia
Medical Director, Stateville Reception and Classification Center, which processes 2,200 male prisoners monthly for Illinois prisons

Increase availability of effective in-prison substance abuse and mental health treatment.

Recommendation

Issue

Illinois leads the nation in drug-related crimes.[21] The number of people incarcerated for drug offenses rose from 7,874 in 1994 to 10,808 in 2003, an increase of 36.9 percent.[22] By 2003, 41 percent of the 35,000 adult prisoners were convicted of a drug law offense.[23] It is estimated that, annually, 69 percent of all prison admissions in Illinois are for crimes associated with drug use regardless of the specific offense for which the person was convicted.[24] In fact, 82 percent of all male arrestees in Chicago tested positive for at least one illegal drug at the time of their apprehension.[25]

National studies reveal that untreated substance abuse is a major factor in repeated criminality. While approximately 40 percent of all first-time offenders have a history of substance abuse, more than 80 percent of individuals with five or more prior convictions have a history of substance abuse.[26] The Bureau of Justice Statistics found that the national rearrest rate for drug offenders after three years increased from 50.4 percent in 1983 to 66.7 percent in 1994.[27] In Illinois, in 2000, 33 percent of former prisoners were rearrested for a drug offense or returned to prison because they tested positive for an illegal drug while on mandatory supervised release or parole.[28] Drug and property offenders (the latter are largely considered to be drug-involved) have among the highest recidivism rates in the Illinois prison population.[29]

Substance abuse issues that are not addressed during incarceration and/or upon return to the community can severely hinder the reentry process. In the absence of treatment, the risk of relapse following release from prison is high. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse makes this point: "Release of untreated drug- and alcohol-addicted prisoners is tantamount to visiting criminals on society."[30]

Despite the incidence of substance abuse and the positive results from effective treatment programs, in-prison treatment is not available to most that need it. Nationally, only 10 percent of state prisoners in 1997 reported receiving formal substance abuse treatment, a decrease from 25 percent in 1991.[31] In comparison, an estimated 70 percent of prisoners in Illinois are believed to need substance abuse treatment.[32] In 2001, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) had only slightly more than 3,100 substance abuse treatment beds for the estimated 27,000 adult and juvenile prisoners in need.[33]

Similar to substance abuse treatment, the need for mental health treatment far exceeds current capacity. Up to 16 percent of the state prison population across the country is estimated to suffer from mental illness, ranging from schizophrenia to major depression.[34] Approximately 6.4 percent of men and 15 percent of women at Cook County Jail exhibit a severe mental illness.[35] Among individuals with mental disorders in jail, it is estimated that 72 percent also have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder.[36]

Because much of this information is self-reported, the incidence of mental illness likely is much higher than these numbers indicate. In general, in Illinois prisons, there is a lack of data about the scope of mental health problems. Without any quantifiable data, the needs for and treatment of this vulnerable population remain unresolved. "In this case, what we don't know can hurt us," says Melody Heaps, President of Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC).[37]

Solution

In-prison drug treatment, when linked with continuity of care, can decrease post-release drug use and enhance positive outcomes.[38] IDOC should dramatically increase the availability of effective alcohol and substance abuse recovery programs, including detoxification services, education and counseling, self-help groups, and therapeutic communities for minimum- or medium-security prisoners throughout the correctional system.

Currently, there are two Illinois prisons dedicated as substance abuse treatment facilities—Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center (SWICC) and Sheridan Correctional Center (Sheridan). SWICC opened in 1995 and was the state's first prison devoted entirely to adult males incarcerated for drug- or alcohol-related offenses. Sheridan re-opened in 2004 as the state's (and nation's) largest prison solely for adult males with substance abuse problems. A core premise of Sheridan—and one that sets it apart from other prison-based drug treatment services across the country—is the implementation of a full therapeutic community within prison walls.

The early track record of Sheridan demonstrates that IDOC can significantly reduce recidivism by devoting the proper resources and expertise to substance abuse treatment. An evaluation conducted by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority in June 2005 showed that parolees from Sheridan were reincarcerated at a rate nearly 50 percent lower than a comparison group of parolees.[39]

IDOC should replicate programs like this one that are successful and cost-effective. IDOC should focus on implementing best practice treatment approaches (e.g., acquisition of pro-social values and conduct and involvement of all treatment and correctional staff in the prisoner change process). Further, IDOC should explore developing other drug treatment programs based on Sheridan's comprehensive therapeutic approach at other institutions, or perhaps creating more specialized prisons modeled after Sheridan.

Mental health treatment should be initiated in prison and continued after release to have a positive impact on prisoners' abilities to reenter society successfully. Because there is a lack of data on the need for and availability of mental health services, both inside and outside prison, the State should form an independent taskforce to assess the quality, availability and focus of mental health care in prisons. Based on the results of these findings, the State should explore establishing mental health units within existing institutions or perhaps creating a specialized prison modeled after Sheridan for prisoners with mental health issues.

Inspiration from the Field: Sheridan Correctional Center in Illinois

In January 2004, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) reopened Sheridan Correctional Center solely for medium security male prisoners diagnosed with substance abuse problems. The men receive intensive substance abuse treatment in a therapeutic community. They also participate in educational and vocational classes and they get assistance in developing a comprehensive post-release plan. Upon their discharge, Sheridan prisoners receive referrals to various services in the community to ensure that they are moving towards recovery and self-sufficiency. The prison collaborates with four different organizations to provide treatment and rehabilitation support during incarceration and for one year post-release.

Loyola University professor David E. Olson recently studied the first 863 prisoners released to parole from Sheridan as of September 2005 and found an overall recidivism rate of 7.7 percent.

Sources: Zernike, Kate, "Helping Inmates Kick Drugs (and the Prison Habit)," The New York Times, June 26, 2005; Gateway Foundation, "Answers to Addiction" Newsletter, November 2, 2005.

Streamline continuity of care from prison into communities.

Recommendation

Issue

Around the country, studies show that seamless and continuous health services are most effective for long-term, lasting outcomes, including decreased drug use, lower recidivism rates and reduced hospital stays.

Drug treatment programs that begin in prison and continue after release are far more successful than those that end with a prison sentence. The findings from the Delaware Key-Crest Substance Abuse Program, which offers intensive clinical treatment in prison followed by treatment, support and supervision in the community upon release, are remarkable: 74 percent of participants were arrest-free 18 months after release, compared to 47 percent of those who did not participate, while 43 percent of participants were drug-free 18 months after release, compared to 15 percent of those who did not participate.[40] Although the benefit of drug treatment service continuity is well established in the research, it is not a common practice.

Illinois lacks a systemized and seamless transition of care from correctional institutions into communities. While the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has made strides in this area, especially at Sheridan Correctional Center, there is still room for improvement across the system. Linkages between prisons and community health services appear to be rare, making continuity of care, even for those who received treatment in prison, difficult if not impossible. Little assistance is provided to prisoners in establishing these linkages. A 2004 study by the Urban Institute found that only nine percent of prisoners returning to Chicago from Illinois prisons reported receiving referrals to community-based health services, and eight percent received referrals to community mental health services.[41]

Even when general linkages with community providers are made, logistical issues within IDOC impede discharge planning, case management and program placement. Uncertain release dates and destinations of prisoners make connecting community providers with individual clients challenging. IDOC's Placement Resource Unit works in concert with Field Services to assist prisoners in their transition, but large caseloads make it hard to provide individualized attention.

Yet despite the documented importance of continuity of care, the barriers to receiving adequate health care after release are immense. Access is limited for numerous reasons. The vast majority of released prisoners are not covered by health insurance.[42] Consequently, free community clinics (with long waits) and emergency rooms often are the only options for these individuals. Mentally ill prisoners typically are given only 14 days worth of psychiatric medication.[43] These prisoners, many of whom are not covered by Medicaid, likely will have difficulty obtaining additional, and much-needed, medication. Further, many released prisoners also lack immediate access to HIV/AIDS services in the community.

Inspiration from the Field:

Thresholds Correctional Network in Illinois

Starting January 1, 2006, Dwight and Dixon Correctional Centers (the Illinois prisons with the largest number of prisoners with severe mental illness) as well as Cook County Jail will have video-conferencing cameras set up in their mental health units. At the same time, Thresholds (one of Chicago's largest nonprofit providers of mental health services) will set up video-conferencing equipment at some of its facilities around the city, along with Heartland Health Outreach in Uptown and Community Mental Health Council in Auburn-Gresham. Thresholds will supply the cameras to the prisons and will cover its portion of the project's costs. The Illinois Department of Corrections will provide access to the network for use by the video-conferencing cameras.

This initiative marks the first time in the United States that such technology is being used to assess prisoners prior to their release, according to officials in charge of the project. The technology will give these social service agencies an important and cost-effective way to work with the participants before discharge and ease their reentry into society.

Sources: Sadeanu, Adinea, "Video-conferencing Enhances Reach of the Thresholds Prison Project," Daily Southtown, August 18, 2005; John Fallon (Coordinator of Demonstration Projects, Thresholds), interview with Julie Wilen, October 25, 2005.

Solution

Connections to community-based treatment upon release reduce the likelihood of recidivism and relapse. So the adequacy of discharge planning and integration of community services can have critical public health implications.

Effective health planning for prisoners' return to society, specifically connecting them with community services, would greatly increase their chances of receiving medical care post-release. Prisoners should leave with scheduled follow-up appointments to a community-based health care provider; a case manager assigned in the community; medication to cover the gap before medical benefits are obtained; a copy of their prison medical summary (or records); assistance with completing applications for medical benefits; and connections to other reentry services. Community providers and families (along with correctional staff) should be included in pre-release planning meetings, and IDOC should develop a comprehensive discharge summary for all prisoners leaving an IDOC facility.

In North Carolina, for instance, every prisoner has the name, address, and phone number of a provider and an appointment already scheduled prior to release. They are released with an adequate supply of medications to sustain them through the transition from prison to the onset of community-based services.[44] Rhode Island has forged a partnership between the corrections department and local health departments as well as numerous community-based providers of housing, substance abuse and related services. Two-person teams are organized to develop treatment plans prior to release and then "track and trace" individuals back in their communities. An infectious disease specialist offers follow-up care after release. Participants see the same medical providers promoting continuity of care. And transportation assistance to medical appointments is provided.[45]

Discharge planning, and the requisite case management that accompanies it, demands additional staff, time and resources. These tasks require extensive coordination of correctional staff and community agencies to link and manage service delivery across systems and agencies. Although an expensive undertaking, the State should maximize the investment made in pre-release substance abuse treatment, mental health care and medical care, and dedicate staff and funding for adequate discharge planning and post-release follow-up.

"We know formerly incarcerated individuals aren't getting continuity of care, because most end up right back in jail shortly after they are released to parole."

Dr. Carl Alaimo
Director and Chief Psychologist, Cermak Health Services' Mental Health Division, Cook County Jail

Inspiration from the Field: Corrections and Community Initiative in Illinois

The Corrections and Community Initiative, launched as a demonstration project in 1999 by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Human Resource Services Administration (HRSA), matches specially trained case managers with HIV-positive prisoners and includes frequent clinic visits and small caseloads. Prior to release, case managers prepare HIV-positive prisoners for their reentry by providing them access to public benefits, medical services, food and nutrition programs, housing alternatives, job training, substance abuse treatment, mental health programs and other services. Over the first five years of the initiative, 675 individuals qualified for and received services. Based on preliminary evaluation results by the Community Mental Health Council, recidivism rates have been less than 30 percent for program participants.

Sources: http://www.sph.emory.edu/HIVCDP/ILL.htm; Rev. Doris Green, (Director of Community Affairs, AIDS Foundation of Chicago), presentation, Chicago Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry, September 22, 2004.

Develop information-sharing programs to streamline portability of records both into and out of prison.

Recommendation

Issue

Even for the few released prisoners who are referred to community health providers, a lack of transferable medical records—showing what assessments and treatments individuals received before and during their incarceration—impede effective continuity of care. There is no system in place to ensure portable records flow into and out of the prison system.

Prisoners often enter prison with sparse information, if any, regarding their medical history. The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) must make a separate request for each individual record from the state public health office—a very labor intensive process which is not used consistently.[46]

By law, Cook County Jail is supposed to provide prisoner files to IDOC upon transfer of prisoners.[47] The assessments are paper records that must be collected, copied and physically transferred when a prisoner leaves the jail. Unfortunately, Cook County Jail lacks the personnel to adequately accomplish this task. At the same time, IDOC also lacks sufficient staff to review and manage all files transferred from the jail.

Moreover, prisoners do not leave prison with any medical records to promote continuity of care after their release. Community-based agencies, then, typically must conduct their own initial health assessments, often lacking critical pieces of information about individuals' prior care and duplicating time, effort and resources.[48]

"For many people, Cook County Jail is the only place they receive primary health care, and may be the only time they receive PAP tests, screening for sexually transmitted diseases or vaccinations. Because they are so disenfranchised, once they leave the institution, their ability to integrate themselves into structured primary health care delivery systems is compromised. Health care information management technology is one of the most important challenges for the future of health care in this country. Portability of medical records provides one avenue for individuals to receive continuity of care once they are released. However, with more than 300 new admissions to Cook County Jail each day, the current paper-based system presents logistical challenges that are insurmountable."

Dr. Sergio Rodriguez
Director, Cermak Health Services' Medical Division, Cook County Jail

Solution

Initially, the State should encourage enforcement of the existing law and require all counties to deliver medical records, along with other judicial and penal documents, to IDOC upon an individual's transfer from a county jail.

Information-sharing methods—creating a uniform system for portable medical records—would streamline continuity of care between prisons and the community. The precedent has been set for Illinois to establish a computerized information-sharing system to link IDOC, jails, and community-based health and treatment providers. On July 12, 2005, Governor Blagojevich signed into law an amendment to the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act that allows the Illinois Department of Human Services, state prisons and county jails to share information about prisoners' mental health for admission, treatment, planning and discharge purposes.[49]

This is significant progress, but the State should expand on this effort to develop a computerized network that allows IDOC, community providers, and other relevant government agencies to share more medical records of individuals imprisoned or recently released. Any network developed would, of course, have to take into account privacy and confidentiality concerns of these individuals.

Cook County has already moved in this direction. The Cook County Jail's DataLink Project is a computerized system that allows the jail's health staff to cross-check intake records with Illinois Department of Public Health's records. DataLink allows the jail's health staff to determine which detainees have been involved in and treated through the state's mental health system, after which staff can contact the appropriate facility and access an individual's health records. Such information-sharing allows health staff to provide treatment consistent with previous care, and enables correctional staff to coordinate with the community-based agency to resume an individual's treatment after release from jail.[50]

Other cities and states already have created similar information-sharing programs. In San Francisco, the City and County of San Francisco Jail Health Services (SFJHS) employs a computerized clinical reporting system that maintains a single uniform health record both in the jail and in the community. The computerized system allows SFJHS to facilitate continuity of care post-release by referring reentering prisoners to a network of community health centers. SFJHS staff made over 10,000 post-release case management contacts last year.[51] In Texas, the state obtained a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) waiver, which gives correctional institutions access to jail records and public health records so prison health staff are informed at intake as to what services prisoners have previously received.[52]

Inspiration from the Field:

Hampden County Correctional and Community Health Model in Massachusetts

The Hampden County Correctional and Community Health Model provides intensive screening to individuals in jail at intake, followed by continuous education on particular health-related issues throughout their detention. Four jail health teams are integrated with four community health centers. Patients are assigned to a health team by their home zip code or prior association with a community health center. Physicians, nurses, and case managers are dually assigned to local jails and community health centers.

About 90 percent of prisoners involved in this program keep their medical appointments after their reentry into the community, and the overall recidivism rate for the Hampden County Correctional Center is 36 percent, well below that of other comparable correctional facilities.

Source: Dr. Thomas Lincoln, Physician at Baystate Medical Center, presentation, Chicago Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry, September 22, 2004.

Ensure timely access to Medicaid and SSI/SSDI benefits for eligible individuals released from prison.

Recommendation

Issue

Incarcerated individuals with a serious mental illness may have once received Medicaid[53] or federal disability benefits, like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI).[54] Prior to incarceration, they likely were not employed, and relied on SSI or SSDI payments to cover housing or other living expenses. The vast majority do not have access to private health insurance and rely on Medicaid for health care coverage, or have no insurance at all.

Few prisoners, however, are enrolled in these federal assistance programs upon release. When they begin their jail or prison terms, they often lose eligibility. And when they are released, restoring that eligibility can be difficult. If prisoners received SSI, SSDI, or Medicaid before incarceration, they can reapply; if not, they can apply for the first time. But the paperwork is cumbersome and unfamiliar, and applications can take months to process—months during which many formerly incarcerated individuals lack money for medication, housing or treatment.

As a result, access to these critical supports—typically conditions of probation or parole—is severely limited, presenting a significant obstacle to transitioning into the community and maintaining continuity of care. "When individuals with mental illness are released from jail or prison without SSI, SSDI, or Medicaid benefits, they are much more likely to end up in a homeless shelter, in the emergency room, or back in jail or prison," according to Chris Koyanagi, Policy Director at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law in Washington, D.C.[55]

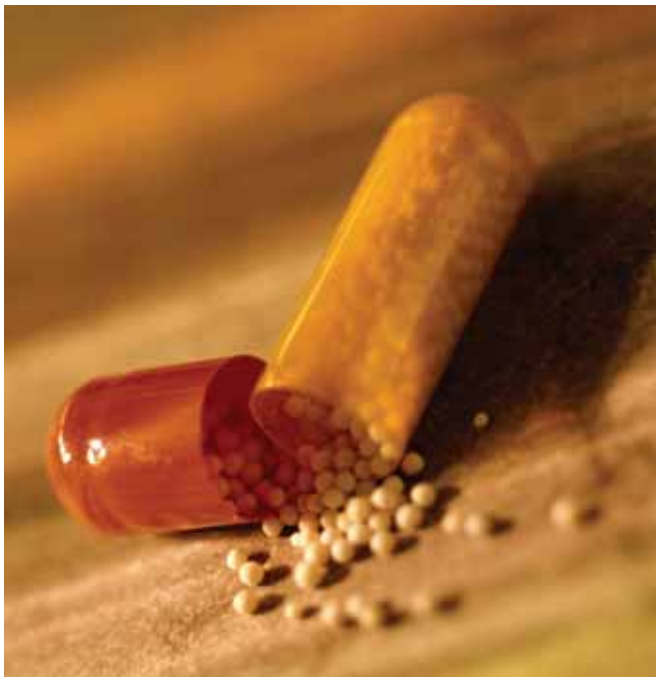
Generally, the length of time a person is in jail or prison determines whether, or when, federal benefits will be affected.[56]

SSI payments continue until an individual has been in jail or prison for a full calendar month—from the first of the month through the last day. After one full calendar month, the individual is "suspended" from SSI. The person remains on the rolls, but does not receive payments. During this period, the Social Security Administration (SSA) presumes that the prisoner, while incarcerated, remains disabled. However, when the individual is discharged, SSA must be informed of the prisoner's release, and a form must be submitted with evidence that financial hardship still exists. Although this process is relatively simple, often it is more than mentally unstable individuals leaving prison can accomplish on their own. Thus, these individuals may go weeks or months without receiving the benefits to which they are entitled, and all too often end up homeless or back in jail or prison.[57]

SSI benefits are terminated if an individual is incarcerated for 12 full consecutive calendar months or more. An individual whose eligibility has been terminated must file a new application for SSI. The average prisoner in Illinois prisons serves just over 19 months;[58] consequently, the possibility that benefits will be terminated is quite high. Once SSI benefits have been terminated, the reinstatement process is considerably more involved than after suspension. The individual must obtain documents detailing his or her medical history, and receive a new assessment to show a current disability under the eligibility standards. SSA may then take at least three months to review the application and issue a decision about reinstatement. In cases where information is missing, the process may be extended by six or nine months.[59] Again, the lack of benefits during this period may force these mentally ill individuals back on the streets and into the criminal justice system.

Like SSI, SSDI payments continue for a short time while an individual is incarcerated. An individual can receive SSDI benefits until he or she has been convicted of a crime and spent 30 days in jail or prison. Payments will be "suspended" on the 31st day of confinement, whether or not a full calendar month has passed. However, SSDI benefits are never terminated for incarceration alone, no matter how long the prison term. People who qualify for SSDI remain eligible as long as they meet the federal definition of disability. Cash payments can resume after release; however SSA must receive verification that the person is no longer in a correctional facility.

Jails and prisons have a financial incentive to inform SSA that a person is confined; they receive federal payments when they supply information resulting in suspension or termination of SSI or SSDI benefits.[60] Unfortunately, correctional institutions have no such incentive to advise SSA when prisoners are released so benefits can be restored.



Medicaid does not pay for services while an individual is in jail or prison. Federal law does not require states to terminate eligibility, but most do. The state removes the prisoner's name from the Medicaid list immediately when it is informed of the person's incarceration. Medicaid benefits are supposed to be reinstated upon release; a state may not drop someone from the rolls unless it has been determined that the individual is no longer eligible. But jails and prisons must notify the Illinois Medicaid Office of the prisoners' release. If this does not happen, released prisoners have to submit an entirely new application, and may lack any means of paying for and receiving medications and health care they need to stabilize their mental health condition. A 2004 Urban Institute study found that 16 months after release, 85 percent of former prisoners were uninsured.[61]

Under the current system, most individuals with serious mental illness will spend their first months out of prison living on the streets and sliding into more and more dangerous mental states. Many will be rearrested and returned to jail or prison before their SSI and Medicaid benefits are reinstated.

Solution

IDOC should enhance its efforts to encourage all prisoners to apply for SSI or SSDI if they are eligible. For prisoners who are interested, IDOC should do what it can to help facilitate and expedite the process.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has a "pre-release procedure" designed to "promote deinstitutionalization by assuring eligible individuals timely SSI payments when they reenter the community."[62] IDOC should take advantage of this pre-release procedure to assure speedy restoration of SSI and SSDI benefits upon a prisoner's release.[63] As part of this procedure, a "pre-release agreement" should be established between IDOC and SSA. The local Social Security offices would help correctional staff learn the rules for pre-release processing of applications and reapplications for benefits. Correctional staff would help the prisoner initiate his or her benefits applications in anticipation of release, gather supporting documents, and notify SSA when the prisoner is officially released. With such an agreement, SSA can process claims more quickly and prisoners can begin receiving payments within days, not months, of their release. This agreement and process currently exists and is being implemented at Dixon Correctional Center.[64] This arrangement should be expanded to and used at all IDOC institutions statewide.

Illinois should further move to suspend, rather than terminate, Medicaid eligibility during incarceration. This is possible under federal law, but requires state legislative approval. In May 2004, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services encouraged all state Medicaid directors to " 'suspend' and not 'terminate' Medicaid benefits while a person is in a public institution" as part of a larger effort to end chronic homelessness.[65] The prisoner would remain enrolled but placed on suspended status. Then, immediately upon release, the prisoner would be entitled to receive benefits from an approved provider. The Bazelon Center has a model law that Illinois could use as a guide.[66]

IDOC should consider extending its post-release housing subsidies beyond the typical two months for former prisoners with mental health issues who have initiated the process but are still awaiting reinstatement of benefits. IDOC also should facilitate scheduling post-release health care appointments and obtaining an adequate supply of medications for prisoners to cover any delay in benefit coverage that may occur.

Other states are grappling with these same issues and have developed innovative strategies to address them.[67] For example, the Texas legislature created a specific agency—the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments (TCOOMMI)—to meet the needs of prisoners with mental illnesses. TCOOMMI has a formal agreement with SSA for processing applications for prisoners awaiting release. The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) operates a Medication Grant Program for prisoners with mental illness whose Medicaid applications are being processed. OMH provides coverage for psychiatric medications in the community until an applicant's Medicaid eligibility is determined.

Increase access to and availability of community-based treatment programs to address prisoners' health-related issues.

Recommendation

Issue

The potential costs of not addressing health-related needs of reentering prisoners are high. Prisoners on prescribed medications are often released with a limited supply of medications or none at all. Those released with contagious diseases risk infecting others within the community if treatment is interrupted. Lack of treatment for drug or alcohol addiction may result in unemployment, criminal behavior and recidivism. Lack of treatment for chronic conditions may lead to higher long-term public health costs. Maintaining one's health is a key factor for successful reentry.

This problem cannot be solved simply by building better hospitals in prison. Prisoners need access to community-based health services after discharge, and prisons need to collaborate with these community providers to improve continuity between pre-release and post-release health care. Such measures, while effective, would stretch the capacity of these already-strained community agencies. If more reliance is placed on community programs that provide drug and mental health treatment, the number and capacity of these agencies needs to be greatly expanded.

Currently, depending on geographic location and type of service needed, waiting lists for community-based drug treatment programs in Chicago may be so long that most released prisoners will relapse and/or be rearrested before they are accepted into a program.[68] "There is a 90 percent failure rate for drug offenders released right to the community, because there is nothing available," explains Dr. Dan Lustig, Associate Director of Clinical Services at Haymarket Center. "If you go to the county hospital for service, you'll end up waiting 12 hours for service, and that's on a good day. An addict isn't going to wait. He's going to get high."[69]

"You really need to have programs set up where you're meeting someone at the gate when they come out. If someone was at the gate the very day of discharge, someone that had the social skills to help this person in society, then that would make all the difference in the world. Because if a positive person isn't meeting them at the gate, then the dope dealer will."

Rev. Larry Smith
Assistant Pastor, United Baptist Church

Haymarket Center's operations illustrate the grave drug treatment shortages throughout the city. Over 60 percent of the center's clients were involved with the criminal justice system during the 90 days prior to their arrival at Haymarket. Of those clients who had actually served time, 98 percent had not received any drug treatment in prison or jail. The prison system refers around 4,000 prisoners a year directly to Haymarket, which has the capacity to service around five percent of those individuals. Although Haymarket refers individuals it cannot assist to other drug treatment providers, waiting lists around the city are comparable to its own. "The result," says Lustig, "is formerly incarcerated drug addicts are roaming the city in what is likely to be an unsuccessful search for treatment. The goal here has to be immediate access."[70]

Meanwhile, mental health services are increasingly in short supply around the nation, and Illinois is in worse shape than most states. Although the state ranks 9th in per capita wealth, it ranks 39th in mental health funding.[71]

In Chicago, year-long waiting lists exist for most residential group homes, and according to advocates, preference is given to people who are already in the Medicaid system and who do not have criminal records.[72] Few prisoners leave prison with appointments to see a mental health professional, and those who do not have an appointment usually cannot manage to make one themselves. If formerly incarcerated individuals were to seek service at a free, walk-in clinic, they likely would have to wait at least six weeks before a staff psychologist could see them.[73] Few former prisoners with serious mental illness can manage such a wait.

Within today's economic environment, resources are scarce for community-based treatment providers and other primary health and support service providers to meet the needs of this population. At the same time, many community providers are not proficient in or comfortable working with formerly incarcerated individuals and their often interrelated physical and mental health issues and addiction problems.

Solution

To significantly reduce recidivism, community-based health and treatment providers are integral to the equation.

Any strategy to adequately address capacity issues demands increased federal, state, county and city funding for community-based treatment. The current fee-for-service structure, which hampers service delivery, should be monitored to ensure that rates are sufficient to cover service costs for working with these individuals. The City also should offer incentives to providers and facilitate trainings to enhance proficiency in serving formerly incarcerated individuals.

To ensure the greatest return on investment, policymakers should support comprehensive programs that are positioned to treat mental illness, substance abuse and other client needs simultaneously. The difficulties faced in dual and triple diagnosis (physical illness, mental illness and substance abuse) are particularly acute, and the associated service needs are even more complex and challenging.[74]

Community-based providers, particularly those who offer intensive outpatient treatment, not only play a central role in continuity of care, but also hold the key to reaching as many released prisoners as possible. The Thresholds Post Care Program, for example, connects with mentally ill prisoners during their incarceration to reduce the risk they will go untreated when released. After their release, program staff provides intensive support to these individuals, visiting them daily to ensure they have an adequate supply of, and are taking, their medications. Because only a few of these programs exist in the city and their capacity is severely limited,[75] the City should help existing treatment providers expand their services, and at the same time, help foster the development of new agencies to fill this critical void.

Community-based providers contribute to the quality and availability of reentry health services. They are also more cost-effective. Every $1.00 invested in substance abuse treatment saves taxpayers $7.46 in crime-related spending and lost productivity.[76] One Chicago study documented substantial cost savings—more than $18,000 per person—from public investment in community mental health care and housing for released prisoners.[77]

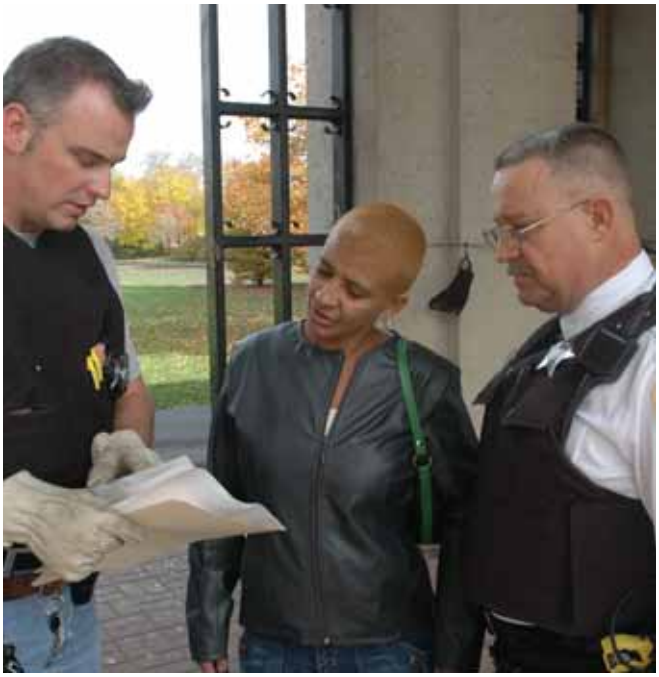
Create and expand diversion programs for individuals who commit non-violent offenses and need substance abuse or mental health treatment.

Recommendation

Issue

Experts increasingly agree that treating non-violent individuals convicted of minor crimes in the community is far more effective than imprisoning them. "Imprisonment for drug crimes is not a cost-effective sanction compared to treatment or intermediate sanctions, and its overuse for lower-level drug offenders represents a misallocation of scarce prison resources," said James P. Lynch, Associate Professor in the Department of Justice, Law and Society at the American University, and William J. Sabol, Senior Research Associate at The Urban Institute.[78] Incarceration diverts valuable dollars that could be spent on outpatient substance abuse and mental health treatment programs.

Public opinion in Illinois supports a shift away from incarcerating individuals with substance abuse and mental health issues. Approximately 75 percent of Illinois voters believe that non-violent drug users should be treated, not incarcerated.[79] Similarly, 82 percent of Americans believe that mentally ill prisoners should receive treatment in mental health facilities instead of serving time in prison.[80] Despite this public sentiment, local criminal justice systems continue to rely overwhelmingly on prisons to treat individuals with substance abuse and mental health issues.



Inspiration from the Field: Police Crisis Intervention Teams in Tennessee

The Memphis Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is a police-based pre-booking jail diversion program. CIT officers receive 40 hours of training in psychiatric disorders and mental illness and learn how to respond to mentally ill individuals in crisis. About half of CIT calls are resolved at the scene. Other times, CIT officers may transport an individual to an emergency service. The CIT program has had many beneficial results including: decreased arrest rates, decreased reincarceration rates, decreased officer injury rates, decreased hospitalizations (less than 15 percent in one year), and increased health care referrals.

Sources: The American Psychiatric Association, "State Updates: September/October2001," http://www.psych.org/join_apa/mb/newsletters/state_update/su_septoct102401.pdf (accessed August 19, 2005). Vickers, Betsy, "Memphis, Tennessee, Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team," Bulletin from the Field, Practitioner Perspectives (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2000).

Solution

Diversion programs and alternatives to incarceration potentially curtail the "revolving door" admissions of the prison system and significantly rehabilitate individuals with substance abuse or mental health issues.

One option is to divert these individuals before they get deeply involved in the criminal justice system. In July 2005, the Chicago Police Department established Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) in two police districts on a pilot basis.[81] These teams are dispatched when police officers apprehend an individual with mental health issues and are trained in methods to de-escalate mental health crisis situations. These teams also have ongoing relationships with community-based mental health clinics to help locate individuals who have missed appointments and may not be taking medication regularly. Since its inception, 334 individuals have been served by CIT officers and taken to community hospitals for assistance.[82] Nationwide, these intervention programs have shown impressive results for both the criminal justice system and individual outcomes, reducing arrest rates, decreasing mental health symptoms and increasing quality of life.[83]

Another diversion approach is the establishment of "drug courts," which opened in Cook County in 1998. These courts exclusively hear cases of individuals on probation who get arrested for a new non-violent felony drug-related offense (or where an individual's substance abuse contributes to the offense). These individuals are given the option to participate in an intensive substance abuse treatment program instead of going to trial, and likely prison, for a probation violation. Those who opt for drug treatment must commit to an intensive 120-day jail-based treatment program in Cook County Jail, followed by sustained out-patient treatment in the community during an 18-month probation period. Generally, to graduate from the program, participants must remain drug-free for one six-month period. The State's Attorney's Office gathers data on graduates comparing criminal activity in the year prior to entering the program versus the year

> ***"Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officers can have a significant impact on reducing recidivism. These officers look at the actions of individuals as a manifestation of their mental health, rather than criminal behavior. CIT officers will more readily look to community-based treatment alternatives rather than to arrest alternatives."***
>
> *Lt. Jeffry Murphy*
> *Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator and Mental Health and Disabilities Liaison, Chicago Police Department*

following completion. For those participants who graduated from October 1999 through May 2004, felony arrests decreased by 92 percent, total arrests decreased by 82 percent, 87 percent had no felony arrests, and 93 percent had no felony drug crime conviction.[84]

In 2004, Cook County opened a "mental health court," the first mental health court in the country to exclusively hear cases of criminal defendants accused of felony violations. This court voluntarily diverts individuals with chronic mental illness arrested for non-violent offenses into appropriate community treatment programs instead of jail or prison for a 24-month probation period. This specialty court recognized the public safety risk posed by mentally ill individuals, the difficulties associated with housing them, and the inadequacy of the criminal justice process in dealing with this population.[85]

Of the 30 individuals referred to community treatment during the court's first 18 months of operation, only two individuals were arrested for new offenses. These same men and women averaged four arrests and two convictions per person in the year before the mental health court diverted them to community-based treatment.[86]

CIT officers, specially trained in handing individuals with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse, work with the mental health court by serving warrants issued by judges assigned to this court. These officers have served more than 40 warrants without incident, and have been successful in locating individuals quickly and returning them to Cermak Health Services at Cook County Jail, thereby keeping individuals in the program and reducing recidivism significantly. This court recently received a $1.2 million grant from the Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as part of the Targeted Capacity Expansion for Jail Diversion Initiative. This grant will add 150 individuals to the program, and allow the Chicago Police Department to train an additional 250 CIT officers to assist with the expansion of this court.[87]

Similarly, the State's Attorney's Office offers a diversion program for non-violent drug offenders with limited criminal histories. Known as the State's Attorney's Drug Abuse Program (SADAP), or "drug school," it provides participants with 10 hours of educational classes aimed at increasing awareness of the implications of drug use in one's life (medically, socially, vocationally and legally). For individuals who successfully complete the program, all pending charges are dismissed and they are immediately eligible for expungement. In 2004, nearly 4,600 people were offered and accepted the "drug school" alternative. Studies have shown that 85 percent of successful graduates (those individuals who completed the program) were not rearrested for a drug offense in the following three years.[88]

The City should gather data to compare costs of existing diversion programs versus costs of incarceration and processing, and explore other promising approaches that have potential for replication or expansion as well as savings. For instance, the new Cook County Jail Diversion Program legislation proposed by Cook County Commissioner Earlean Collins creates a pilot program to develop alternatives to incarceration for individuals with mental illness and substance abuse issues accused of misdemeanors and minor felonies. It also establishes a crisis center and an advisory panel to oversee the effectiveness of the program.[89]

Inspiration from the Field:
Proposition 36 in California

In the November 2000 elections, California voters approved Proposition 36, also known as the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act, as a major shift in criminal justice policy. It required substance abuse treatment, not jail, for individuals convicted of drug possession or use and for non-violent parolees who test positive for drug use. The state Legislative Analyst's Office estimated that the Act could eventually save the state between $100 and 150 million per year and counties about $40 million per year.

According to the University of California at Los Angeles, which is studying the impact of Proposition 36, this initiative has yielded excellent results during its first several years of implementation. The completion rates were comparable to those in other diversion programs, such as drug courts, even though participants on average had longer histories of drug addiction, and half of them never had access to treatment before. The future of Proposition 36 is now at issue in the California legislature.

Sources: Cornett, Craig and Dan Carson, "Implementing Proposition 36: Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities," Legislative Analyst's Office, December 2000, http://www.lao.ca.gov/2000/prop36/121400_prop_36.html (accessed November 29, 2005); "Evaluation of the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act: 2004 Report," http://www.uclaisap.org/Prop36/documents/sacpa080405.pdf (accessed November 29, 2005).

Create more positive social structures and peer support groups to assist with recovery and difficult psychological adjustment during prisoner reentry.

Recommendation

Issue

Individuals leaving prison, whether for the first or the fourth time, often are confronted with an emotional and psychological adjustment upon their return to society.

During incarceration, many prisoners become disconnected from family and friends. They often leave prison with little money, no job prospects, addiction issues and housing concerns. They may return to environments that contributed to their criminal activity and led to their incarceration. Due to the social dynamics in prison, they may lack the social skills needed to interact successfully with others outside prison walls. Their support network in their neighborhood or community, to the extent one exists at all, may be comprised of other formerly incarcerated individuals. Once they are released, many prisoners do not know where to seek help, and instead return to their previous life on the streets. "I became addicted to the street, hanging out with people from the projects," said Chicago resident Terrence Johnson, who was sent to Illinois prisons three separate times for drug and property crimes. "When I got out of prison, I just went right back to the same environment. It was like I didn't miss a beat."[90]

Many individuals leave prison with the goals of maintaining a drug-free and crime-free lifestyle, finding stable housing and employment, and repairing family relationships. However, as released prisoners progress down this path, they need support to help them cope with the emotional, psychological and physical stress of reentering society.

"When people walk through the door, they feel safe, they feel welcomed. They participate in support groups and they can be themselves. And, gradually, that breaks down their hesitation to use other services."

Jerome Collins
Founder of Winners' Circle peer-led support group

Inspiration from the Field:
Winner's Circle in Illinois

In 1997, Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities, Inc. (TASC), a community-based organization that provides specialized clinical case management services for individuals with substance abuse and mental health issues, launched a reentry program called the Winners' Circle. The members of this peer-led support group are actively involved in family, recreational, and community projects, serving as volunteers, mentors, recovery advocates, role models, and presenters to other peer support groups and community organizations.

The meetings are patterned after traditional 12-step groups, which many members also attend. Members lead and TASC staff facilitate the meetings. Currently, there are more than 100 active members in the 12 groups that meet in five cities across the state of Illinois.

Source: "Restoring Citizenship: Inner Circle and Winner's Circle," http://www.tasc-il.org/preview/corrections.html#rcsp (accessed November 16, 2005).

Solution

Many community- and faith-based organizations can provide a framework for structured peer support groups and mentoring programs for formerly incarcerated individuals. Peer support groups hold a unique place in the reentry process, providing invaluable assistance and encouragement from other individuals "who have been there" and succeeded. Quality mentoring relationships offer a extra level of support to people coming out of prison or jail and can help them discover how to unlock and achieve their potential.

The City should promote the development of peer support groups and mentoring programs by agencies already working with this population and providing other services. Agencies could incorporate participation as part of an employment strategy or treatment plan. These groups and programs would provide positive social relationships and an atmosphere conducive for formerly incarcerated individuals to discuss—and work together to resolve—challenges arising from their transition back to society.

For instance, Ready4Work (R4W) is a three-year, national demonstration project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, which has promoted the use of mentoring to help reduce recidivism in 17 sites across the country. As the lead organization in Chicago, the Safer Foundation is collaborating with St. Sabina, People's Church of the Harvest, Trinity United Church of Christ, and Ambassadors for Christ to blend mentoring with job readiness and placement services for young people, ages 18 through 34, who are returning to the community from prison or jail. Since December 2003, more than 250 men and women have been served through this effort, gaining invaluable basic life skills, high school diplomas, job training and long-term stable employment. The mentoring offered by the faith partners has been critical. "Persevering through the tough times is easier when caring people are there to guide and encourage you," says Rodney Horton, a R4W participant. "You have to hold onto something that is true and real in your life—something and someone that will support you in good times and in bad."[91]

"Being part of a peer support or mentoring group shows you that others have succeeded. You look at the other people and say, 'If you can do it, I can do it. I just need an opportunity. It's not about what you can do for me, but what I can do for myself.' Being a mentor is just as rewarding. It gives you the extra push to go on. To do for someone else what someone did for you."

Erick Williams
Chair of Narcotics Anonymous group

Real life

Margaret M. is a 55-year-old Latino woman.

Margaret M.

Margaret grew up on Chicago's south side with an abusive, alcoholic mother as well as her father and older brother. Her mother "abandoned" the family when Margaret was four, and she was raised by her father and her father's relatives. She ran away for the first time when she was 12 years old at which time she began drinking, "imitating what I saw growing up," she explains.

She dropped out of high school as a freshman, and started experimenting with drugs. Her parents died when she was 14 years old. "No one stepped up to take responsibility for me," Margaret recalls. "I lived in an assortment of places during my teenage years, in relatives' and friends' living rooms, shelters, I even would ride the trains at night for somewhere to stay." She got married when she was 17 years old to a man who was violent, schizophrenic, and not on medication. They moved across the country. "I had four children, continued to drink heavily, had no job, and was repeatedly 'tormented' by my husband," she says. "We moved to California to start fresh." It did not work.

Margaret eventually left her husband, but then immediately got involved in another abusive relationship. During this time, she completed a nursing program, became a licensed vocational nurse, and worked three different jobs in health care settings. "I wanted to escape the abuse from my boyfriend, so I decided to give up my jobs and move back to Chicago."

While in Chicago, she became, in her words, "a welfare mom." Although she was surrounded by relatives, the majority of them also were struggling with alcoholism and provided no positive outlet for her drinking problems. "My life was unmanageable. I was running from situation to situation, changing my environment, but never changing my behavior," she says. Margaret got involved in yet another abusive relationship. "It was all I knew, and I accepted it as a way of life." Her family and friends tried to help her, but she recalls "I was too ashamed and embarrassed that I was in another abusive relationship and I just couldn't rely on them as a way out of the difficult situation." Although she had a job and her own apartment, she moved into her boyfriend's house, away from her family. Margaret finally built up the resolve and courage to leave this boyfriend. The day she packed her bags, she had been drinking heavily. Her boyfriend returned home from work, "yelled at her to get out of his house," a terrible fight ensued, and in the midst of the altercation, Margaret shot her boyfriend.

During her time on bail, Margaret bounced around to different family members, some of whom took care of her youngest daughter. Although she got a job at a grocery store and was involved in counseling, she was still drinking heavily and her relatives kept throwing her out on the street. "Everyone was distant. One relative even told me, 'This has never happened in our family.' No one wanted me around. They were afraid and I didn't know what to do," she explains. Her other children were older, and living on their own at this point; as a result of what had happened, she had conflict with them, too. "I was desperate. I didn't know what to do. I just wanted to be together with my daughter. I thought she needed me," Margaret says. Finally, Margaret's attorney took her into her own home and, as Margaret describes, "saved my life."

Margaret pled guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to six years in prison. Her attorney took responsibility for her youngest daughter while she served her time, and told Margaret about the treatment programs available to her during her incarceration at Lincoln Correctional Center. She "surrendered" and enrolled in one of the treatment programs that her attorney had described. Initially she did not think she needed it. But on the first day, her counselor told her that "[she] was not going anywhere" without it. She began taking every class and every group session that she possibly could. "After I got focused, I obtained many certificates in prison, took GED classes and completed my treatment program."

Both during and after prison, Margaret luckily had a great deal of support from her friends and family. Her children and relatives wrote to her and visited her at Lincoln. However, she also knew that she faced many obstacles upon her release. She did not have a place to live, she did not have a job, and she did not want to relapse into her addiction. "It was hard to admit that I was homeless again. I knew I had to change my life and my choices," she realized.

Margaret's daughter and attorney picked her up from prison and took her directly to a supportive housing facility, where she has been for the past six months. There, she received intensive outpatient treatment and health services through community-based agencies, participated in group therapy, and "took advantage of all the programs and support they offered." According to Margaret, "It gave me hope that I could achieve some of the goals that I wanted. There were meetings and bonding and caring and concern. It made me believe in myself. It made a world of difference to feel that way."

Margaret has been sober for three years now. She is currently participating in a job readiness program and wants to apply for a training program. "I am open to new things. I know I need new job skills and need to fit in somewhere. I never even finished school. There are a lot of programs here. I know I have to stay connected to meetings and to recovery, and talk to my support network and learn about red flags in relationships. I also know now that I am worthy to have a good life."

Margaret knows that she can succeed outside of prison. "Support of friends and family makes the difference for me. They help me avoid people, places and things and to love myself. A lot of people loved me during this difficult time." As part of an advocacy group, Margaret explains, "I often go to churches and other groups to talk about my experience in prison, to increase awareness of prison conditions, and to show how this experience has affected me and my family."

"Support of friends and family makes the difference for me. They help me avoid people, places and things and to love myself. A lot of people loved me during this difficult time."

Real Life

Sam J. is a 41-year-old African-American man.

Sam J.

Similar to most of his closest friends and relatives, Sam used heroin, "hustling and living the street life for many years," he explains. "It was a social thing at first. I didn't understand how it would get out of control." After over ten years of habitual drug use, his health began to deteriorate and he became increasingly unable to meet society's daily demands. "I was using the streets as a method to generate revenue. I thought the working man was a sucker. I could live the fast life with all the action—it was captivating."

At 23 years old, Sam was arrested and convicted for possession of illegal substances. He was sentenced to six years at Logan Correctional Center. After serving two-and-a-half years of his sentence, Sam was released from prison. Although his health had improved during his incarceration, his craving for heroin persisted. When he returned home, he soon found that his family and friends were still abusing illegal substances. "I didn't change my method of survival," he says. And so, shortly thereafter, Sam relapsed.

He spent seven more years struggling with his heroin addiction. During this period, he volunteered at a neighborhood restaurant. Because he had taken culinary classes in prison, he was hired as a cook. Sam held this position for over a year, explaining "my boss was very supportive," but because he was still using drugs, he couldn't keep steady employment and changed jobs frequently.

A few years later, according to Sam, "the bottom fell out. The ugly side of my addiction took over. I thought I was in control, but really the drugs were in control." He was arrested and convicted of possession again.

However, this time, things were different for Sam. "After 23 years, I was ready to try something new," Sam says, remembering the sudden determination he felt after his second conviction. "I said to myself, 'this revolving door is over.' I'm going to do what I need to do to become a productive member of society and to enjoy life like other people do." Sam entered drug therapy while at Vandalia Correctional Center and, as he describes, "spent the majority of my prison term in a treatment atmosphere." By the time he was released, he was equipped with strategies for facing his addiction on the outside. "They taught me about resources to use in mainstream society. I learned about my addiction as a disease."

The first and most critical strategy, Sam realizes, was to find and connect to other drug addicts who were in recovery. "I explained to my wife, 'I'm not going to be a burden to you.'" Sam reached out to other family members, many of whom were former addicts now in recovery. "Once I saw my family members recovering, I knew it was possible for me. Some of my friends that I grew up with, they were also in recovery. I had an insight that there are other people dealing with these issues who found a way out." His wife understood his need to become healthy and emotionally stable before looking for a job. Although it was financially difficult to provide for the family during this period, his wife backed his decision. "I was exposed to so much understanding and support. Drugs were a plague on our family. But when my mother got clean, it had a trickle down effect."

Today, Sam has been drug- and crime-free for six years. "I found freedom," he describes. He has been employed as a cook at an Italian restaurant for the last four years and he volunteers one day a week at a community-based employment center, connecting other former prisoners with his own extensive support network.

> "Once I saw my family members recovering, I knew it was possible for me."

Recommendations

Reforms with Statewide Impact

- Designate a family liaison officer to provide pre-release support to prisoners and their families beginning at prisoner intake.
- Improve visitation facilities and procedures to encourage increased contact, when appropriate, between prisoners and their families during incarceration and to enhance the quality of prison visits.
- Facilitate contact between prisoners and their families during incarceration by decreasing the expense and increasing methods of long-distance communication.
- Review policies regarding child support obligations of incarcerated parents.

Reforms with Citywide Impact

- Support and expand family-focused case management services, and cultivate family support groups.
- Improve reunification services at Cook County Jail so that the instances of termination of parental rights are reduced for this incarcerated population.
- Support more mentoring and other social service programs for children of incarcerated parents.

Chapter 3
Family

Chapter 3: Family

Having a supportive and committed network of family and friends can be key to an individual's success or failure in the reentry process.[1]

Research confirms this fact. In a recent Urban Institute report, 71 percent of former prisoners noted positive family support as crucial in helping them turn their lives around.[2] Relatives, with whom former prisoners often live during their transition, provide financial aid, job search assistance, moral support, encouragement to abstain from drugs and obtain treatment, and positive reinforcement.[3]

Yet despite the central role that families play, the impact of incarceration and reentry on families is frequently overlooked. Policymakers often are not attuned to how the prison experience takes its toll on the loved ones left behind, nor have they paid sufficient attention to how engaging families during and after confinement may boost the chances of better reentry outcomes. To effectively address prisoner reentry issues, and to successfully develop solutions to these issues, we cannot concentrate solely on the individual; it is crucial to tackle the needs and promote the strengths of the whole family.

Unfortunately, families all too often become alienated and estranged from their loved ones in prison. Nationally, up to 50 percent of the men and 65 percent of the women in prison are parents, but more than half of these individuals report never receiving a personal visit from their children during their incarceration.[4] For many families, the obstacles to visiting a relative in prison—time and money needed to travel long distances to the institutions as well as the emotional stress of the actual prison visit (e.g., lengthy security checks, uncomfortable visiting facilities, and seemingly unfriendly correctional department staff)—are overwhelming. So contact may be sporadic. The respect, trust, and daily intimacy that hold families together may be strained when a loved one becomes incarcerated.[5] The imprisoned individual may feel angry, isolated, depressed, and guarded while those left behind may feel confused, anxious, abandoned, resentful, guilty and relieved all at once. The social stigma and shame associated with having a family member in prison also can weaken relationships.[6]

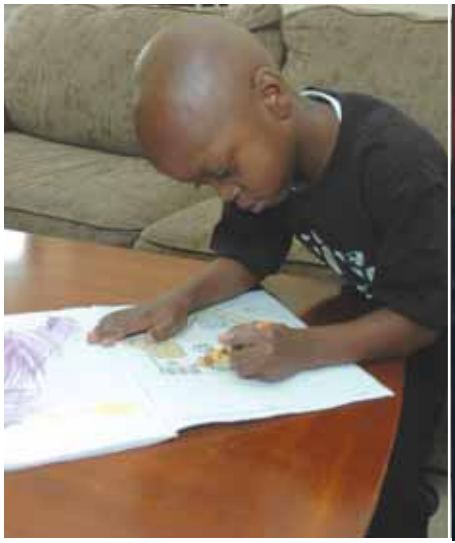
Furthermore, few families with incarcerated relatives can afford to focus on the reentry process. By and large, most families face challenging circumstances themselves, including poverty, mental illness, substance abuse, limited access to social services, and a family history of involvement with the criminal justice system.[7] Often, with a relative in prison, these families must contend with additional hardships. For instance, the household may have lost one of its major wage earners and be forced to stretch resources to meet housing, food, employment, and transportation needs. A grandmother may find herself the sole caregiver of her grandchildren, and a teenager may lose the daily support and companionship of his or her parent. Left unaddressed, these new challenges can undermine a family's ability to effectively support the reentry of their loved one.

But when it comes time for release, incarcerated individuals will often still turn to their family for help. And the stress that families encounter when a relative is incarcerated simply does not disappear when the person is released. Formerly incarcerated parents may experience difficulties trying to reestablish a relationship with children who had been left in the temporary custody of family members. Further, the assumed support often evaporates over time as extra demands are placed upon an already-strained family system.

In spite of these troubling facts, today there is no concerted effort to assist families of incarcerated individuals in Illinois. Most are, quite simply, left to fend for themselves.

Designate a family liaison officer to provide pre-release support to prisoners and their families beginning at prisoner intake.

Recommendation



Issue

Strict security precautions, long lines, and emotionally tense situations at prisons preclude the development of a cooperative relationship between correctional staff and visiting family members. Such an environment contributes to stressful and unsatisfying visits for both visitors and prisoners, and presumably lowers job satisfaction among correctional staff, already contending with highly demanding job environments.[8]

Solution

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) should designate staff at each correctional institution to promote the positive involvement of family members during prisoners' incarceration and in preparing for their release. In New York and Texas, for instance, prisons employ "family liaison officers" for this purpose.[9] Here in Illinois, these family liaison officers would similarly help facilitate family visits and act as a first point of contact for families. Family liaison officers would not be correctional officers. They would work with families as soon as a relative enters prison to help them understand and prepare for the psychological, environmental and practical challenges both families and prisoners may encounter when prisoners return home. They would be available at institutions during visiting hours to answer questions. Such resources could greatly reduce anxiety, and thus ensure that families are in a better position to fully support the reentry process.

"When my sons were incarcerated on drug and burglary charges, I didn't really know anything about the prison system. At first, I didn't even know the number down there to call. But I wanted to stay involved in their lives."

Carolyn Nance
Mother of three sons, each of who have been incarcerated in Illinois prisons

Improve visitation facilities and procedures to encourage increased contact, when appropriate, between prisoners and their families during incarceration and to enhance the quality of prison visits.

Recommendation

Issue

Most of the 27 correctional institutions in Illinois are located downstate more than 100 miles from the City of Chicago.[10] For those who do not have access to a car and for those with limited financial resources, visiting some of these prisons is virtually impossible. Prison visiting schedules are restrictive and permit visiting only on certain days and at certain times, often conflicting with work and school schedules. A study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that as the distance between a prisoner's home and the institution of incarceration increased, the percent of visitors steadily decreased.[11]

Moreover, the actual prison visit itself can be a trying experience. Visitors often arrive at the institution uninformed about the rules, and must wait in long lines before filling out the requisite forms and being processed through security.[12] For example, visitors, even those from other states, may be turned away because they did not know to bring, and therefore lack, appropriate forms of personal identification.[13] Once inside the institution, general conditions often contribute to frustration. Vending machines may be the only source of food. At some facilities, families may not use cash, but instead are required to purchase $10 cash cards from the institution to buy a bag of chips.[14] When the weather is bad, visitors must spend an additional 50 cents to store their coats in a locker.[15]

In Illinois, only a few prisons have "child-friendly" visitation areas. Elsewhere, children visit with their incarcerated parent in the general visitation area. For reasons of safety, security and order, visiting children may have to communicate with the incarcerated parent through Plexiglas screens,[16] and this can pose a tremendous psychological barrier for children who are accustomed to connecting with a parent through physical contact.[17]

Inspiration from the Field:

San Quentin Visitor's Center in California

San Quentin Visitor's Center, also known as House on the Hill, is managed by Centerforce, an organization that offers assistance to prisoners, former prisoners, and family members of prisoners.

The House on the Hill provides childcare services, an emergency clothing exchange for visitors who are denied a visit due to their clothing, hospitality services and waiting areas, and transportation services from local transportation centers and from the processing unit to the visitor center. It provides information on local resources, general health and wellness, bus routes, area hotels and car rentals. The House on the Hill also presents a video tracking a day in the life of a San Quentin state prisoner to answer the typical questions posed by visiting children.

Sources: Centerforce/Friends Outside Information Sheet; Tara Regan (Children and Family Program Director, Centerforce), interview with Julie Wilen, November 1, 2005.

Solution

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) should more effectively inform families about the visitation rules and policies, and explain the reasons why these rules and policies are in place. Several states, such as Arizona, Missouri and California, have developed handbooks that provide families with information about visitation procedures, hours, conditions, pertinent rules and their importance.[18] Each Illinois correctional institution should develop a visitor information sheet, including visitation schedules, rules, necessary documentation, and details about nearby lodging, transportation, maps, and visitor service organizations. Prisoners should be given the opportunity to mail this information to prospective visitors. In addition, this material should be available on the Internet as well as upon request from the department. Each institution also should offer and conduct voluntary orientations for all first-time visitors.

IDOC should expand on visiting procedures and facilities that promote positive, meaningful interaction between prisoners and families. Prisons should assess visiting hours to provide a range of days and times that would accommodate varied schedules for adult family members and children, taking into account public transportation schedules. Healthy snacks should be available in the vending machines. Child-centered, supervised areas should be established and maintained in all prisons. These areas should incorporate toys, books, games, and other activities appropriate for children of differing ages. Visiting rooms should promote informal, relaxed social interaction between incarcerated parents and their children. To best design these spaces, IDOC should consult with children of incarcerated parents. It is often assumed that those affected by the problem cannot contribute to the conversation, in part because they are young and in part because they are not objective. But they can offer an important vantage point, and their experience should be included.

One of the most notable programs for mothers is the Children's Center at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in Bedford, New York.[19] The Children's Center is a national leader in its progressive approach to children and their incarcerated mothers. A well-equipped playroom is open 365 days a year. A prison nursery allows mothers in prison to keep their children up to one year after birth. Beyond literacy activities, parent education, foster care workshops and support groups, a variety of activities exists for parent-child interaction, including story corner, holiday programs and overnight visits.

FamilyWorks at Sing Sing Correctional Facility in Westchester County, New York, was the first comprehensive program of parenting education and family services for incarcerated fathers and their children at a men's state prison. It provides both a parenting skills course and a children's visiting center to help preserve and nurture the bonds between children and their incarcerated fathers.[20] Parents and Children Together (PACT) in Fort Worth, Texas, provides similar services in several federal prisons as well as a hospitality center and overnight lodging for prisoner visitors. PACT also sponsors a support group for children of incarcerated fathers and "Children's Day" where children are escorted into the facility and allowed to visit their fathers' rooms, eat lunch, and spend quality one-on-one time with their fathers.[21]

Finally, all corrections department staff should be trained to create an overall environment, within reasonable security limits, conducive for promoting positive, meaningful interactions for prisoners and their families. Contraband is a serious problem and strict security measures are certainly necessary. Still, family visits could become less stressful and more rewarding without compromising valid safety precautions if corrections staff were trained to better understand and appreciate the important role that family can play both during and after the period of incarceration. Prison visits help to sustain family relationships and also improve the chances of reentry success.[22]

"We visit my daughter-in-law in prison often. I want my daughter-in-law to see her kids. I want the kids to grow up knowing that she loves them. When they see her, they run to her, and give her big hugs. It is so nice. It means a lot to the kids to visit their mom. They want to see her and to touch her. Pictures and letters don't mean as much."

Theresa Powell
Her daughter-in-law was sentenced to 20 years in prison for murder and she currently has custody of her four grandchildren

Facilitate contact between prisoners and their families during incarceration by decreasing the expense and increasing methods of long-distance communication.

Recommendation

Issue

Even families that are highly motivated to stay connected to an imprisoned relative may find it simply impossible to travel to correctional facilities. Today, the only alternative to personal visits is telephone conversations. Unfortunately, this is a costly alternative. In order to pay for security measures like call recording and real-time call monitoring, the corrections department imposes a high fee on telephone calls in and out of prisons. In 1998, the Florida government commissioned a study to look at state policies on mail, visiting and phone access, and discovered that the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) made 50 cents for every one dollar call placed by a prisoner, collecting an estimated $12–16 million over the course of the year.[23]

However, it is largely inmates' families that bear this financial burden since prisoners are allowed to make only collect calls. Because all calls from an institution are diverted to a single telephone company under contract with the corrections department, the paying party is unable to choose their own—and perhaps lower cost—service provider.[24] The Florida study found that accepting collect phone calls from a prisoner cost families an average of $69.19 per month.[25]

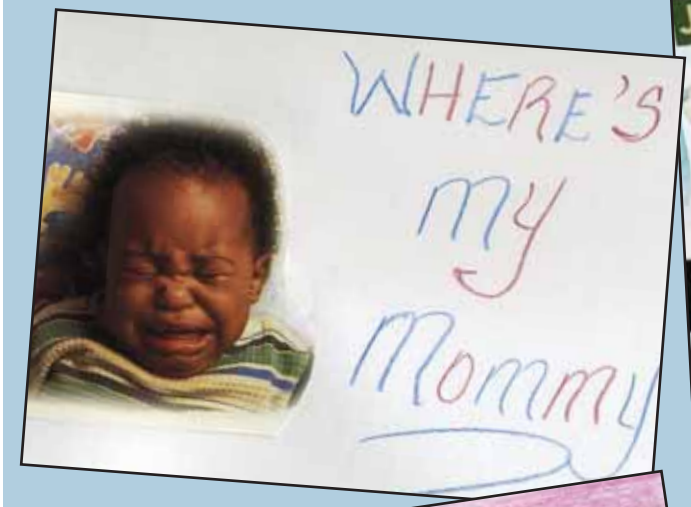
"My mom and I went to Menard Correctional Center to see my brother. It was very stressful. It took us seven hours to get there on a dirty, crowded bus. The bus left from the south side of Chicago at midnight, and we live on the west side. We had to take two buses and two trains just to get to the bus. Someone went to the bathroom in the back of the bus. My mom had to clean it up."

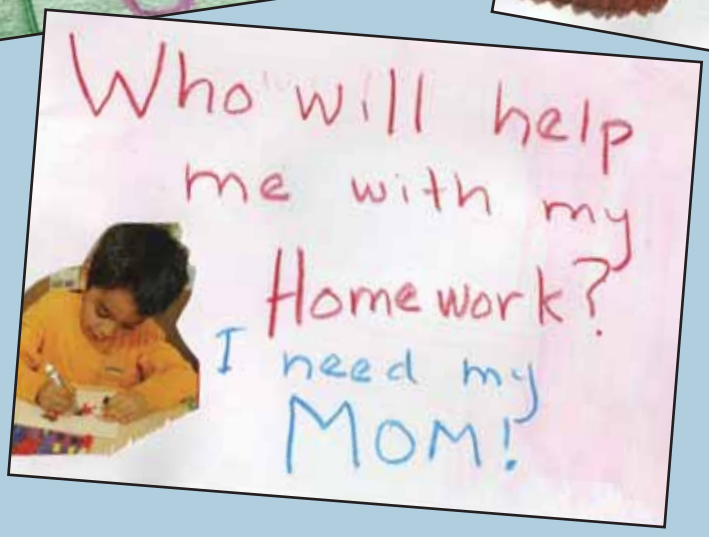
Jonathan Logan
17 years old; his brother was sentenced to 35 years at Menard Correctional Center

Solution

IDOC should attempt to reduce or eliminate the excessive surcharge placed on prison phone calls. If there are revenues derived from these calls, they should be invested in direct services to benefit families. New York and California have used this funding to provide visitor hospitality centers and a free bus program to transport those family members who otherwise could not afford a ride to remote prisons.[26] In addition to visitor centers and transportation assistance, Illinois could use this pool of resources to purchase books, toys and games for visiting children.

Today's advanced technologies permit a wide array of long-distance communication—such as email, instant messaging, videotaped correspondence and videoconferencing—that should also be considered. Although security concerns may exist, some states, like California, Texas, Ohio and Maryland, have found secure ways to offer basic computer access to inmates.[27] Given the distance between many incarcerated individuals and their home communities, IDOC should explore innovative ways to provide contact opportunities for relatives who live far away, especially those who may not have the means to travel.





Formerly incarcerated women from Chicago created art for an exhibit called "Interrupted Life: Incarcerated Mothers in the United States" that will tour the country in 2006. Samples of their work are displayed here and throughout this report.

Review policies regarding child support obligations of incarcerated parents.

Recommendation

Issue

Fathers who are released from prison often find themselves burdened by large child support arrearages. In fact, studies have shown that over 20 percent of prisoners in the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) were part of the child support caseload.[28]

Child support enforcement is critical to the well being of children and families.[29] At the same time, noncustodial parents accruing debt while they are incarcerated likely have no resources to pay off their obligations upon their release from prison because they typically reenter society with no savings or assets, limited job training and work experience, substance abuse or mental health issues, and barriers to employment ranging from legal restrictions to employer attitudes.[30] Accruing child support obligations and penalties while in prison, therefore, can serve as a disincentive for released prisoners to seek legitimate employment, and discourages them from getting involved, emotionally and financially, with their children and families after release. The current system of child support presents this dilemma for society, and any recommendation considered must acknowledge this public policy quandary. Noncustodial parents should not necessarily be relieved of their financial obligations merely because of their imprisonment; however, children and families might be better served if these individuals leave prison in a financial position to pay their debts.

Courts generally set child support amounts as a percentage of the earnings of the noncustodial parent at the time of the decision. If the noncustodial parent is unemployed or cannot be found, the court bases the amount on the parent earning minimum wage at 40 hours a week.[31] However, when a parent who owes child support is incarcerated, his or her wages can drop to as little as 25 cents an hour.[32] Despite the huge drop in earnings experienced by incarcerated individuals, the order amount is not automatically reassessed, and the process for modifying a child support obligation can be long and involved.[33] Usually, the amount is not reduced, and a substantial debt can accrue as interest builds on unpaid child support.[34] Studies in Massachusetts and Colorado documented that parents with child support orders entered prison already owing approximately $10,000 on average. By the time of release, these noncustodial parents owed as much as $16,000 to $20,000.[35]

In 1996, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.[36] Among other things, the law prompted the "New Hire Registry," a system that allows the government to track noncustodial parents who owe child support and who obtain employment anywhere in the United States. Employers must report new hires within 20 days, and the information is matched against local, state and federal records. Parents who are identified as owing child support may have as much as 65 percent of their earnings, as well as the contents of their bank accounts, seized. Their drivers' licenses also can be suspended. Although these regulations are intended to provide assistance for children, some formerly incarcerated individuals may instead seek illegal employment to avoid having their locations and earnings reported to the child support enforcement system.[37]

Solution

The State should balance children and families' pressing financial needs with society's interest in encouraging individuals with criminal records to find legal, self-sustaining employment, stay out of prison, and pay their child support debts.

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) currently runs educational programs in several Adult Transition Centers (ATCs) to help soon-to-be released noncustodial parents understand their rights and responsibilities. DCSE also refers released prisoners to community organizations that assist with employment searches, provide parenting classes, help incarcerated fathers establish paternity, and aid with requests for modifications of child support orders.[38] In 2002 and 2003, the DCSE implemented a pilot program, the Father Reintegration Project, which placed full-time staff members at two ATCs to more effectively deliver information and handle case management.[39]

Lessons from the Father Reintegration Project should be used to extend DCSE's programs to all incarcerated noncustodial parents with child support obligations. DCSE agencies in Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon and Washington, for example, inform noncustodial parents at intake about requesting a modification of their child support order to avoid significant, and largely unpayable, child support obligations upon their release.[40]

"When I left prison, I owed $15,000 in back child support because of the time I was in prison [10 months] without working. When I got out, if I had had to pay rent, I'd be homeless. Because of the amount of money I owed, I had to forfeit my parental rights, I had to lose my child, which has taken an emotional toll. I am currently working two full-time jobs, and am looking for an additional part-time job to pay off my debt and to survive."

Ivan Lopez
Noncustodial father formerly incarcerated at Sheridan Correctional Center

Several states have provided other types of relief for incarcerated noncustodial parents. In Arizona, for example, courts can suspend the imposition of interest on child support debts while the parent is imprisoned, and Massachusetts and Texas are experimenting with ways to streamline the modification process for incarcerated mothers and fathers.[41] Michigan began a new state pilot program that enables prisoners, through audio and videoconferencing, to modify child support orders in court hearings without leaving prison.[42]

Ensuring that child support payment plans are reasonable, for both the incarcerated noncustodial parent as well as the family, will help incarcerated parents reenter their communities without impracticable debts, encourage them to obtain legitimate employment, and play a more positive and active role in their children's lives.

Support and expand family-focused case management services, and cultivate family support groups.

Recommendation

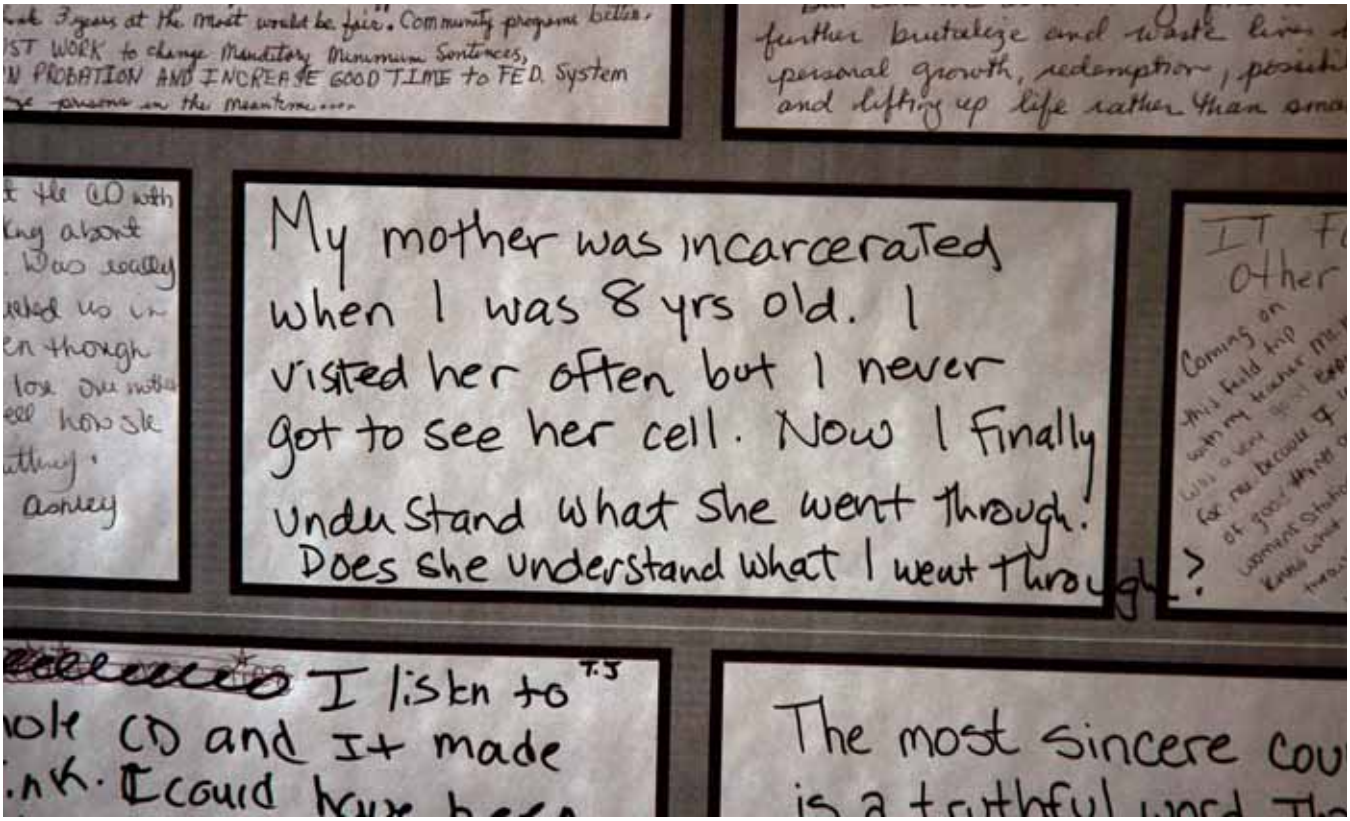
Issue

The more often people leaving prison are involved in programs that expose them to different ways of thinking and behaving, the less likely it is that these people will end up back in prison. Unfortunately, formerly incarcerated individuals may not choose, on their own, to take advantage of such opportunities. Formerly incarcerated individuals who have successfully stuck with the rehabilitation process point repeatedly to family encouragement as their primary motivation for doing so.[43] One of the most effective strategies for facilitating prisoners' transition into mainstream society, then, is for families to be directly involved in planning and supporting the reentry process.

But families of former prisoners often face their own set of challenges and, to fully support their loved one's return to society, may need ongoing support themselves.

Although surprisingly little research has been done on the impact of imprisonment (and reentry) on families of incarcerated individuals, clearly families experience economic hardships and emotional stress.[44] Incarceration is difficult for everyone affected. There is often a fear of being labeled. The justice system and its procedures are often confusing and frustrating. The happy and unhappy feelings and events of day-to-day life may be difficult to talk about. Over time, disconnectedness can overtake relationships. There may be both physical and psychological distancing. And the moment of release and reunion may be viewed with anticipation, reservation or apprehension, or it may not be desired at all. In all instances, coming home triggers a complex, mixed set of feelings and realities for those with the closest bonds to the former prisoner.

Families may need to restructure their entire lives to deal with the absence of a relative, and then again with the return of that relative, and may find that, at a time when help is most needed, people withdraw from them.[45]



Inspiration from the Field:

La Bodega de la Familia in New York

The La Bodega de la Familia Center offers a range of services, including family case management, referrals, 24-hour crisis support for drug-related emergencies, support groups, and cultural activities. Case managers help the family work with various social service agencies and advocate with parole agents to promote the use of alternatives to incarceration when appropriate.

A study of La Bodega's participants by the Vera Institute found that involving families during the first six months of an individual's release and treatment process helped to reduce drug use from 80 percent to 42 percent, reduce recidivism and reduce the number of family members with unmet medical, social, housing and mental health needs.

Sources: La Bodega de la Familia, "La Bodega de la Familia: Families, Neighborhoods, Justice," http://www.labodegadelafamilia.org (accessed July 19, 2005); Sullivan, Eileen et al, "Families as a Resource in Recovery from Drug Abuse: An Evaluation of La Bodega de la Familia" (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2002).

Solution

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) should refer families of incarcerated individuals to community-based agencies in their neighborhoods for case management services, ideally through the role of the "family liaison officer." These agencies could then refer families to (or provide) services such as family counseling, support groups, parenting classes, youth mentoring, anger management, financial counseling, legal assistance, free health care, job training and placement, and housing assistance.

Many community-based agencies already exist in Chicago that provide case management services to large numbers of released prisoners; these agencies are solid partners with which IDOC could connect to provide family-focused case management. However, these agencies typically look at the formerly incarcerated individual as their client. They fail to consider family members affected by the individual's incarceration. These agencies should broaden their focus to look holistically at the family as their client and shift their approach to more family-focused case management. Case managers who focus holistically on the family unit not only assist released prisoners by involving close friends and relatives in the reentry process, but also link friends and relatives to much-needed services.

Because the demand in many of these agencies is already high, they face serious capacity (and related funding) issues affecting their ability to take on new clientele or to increase their breadth of services. The City should encourage these existing agencies to explore new funding sources to expand their case management to the family, and at the same time, help to foster the development of new agencies to fill this unmet need.

Additionally, the City should work through its departments and sister agencies (e.g., Departments of Children and Youth Services, Human Services, Public Health as well as Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Housing Authority and others) to more systematically provide information about informal family support networks and encourage the development of more family support groups by organizations that already serve formerly incarcerated individuals. Similar to support groups for an array of addictions, family members of incarcerated individuals can find great comfort and strength in sharing their experiences with other people facing comparable situations. Family support groups can make a significant, demonstrable difference—often providing a solid foundation for recovery and rehabilitation programs—and should be expanded to encompass the family members of this vulnerable population.

For example, in Chicago, Sankofa began in 1996 as an informal network organized by a small group of women with children in prison. Sankofa members provide each other with a nucleus of emotional and spiritual support, attending court hearings together and collectively advocating for an increased focus on rehabilitation in the corrections system. Individuals whose family members are involved in the criminal justice system still run the organization, which now serves families across the Chicago area.[46]

Improve reunification services at Cook County Jail so that the instances of termination of parental rights are reduced for this incarcerated population.

Recommendation

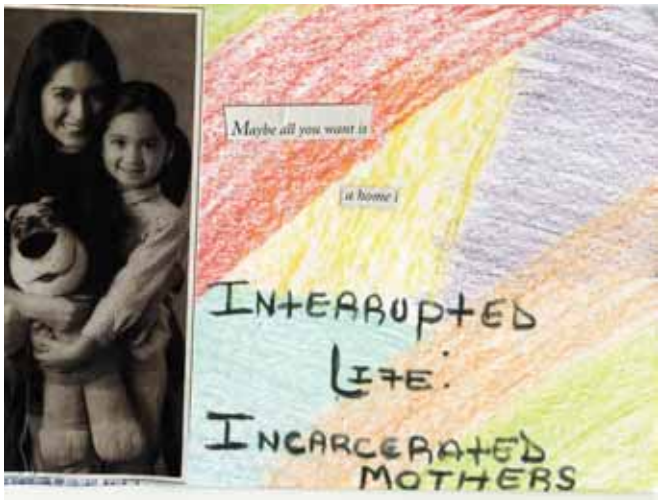
Issue

While incarcerated fathers may find themselves incurring mounting child support debts during their imprisonment, incarcerated mothers will more likely face custody battles. Approximately 10 percent of children of incarcerated mothers are placed in foster homes, whereas only two percent of children of incarcerated fathers are placed in foster homes.[47] Since custody issues disproportionately affect mothers, women's correctional facilities must be especially prepared to assist prisoners with these matters.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) provides for tight timelines in processes and reports to guide the court system in situations where children have been removed from their biological parents.[48] Once the child has been in state care for 15 out of the previous 22 months, the State must file a petition to terminate parental rights.[49] Whether a case progresses towards reunification, adoption or subsidized guardianship is dependent on the factors of each individual case. Ultimately, the court must determine whether the best interests of the child are served by a plan for reunification or some other permanency goal.[50]

But according to Gail T. Smith, Executive Director of Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers (CLAIM), mothers often are held in pretrial detention at Cook County Jail for as long as a year without access to services to progress in their reunification plan.[51] Nevertheless, the State's Attorney may still move to terminate parental rights during this time.

Fortunately, since the advent of the Women and Family Services Division in 1999, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has greatly expanded its efforts to assist mothers with custody issues during their incarceration.[52] When a mother enters an Illinois prison, she is interviewed about the status of her children, and whether they are in foster care or the custody of a family member. Prison staff then contacts DCFS to determine what type of reunification plan, if any, is in place. If the plan calls for drug therapy or parenting classes before the mother can reestablish custody of her child, the prisons typically provide these services. In order to meet DCFS' interactive visiting requirements, all three adult women's correctional facilities have child-friendly visiting areas, where the mother can touch, hold and play games with her children. Free bus services are readily available to transport children to and from Cook County to downstate prisons. For situations where such visits are impractical, video conferencing capabilities now exist at the Women's Treatment Center in Chicago, enabling children to more meaningfully engage with their mothers. Children are given free bus tokens to the center, and the conferences are even recorded so the child can replay them at home.



Unfortunately, the situation at Cook County Jail is somewhat different.[53] The Department of Women's Justice Services at the Cook County Jail has made an effort to establish services for women detainees. The Sheriff's Female Furlough Program (female day reporting) and the Sheriff's MOM's Program (Maternity Objectives Management Program) both help to preserve the bond between female detainees and their children.[54] However, many conditions still exist which prevent mothers from fulfilling the DCFS requirements for reunification. Cook County Jail's "no contact" rule prohibits any contact with prisoners and requires visitors (even children) to communicate with their relatives through Plexiglas windows. Further, approximately 70 percent of women are in jail for non-violent (usually drug-related) offenses, and women comprise about 23 percent of the jail's population. Although the Residential Drug Treatment Program contains 100 beds for comprehensive therapeutic substance abuse treatment, the need for therapy far exceeds the availability. Despite these conditions, the women in Cook County Jail are expected to meet the same reunification requirements as women in IDOC prisons. Because of the current conditions at Cook County Jail, many cannot fulfill these requirements and risk losing custody of their children permanently.

Solution

DCFS and Cook County Jail staff should coordinate to improve reunification services by routinely transporting children from foster care homes to the jail to enable them to visit with their mother in a child-friendly visiting environment, and by providing parenting classes to all prisoners with children (custodial and noncustodial).

In addition, incarcerated and recently released parents need legal assistance to negotiate the process of regaining custody. "Once a child is in the system, it is not so easy to get them out, even if the parent is completely competent to care for them," said Smith.[55] Access to appropriate legal assistance and advice, through local law schools and legal clinics, could greatly reduce the frustration and often unnecessary expenditure of time, paperwork and money to regain custody of children where termination of parental rights has occurred.

"Years of anecdotal evidence show that the thing that helps women in prison turn their lives around is having some kind of hope. For so many women, kids are the source of that hope. When they lose that, that's when they spiral out of control. But with today's laws, someone could be in prison for shoplifting and they could lose custody of their kids permanently if they don't have a family member that's able to step in."

Joanne Archibald
Associate Director, Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers

Support more mentoring and other social service programs for children of incarcerated parents.

Recommendation

Issue

From 1991 to 1999, the number of children with a parent in state or federal prison rose by more than 50 percent, from 900,000 to approximately 1.5 million.[56] The incarceration of a parent can have a profound effect on child development. When parents are arrested and confined, children's lives become disrupted and chaotic. Children may experience traumatic separations from their parents or siblings and stressful shifts to different caregivers, which may be compounded by existing poverty, addiction, and abuse and neglect issues.[57] As a result, children of incarcerated parents are six times more likely than other youth to become incarcerated at some point in their lives.[58] Positive intervention with children of incarcerated parents is essential to prevent criminal behavior from moving to the next generation.

Solution

To break intergenerational cycles of crime, the City should help children of incarcerated parents cultivate healthy, stable adult relationships by providing ongoing support and positive role models through mentoring programs. Research shows that mentoring is effective in putting, and keeping, children on the right track. For instance, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago paired 500 children from single-parent homes with adult mentors; another 500 children were placed on the waiting list. The study found that the children matched with mentors were 46 percent less likely than their unmatched counterparts to start using drugs, 27 percent less likely to start using alcohol, 52 percent less likely to skip a day of school, and 33 percent less likely to hit someone.[59]

A trusting relationship with a caring adult can provide much-needed stability for the young person. It also can provide the incarcerated parent with assurance that someone will look after the best interests of their child. Mentors should not be "replacement parents." Rather, mentors can facilitate a smooth reentry by helping the incarcerated parents reconnect with their child and may become a supportive resource after the return of the parent.

Considerable momentum is already building around this issue. In 2003, President Bush called on Congress to provide $150 million over three years for community- and faith-based organizations to recruit and train mentors for children whose parents are incarcerated.[60] As a result of the President's directive, the federal government has already funded 52 new mentoring programs in the first year and another 169 programs in the second year through the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Initiative.[61]

"I like this program. They help me with my homework, we go different places and we do all sorts of activities together. My favorite part is going to the computer lab. When my dad left, everyone was mad. They help me get my feelings out and let me talk about my dad [in prison]. My sister and I have been coming here for a long time. My mom used to bring us to this program when she had to go to work."

Diavanna Davis
13 years old, daughter of incarcerated father. Diavanna is a participant at Elliott Donnelley Youth Center

The City should follow this lead by encouraging existing mentoring programs to tap into this federal source of funding, and promote the development of more mentoring programs in communities with high concentrations of incarcerated parents. Of course, mentors should be specially equipped to work with this population given the feelings, reactions and behaviors that they may encounter. Organizations like The Mentoring Center in Oakland, California, and the Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners in Washington, D.C., could provide technical assistance and training in this area.[62] Mentor programs also should appreciate the children's perspective, and should take into account the experience of these young people in their planning and programming.[63] Effective, culturally sensitive mentoring programs should be designed to meet the unique challenges of incarcerated parents and their children, and should collaborate with faith-based groups, neighborhood organizations, social service agencies and businesses in the communities.[64]

Beyond mentoring programs, children of incarcerated parents likely would benefit from other social services such as group and individual therapy, developmental skills–building activities, and social-recreational activities. Individuals with whom young people interact frequently (e.g., teachers, school counselors, tutors, church members) should be involved in the delivery of these services to ensure long-term, far-reaching outcomes.

"Growing up, my mother did drugs and was physically abusive. This was the life I knew. So I did drugs, sold drugs and I finally ran away when I was 14 years old. After doing jail time, I became a father and it was a turning point for me. But knowing that the woman who brought me into this world was in prison had a big effect on me. I have a son now, but where is his grandmother?"

Larvell Watkins
Youth with mother incarcerated for three years on drug charges

INSPIRATION FROM THE FIELD:

AMACHI IN PENNSYLVANIA

Amachi, one of the first major efforts to mentor children of prisoners, is a unique collaboration of secular and faith-based organizations. Amachi organizers work closely with local justice institutions to identify and contact children of prisoners. Faith organizations recruit ten volunteer mentors from their congregations, who work at least one hour a week for a year with a child of a current or former prisoner. Amachi's partner, Big Brothers Big Sisters, screens, trains and supports the mentors. Amachi recruits large numbers of qualified, motivated mentors, especially from the African-American community.

As of June 2005, 108 Amachi-affiliated programs exist nationwide; they have partnered with over 1,000 churches and served more than 7,600 children.

Sources: www.amachimentoring.org; Farley, Chelsea, Public/Private Ventures In Brief, Amachi In Brief, February 2004, 1-3.

Real Life

Billie H.

Billie H. is a 41-year-old African-American woman.

Billie grew up on the west side of Chicago with her mother and nine siblings. At age 14, Billie began using marijuana; it was the beginning of a 25-year addiction that led to a life of habitual drug use and prostitution and shuffling in and out of jail and prison over 150 times. Following a school suspension for smoking marijuana, she dropped out after the eighth grade. At 15 years old, she began having sex, and quickly became promiscuous, "turning dates for a bag of pot." Billie says that her older sister, who was already a prostitute, "introduced her to life on the streets." Lured by the large amounts of money she could make in one night, she began selling sex on a more frequent basis. Her drugs of choice escalated to heroin and cocaine, and her life became filled with pimps and other prostitutes. To pay for her expensive drug habit, approximately $500/day, she engaged in prostitution full-time. She became mesmerized by her lifestyle, and as she claims, "had a life that I liked with a lot of fine things." Billie began living in hotels, friends' living rooms, cars, and on the street, basically she says, "anywhere that I could close my eyes for a little while. Sometimes I would just slump over on a curb in between jobs."

During this time, Billie was taken to jail repeatedly each week for solicitation, and each time her pimp would bail her out. Short stints in jail did nothing to diminish her substance abuse or prostitution. "Jail was not stopping me from going out and doing my thing," Billie explains. "Sometimes I wanted to be picked up by the police—I was so tired."

When Billie was 26 years old, she was arrested for burglary while engaging in an act of prostitution, and was sentenced to three years in prison. She served one year at Dwight Correctional Center, which she describes as "sweet." "It was like going on vacation. I could sleep in a bed, have hot food and showers. I wasn't living on the streets or doing my drugs. I was just playing cards with the other girls." When she was released, she was given $100 of "gate money," and Billie claims that money served as her "trigger." She went straight back to her drug spot, and within hours, she was back into prostitution on the streets working to get more money for drugs.

A couple years later, her drug use and prostitution became more intense and Billie started "boosting," or stealing clothes from department stores. "I had no pimp. I was back living in cars and on the streets for days at a time, hanging out with anyone and everyone who would give me a hit." During this time, she gave birth to a daughter who was drug-exposed. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) put a "hold" on the baby and only released the baby into Billie's custody with the assurance that Billie's mother would help to care for her. Although Billie moved back in with her mother, she was "turning tricks" at her home. Billie got pregnant again, and gave birth to another baby girl, who was also drug-exposed. Billie recalls, "I didn't want to have an abortion. So, I thought I would keep using drugs, and the state would take the baby and give it to a family to care for it." DCFS took custody of her baby at the hospital, and, to Billie's surprise, subpoenaed her into court and took her other daughter from her in the courtroom. Both girls were placed with a foster family. "I started feeling sorry for myself after this. I tried to overdose. I was using more and more drugs and hated everyone. I was mad at my mom for raising my sister's kids, but not raising mine," recalls Billie.

In 1995, Billie was arrested and sent to prison for theft. She served one year at Logan Correctional Center (Logan). During this time, she signed up for a GED preparation course, but she was released before she could complete the class. She left prison with $350 in her pocket that she had earned at Logan. According to Billie, "I went straight from the train to my drug spot, without even going home first."

Not even one year later, she was again arrested for theft, agreed to a plea bargain, and was sent to prison for another nine months. This time, she says, "I just wanted to work and to go to my room. And after my release, I tried to change my life—to stop the drugs, the prostitution, and tried to find a job." She sought help from a job training and employment program; however, as she explains, "I became frustrated after a few months and was depressed that it was going to take 2½ years to get my daughters back." Shortly thereafter, she began working at a temporary employment agency. "But my dope mentality took over, I was still using drugs and I stole from my employer." Eventually, she got fired from her job.

"People had faith in me. It was enough to keep me going."

In 1999, she gave birth to her third daughter. Billie was drug-free and employed at odd jobs during this time. Although she was clean for three more years, her drug habit resurfaced in 2002 and she was arrested for felony prostitution. She spent a short time in prison.

Finally, at this point, Billie became resolved. "I was not going back, I wanted to see my baby, and everything took a turn." She returned home, but DCFS required Billie to attend drug treatment to maintain custody of her youngest daughter. She entered in-patient residential treatment, while her mother and friends took care of her daughter. From there, she went to a DCFS-affiliated recovery home for six months, and then into DCFS-affiliated semi-independent housing. She regularly attended Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings. She has a strong support network of family members and friends, many of whom are recovering addicts, and have been clean for many years. "I often turn to my oldest brother for support," she says. "He is my [AA] sponsor. He keeps our family together. He is a recovering addict, and used to tell me, 'Billie, it is okay if you relapse. It takes a few times to get things right.'"

During this time, she heard about a community-based employment agency from her case manager and from some girlfriends, and began its job-readiness and placement program. She also became an intern at the agency's social enterprise business. "People had faith in me," Billie realizes. "It was enough to keep me going. I found out that I am responsible. Through my evaluations, I always ranked number one."

Now, she has been clean for two years. She recently became employed with a local taxicab company. "I am never late, never sick. I am responsible. I am willing to go above and beyond in jobs, and I would do anything to help others on my team." One month ago, she regained custody of her youngest daughter, and moved into an independent living housing facility. She recently opened up a bank account, and has accumulated a small savings. She has reestablished her relationships with her relatives, and as she says, "I'm best friends with my mother. My whole family supported me through everything."

Billie knows her successes. As she tells it, "everything is coming along. I'm not stressed out. I'm not in need of anything. I am just keeping up with treatment and my programs. If I use another drug, I know the consequences."

Real life

Shannon G. is a 33-year-old African-American man.

Shannon was 12 years old when he tried cocaine for the first time. By sixteen, he was using alcohol and drugs so often that his mother encouraged him to get treatment. He didn't. When he went away to college two years later, Shannon's drug problems became even more severe. His behavior was erratic. His drug-fueled rages became more pronounced, finally landing him in prison on charges of manslaughter and arson.

Shannon was sentenced to Mississippi Correctional Center for 20 years. He served more than nine years, and avoided prison programs on principle. "It is impossible to deal with those types of issues when every day you have to think in the terms of 'only the strong survive,'" Shannon says. "Emotionally I set myself aside, except on visiting days when my wife would come to see me. Other than that, my daily life was 'I'm the meanest of the mean. Don't bother me and I won't bother you."

Through his father-in-law, Shannon knew he would have a job waiting for him after his release, so he was not concerned about job training or education in prison. However, he did not realize that his lifelong substance dependency would quickly resurface once he returned to Chicago's south side, threatening his job, his family, and his mental and physical health.

In prison, there was no access to drugs, and Shannon simply assumed that, after nearly 10 years of being drug-free, he would have kicked the habit. But on the outside, Shannon relapsed into drug use as soon as he got his first paycheck. His violent rages returned shortly thereafter, undermining his efforts to reestablish a life with his wife and children. He left his first job, then his second. He was fired from his third job, a well-paying manufacturing job in the suburbs. Still, he says, it never occurred to him to seek help. "I think I had been on parole for close to two years before I even thought of trying to get some help," Shannon explains. "I had heard about a specific community-based agency that could help before I left prison. But I had no need because I had a job. My understanding was that this organization just got you jobs. I didn't know about all the other programs they had."

Finally, pressured by his wife and mother to seek assistance, Shannon visited this agency. His caseworker connected him with drug therapy and mentoring services offered near his home. With this support, Shannon says that he felt for the first time that he was making strides toward long-term stability.

Currently, Shannon is employed at a moving company in Chicago, where he has been for the last two years. But he makes clear, "I still have a lot of my childish, selfish ways, even though I'm 33 and I have a wife and two kids. I still have some of my prison ways. I still haven't psychologically adapted to society as a whole. A lot of it is mental. It's about working with issues you tend to deal with in prison, and maybe even before you went to prison. But what I've realized is, job or no job, if I don't change the way I think, I'm still going be the same person."

"What I've realized is, job or not job, if I don't change the way I think, I'm still going to be the same person."

Shannon G.

Recommendations

Reforms with Statewide Impact

- Develop a standard discharge planning process that connects formerly incarcerated individuals with reentry services in or near the community to which they will return.
- Ensure that prisoners have appropriate identification (or documents with which to obtain a state identification card) at the time of their release.
- Expand capacity and number of Adult Transition Centers for a more gradual transition from prison to the community.
- Restructure parole supervision to better facilitate connections to and delivery of reentry support services.
- Generate an annual report of returning prisoners for municipalities to encourage needs-based assessment of local resources.
- Explore options to stimulate justice reinvestment.

Reforms with Citywide Impact

- Design and conduct a comprehensive awareness and outreach campaign.
- Establish an information and referral source for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Expand housing options for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Establish community-based "Reentry Resource Centers" in neighborhoods with the highest concentration of returning prisoners.
- Incorporate restorative justice principles into the criminal justice system and reentry process.
- Advocate for revision of the methodology of the U.S. Census, which currently counts incarcerated individuals as residents of the prisons instead of their home communities.

Chapter 4: Community Safety

Prisoner reentry affects not only the individuals who are returning home, but also the community to which they are returning.[1] At the same time, the characteristics of the community may affect an individual's reentry success. For instance, the availability of jobs and housing and the accessibility of social services are likely to influence the transition process.[2]

In 2001, 97 percent of all men and women released from Illinois prisons returned to communities within the state.[3] About 75 percent of these individuals went back to only six counties (Cook, Winnebago, Lake, St. Clair, Peoria and Will).[4] And 53 percent returned to the City of Chicago.[5] That means, in 2001, approximately 15,488 formerly incarcerated men and women returned to Chicago alone. Just three years later, in 2004, that number had already increased to 18,320.[6]

A large number of prisoners who locate to Chicago are concentrated within just a few communities of the city. In 2001, for example, 34 percent of prisoners transitioned back to only six of Chicago's 77 communities—Austin, Humboldt Park, North Lawndale, Englewood, West Englewood and East Garfield Park.[7] These communities are ill-equipped to absorb these former prisoners given the high percentages of poverty, unemployment, and female-headed households within those areas.[8]

Prisoners who return to communities lacking the necessary resources to meet the challenges they face have higher rates of recidivism, and communities affected by elevated levels of incarceration and reentry may experience higher crime rates.[9] Indeed, in Chicago, the communities with the highest number of formerly incarcerated individuals have some of the city's highest crime rates. In areas experiencing both high rates of people going to prison and high rates of people returning from prison, relationships among residents become precarious, families experience greater stress, the image of the neighborhood suffers, and financial investment in the community declines.[10]

The public safety issues associated with incarceration and reentry tend to be exacerbated in neighborhoods already experiencing significant disadvantage. But when formerly incarcerated individuals return to a life of drugs and crime, all of Chicago's communities suffer. Families are destabilized, and neighborhoods are characterized by fear and distrust. Businesses close their doors and move elsewhere. The scarce opportunities for advancement diminish still further. Children entering their teenage years lose hope. Developing ways to increase the chances of successful reentry—and simultaneously enhance public safety overall—is a pressing need.

Develop a standard discharge planning process that connects formerly incarcerated individuals with reentry services in or near the community to which they will return.

Recommendation

Issue

Typically, on their release day, prisoners are given their personal belongings, a small amount of "gate money," perhaps a bus ticket and are told to go directly to their host site to meet with their parole agent. Most released prisoners return to their communities without referrals, a support system or a plan of action during the most critical time of reentry.

Released prisoners, then, may simply wander from program to program in the hopes of finding an appropriate fit or an available spot. Individuals with substance abuse or mental health issues are at particular risk without appropriate discharge planning. Without therapy or proper medication, they may relapse in a matter of days or even hours.

The responsibility often falls on parole agents—who may have caseloads of between 70 to 100 parolees—to quickly identify the parolees' needs and form a plan for connecting them to services available in the community. Because parole agents may get assigned released prisoners in a large geographic area, many parole agents may not be fully aware of all available agencies, programs or resources near their parolees. In many cases, relying primarily on a parole agent to develop a discharge plan and make the appropriate linkages may be too little too late.

Solution

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) should create a standardized and coordinated discharge planning system throughout its institutions that connects prisoners with appropriate social service agencies in the community before they are released. That way, on a prisoner's release day, he or she will know exactly where to go for support services, and the agencies will be prepared for the individual's arrival. A discharge planning system should be designed to address treatment, employment, health, housing, transportation, financial and other related needs with which prisoners must contend once outside prison walls.

In 2002, IDOC received a $2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice through the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative to establish the Illinois Going Home Program. The Going Home Program is a pilot program for male prisoners between the ages of 18–24 who will be paroled to the North Lawndale community.[11] IDOC has contracted with several social service agencies to provide participants with assessment, intensive case management, substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, transitional housing, employment training and placement assistance. The program's transition teams are comprised of clinical reentry managers, job developers, licensed clinicians, parole agents, and IDOC counselors. These teams work with prisoners during the last six to twelve months prior to their release date to develop a reentry plan and discharge summary, and to address any barriers they may have.[12] During this period, the participants are incarcerated at an IDOC Adult Transition Center in the North Lawndale area. After their release, the former prisoners are required to have ongoing meetings with their clinical reentry manager and maintain contact with their parole agent.[13] The goal of the Going Home Program is to reduce recidivism by building strong relationships with service agencies in the community.

University of Chicago researchers currently are completing an evaluation of the Going Home Program. Their initial recommendations encourage IDOC to begin reentry support services as early as possible while prisoners are incarcerated; bring the community inside prisons by involving mentors, faith-based organizations and business owners with the transition from prison to parole; gradually transition prisoners from higher security prison facilities to Adult Transition Centers then to a transitional living environment before returning back to their home; and provide more intensive case management after release by more frequent face-to-face contacts and smaller caseloads for parole agents and case managers.[14]

IDOC should use the lessons of the Going Home Program to help inform policymakers about the changes needed to develop and implement an effective discharge planning process statewide.

Ensure that prisoners have appropriate identification (or documents with which to obtain a state identification card) at the time of their release.

Recommendation

Issue

Research has consistently shown that the first six months after release are a decisive period for successful reentry outcomes, and that recidivism is at its highest during this time.[15] At the same time, the sooner a released prisoner obtains employment, and some semblance of stability, the less likely he or she is to recidivate.[16] To achieve that stability and effectively function in society today—to apply for a job, to receive medical care, to sign a lease or to get services at a bank—an individual must have at least one piece of accepted identification.

Unfortunately, most prisoners are released without any identification. In fact, the Urban Institute found that only 22 percent of prisoners returning to Chicago reported having any kind of photo identification on the day of their release.[17] This lack of identification may disrupt the whole process of reentry before it has begun, making it virtually impossible for a person to begin looking for a job, treatment, housing and a range of other critical services.

Many problems arise for prisoners as they attempt to obtain valid state identification. Most do not have the requisite supporting documents (e.g., passport, birth certificate, Social Security card, or proof of residence) necessary to apply. Prisoners also need to appear in person at an Illinois Secretary of State facility to secure a state identification card—a task that is difficult, if not impossible, for an incarcerated person to do. Moreover, many months before discharge, prisoners usually do not know where they will be living post-release, and consequently cannot list a definite address. Even after their release, many prisoners may be living with family members or friends, or may change addresses frequently until stable housing is found, and may not have utility bills and other forms of documentation typically used to establish proof of residence.

To complicate these problems further, many individuals are arrested, convicted and incarcerated under false names, or aliases, and do not want to reveal this fact to correctional staff.[18] In fact, some prisoners may actively impede their counselors' efforts to obtain missing documents that must be requested from the appropriate state agency (for a birth certificate) or federal department (for a social security card).[19] Because the name on the judgment order issued by the sentencing court, also known as the court mittimus, may or may not be an individual's real name, the Secretary of State cannot rely on this paperwork. For many public policy reasons (e.g. child support obligations, liens, etc.), the Secretary of State needs individuals to prove their identity.

The quicker formerly incarcerated individuals can obtain valid state identification, the sooner they can take the next steps necessary to facilitate their own successful reentry, thereby reducing the likelihood of recidivism.

Solution

For a smooth transition back to a community, prisoners must leave prison with valid state identification, or at least with the supporting documents with which to obtain a state identification card immediately after their release.

Currently, the process is in place for prisoners to obtain a temporary IDOC identification card (IDOC card) before their release.[20] Up to 18 months prior to discharge, IDOC's Pre-Release Services Division is required to assist a prisoner in obtaining a Social Security card and birth certificate.[21] IDOC is required to store the documents for the individual.[22] If all identifiers match, an IDOC card is processed for a $1 fee from the individual's commissary account.[23] The IDOC card expires 30 days after the prisoner's release.[24]

Within 30 days following discharge, the individual may present the IDOC card, along with his or her Social Security card and birth certificate, at any Illinois Driver Services facility to obtain an official state identification card for a $20 fee.[25] At this point, if the individual's identifying documents all match, the Secretary of State will waive the proof of residency requirement, and will accept an address verbally.[26] Moreover, IDOC will write the Secretary of State a check for the $20 fee usually required for first-time applicants to receive a state identification card, thus essentially waiving the required fee.[27]

This process is a significant step toward resolving this issue, but some challenges remain. First, although prisoners receive information upon their initial arrival at IDOC's Reception and Classification Unit (the division of IDOC responsible for the intake and processing of prisoners) about the importance of having valid state identification after their release, it is the responsibility of counselors at each separate correctional facility to determine what documents prisoners already have or may need. This practice should be streamlined at the Reception and Classification Unit, saving staff time and resources for what has become labor-intensive and time-consuming. Here, efficiency is extremely important, taking into account that the majority of Illinois prisoners are in prison for about one year.[28]

Released prisoners also still need to personally appear at a Secretary of State's Office; the burden is on each individual to act within 30 days of his or her release or the IDOC card will expire. At that point, they are treated as a first-time applicant to obtain state identification. IDOC should help to facilitate this personal appearance requirement where possible.[29] Further, the process to obtain an IDOC card remains voluntary, and because of the issue of false identities, few prisoners take advantage of it. IDOC should encourage all prisoners to apply, and do what it can to help expedite the process.

IDOC's ultimate goal should be for all prisoners to leave prison with valid state identification. Short of that, IDOC should collaborate with other state agencies to establish measures that would dramatically increase the percentage of prisoners who have all the documents necessary to obtain proper identification as soon as they are released.

Expand capacity and number of Adult Transition Centers for a more gradual transition from prison to the community.

Recommendation

Issue

For most prisoners, the transition from prison back to their communities is a stressful and complicated time, filled with questions, concerns and unknowns.

With even the best pre-release programming, many prisoners may not be mentally, emotionally or logistically prepared for their discharge. The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has created Adult Transition Centers (ATCs) to provide selected prisoners with structured supervision in a community setting for a more gradual transition back into society. Formerly known as Community Corrections Centers or Work Release Centers, the ATCs allow incarcerated individuals to spend the last months of their sentence residing in or near their home community. They have been successful in helping prisoners reconnect with family, prepare for the rigors of employment, and generally readjust to the social and cultural mores of life outside prison.[30]

IDOC operates eight ATCs throughout the state, three of which are located in Chicago.[31] Only one of these eight centers houses female prisoners. All combined, they are designed to house approximately 1,500 prisoners, who must work or go to school and return to the ATC when not participating in an approved community activity.

Prisoners who are within two years of release and classified as minimum security may apply for transfer to an ATC, and IDOC is extremely selective about who is approved. The population at ATCs has increased 22 percent in recent years from 1,360 in 1999 to 1,658 in 2001.[32] Despite this increase, only three percent of all Illinois prisoners are transferred to Adult Transition Centers.

Prisoners at ATCs are expected to spend at least 35 hours a week involved in constructive activity, including employment, vocational training, life skills, alcohol and drug counseling and public service work. These individuals are expected to contribute 20–30 percent of their income to offset the facilities' operation costs, and are required to save a portion of their earnings. This financial

involvement helps prisoners develop a sense of personal responsibility and competency. Those individuals unwilling or unable to live up to the requirements of the ATC are returned to prison to serve out the remainder of their sentence.

Unfortunately, even with highly restrictive requirements for participation, these ATCs operate beyond full capacity, and can only accommodate and assist a small portion of the prison population to gradually transition back into their communities.

Solution

Because of the success of the ATCs, IDOC should earmark more state funding for the development of additional ones. ATCs give those leaving prison an opportunity to make a gradual, rather than an abrupt, adjustment to life on the outside. Prisoners participate in programming specifically designed to ease the stress of the reentry process, and often provide an outlet for emotions that might otherwise have prompted them to return to a life of drugs and crime.

Additional ATCs for female prisoners are especially needed. Debbie Denning, Deputy Director of IDOC's Department of Women and Family Services recognizes this. "Transition support is so important," she explains, "because so many women have absolutely no family support when they leave prison, or the family they do have may step up and hand their children over and say, 'Hey, it is time for you to take care of them,' when the woman doesn't even have a job or a place to stay yet. The ATC is a safe place for them. It gives them time to build a bank account, have a stable job, and find supportive housing."[33]

Restructure parole supervision to better facilitate connections to and delivery of reentry support services.

Recommendation

Issue

The majority of formerly incarcerated individuals are released to some form of supervision following prison, typically parole. In Illinois, 83 percent of prisoners are given mandatory supervision, with the condition that they report to a parole agent on a regular basis.[34] As incarceration and release rates have grown over the years, the parolee population has grown as well. Between 1990 and 2000, the overall Illinois parole population jumped 59.9 percent from 18,882 to 30,199 individuals.[35] There has been a corresponding increase in the percentage of parolees that are rearrested for committing a new crime or violating a condition of parole (these technical violations—such as failing to report for a scheduled office visit, missing a curfew, failing to attend a job or school, testing positive for drugs or alcohol—are not by themselves a criminal offense). In fact, technical violations accounted for 24 percent of all new Illinois prison admissions in 2004.[36]

Theoretically, mandatory supervision serves two primary functions: (1) promoting the successful reintegration of released prisoners back into society and (2) monitoring released prisoners for public safety purposes to ensure that they are maintaining drug- and crime-free lifestyles.[37] But the second function seems to have consumed the first. The role of a parole agent typically is to make certain that released prisoners are complying with the conditions of their parole. Parole agents monitor the parolees under their charge, and have the discretion to report all misbehaviors to the Prisoner Review Board, which could lead to rearrest and reincarceration.

Mandatory supervision offers a crucial opportunity to assist released prisoners at the time when they are most likely to recidivate. For the majority of returning prisoners, a parole agent may be one of the few people they encounter who has the ability to make referrals to support services.

However, with the dramatic increase in the number of released prisoners, parole agencies across the country have found that their resources are tight, which translates into higher caseloads for parole agents and fewer services for parolees.[38] "Underfunded parole agencies . . . have made parole more a legal status than a systematic process of reintegrating returning prisoners," wrote Jeremy Travis, President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York and a preeminent national researcher on reentry issues.[39]

Clearly, to be effective in reducing recidivism, parole must be supportive of the overall reentry challenges of the individuals under correctional supervision. Without the appropriate resources for and focus of parole agents on reentry support services, returning prisoners will not receive the individual attention they need to succeed.

Solution

To promote the successful reentry of people with criminal records, enhance public safety, and strengthen communities, a fundamental philosophical shift must occur in the way parole agents view their jobs.

As a part of parole reform, and in a major effort to increase resources for parolee supervision and services, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) implemented Operation Spotlight.[40] This initiative will double the number of parole agents over a four-year period, significantly reducing their average caseload and enabling them to provide more individualized attention to individuals under their charge. An automated case management system is also being developed to assist parole agents in effectively maintaining and tracking contacts with parolees. This increase in staff, coupled with smaller caseloads, will allow parole agents to improve parolee supervision as well as intervene promptly and appropriately to aid high-risk parolees like those struggling with mental illness and drug addictions. The goal is to reduce crime and recidivism throughout the state.

Operation Spotlight presents a unique opportunity and IDOC should take advantage of it as a launch pad for even more widespread reform. The overall philosophy of and the culture within the parole department must still be substantially altered if parole agents are to play a meaningful role in facilitating the delivery of reentry support services. Parole agents must focus on helping prisoners succeed in their reentry efforts, rather than only monitoring them for mistakes. For many years, parole agents have concentrated on law enforcement, surveillance and compliance, and their job performance has been measured accordingly. Instead, parole agents must view their primary function as facilitating linkages with social service agencies and resources in the community.[41] However, this will entail more than a shift in job responsibilities. The mentality of the parole department is ingrained in years of recruiting former corrections officers for parole jobs. To achieve a radically different approach to parole agents' work, IDOC must begin by recruiting new parole agents with not only corrections experience but also social service backgrounds. IDOC also should provide training for all parole agents to focus more on the connection to and importance of community-based services.

With new motivation, parole agents could become resources for the restoration of local neighborhoods and the rehabilitation of individuals. To this end, parole agents should be given incentives to make referrals to community-based services when technical violations occur. Implementing intermediate or graduated sanctions for technical violations of parole is more effective in reducing recidivism than simply reporting parole violators and sending them back to prison.[42] Graduated sanctions may include residential treatment, community service, electronic monitoring, curfew, counseling, increased drug testing, or formal reprimand. These graduated sanctions change the behavior of the parolees by showing the certainty of punishment, while saving prison for more serious, violent criminals.

Parole agents should be responsible for particular neighborhoods rather than having their caseloads span a wider geographic area. Reentry from prison, then, can become a shared responsibility of the community, parole agencies, parolees and their families.

In Spokane, Washington, "neighborhood-based supervision" has changed the mentality of parole agents by requiring them to do outreach in the communities in which they work. Parole agents are no longer based in a central office to which parolees are expected; instead, these "community corrections officers" walk the streets and hallways of low-income housing complexes. Rather than using random phone calls to monitor an individual's progress, they make random person-to-person visits. Because they become enmeshed in the community, they often know when one of their parolees is behaving improperly, and can intervene to correct or change that behavior. "A lot of [the parolees] don't have anyone else or know where to turn for help," one community corrections officer told the *Spokane Spikesman-Review*. "That's part of our job."[43]

Generate an annual report of returning prisoners for municipalities to encourage needs-based assessment of local resources.

Recommendation

Issue

Almost all individuals who are released from an Illinois prison will return to a community in Illinois.[44] But the communities receive these formerly incarcerated men and women with little, if any, information about them or their evolving need for services. Although the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has some of this data (e.g., demographics, offenses, health issues, and education levels of prisoners), there is no systematic, consistent method to provide local governments with this information.

Policy decisions should be made that are empirically grounded and reflective of current realities. Without this data, municipalities are unable to inform city departments about where to focus available services to best support formerly incarcerated individuals in their jurisdiction and are unable to adequately persuade city councils, public officials or policymakers about where to judiciously allocate scarce resources.

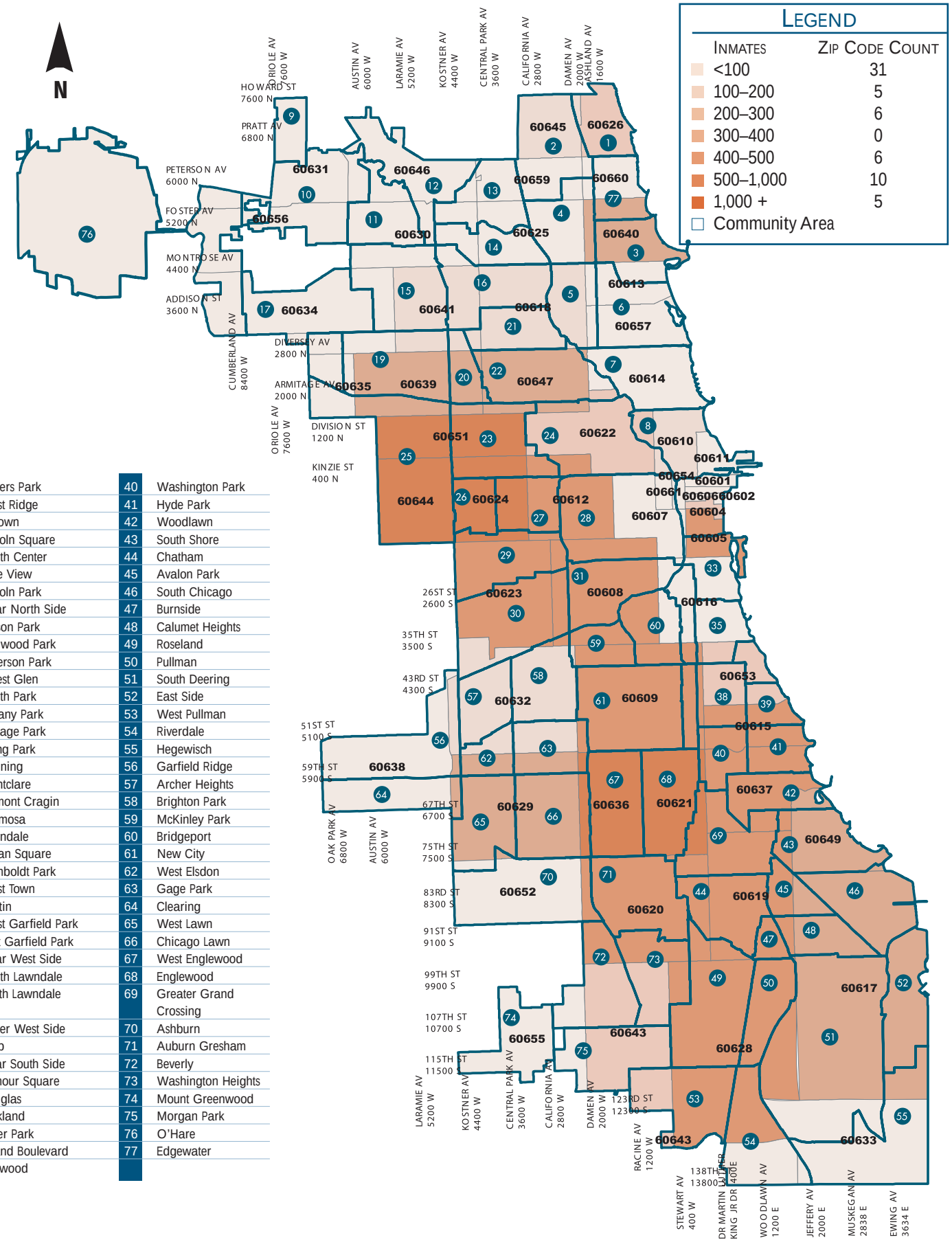
Solution

It is invaluable to have knowledge about released prisoners conveyed to local government. Because the statistical information concerning the needs of prisoners returning to each county is constantly evolving, IDOC should develop a system to accurately update prisoner records on a yearly basis and create "exit reports." These reports should include the total number of exits to each local jurisdiction, and should be further broken down by zip code within each local jurisdiction. These reports could be published and made available to the public via the Internet. Basic demographics about the released prisoners should be provided as well as employment and education levels, health status, offenses committed, and type of housing into which prisoners will be released. These reports would provide a more complete picture for local jurisdictions of issues with which they will be dealing when prisoners return to their communities.

In April 2003, the Urban Institute launched a three-year longitudinal study of prisoner reentry in Illinois. The report from the first phase of research included a wide range of statistical information of prisoners released from Illinois correctional facilities.[45] It examined the percentage of prisoners released by race, age, education, admission type, conviction offense, sentence length, time served, security level, and number of prior incarcerations. This report presented the number of prisoners returning by county, city, and district, providing useful data on which jurisdictions received the most returning prisoners. For those communities in Chicago with the highest percentage of returning prisoners, data about unemployment, poverty levels, and local social service providers also was included in the report.

The Urban Institute study represents a tremendous effort on the part of a research-based institution to collect and present an extensive amount of information in a succinct and organized manner. It has been highly useful to those working in the criminal justice field. However, the Urban Institute study is based on statistics gathered in 2001. In order to better serve municipalities, efforts should be made to keep the data current so that local jurisdictions can make informed judgments about how and where to invest their resources. Annual exit reports could help ascertain the complexities with which local jurisdictions must contend, and help inform reentry planning efforts.

City of Chicago 2004 Inmate Exits (18,320) to Chicago by Zip Code and Community Areas



1	Rogers Park	40	Washington Park
2	West Ridge	41	Hyde Park
3	Uptown	42	Woodlawn
4	Lincoln Square	43	South Shore
5	North Center	44	Chatham
6	Lake View	45	Avalon Park
7	Lincoln Park	46	South Chicago
8	Near North Side	47	Burnside
9	Edison Park	48	Calumet Heights
10	Norwood Park	49	Roseland
11	Jefferson Park	50	Pullman
12	Forest Glen	51	South Deering
13	North Park	52	East Side
14	Albany Park	53	West Pullman
15	Portage Park	54	Riverdale
16	Irving Park	55	Hegewisch
17	Dunning	56	Garfield Ridge
18	Montclare	57	Archer Heights
19	Belmont Cragin	58	Brighton Park
20	Hermosa	59	McKinley Park
21	Avondale	60	Bridgeport
22	Logan Square	61	New City
23	Humboldt Park	62	West Elsdon
24	West Town	63	Gage Park
25	Austin	64	Clearing
26	West Garfield Park	65	West Lawn
27	East Garfield Park	66	Chicago Lawn
28	Near West Side	67	West Englewood
29	North Lawndale	68	Englewood
30	South Lawndale	69	Greater Grand Crossing
31	Lower West Side	70	Ashburn
32	Loop	71	Auburn Gresham
33	Near South Side	72	Beverly
34	Armour Square	73	Washington Heights
35	Douglas	74	Mount Greenwood
36	Oakland	75	Morgan Park
37	Fuller Park	76	O'Hare
38	Grand Boulevard	77	Edgewater
39	Kenwood		

Explore options to stimulate justice reinvestment.

Recommendation

Issue

Over the past decade, corrections expenditures have increased as fast, and often faster, than any other state budget item. But as one research study in New York points out, society now spends a million dollars a year to incarcerate people from just one single block in Brooklyn —over half of these people for non-violent drug offenses— and return them, on average, in less than three years unstable, unskilled, untrained, uneducated and unhealthy to the same unchanged block.[46]

As the fiscal crisis intensifies in states across the country, including Illinois, government leaders need to assess whether this type of substantial financial investment makes good sense. Determining the answer and developing the right measures is a complicated and extremely sensitive endeavor. Policymakers need to consider if it is possible to stem the growth of the prison population without compromising public safety. In doing so, policymakers also need to contemplate whether the communities which send disproportionately large numbers of people to prison and jail are adequately prepared and equipped to receive the growing influx of people released from those institutions. As it stands, few, if any, initiatives exist to reinvest in the neighborhoods that are home to the bulk of former prisoners.

"You can think of the money [society] spends on incarceration and criminal justice as a pool of funds—funds that could be spent in a different way. . . . Looking back at a year's worth of prison admissions, these were the results of a bunch of individual decisions, but it turns out to amount to enough financial investment to be thought of as an actual spending policy."

Eric Cadora
Director, Justice Mapping Center

INSPIRATION FROM THE FIELD:

RECLAIM OHIO

In response to a growing need to address overcrowding issues in Ohio's juvenile institutions, RECLAIM Ohio was created in July 1993. It is a funding initiative which encourages juvenile courts to develop a range of community-based options to meet the needs of juvenile offenders or youth at risk of offending.

Under the program, each Ohio county receives funds from the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) for the treatment and care of youthful offenders. This ensures that local judges are free to make treatment decisions that are appropriate and in the best interest of the youth and the community. By diverting youth from DYS, judges even have the opportunity to increase the funds available locally.

As a result, more youth currently are being served locally where families can participate in their treatment. Institutions are less crowded, and DYS is focusing its treatment and rehabilitative efforts on the more serious, repetitive, felony-level youth. DYS population decreased from 2,600 in May 1992 to 1,800 in July 2004.

Source: www.dys.ohio.gov/RECLAIMOhio.html.

Solution

The goal of "justice reinvestment" is to redirect some portion of the $60 billion America now spends on prisons to rebuilding the human resources and physical infrastructure—the schools, health care facilities, parks and public spaces—of neighborhoods devastated by high levels of incarceration.[47] Justice reinvestment is, however, more than simply rethinking and redirecting public funds. It is also about transferring accountability and responsibility to the local level. Justice reinvestment seeks community-level solutions to community-level problems.[48]

The Council of State Governments has provided technical assistance to a few states that have demonstrated a bipartisan commitment to maintaining public safety and reducing the corrections budget through the design and implementation of justice reinvestment initiatives.[49] The goal is to generate savings by moderating the growth of the prison population and to reinvest some of the savings in particular neighborhoods receiving a disproportionate number of released prisoners.

These states are creating maps of prison spending as a new way to look at the phenomenon. The prison-spending maps highlight the fact that community residents' money is being spent on incarceration (usually in other parts of the state) and that there might be another, better way to spend those same criminal justice dollars.[50]

The State should explore ways to move in this direction. It must build momentum and generate the political will to analyze the current incentive structure of the criminal justice system, and to suggest new ways of thinking about crime and punishment, recidivism and reform. A prison-spending map of specific neighborhoods in Chicago, and other parts of the state, would help to illuminate these issues. It would demonstrate how much money society is spending on incarceration compared to how much money society is spending on education, drug treatment, mental health care and job training. The State should then convene a representative group of stakeholders to stimulate dialogue and attempt to develop scenarios about different incentive structures to effectively reduce recidivism and make Illinois communities safe, stable and economically viable places to live and work.

"The illuminating work of the Urban Institute has laid the foundation for a model reentry demonstration project. Its goal should be to lower recidivism and permit the savings to be invested in services to reduce crime and enhance strong community-based programs."

Julia Stasch
Vice President, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Design and conduct a comprehensive awareness and outreach campaign.

Recommendation

Issue

Former prisoners reenter Chicago neighborhoods on a daily basis, typically with little planning, counsel or support. This affects the individuals themselves, their neighbors and the community at large. Yet there is almost no public discussion of this fact.

When the topic of crime does come up, people do not often think about the problems that society or their particular neighborhood might face concerning formerly incarcerated individuals, nor do they voice concern about how returning prisoners are treated or whether they would be able to rebuild their lives. The issues are unfamiliar and perhaps controversial. Rather, people talk about vandalism, or the disastrous effect of drugs and gangs in their community. Pushed further, people may sometimes just reflect back what they see or hear in the media. And sometimes, unfortunately, their perspective is colored by stigma and fear. There are general misconceptions about prisons and jails and the individuals released from these institutions.

When it comes to creating effective and durable pathways for successful reentry, one of the greatest challenges is the public's perception, knowledge and engagement. It is a threshold hurdle. While former prisoners must learn to act responsibly, the community must be strong enough—and willing enough—to give them the opportunity to do so. Communities as a whole, and the residents within them, need to appreciate the importance of reentry issues and take a proactive stance to address them.

Solution

The City, in partnership with a public relations or marketing agency, should design and implement a widespread awareness and outreach campaign. Such a campaign would help to raise consciousness among all Chicagoans, tackling misperceptions and negative stereotypes while enlisting broad support and input.

The campaign should engage numerous strategies to reach a broad range of audiences. On a grassroots level, the City should sponsor informal dialogues with community-based organizations and leadership groups to stimulate local discussion. The dialogues should include a diverse array of people, such as formerly incarcerated individuals, concerned citizens, advocates, social service professionals, local employers and others. As a result of these thoughtful conversations, participants would have a chance to better understand the impact and implications of prisoner reentry, examine how this issue relates to their own lives, and consider how to develop multi-dimensional policies, programs and initiatives for the future.

Chicago's Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) is one mechanism to "spread the word" as a part of an awareness and outreach campaign. Since 1995, CAPS has held meetings in church basements, libraries, hospital cafeterias and Park District field houses throughout each of Chicago's 281 "beats." Today, 60 percent of Chicago residents are aware of CAPS meetings in their area and 28 percent are estimated to have attended at least one CAPS meeting.[51] The meetings are an effective way to increase knowledge about neighborhood crime, and about how police respond to such activity. Building off the structure already in place with CAPS, the City could showcase how community agencies are working with returning prisoners during their transition home, and how this population can be more of an asset than a burden to Chicago's neighborhoods.

The Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign offers media resources to help facilitate these types of discussions.[52] They have developed more than 12 public television documentaries that span over the last two years. The City should request copies of these documentaries for a variety of purposes. It could plan public television programs on the ChicagoWorks cable station. It could host local screening events and post-film forums at Chicago Public Libraries or City Colleges. It could also present a select number of films in local Chicago public high schools, and sponsor an essay-writing contest for students.

"When I meet with employers, all I ever hear about are the horror stories, never the success stories. We need public service announcements from owners of companies, top salespeople and other successful professionals sharing their success stories and acknowledging that they have criminal records. Credibility is a big issue. Society looks at people returning from prison to do wrong again. They become institutionalized again, this time not through the penal system, but rather in their own neighborhoods. We must give these individuals a chance to prove themselves to society."

Alderman Walter Burnett
27th Ward, City of Chicago

Further, the City should consider supporting art exhibitions created by formerly incarcerated individuals as a medium to enhance understanding and appreciation about the lives of these individuals both inside and outside prison walls.

A website should be developed to illustrate the innovative ways that organizations and government are beginning to think, work and collaborate on reentry activities. Information about city initiatives, and how communities can be involved in or contribute to the reentry process, should be accessible on this website. Additionally, public service announcements or advertisements should profile success stories and share real-life challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals.

Each component of the campaign would help to stimulate dialogue among the public, with the ultimate goal of encouraging community ownership of the problem and the solution.

Establish an information and referral source for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Recommendation

Issue

Information about community resources can provide access to programs and a corresponding sense of direction for prisoners who are reentering society. Formerly incarcerated individuals often need guidance about services and opportunities in their communities for employment, treatment, health care, housing and various other issues. Former prisoners, specifically those who have been away from their communities for a significant period of time, may need assistance determining where services are located and how to travel to these services.

It is somewhat unclear how former prisoners get their information. There does not appear to be any consistent, reliable source to guide individuals with criminal records. Word of mouth can be invaluable, but may be limited in terms of depth and breadth of information.

Inspiration from the Field: The Osborne Association in New York

The Osborne Association operates a toll-free information hotline for families of incarcerated individuals providing answers to questions about visitation, transportation, transfers, parole and other issues related to a relative's incarceration. Former prisoners and their families volunteer to staff the hotline and provide additional information, support, and linkages to community services. For their service, the volunteers receive transportation passes, meal allowances, and small stipends. The hotline receives an estimated 200 calls a month; approximately 30 percent are repeat callers.

Sources: www.osborneny.org; Eric Waters (Program Coordinator, Family Resource Center, The Osborne Association), interview with Julie Wilen, November 1, 2005.

Solution

The City should develop an extensive community resource mapping system to identify organizations and programs in each Chicago community that serve formerly incarcerated individuals. After this information has been compiled, the City should, then, develop mechanisms and explore different channels by which to disseminate and share this information.

The City should create a "reentry resource guide" containing organizations, programs, services, contact information and transportation options for each community. Hard copies of this guide could be available in a variety of public venues (e.g., parole offices, libraries, health clinics). It could also be distributed to every prisoner through the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) Pre-Start program, with each prisoner's reentry plan and discharge summary. But this resource guide should be electronically based and accessible through the

Internet. This vehicle allows for increased accessibility to many people, and will enable the database to be updated and maintained regularly. As with any kind of resource guide, it runs the risk of becoming obsolete within months. Consequently, the issue of how, when and who updates and maintains this resource guide and database must be dealt with at the outset.

Prisoners could assist with this responsibility. They would be a consistent and low-cost labor force, and would gain invaluable job experience at the same time. Additionally, it would help them learn about organizations, programs and services available to them after their release. In Washington, the Correction's Clearinghouse (CCH) publishes a Case Management Resource Directory which lists over 2,500 resources in the state—from free clothing to substance abuse treatment—that can steer formerly incarcerated individuals to needed help. CCH coordinated correctional administrators and local college computer instructors to devise a prison industry program for prisoners to assist with designing, editing, maintaining, producing and distributing the resource directory.[53]

The resource guide also could be a practical and informative tool for either Chicago's 311 Call Center or a new toll-free reentry information hotline. The 311 Call Center is often used by Chicago residents to access non-emergency and general information about Chicago's events, services, and community programs. It handles 3.8 million calls annually, receiving requests or inquiries and forwarding them to the appropriate departments. A toll-free hotline could be established, as an alternative, to provide callers with information on a wide range of issues, including treatment centers, housing resources, and employment agencies. Formerly incarcerated individuals could contact the 311 Call Center or the toll-free hotline if they are unsure about where to go for assistance, and the operators could use the resource guide to provide direction and guidance.

Expand housing options for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Recommendation

Issue

Housing is one of the most important elements of a reentry plan for prisoners returning to the community from prisons and jails, but sometimes a stable housing option cannot be found by the time an individual is released. Nationwide, of the approximately 650,000 individuals released from state and federal prisons annually, and the seven million individuals released from local jails, an estimated 10 percent are released into homelessness.[54] For those with mental illness, approximately 20 percent are homeless in the months before and after incarceration.[55] In Chicago, approximately 1,200 formerly incarcerated individuals are discharged from state prisons to homeless shelters each year because they have no other place to go at the time of their release.[56] Homelessness, literally being back on the streets, makes it difficult to comply with parole conditions and contributes to the cycle of recidivism.

New research has emerged on the relationship between incarceration and homelessness, which suggests that "homelessness contributes to a higher risk for incarceration and that, inversely, incarceration contributes to an increased risk of homelessness."[57] Data from a New York study showed that 6.5 percent of prisoners had used homeless shelters in the two-year period prior to entering prison; 45.1 percent of these individuals had subsequent shelter stays and 42 percent had subsequent prison stays.[58]

Inspiration from the Field:

St. Leonard's Ministries in Chicago

Founded in 1954, St. Leonard's Ministries provides a unique blend of supportive housing and case management services for 350 formerly incarcerated individuals each year through its three residential programs—St. Leonard's House, Grace House, and St. Andrew's Court.

Staff at St. Leonard's Ministries creates a tight-knit community to keep residents on the path to productive and self-sufficient lives. To complement its mix of services, St. Leonard's Ministries recently opened the Michael Barlow Center within walking distance of its residential buildings to provide job training and placement assistance for its residents. The recidivism rate for its residents after three years is approximately 20 percent, compared to the statewide rate of 54 percent.

Source: Bob Dougherty (Executive Director, St. Leonard Ministries), interview with Ben Lumpkin, January 25, 2005.

But the homeless service system is not equipped to deal with large numbers of formerly incarcerated individuals. A recent paper published by the Regional Roundtable on Homelessness noted that the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) funding restrictions and resource limitations, as well as program and community-specific rules, often bar individuals with felony convictions.[59]

The general lack of affordable housing in Chicago also is a barrier for many. Of course, former prisoners are only a smaller subset of the larger general population in need. Cutbacks in federal housing resources have reduced the housing alternatives for all low-income people. As the Re-Entry Policy Council pointed out, "Given the overwhelming demand for and limited supply of affordable housing and the stigma of having a criminal history, it is unrealistic that individuals released from prison or jail would be given priority access to the affordable housing. At the same time, there are public safety and other implications to categorically excluding recently released individuals from this housing stock."[60]

Of the affordable housing that is available, many returning prisoners do not have the financial ability to even pay a deposit on an apartment by themselves. And they may be ineligible for public housing.

Public housing policies in this country are governed by a complex set of federal laws and regulations, local policy directives, ordinances and judicial case law. When it comes to people with criminal records, federal law imposes ineligibility for public housing on certain types of offenders, and gives discretion to local providers of federally-assisted housing as they shape their admissions policies to deny access to others.[61] Federal law also requires public housing authorities to evict certain occupants for certain criminal offenses. Screening rules nationwide were developed in order to strike a balance between addressing the housing needs of various populations while safeguarding all residents from drug dealing and other criminal activity.[62]

It's important to note that the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), regardless of its screening policy, has waiting lists of tens of thousands of families for public housing units and housing choice vouchers (formerly known as Section 8 vouchers). So currently, securing a new lease or a new voucher through federally-assisted housing is not a realistic option for anyone in Chicago, let alone those with criminal backgrounds. Additionally, as CHA continues through its "Plan for Transformation," housing resources are not available to accommodate households expanding due to family members returning from prison or jail.

Released prisoners who may be able to stay with family, or on their own, in their old communities may not want to do so. They may need to change how they live, with whom they live, and where they live. The Urban Institute found that 45 percent of men leaving prison in Illinois chose not to return to the same Chicago community where they had lived before prison, partly because they wanted to "avoid trouble" in their old neighborhoods.[63]

Although finding a place to live is a critical component of the reentry process for former prisoners, it may not be enough to simply have a bed to sleep in and a roof over their heads. Indeed, some individuals may actually need some form of "supportive housing," where their place of residence is enriched with on-site services including a case manager to help facilitate access to treatment, counseling, employment and educational programs.

In the housing arena, more options for formerly incarcerated people must exist to prevent recidivism, foster stability, and promote public safety.

Solution

The City should work with the State to develop a targeted strategy for identifying formerly incarcerated individuals who were homeless at entry into prison, and advocate to cease the current Illinois Department of Corrections' (IDOC) practice of discharging directly into homeless shelters. With the development of the new Homeless Management Information System in Chicago, the City could match its homeless shelter use data with IDOC prison admissions data to identify individuals who are cycling regularly between shelters and prisons. In New York City, for example, the Departments of Corrections and Homeless Services have initiated a formal collaboration in which they have matched their data systems to identify individuals that are frequently in contact with both agencies. These agencies are jointly developing an initiative that would target housing assistance resources to these at-risk individuals, with the goal of breaking the cycle of homelessness and incarceration.[64] Implementing housing assessments at prison intake, identifying housing needs well in advance of release, and securing appropriate housing placements upon discharge could prevent thousands of people each year from entering homelessness directly from prison.

In addition, the City should encourage the use of the HUD definition of homelessness to determine eligibility for formerly incarcerated people who have experienced homelessness and who qualify for federally-funded services and housing. Unlike the McKinney definition of homelessness, the HUD definition allows access to HUD-funded programs for individuals leaving institutions and other systems of care, including prisons, with no regular, stable place to live.[65] Advocacy at the client- and systems-level is needed to ensure that formerly incarcerated individuals who are homeless can access safe, stable residential settings.

Short-term rental subsidies also should be provided for select prisoners immediately after their release.[66] These temporary stipends can assist in making the first few months' rental payments and may give these individuals a window of opportunity in which to gain employment and to become self-sufficient.

Furthermore, the City should encourage HUD to fund and develop pilot programs to provide subsidized public housing with some intensive services for a targeted set of formerly incarcerated individuals, such as the Oakland Housing Authority in California has done through their Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers to Succeed (MOMS) Program.[67] The Oakland Housing Authority works with the Alameda County Sheriff to identify single mothers who have been released from Santa Rita County Jail. These women become public housing residents and may obtain apartments in a specific public housing building designated for MOMS participants. For one year while they are involved in the program, MOMS participants are provided with on-site case management services and support including substance abuse treatment, mental health counseling, basic parenting classes, life skills, and vocational and educational guidance. If the mothers and their children are successful in the program, they can move to permanent public housing.

The City should continue its efforts to promote the development of supportive housing, specifically in the geographic areas with high concentrations of returning prisoners. Supportive housing—safe, affordable rental housing paired with an array of services—has proven effective to help homeless individuals, and others with multiple barriers, successfully reengage in society.[68] Supportive housing interrupts the costly cycle of people moving in and out of hospitals, shelters, prisons, and jails, and provides individuals with the stability they need to reenter the work force and lead healthier lives.

While development of supportive housing exclusively for formerly incarcerated individuals is one worthwhile approach, efforts should simultaneously be made to integrate individuals with the general population. Existing supportive housing providers should be offered training to more effectively serve and meet the needs of formerly incarcerated individuals. This training could touch on issues unique to people with criminal records, and could help case managers more successfully assist those with a history of incarceration.

Overall, however, attitudinal barriers in the community must be overcome to expand housing options for people coming out of prison and jail. Communication strategies around housing developments for formerly incarcerated individuals should highlight that the risk to the community is not the number of residents who are former prisoners; the danger actually stems from the number of residents who are former prisoners and who do not have appropriate support, services, and stable housing. As Jackie Reed, Executive Director of the Westside Health Authority contends, "You might not want to have them in your backyard. But, guess what? They are going to be in your backyard anyway. They already are."[69] To counter the "not in my backyard" syndrome, outreach to communities must demonstrate how expanding housing options for formerly incarcerated individuals contributes to overall community safety.

"I was nervous about my release. My biggest fear was who was going to hire me, especially now that I am an 'ex-con,' and where was I going to live. I had burned my bridges. I had no family to turn to. Supportive housing helps to combat the revolving door syndrome of prison. It reminds you that you don't have to go back, that there are so many resources available to you."

Kevin Ronquillo
Formerly incarcerated at Taylorville Correctional Center, current Maintenance Supervisor at St. Andrew's Court

Establish community-based "Reentry Resource Centers" in neighborhoods with the highest concentration of returning prisoners.

Recommendation

Issue

In 2001, the Urban Institute found that more than half of released prisoners in Illinois returned to the City of Chicago, and 34 percent of those individuals returned to only six of Chicago's 77 communities.[70] In that same year, only 24 percent of the agencies specifically and exclusively designed to serve formerly incarcerated individuals were located in any of these six communities.[71]

When individuals, particularly former prisoners, are forced to travel to multiple agencies beyond their neighborhoods to obtain services, additional barriers arise. During years of confinement, many have developed genuine phobias of traveling outside areas of the city familiar to them. Many have no reliable means of transportation. And many must confront personal safety issues when traveling across gang boundaries. As Niuris Ramos, the lead community organizer of the Near Northwest Neighborhood Network points out, "People in Humboldt Park are not going to go too far south or too far west. It is hard for them to cross gang borders. Even when they have to go to 26th Street [Criminal Court Building] for probation, they may worry about crossing this border, and this border, and this border. And they don't know what to do."[72] Many returning prisoners, then, when confronted with such challenges, will simply do nothing, and ultimately, will not attempt to connect with services they need.

Solution

Local "reentry resource centers" could provide support to returning prisoners as they begin and proceed through the reentry process.

The City should develop pilot resource centers in neighborhoods with large numbers of reentering prisoners that lack sufficient social service agencies with the skills and capacity to work with this unique population. These centers should be a former prisoner's first point of entry and continual point of access. These centers would primarily serve as a hub for referrals, support and guidance, although they could provide some discreet direct services. Reentry resource centers should collaborate, not compete, with parole agents and other community-based service providers on which these individuals rely.

During a prisoner's pre-release period, correctional staff should contact the appropriate reentry resource center and work with them to develop a plan for post-release services. This type of collaboration would foster intensive early planning and linkages between correctional staff, prisoners, and the local community-based reentry resource centers, and would provide the framework for the continuum of services when an individual returns to the community.

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) recently opened two of its own reentry resource centers in Chicago. The centers are managed by a Chicago social service agency and co-located with parole offices. IDOC's goal is to establish a community corrections model that allows for parole agents, providers, and community leaders to work together on reintegrating former prisoners into the community. The agency's hope is that, through this model, former prisoners will have more opportunities to connect with essential services when they stop by to check in with their parole agents for their required periodic appointments.[73]

Some advocates believe that this model could be enhanced by also establishing a network of similar, community-based resource centers that would reach even deeper into the former prisoner population and further increase the range and availability of services. "The majority of parole agents have been trained as correctional workers and are still part of corrections," explains Joanne Archibald, Associate Director of Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers (CLAIM). "When community providers coordinate reentry support services, former prisoners have a different level of trust and comfort. Parolees feel more comfortable talking to someone outside corrections."[74]

Working alone, neither IDOC staff nor community-based providers can fully meet the needs of all individuals leaving prison. The unique circumstances of formerly incarcerated individuals are too complex, and the challenges to reentry are too numerous, for either one. The most successful reentry outcomes will be accomplished only through deliberate coordination and collaboration.

> ***"When you get out of prison, you think it's us against the world. You have $50 in your pocket and you must figure out what to do with it. It is a very stressful experience coming out of prison; it has a psychological effect on people. You can't just throw us into mainstream society and expect us to succeed. We need resources immediately upon release; we need a support system to help adjust. We don't know how to live. I didn't even know how to use a cell phone. We need a roadmap to help get back into society."***
>
> *Xavier McElrath-Bey*
> *Discharged from Illinois Rivers Correctional Center after 13 years in prison*

Incorporate restorative justice principles into the criminal justice system and reentry process.

Recommendation

Issue

Our legal system today is grounded in the philosophy of retributive justice.[75] The criminal justice system tends to be punitive, adversarial and state-centered. There is a concerted focus on rules and laws. The primary aim is to establish guilt or innocence. Accountability is equated with punishment. With the increasing mass of imprisoned individuals, increasing expense of building correctional facilities and incarcerating offenders, and increasing recidivism rates, a growing number of judges, probation officers, parole agents, prosecutors, and other justice professionals as well as community leaders agree that the time is right to consider alternatives on how we handle traditional criminal justice practice.

Solution

Restorative justice provides a new way of thinking about, understanding, and responding to crime.[76] It is an emerging philosophy that, with increasing frequency, is being used to guide justice system responses all over the world.[77]

First, it views criminal acts more comprehensively.[78] Rather than defining crime only as broken rules and laws, restorative justice views crime as harm done to people and places. Second, it involves more parties.[79] Rather than giving key roles primarily to government and the offender, crime is considered an injury to the individual victims, offenders and communities, and creates an obligation for everyone to work together to make things right. In fact, restorative justice strives to maximize input and active participation of these constituencies, giving equal weight to their concerns in the quest for responsibility, restoration, recovery, reconciliation, healing, habilitation and reintegration.. Third, it measures success differently.[80] Rather than looking at how much punishment has been inflicted, it assesses how much harm has been repaired or prevented. Finally, it sees crime as a collective problem.[81] Rather than leaving the problem of crime to government alone, restorative justice recognizes the critical importance of full community involvement and initiative in responding to and reducing crime. A strong, sensible, enduring solution requires maximum engagement of all the affected parties to decide what justice requires in each situation, and those same individuals ought to be involved in an ever-evolving discussion that explores whether or not their communities are stronger after the criminal justice intervention than they were before the crime happened. Ultimately, through a restorative justice lens, only interventions that are grounded in and directed by the community are likely to strengthen the community in the end.[82]

The City should explore ways to operationalize the principles underlying restorative justice. To that end, the City should build on existing programs and practices that reflect restorative justice principles, such as victim-offender mediation, family group conferencing, or community service.

For example, in Oregon, Deschutes County has adopted the concept of a "community justice corps."[83] The idea is to mobilize people returning home from prison as agents of community restoration. In 1997, Oregon passed legislation that allowed Deschutes County to supervise juveniles—otherwise destined for state prisons—in community programs. These youth join with other community residents to rehabilitate housing and schools, redesign and rebuild parks and playgrounds, and redevelop and rebuild the physical infrastructure and social fabric of their own neighborhood. Within one year, the program reduced youth incarceration in state facilities by 72 percent, a national high according to the National Center for Juvenile Justice. The youth in the program averaged 204 hours of community service compared to four hours for incarcerated youth and their restitution rate was four times higher than their incarcerated peers. The City should learn from the Oregon experience and develop a pilot community justice corps for people with criminal records.

Through a restorative justice framework, the public is afforded an effective and efficient means of protection; offenders are held accountable for their actions and the restoration of any harm suffered; the power of the community is harnessed so that bonds are strengthened and people feel safer; and recidivism is reduced because offenders are also afforded meaningful opportunities to develop skills, engage in productive activities and make a positive contribution for a renewed sense of purpose and belonging in society.

"Many community residents know many people dealing with prisoner reentry issues and can refer them to resources in the community. Our role should be to facilitate discussion and educate people to advocate for themselves or their family members who have been incarcerated. Our goal should be to look at alternatives, besides being behind bars, that can be implemented at the community level."

Valerie Leonard
North Lawndale resident and member of North Lawndale Community Advocacy Team

Inspiration from the Field:

Citizen Circles in Ohio

In Ohio, the Adult Parole Authority formed "Citizen Circles" to engage community residents in the process of welcoming released prisoners back into their neighborhoods.

Prisoners are generally told about the groups before their release from prison. Residents volunteer to serve on the circles, and prisoners volunteer to participate as well. All together, they develop a plan to help the individual become a healthy, productive, law-abiding citizen. The Citizen Circles meet on a regular basis to discuss the individuals' progress, review plans, interview new applicants, admit new members and to discharge both successful and unsuccessful participants.

As of July 2005, 18 Citizen Circles were in progress, representing all seven Adult Parole Authority regions.

Source: McMillan, Meta, "Citizen Circles widen to help ex-offenders begin new lives in Cleveland," City News Ohio, October 26, 2005, http://www.citynewsohio.com/News/article/article.asp?NewsID=62899&sID=4 (accessed November 17, 2005).

Advocate for revision of the methodology of the U.S. Census, which currently counts incarcerated individuals as residents of the prisons instead of their home communities.

Recommendation

Issue

A longstanding quirk in census rules counts incarcerated people as "residents" of the prisons—locations where most are held for only a short time—instead of residents from the towns and cities where they actually lived. This methodology pre-dates high incarceration rates or modern uses of demographic data. But with 1.4 million people in state and federal prison today, padding electoral districts' population figures shifts political power from the densely populated urban areas where most prisoners live to the less populated rural districts where prisons often are built.[84]

As a result, the current census figures inflate the population of communities in Illinois where the majority of prisons are located and undercount Chicago's population. This is not just an issue of statistical trivia; rather it poses significant questions as to Chicago's proper representation in Springfield and its eligibility for state and federal funding.

Each decade, the Illinois state legislature uses U.S. Census data to redraw its legislative district boundaries so that each district will contain the same number of people as required under the 14th Amendment's One Person One Vote rule. This ensures that each resident gets equal access to government, but this principle is diluted when census numbers fail to accurately reflect where the state's population actually resides. Incarcerated individuals cannot even vote in Illinois; it is ironic, then, that they count as constituents when state legislators draw up legislative districts.

Each Chicago resident miscounted by the census dilutes Chicago's representation twice. First, it reduces the number of Representatives and Senators from the City of Chicago, and then again it increases the number of Representatives and Senators from other parts of the state. This gives districts with prisons undeserved strength in the state legislature and more influence than they would otherwise have in state affairs. By counting impoverished prisoners as residents of prison districts, these counties also reap more than their fair share of federal dollars earmarked for the poor.

Solution

Counting prisoners at their pre-prison addresses would cure what has clearly become a troubling flaw in the census process. This methodology can be modified at either the federal or state level. Federally, the Census Bureau could simply change its procedures before the 2010 census. On the state level, passage of House Bill 906, the Prisoner Census Adjustment Act, introduced by Representative Arthur L. Turner in 2005, would require the Illinois Secretary of State to create a specially modified version of the Census Bureau's redistricting data that would enumerate prisoners as residents of their actual home communities.

To grow and develop into healthy, viable settings, Chicago's communities should advocate for fair representation in the calculation of its formerly incarcerated population.

A Note of Thanks

Many people worked very hard to ensure the success of the Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry. The information and recommendations contained in this report would not have been possible without their leadership.

Our thanks first go to The Honorable Richard M. Daley, Mayor of the City of Chicago, for having the vision and courage to address this issue that has been ignored for so long. Since his bold step to call the members of this Caucus together, other elected officials around the country have followed his lead and begun to devote time and resources to confronting the challenges posed by the formerly incarcerated.

Thank you to our two co-chairs, Roxanne Ward of Ariel Capital Management and Paula Wolff of Chicago Metropolis 2020. Roxanne and Paula focused on both the big picture and the finer details. They offered sharp intelligence and astute insight, and the Caucus always benefited from their discerning questions and clearheaded guidance. They served as role models, gentle critics, and constant champions. Working with the two of them made work a pleasure.

Thank you to the Caucus members for their dedication and wisdom. With their insightful contributions, the Caucus evolved into something truly valuable. They were a source of inspiration, and that inspiration will help influence the debate on issues of prisoner reentry for years to come.

Thank you to the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago for graciously allowing us to use their splendid meeting space. It was our Caucus home where we could listen and learn, question and discuss, and where the fruits of our labors took shape.

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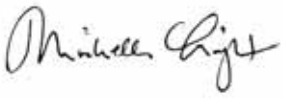
Thank you to the participants in the Dialogue Groups, as well as the people who agreed to be interviewed for our Stakeholder Perspectives, for investing their time and sharing their ideas. Each brought a unique and valuable viewpoint to the conversation. We wanted this final report to reflect the best thinking of concerned citizens throughout the city, and they helped us to achieve this goal.

And to those individuals with criminal records, and their loved ones, who find themselves reflected within these pages, thank you for sharing your struggles with us. It takes courage to let a stranger tell your story, and let other strangers read your story, and we hope that we've done you some small measure of justice.



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(as of July 1, 2005)

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(as of July 1, 2005)

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Anonymous, *brother was formerly incarcerated*
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Ms. Darlene Lewis, *University of Chicago Hospitals Medical Center, nephew is incarcerated*
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Ms. Sheila McCrea, *resident of North Lawndale*
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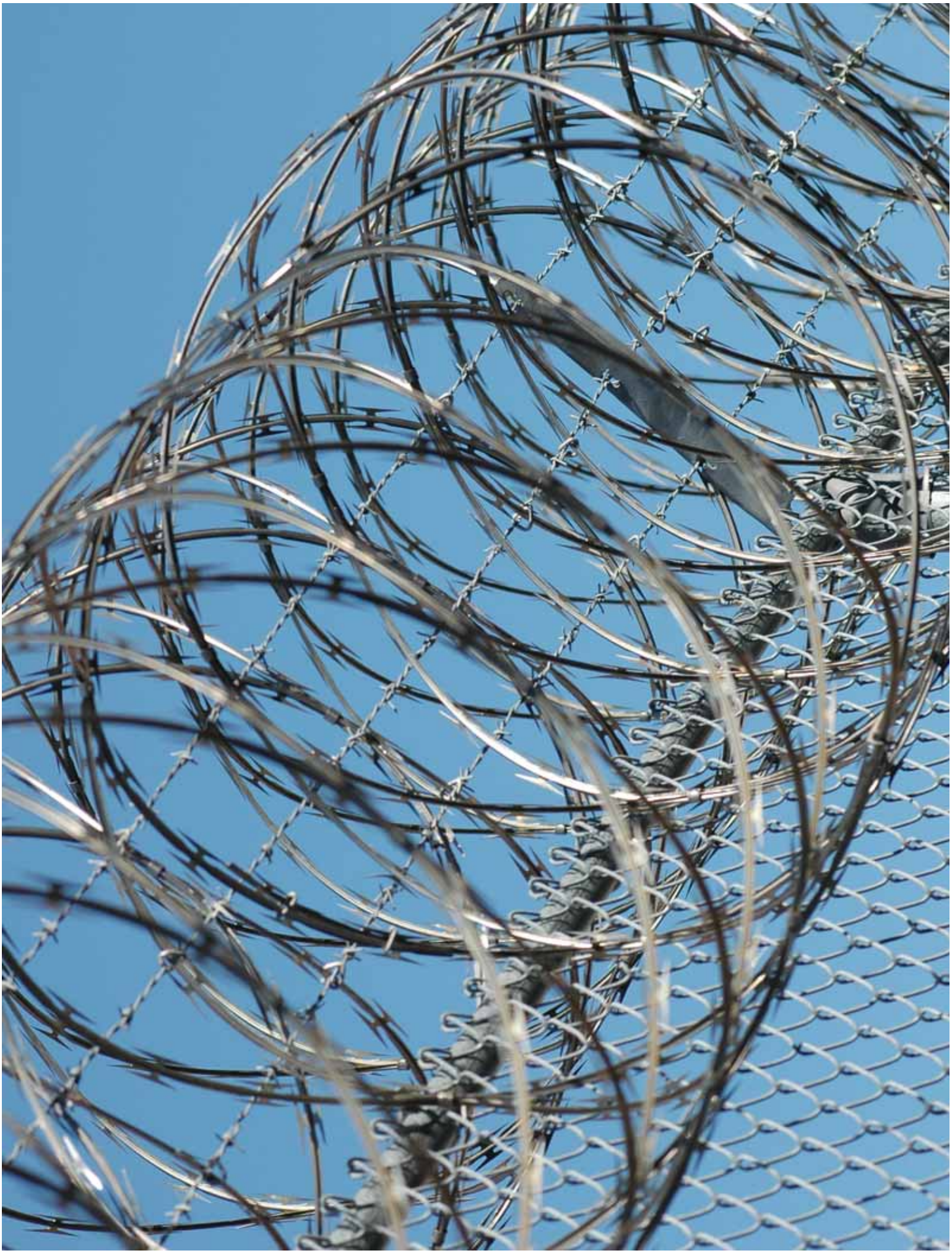
Ms. Dee Wilson, *Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments*
Mr. Edward A. Zanghi, *Illinois Department of Corrections*



Endnotes

Introduction

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4 Bonzcar, Thomas, "Prevalence of Imprisonment in the U.S. Population, 1974-2001," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003), http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/piusp01.pdf (accessed November 11, 2005), Figure 3. The U.S. incarceration rate of 724 per 100,000 persons places this country at the top of the list in the Western world. Rates of other nations—Russia (564), Great Britain (145), Canada (116), Germany (97), France (88), and Japan (60)—are all significantly lower. *See* "New Incarceration Figures: Growth in Population Continues" (Washington, D.C.: The Sentencing Project, 2005), http://www.sentencingproject.org/pdfs/1044.pdf (accessed November 11, 2005).

5 Throughout this report, words such as "former prisoner," "released prisoner," "formerly incarcerated individual," and "person with criminal record" are used interchangeably.

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[30] Travis, Jeremy, Elizabeth M. Cincotta, and Amy L. Solomon, *Families Left Behind: The Hidden Costs of Incarceration and Reentry* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute, 2003), http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310882_families_left_behind.pdf (accessed June 7, 2005), 2.

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[34] Harrison, Paige and Allen Beck, "Prisoners in 2004" (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005), http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/p04.pdf (accessed November 11, 2005), Table 10.

[35] Harrison, Paige and Allen Beck, "Prisoners in 2004" (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005), Table 11, http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/p04.pdf (accessed November 11, 2005). Some scholars and commentators argue that there is a simple explanation for these statistics: African Americans commit more crimes. But even if that were true, it would not explain the serious degree of disproportionate treatment that blacks endure in the criminal justice system and has been clearly documented. See http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/dmc/.

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[39] Street, Paul, "Race, Place, and the Perils of Prisonomics: Beyond the Big-Stick, Low-Road, and Zero-Sum Mass Incarceration Con," *Z Magazine* (July/August 2005) http://www.prisonpolicy.org/news/zmagjulaug2005.shtml (accessed on November 11, 2005).

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[43] The Transition from Prison to Community Initiative webpage, http://www.nicic.org/pubs/2002/017520.pdf. Missouri and Oregon were the first two states selected to test pilot the model. Based on those experiences, NIC expanded the program to four additional sites including Indiana, Michigan, North Dakota, and Rhode Island.

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[45] NGA Center for Best Practices, "Issue Brief: NGA Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy" (NGA Center for Best Practices, January 5, 2005), http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440ddcbeeb501010a0/?vgnextoid=c223303cb0b32010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD. Following a national request for proposals, teams from seven states—Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Virginia—were invited to participate.

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Chapter 1: Employment

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[16] School District 428, "Annual Review of Programs: Fiscal Year 2004," (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 2004), 42. Roger Williams, (Superintendent, School District 428), interview with Julie Wilen, November 14, 2005.

[17] Lisa Hampton, "Meeting Summary with Superintendent LeAnn Miller" (unpublished notes, December 17, 2003). One year later, in 2004, School District 428 was not able to provide comparable data about waitlists. But 8,394 adult prisoners took an Adult Basic Education class and 1,925 of these individuals completed the class (e.g., achieved at least a 6.0 on the TABE test after either 45 or 90 days). Roger Williams, (Superintendent, School District 428), interview with Julie Wilen, November 14, 2005.

[18] A person who successfully passes the GED test earns a certificate from the Illinois State Board of Education that is equivalent to a high school diploma.

[19] Roger Williams, (Superintendent, School District 428), interview with Julie Wilen, November 14, 2005.

[20] Karen Scheffels, Executive Director of the Literacy Council, testimony at public hearing, Governor's Community Safety & Reentry Working Group, April 12, 2005.

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[22] Illinois Department of Corrections, Office of Communications, "2003 Annual Report," (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, December 2003), 138.

[23] "Low rates of job retention can also be traced to the types of jobs that ex-offenders with little formal education and little-to-no work experience are relegated to. Because of their lack of experience and the stigma of their criminal background, many ex-offenders are concentrated in low-wage and temporary jobs with no upward mobility." Heinrich, Svenja, "Reducing Recidivism Through Work: Barriers and Opportunities for Employment of Ex-Offenders," (Chicago, IL: Great Cities Institute, The University of Illinois at Chicago, September 2000), 20. *See also* Holzer, Harry, Steven Raphael, and Michael Stoll, "Employment Barriers Facing Ex-Offenders" (working paper from the Urban Institute Reentry Roundtable Meeting, May 19-20, 2003), 5.

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[25] "The rules and regulations shall also provide that the good conduct credit accumulated and retained under paragraph (2.1) of subsection (a) of this Section by any inmate during specific periods of time in which such inmate is engaged full-time in substance abuse programs, correctional industry assignments, or educational programming provided by the Department . . . shall be multiplied by a factor of 1.25 for program participation before August 11,1992 and 1.50 for program participation on or after that date." 730 ILCS 5/3-6-3; Illinois Department of Corrections, "Frequently Asked Questions," http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/faq/default.shtml (accessed August 2, 2005).

[26] "No inmate shall be eligible for the additional good credit time under this paragraph (4) who (i) has previously received increased good credit under this paragraph (4) and has subsequently been convicted of a felony, or (ii) has previously served more than one prior sentence of imprisonment for a felony in an adult correctional facility." 730 ILCS 5/3-6-3.

[27] Just over 25 percent of the prison population has been incarcerated at least once before. La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 33, Figure 21.

[28] Illinois. 94th General Assembly. Public Act 094-0128 (July 7, 2005), http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0128 (accessed November 18, 2005).

[29] Lizette Richardson (former director, Malcolm X Adult Learning Center, City Colleges of Chicago), meeting with Leonard McKinnis, August 15, 2005.

[30] City Colleges of Chicago, "The Center for Distance Learning," http://cdl.ccc.edu/, (accessed July 5, 2005).

[31] Illinois Council on Vocational Education, *The Positive Impact of Corrections Education on Recidivism and Employment,* (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 1997), 51.

[32] Illinois Department of Corrections, "Human Services Plan–Fiscal Years 1998-2000: Adult Institutions and Community Correctional Centers," (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 2000) http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/reports/human_services_plans/hsp2000_4.pdf (accessed August 2, 2005), 73.

[33] Illinois Department of Corrections, "Human Services Plan–Fiscal Years 1998-2000: Adult Institutions and Community Correctional Centers," (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 2000) http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/reports/human_services_plans/hsp2000_4.pdf (accessed August 2, 2005), 73.

[34] School District 428, "Annual Review of Programs: Fiscal Year 2004," (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 2004), 43.

[35] Illinois Department of Corrections, Administrative Directive 04.10.108 for all School District Academic and Vocational Programs on Student Assessment and Placement, effective on April 1, 2005, at II(F)(2)(b).

[36] The Critical Skill Shortages Initiative reports for the northeast region can be found at http://www.workforceboardsmetrochicago.org/transport.php (accessed November 17, 2005). For more information about the general CSSI initiative, see http://www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/Bureaus/Workforce_Development/Resources/CSSI.htm.

[37] School District 428, "Annual Review of Programs: Fiscal Year 2004," (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 2004), 14.

[38] Lawrence, Sarah, Daniel M. Mears, Glenn Dubin, and Jeremy Travis, "The Practice and Promise of Prison Programming," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, May 2002) http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410493_PrisonProgramming.pdf (accessed August 10, 2005), 15.

[39] The Illinois Department of Employment Security recently published "Winning Job Opportunities: A Guide for the Formerly Incarcerated in Illinois," which outlines occupations with the most job openings each year by education level and has trained staff at the Sheridan Correctional Center on the use of its labor market and career information. Sherri Moses, (Director of Policy, Illinois Department of Employment Security), email interview with Julie Wilen, October 19, 2005.

[40] In preparation for the reopening of Sheridan Correctional Center in 2004, for instance, the Safer Foundation conducted a study of the Chicago-area job market to determine which industries were most likely to have jobs for people leaving prison. They looked specifically for industries that would be willing to hire people with education levels somewhere between 6th and 8th grade, with no legislative or general practice barriers to hiring people with criminal records, and finally, generating large numbers of entry-level openings annually in the geographic region to which most Sheridan inmates would return—Chicago and the surrounding Cook County. IDOC then worked with specific groups to develop a half-dozen vocational training programs, including transportation and warehousing, construction trades, light manufacturing and hospitality. Jodina Hicks, (Vice President of Public Policy and Community Partnerships, Safer Foundation), interview with Michelle Light, September 13, 2005.

[41] The IDOC Women and Family Services Division has taken the lead in this area by working to circumvent many of the barriers to vocational training for its female prisoners: the mandatory GED requirement, the length of vocational programs, and the disparity between trainings and employment. Debbie Denning, the division's Deputy Director, noted "there are some women that will never get their GED who nonetheless have skills that could lead to jobs," and many programs "have so many hours of work experience before you can take the state boards, and a lot of women are not in prison long enough to complete the program." Because of this, in 2003, School District 428 launched a program to train female prisoners to become nail technicians—a course in which women would not need to have a GED to participate, and which could be completed in four months. Denning comments that "today, 100 percent of the women graduate, and some women are taking their state boards before they are even released, so when they get back to the community, they can walk into a shop and get an apprenticeship." Debbie Denning (Deputy Director, Department of Women and Family Services, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 15, 2005.

[42] Lawrence, Sarah, Daniel M. Mears, Glenn Dubin, and Jeremy Travis, "The Practice and Promise of Prison Programming," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, May 2002), http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410493_PrisonProgramming.pdf (accessed August 10, 2005), 15.

[43] Illinois Department of Corrections, Office of Communications, "2003 Annual Report," (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, December 2003), 12.

[44] Illinois Correctional Industries Annual Report FY1998 (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections), 21.

[45] Illinois Correctional Industries Annual Report FY1998 (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections), 21.

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[48] Council of Advisors to Reduce Recidivism Through Employment, "A Review of the State of Illinois Professional and Occupational Licensure Policies as related to Employment for Ex-Offenders," (Chicago, IL: The Safer Foundation, September 2002).

[49] Samuels, Paul and Debbie Mukamal, "After Prison: Roadblocks to Reentry," (New York, NY: Legal Action Center, Open Society Institute, 2004), 9.

[50] Glenn Martin, (Co-Director, National HIRE Network), email correspondence with Michelle Light, November 10, 2005.

[51] Illinois. 93rd General Assembly. Public Act 093-0207 (January 1, 2004), http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?name=093-0207 (accessed August 3, 2005); Illinois. 93rd General Assembly. Public Act 093-0914, (January 1, 2004), http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=093-0914&GA=093 (accessed August 3, 2005).

[52] Certificates of Relief from Disabilities (CRD) can be issued to an individual if they have no more than one felony conviction. It does not matter if that individual spent time in prison as part of their sentence. If the person has not been incarcerated, a CRD can be issued by a Circuit Court, either at the time of sentencing or later by application. If the person has been incarcerated, a CRD can be issued by the Prisoner Review Board at the time of release. In comparison, Certificates of Good Conduct (CGC) can be issued to an individual if they have no more than one felony conviction, spent time in prison, and are now no longer incarcerated. The Prisoner Review Board is the only body that can issue a CGC. There is a waiting period and the application will be considered only if a sufficient period of time has passed, depending on the nature and level of the offense. See Public Act 093-0207, 93rd General Assembly, (January 1, 2004) http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?name=093-0207 (accessed August 3, 2005); Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Court, "Certificate of Relief from Disabilities," http://www.19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us/self-help/other/relief_of_disabilities.htm (accessed August 3, 2005).

[53] It's important to note that having either certificate does not guarantee that an individual will be granted a license or job. A certificate is not a pardon and it does not erase the record of a criminal conviction. It simply testifies that the state believes the individual can become a productive member in society. Judicial, administrative, licensing, or other bodies can still rely upon the conviction as the basis of discretionary power to refuse to issue or re-issue a license, permit, or other privilege.

[54] Sue Hoffer, (Spokesperson, Illinois Department of Finance and Professional Regulations), interview with Tim Michaels, August 3, 2005.

[55] According to the Safer Foundation, very little work had been done by IDOC to implement the law immediately after it went into effect in January 2004. But by December 2004, IDOC had (1) trained wardens and staff on CRD process; (2) integrated the distribution of a separate letter describing the CRD through their management information system during an inmate's orientation to the facility; (3) facilitated training of all incarcerated individuals on the Certificates of Relief from Disability during Pre-Start, and started to assist with the completion and forwarding of the application to the PRB as part of the parole process; and (4) trained parole on the Certificates of Relief from Disability for already released individuals. Rochelle Perry, (Acting Director of Public Policy, Safer Foundation), personal correspondence with Michelle Light, July 2005.

[56] According to the Safer Foundation, the Prisoner Review Board (PRB) was concerned about deeming applicants "rehabilitated" without any qualitative descriptions of how the state could conclude that an applicant was indeed "rehabilitated." The PRB did not feel that the statute language provided enough direction on the definition. They also needed to hire an administrative person to handle application processing and needed funding to set up a database to maintain application information. Rochelle Perry, (Acting Director of Public Policy, Safer Foundation), personal correspondence with Michelle Light, July 2005.

[57] According the Safer Foundation, there is only one judge across the state (Honorable Paul Biebel in the Cook County Circuit Court) who has reviewed motions for Certificate of Relief from Disability applications. Two applications were summarily rejected by the clerk's office for insufficient information. Four applications were filed and considered—two were approved and two were denied. Many clerks in other municipal districts were not even aware of the legislation enacting the certificates. Rochelle Perry, (Acting Director of Public Policy, Safer Foundation), personal correspondence with Michelle Light, July 2005.

[58] According to the Safer Foundation, the Illinois Department of Finance and Professional Regulations (IDFPR) developed a report in February 2005 on the receipt and processing of licensure applications from individuals with criminal records from January 1, 2004 to November 30, 2004. During that period, IDFPR received 24 applications, of which they issued 16 licenses, denied 1 application, and had 7 applications still pending. None of the 24 applicants had CRDs. Rochelle Perry, (Acting Director of Public Policy, Safer Foundation), personal correspondence with Michelle Light, July 2005.

[59] The Safer Foundation, the Legal Action Center and local advocacy groups have been working on these issues.

[60] Currently, CRDs only apply to 18 of the 57 occupational licensing statutes with stipulations related to criminal history. PA 093-0207 applies to 15 occupations, and PA 093-0914 adds 3 additional occupations. Illinois. 93rd General Assembly. Public Act 093-0207, (January 1, 2004) http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?name=093-0207 (accessed August 3, 2005); Illinois. 93rd General Assembly. Public Act 093-0914, (January 1, 2004) http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?name=093-0914&GA=093 (accessed August 3, 2005).

[61] Delaware. SB #229. 142nd General Assembly. 1st session, June 22, 2004.

[62] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 40.

[63] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 40.

[64] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Christine Visher, "Chicago Prisoners' Experiences Returning Home," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, December 2004), 3.

[65] Sherri Moses, (Director of Policy, Illinois Department of Employment Security), interview with Julie Wilen, October 7, 2005.

[66] National Institute of Corrections, "Administrative Guide: Offender Workforce Development Specialists Training Program" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, August 2004), 1.

[67] Patricia Rusoff, (State Bonding Coordinator, Illinois Department of Employment Security), interview with Julie Wilen, September 28, 2005.

[68] In 1997, for instance, a small Memphis-based firm named Rapsheets.com began selling national criminal background checks over the internet for less than $30 apiece. The site claims that its criminal directory now encompasses 170 million criminal records. See www.rapsheets.com and www.marketwire.com.

[69] "SHRM Finds Employers Are Increasingly Conducting Background Checks to Ensure Workplace Safety," press release (January 20, 2004) http://www.shrm.org/press_published/CMS_007126.asp (accessed November 18, 2005).

[70] Tammi Kessel, (Assistant Bureau Chief, Illinois State Police), interview with Tim Michaels, August 19, 2005.

[71] The results from this study can be found at www.napbs.com.

[72] "Study Finds FBI Criminal Database Search Ineffective for Employment Background Checks," National HIRE Network newsletter, October 2005, 1-2.

[73] Maurice Emsellem, (Soros Justice Senior Fellow, National Employment Law Project), email correspondence with Michelle Light, November 10, 2005.

[74] According to the EEOC, statistics show that members of certain minority groups, particularly African-Americans and Hispanics, are arrested and convicted at a disproportionately higher rate than whites. Therefore, the EEOC advises employers not to use criminal records as an absolute bar in hiring decisions because such use may disproportionately exclude people of color and consequently qualify as racial discrimination.

[75] Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Policy Statement on the Issue of Conviction Records under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," Notice N-915, 2 (Feb. 4, 1987); Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Policy Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest Records in Employment Decision under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964," Notice N-915-061, 2 (Sept. 7, 1990).

[76] The City of San Francisco took a bold step recently as elected officials unanimously passed a resolution urging the city and county to delete the question about prior convictions from public employment applications. Although this resolution does not prevent employers from conducting background checks or asking about prior convictions during job interviews, it does give individuals with criminal backgrounds an opportunity to present their qualifications in the application, get beyond the initial paperwork and sell themselves to an employer. *See* Romney, Lee, "A Call to Let Felons Start Fresh: San Francisco Supervisors Urge Deletion of the Question about Prior Felonies from Public Job Applications," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 2005, B3.

[77] Jodina Hicks, (Vice President of Public Policy and Community Partnerships, Safer Foundation), interview with Ben Lumpkin, May 5, 2005.

[78] Love, Margaret Colgate, "State Laws Limiting Consideration of Conviction in Employment and Licensure," National HIRE Network newsletter, November 2005, 1-4.

[79] Ricki Lowitz, (Program Officer, Local Initiatives Support Corporation), interview with Ben Lumpkin, April 20, 2005. However, to improve service delivery, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) recently launched a new "Reentry Employment Service Program" (RESP) at all 52 local IDES offices across the state, including the Chicago Workforce Centers. At each office, a RESP Liaison is trained to assist individuals with criminal backgrounds in their job search and work directly with employers to facilitate job matches. This program is still being fully developed to provide assessment, job skills matching, job readiness and job search assistance, resume preparation, referrals and follow-up services. Sherri Moses, (Director of Policy, Illinois Department of Employment Security), email interview with Julie Wilen, October 19, 2005.

[80] Wagner, Suzanne L., Charles Chang, and Toby Herr, "Advancement Among Project Match Participants: How Far? How Fast? How Frequent?" (Chicago, IL: Project Match, 2005), http://www.pmatch.org/rp_update_apr_ofive.pdf (accessed August 9, 2005).

[81] Olson, Lynn, Linnea Berg, and Aimee Conrad, "High Job Turnover Among the Urban Poor: The Project Match Experience" (Chicago, IL: Project Match, 1990).

[82] Holzer, Harry J., Steven Raphael, and Michael Stoll, "Can Employers Play a More Positive Role in Prisoner Reentry?" (working paper from the Urban Institute Reentry Roundtable Meeting, March 20-21, 2002), http://urbaninstitute.org/UploadedPDF/410803_PositiveRole.pdf (accessed November 18, 2005); Regenstein, Marsha, Jack A. Meyer, and Jennifer Dickemper Hicks, "Job Prospects for Welfare Recipients: Employers Speak Out," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1998), http://newfederalism.urban.org/html/anf25.html (accessed November 18, 2005).

[83] One model, "*Work Certified*" [www.workcertified.org] was originally developed by a Workforce Board in Florida but is used in different locations across the country now, including two sites in Illinois. Another model, *Equipped for the Future* was developed by the National Institute for Literacy [www.nifl.gov.eff.html] initially to guide and improve adult literacy programs, and is currently being piloted in the States of New York, New Jersey, Florida and Washington. Another option for work readiness assessment is ACT's *Workkeys* [www.act.org/workkeys/overview/prod.html] that is used by several states to determine preparedness. The City Colleges of Chicago is already a testing and scoring site for *Workkeys*. Linda Kaiser, (Executive Director, Chicago Workforce Board), email correspondence with Julie Wilen, October 24, 2005.

[84] "Big Shoulders, Big Challenges: Preparing Chicago's Workforce for the New Economy," (Chicago, IL: Chicago Jobs Council, September 2005), 4.

[85] Diane Williams, (President, Safer Foundation), email correspondence with Michelle Light, October 17, 2005.

[86] Will Edwards, (Director of Workforce Solutions Unit, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development), interview with Ben Lumpkin, May 5, 2005.

[87] Examples would be health care, manufacturing, transportation, warehousing and logistics, technology, finance and insurance, and hospitality, tourism and retail. Since 2002, the Chicago Workforce Board (CWB) has targeted these industries as notable high growth occupations key to our local (and regional) economy. CWB chose these industries based on a combination of labor market dynamics, employment information and occupational projections. Linda Kaiser, (Executive Director, Chicago Workforce Board), correspondence with Michelle Light, January 4, 2006.

[88] Solomon, Amy L., Michelle Waul, Ashley Van Ness and Jeremy Travis, "Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Program," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, January 2004), 14.

[89] Solomon, Amy L., Michelle Waul, Ashley Van Ness and Jeremy Travis, "Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Program," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, January 2004), 15.

[90] See "Federal Bonding: Insurance for Your Employees," http://www.ides.state.il.us/pdf/employers/fidelitybond.pdf (accessed November 17, 2005).

[91] See U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, "What is the Work Opportunity Tax Credit?" http://www.uses.doleta.gov/wotcdata.asp (accessed November 17, 2005).

[92] Patricia Rusoff, (State Bonding Coordinator, Illinois Department of Employment Security), interview with Julie Wilen, September 28, 2005.

[93] From October 2004 to June 2005, the Illinois Department of Employment Security certified 579 individuals under the "ex-felon" category who were employed and whose employers requested certification to receive credits under the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program. An additional 330 incarcerated individuals were certified while still in prison to assist them in looking for employment after their release. Barb Herber, (Interim WOTC Coordinator, Illinois Department of Employment Security), interview with Julie Wilen, October 11, 2005.

[94] Kirby, Gretchen et al., "Transitional Jobs Programs: Stepping Stones to Unsubsidized Employment," (Princeton, N.J.: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., 2002), x.

[95] National Transitional Jobs Network, "Transitional Jobs: Real Jobs, Real Wages, Real Success," April 2005, http://www.transitionaljobs.net/Resources/Downloads/TJProgramsRealJobsWagesSuccess.pdf (accessed November 17, 2005).

[96] Illinois. 93rd General Assembly. Public Act 093-0208 (July 18, 2003). This bill provides that the Departments of Human Services and Corrections may establish a pilot program to place hard-to-employ persons, including persons who have been released from a county jail or state prison, into jobs. It was signed into law on July 18, 2003, but no monies have ever been appropriated to fund this program.

Chapter 1: Employment (cont.)

[97] The Delancey Street Foundation, "Main Page," http://www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/grassroots/delancey/ (accessed November 17, 2005). (The following outcomes have been achieved through the work of the Delancey Street Foundation: over 1,500 low-income housing units have been built by participants and 800 individuals have been trained in the construction trade; over 10,000 formerly illiterate people have high school equivalency degrees; 1,000 participants have graduated with a diploma from the state accredited three-year vocational program; and the program has moved about 10,000 violent gang members away from gangs).

[98] "Chicago Small Business Assistance Center," http://egov.cityofchicago.org/city/csbac/home.do (accessed August 13, 2005).

[99] "Department Overview," http://egov.cityofchicago.org/city/webportal/portalEntityHomeAction.do?entityName=Business+Affairs+and+Licensing&entityNameEnumValue=147&Failed_Reason=Invalid+timestamp,+engine+has+been+restarted&com.broadvision.session.new=Yes&Failed_Page=%2fwebportal%2fportalEntityHomeAction.do (accessed November 17, 2005).

[100] The Criminal Records Collaborative included the Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic, Chicago Jobs Council, First Defense Legal Aid, the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, and the Safer Foundation.

[101] Lisa Hampton, (Senior Policy Associate, Chicago Jobs Council), interview with Tim Michaels, August 29, 2005.

[102] The website can be accessed at http://www.ides.state.il.us/ExOffenders/.

[103] Lisa Hampton, (Senior Policy Associate, Chicago Jobs Council), interview with Julie Wilen, October 31, 2005.

[104] In Illinois, there is no *expungement* for felony convictions. *See* "Summary of 20 ILCS 2630/5 as Amended by P.A. 93-210, P.A. 93-211, and P.A. 93-1084," Chart published by Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic, 2005. State laws which apply to *sealing* of criminal records have recently been considered by the General Assembly. In 2004, Illinois passed a law allowing people to file a petition to seal their misdemeanor arrest and conviction records. Illinois. 93rd General Assembly. PA 93-0211 (January 1, 2004). Effective January 1, 2004, this law authorized sealing if the person has been acquitted or released without being convicted, if the conviction has been reversed, or if a certain period of time has passed after the person has completed their supervision or the sentence. A new law, which took effect on June 1, 2005, addresses sealing of convictions for Class 4 felony drug abuse and prostitution after going through a similar petition process. Illinois. 93rd General Assembly. PA 93-1084 (January 1, 2004). Under the new law, individuals with more than one felony cannot seal their records. And in any case, law enforcement authorities may still access the records; so can employers, such as schools, who are required by law to check backgrounds. People seeking to seal drug records must pass a drug test within a month of the request, and authorities can protest the sealing. Applicants must also wait at least three years after the conviction.

[105] Margaret Soffin, (Attorney and Director of Criminal Records Program, Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic), interview with Julie Wilen, October 11, 2005.

Chapter 2: Health

[1] Mumola, Christopher, "Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners, 1997," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999), 1.

[2] Karberg, Jennifer and Doris James, "Substance Dependence, Abuse, and Treatment of Jail Inmates, 2002," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005), 1.

[3] Solomon, Amy, Michelle Waul, Asheley Van Ness and Jeremy Travis, "Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Reentry Programs" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2004), 49.

[4] Hammett, Theodore M., Cheryl Roberts and Sofia Kennedy, "Health-Related Issues in Prisoner Reentry," *Crime & Delinquency* 47, no.3 (2002): 390-409.

[5] Ditton, Paula M., "Mental Health and Treatment of Inmates and Probationers," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999). See *also* Harrison, Paige M. and Allen J. Beck, "Prisoners in 2003," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004).

[6] Peterson, Eric, "Why inpatient treatment for mentally ill is dwindling," *The Daily Herald*, August 3, 2003.

[7] National Commission on Correctional Health Care, *The Health Status of Soon-To-Be-Released Inmates: A Report to Congress*, March 2002, http://www.ncchc.org/stbr/Volume1/Health%20Status%20(vol%201).pdf (accessed November 29, 2005), xi.

[8] National Commission on Correctional Health Care, *The Health Status of Soon-To-Be-Released Inmates: A Report to Congress*, March 2002, http://www.ncchc.org/stbr/Volume1/Health%20Status%20(vol%201).pdf (accessed November 29, 2005), xi.

[9] Dr. Nader Tobia (Medical Director, Stateville Reception and Classification Center), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 9, 2005.

[10] National Commission on Correctional Health Care, *The Health Status of Soon-to-be-Released Inmates: A Report to Congress*, March 2002, http://www.ncchc.org/stbr/Volume1/Health%20Status%20(vol%201).pdf (accessed November 29, 2005).

[11] Dr. Nader Tobia (Medical Director, Stateville Reception and Classification Center), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 9, 2005.

[12] Dr. Jack Raba (Former Chief Operating Officer, Cermak Health Services, Cook County Bureau of Health Services), email correspondence with Julie Wilen, October 19, 2005.

[13] Dr. Nader Tobia (Medical Director, Stateville Reception and Classification Center), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 9, 2005.

[14] Mallik-Kane, Kamala, "Returning Home Illinois Policy Brief: Health and Prisoner Reentry" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2005), 5.

[15] Ryan, Keith, "Checking Up on Prison Health Care," *Illinois Issues*, March 24, 2001.

[16] Anno, B. Jaye, "Prison Health Care Services" (working paper presented at Urban Institute Reentry Roundtable Meeting, December 11-12, 2002), 5.

[17] Dr. Nader Tobia (Medical Director, Stateville Reception and Classification Center), interview with Ben Lumpkin, Aug. 9, 2005.

[18] National Commissions on Correctional Health Care, "Accreditation," http://www.ncchc.org/accred/index.html, (accessed July 30, 2005).

[19] Anno, B. Jaye, "Prison Health Care Services" (working paper presented at Urban Institute Reentry Roundtable Meeting, December 11-12, 2002), 6.

[20] Anno, B. Jaye, "Prison Health Care Services" (working paper presented at Urban Institute Reentry Roundtable Meeting, December 11-12, 2002), 6.

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[22] Illinois Department of Corrections, "Statistical Presentation 2003" (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 2004), http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/reports/statistical_presentation_2003/part1.shtml (accessed July 19, 2005), Figure 3.

[23] Olson, David E., Rebecca Juergens and Steven P. Karr, *Impetus and implementation of the Sheridan Correctional Center Therapeutic Community*, (Chicago, IL: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 2004), 2.

[24] Illinois Department of Corrections, "Governor Blagojevich marks one-year anniversary of Sheridan National Model Drug Prison & Reentry Program: national experts commend program for promising early results showing reduction in crime and recidivism among program participants," *IDOC News*, http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/news/archive/2005/2005-Sheridan1YrAnniv.shtml (accessed November 15, 2005).

[25] Illinois Department of Corrections, "Sheridan Correctional Center," http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/facilities/information.asp?instchoice=she (accessed July 19, 2005).

[26] Petersilia, Joan, *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 48.

[27] U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Reentry Trends in the US: Recidivism, http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/reentry/recidivism.htm (accessed July 12, 2005).

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[31] Mumola, Christopher, "Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners, 1997," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999).

[32] Olson, David E., Rebecca Juergens and Steven P. Karr, *Impetus and implementation of the Sheridan Correctional Center Therapeutic Community*, (Chicago, IL: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 2004), 2.

[33] "IDOC data indicates that 57 percent of adult male offenders and 63 percent of female adult offenders in prison are in need of substance abuse treatment, and just over 3,100 treatment beds are available." See Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, "Criminal Justice Plan for the State of Illinois," June 2001, http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/pdf/Criminal%20Justice$20Plan/StateCriminalJusticePlan.pdf (accessed December 7, 2005), 60.

[34] Ditton, Paula M., "Mental Health and Treatment of Inmates and Probationers," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999). *See also* Harrison, Paige M. and Allen J. Beck, "Prisoners in 2003," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004).

[35] National GAINS Center for People with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System, "The Prevalance of Co-Occurring Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders in Jails," (Delmar, NY: Policy Research Associates, 2002).

[36] National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, "Dual Diagnosis and Integrated Treatment of Mental Illness and Substance Abuse Disorder," http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By_Illness&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=13693 (accessed September 29, 2005).

[37] Melody Heaps (President, Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities), remarks made at Commission meeting, Governor's Community Safety & Reentry Working Group, October 6, 2005.

[38] Winterfield, Laura and Jennifer Castro, "Returning Home Illinois Policy Brief: Treatment Matching" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2005), 1.

[39] "Progress Report on Sheridan," *Answers to Addiction* newsletter published by the Gateway Foundation, November 2, 2005.

[40] Robert Hooper, Strategic Solutions for Public Safety, clinician who developed Key-Crest Substance Abuse Treatment Program in Delaware (presentation, Chicago Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry, September 22, 2004).

[41] Castro, Jennifer, Nancy La Vigne and Christy Visher, "Chicago Prisoners' Experiences Returning Home" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2004), 12.

[42] In Chicago, a 2004 study found that fully 81 percent of prisoners returning to the city did not have health insurance. Castro, Jennifer, Nancy La Vigne and Christy Visher, "Chicago Prisoners' Experiences Returning Home" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2004), 3.

[43] Individuals leaving Cook County Jail typically are given no medication at all. Dr. Dan Lustig (Associate Director of Clinical Services, Haymarket Center), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 10, 2005.

[44] R. Scott Chavez, Vice President of National Commission on Correctional Health Care (presentation, Chicago Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry, September 22, 2004).

[45] R. Scott Chavez, Vice President of National Commission on Correctional Health Care (presentation, Chicago Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry, September 22, 2004).

[46] Dr. Carl Alaimo, (Director and Chief Psychologist, Cermak Health Services' Mental Health Division, Cook County Jail), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 3, 2005.

[47] 20 Ill. Adm. Code 107.20 (2005).

[48] Dr. Dan Lustig (Associate Director of Clinical Services, Haymarket Center), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 10, 2005.

[49] Public Act 094-0182, 94th General Assembly (July 12, 2005), http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=094-0182 (accessed November 29, 2005).

[50] Dr. Carl Alaimo (Director and Chief Psychologist, Cermak Health Services' Mental Health Division, Cook County Jail), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 3, 2005 (although DataLink is still active, some of the original plans [e.g., conducting follow-up studies to determine effectiveness of reducing recidivism] have been cut back due to lack of funding).

[51] R. Scott Chavez, Vice President of National Commission on Correctional Health Care (presentation, Chicago Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry, September 22, 2004).

[52] Dee Wilson, Director of the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments (presentation, Chicago Mayoral Policy Caucus on Prisoner Reentry, September 22, 2004).

[53] Medicaid is a joint federal-state assistance program that pays medical bills for eligible people. It is probably the most important legal entitlement that people with mental illness have for both mental health care and medical services.

[54] The Social Security Administration administers two programs—Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI)—which provides monthly income-support payments to men and women who are too disabled to work. SSDI is for people who have worked and paid Social Security taxes for at least 10 years in order to qualify. SSI is for people with limited amount of income and resources. It is a "means-tested" program—only those in financial need can qualify. An individual can be eligible for SSI even if they have never worked in employment covered by Social Security. Benefit amounts are periodically adjusted by the federal government.

[55] Chris Koyanagi (Policy Director, Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law), email correspondence with Michelle Light, November 17, 2005.

[56] The following information describing the law as it pertains to SSI, SSDI and Medicaid is derived from three main sources: "For People with Serious Mental Illness: Finding the Key to Successful Transition from Jail to Community: An Explanation of Federal Medicaid and Disability Program Rules" (Washington, D.C.: Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 2001); "Arrested? What Happens to Your Benefits if You Go to Jail or Prison" (Washington, D.C.: Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 2004); National GAINS Center for People with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System, "Maintaining Medicaid Benefits for Jail Detainees with Co-Occurring Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders" (Delmar, NY: Policy Research Associates, 2004).

[57] John Fallon (Coordinator of Demonstration Projects, Thresholds), interview with Ben Lumpkin, June 15, 2005.

[58] Illinois Department of Corrections, "Statistical Presentation 2003" (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 2004), 28. http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/reports/statistical_presentation_2003/2003StatisticalPresentation.pdf (accessed July 19, 2005).

[59] John Fallon (Coordinator of Demonstration Projects, Thresholds), interview with Ben Lumpkin, June 15, 2005.

[60] Jails and prisons can enter into agreements with SSA to provide monthly reports of prisoners' names, Social Security numbers, dates of birth, confinement dates and other information. The institution receives $400 when this information is sent within 30 days of the prisoner's arrival, and $200 if it is sent within 90 days. 42 U.S.C. § 1382(e)(1)(I) as amended by Public Law 104-193 (SSI incentive) and 42 U.S.C. § 402(x), as amended by Public Law 106-170 (SSDI incentive).

[61] Mallik-Kane, Kamala, "Returning Home Illinois Policy Brief: Health and Prisoner Reentry" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2005), 3.

[62] See the Social Security Administrations Program Operations Manual System ("POMS") (available online at the SSA website, http://policy.ssa.gov/poms.nsf/lnx/0500520900 at POMS SI 00520.900, and Section 1631(m) of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1383(m).

[63] There is actually no pre-release procedure for SSDI as there is for SSI, but when jails or prisons have a pre-release procedure for SSI, they can also use them to help SSDI recipients.

[64] Richard Guzman (Manager, Office of Reentry Management and Placement Resource Unit, Illinois Department of Corrections), email correspondence with Julie Wilen, October 11, 2005.

[65] Glenn Stanton (Acting Director of Disabled and Elderly Health Programs Group, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services). "Ending Chronic Homelessness" Memo to State Medicaid Directors, May 25, 2004.

[66] "Building Bridges: An Act to Reduce Recidivism by Improving Access to Benefits for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities upon Release from Incarceration." (Washington, D.C.: Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 2002).

[67] "Ensuring Timely Access to Medicaid and SSI/SSDI for People with Mental Illness Released from Prison: Four State Case Studies." (Lexington, KY: Council of State Governments, 2005).

[68] Kelvy Brown (Director of Substance Abuse Program, Chicago Department of Public Health), email correspondence with Julie Wilen, October 17, 2005 (although outpatient drug treatment is readily available, residential treatment facilities, recovery homes and methadone maintenance programs have lengthy waiting lists).

[69] Dr. Dan Lustig (Associate Director of Clinical Services, Haymarket Center), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 10, 2005.

[70] Dr. Dan Lustig (Associate Director of Clinical Services, Haymarket Center), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 10, 2005.

Chapter 2: Health (cont.)

[71] Dr. Carl Alaimo (Director and Chief Psychologist, Cermak Health Services' Mental Health Division, Cook County Jail), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 3, 2005. See *also* Illinois Coalition for People with Disabilities, "A Report on Illinois' Community System of Services and Supports: Historical Perspectives, Contemporary Issues and their Impact on People with Developmental Disabilities and their Families," April 24, 2001, 12.

[72] John Fallon (Coordinator of Demonstration Projects, Thresholds), interview with Ben Lumpkin, June 15, 2005.

[73] John Fallon (Coordinator of Demonstration Projects, Thresholds), interview with Ben Lumpkin, June 15, 2005.

[74] Dr. Dan Lustig (Associate Director of Clinical Services, Haymarket Center), interview with Ben Lumpkin, August 10, 2005 (For example, of Haymarket's substance-abusing clients, 68 percent suffer from acute mental distress, and 44 percent have been diagnosed with acute traumatic distress).

[75] For example, the Thresholds Post Care Program can only serve approximately 40 people per year.

[76] Rydell, C. Peter and Susan S. Everingham, "Controlling Cocaine," prepared for the Office of National Drug Control Policy and U.S. Army (Santa Monica, CA: Drug Policy Research Center, RAND, 1994).

[77] Information available at http://www.thresholds.org/jailtables.asp. During a year in the Thresholds program, the 30 program participants studied spent approximately 2,200 days less in jail than in the year preceding their participation, for savings of $70 per day plus the expense of arrest and booking. They also spent about 1,800 fewer days in public psychiatric hospitals, for savings of $500 per day. Meanwhile, Thresholds only costs around $26 per day. *See also* Criminal Justice/Mental Health Project coordinated by the Council of State Governments website at http://consensusproject.org/projects/fiscal/fact_fiscal_implications (accessed on November 18, 2005).

[78] Lynch, James and William Sabol, "Did Getting Tough on Crime Pay?" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1997) under "Summary."

[79] Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association, "Survey finds Illinois voters believe addiction is a public health issue," news release, March 3, 2003, http://www.iadda.org/survey.pdf (accessed August 18, 2005).

[80] Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., "Changing Public Attitudes toward the Criminal Justice System: Summary of Findings," The Open Society Institute, February 2002, http://www.soros.org/initiatives/justice/articles_publications/publications/hartpoll_20020201/Hart-Poll.pdf (accessed August 18, 2005), 11.

[81] Lieutenant Jeffry Murphy (Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator and Mental Health and Disabilities Liaison, Chicago Police Department), interview with Julie Wilen, on October 24, 2005.

[82] "Crisis Intervention Team Program Report," provided by Officer Rosemary Loaiza, Chicago Police Department, email correspondence with Julie Wilen, November 10, 2005.

[83] "Pre-Booking Diversion: Law Enforcement Diversion Programs" (Washington, D.C.: Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 2001), http://www.bazelon.org/issues/criminalization/factsheets/pdfs/pre-booking_diversion.pdf (accessed November 16, 2005), 1.

[84] "Drug Treatment Programs Report: Impact of RAP on Subsequent Criminal Activity," June 29, 2005, provided by Mark Kammerer (Director of Treatment Programs, Cook County State's Attorney's Office), email correspondence with Julie Wilen, November 10, 2005.

[85] Presentation by Chicago Police Department Crisis Intervention Team, Research and Development Division. Lieutenant Jeffry Murphy (Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator and Mental Health and Disabilities Liaison, Chicago Police Department), email correspondence with Julie Wilen, November 10, 2005.

[86] Albert J. Pizza, LCSW (Clinical Supervisor, Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities, Mental Health Court Program), interview with Julie Wilen, November 1, 2005.

[87] See www.gainscenter.samhsa.gov/pdfs/spotlight/TCE_grantee_Spotlight.pdf.

[88] "State's Attorney's Drug School Program Highlights and Outcome Data," updated continuously, provided by Mark Kammerer (Director of Treatment Programs, Cook County State's Attorney's Office), email correspondence with Julie Wilen, January 9, 2006.

[89] Harris, Michelle. Memo to all Commissioners of Cook County, Illinois: "Report of the Health and Hospitals Public Health Subcomittee," October 27, 2005.

[90] Terrence Johnson, interview with Ben Lumpkin, May 5, 2005.

[91] "Getting Off the Merry-Go-Round," *Catalyst* newsletter published by the Safer Foundation, Winter 2005.

Chapter 3: Family

[1] We recognize that families may take many different forms and have many different meanings. "Family," broadly defined, may not always be determined by kinship or bloodline. It may include fathers, mothers, grandparents, children, siblings, cousins, friends, and significant others who are connected to a family network. But we will use the reference to "family" as our shorthand throughout this chapter.

[2] Castro, Jennifer, Nancy La Vigne and Christy Visher, "Chicago Prisoner's Experiences Returning Home" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2004), 8.

[3] Bobbit, Mike and Marta Nelson, "The Front Line: Building Programs that Recognize Families' Role in Reentry" (New York, NY: Vera Institute of Justice, 2004), 1.

[4] Shapiro, Carol, "Coming Home: Building on Family Connections," *The Corrections Management Quarterly* vol. 5, no. 3 (2001): 52-61.

[5] Hairston, J. Creasie Finney, "Prisoners and Families: Parenting Issues During Incarceration," *From Prisons to Home Conference* (Washington, D.C: January 30-31, 2002), 47.

[6] Western, Bruce, "Incarceration, Marriage, and Family Life," Russell Sage Foundation Working Paper Series, September 2004, http://www.russellsage.org/publications/workingpapers/incarcerationmarriagefamilylife/document (accessed August 22, 2005), 14-5.

[7] Shapiro, Carol, "Coming Home: Building on Family Connections," *The Corrections Management Quarterly* vol. 5, no. 3 (2001): 52-61.

[8] Finn, Peter, "Addressing Correctional Officer Stress: Programs and Strategies," (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, 2000), http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/183474.pdf, (accessed July 15, 2005), 2.

[9] Florida House of Representatives, Justice Council, Committee on Corrections, *Maintaining Family Contact When a Family Member Goes to Prison: An Examination of State Policies on Mail, Visiting, and Telephone Access* (Tallahassee, 1998), http://www.fcc.state.fl.us/fcc/reports/family/famcont.html (accessed, July 18, 2005), under "Chapter 9: Innovative Family Programs in Other States."

[10] Twenty-four out of Illinois' 27 adult correctional centers (89%) are more than 100 miles away from Chicago by car. Illinois Department of Corrections, "IDOC facilities," http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/facilities/default.shtml (accessed July 14, 2005); Mapquest.com, "Driving Directions," www.mapquest.com (accessed July 14, 2005).

[11] U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics and Federal Bureau of Prisons, *Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities*, 1997, conducted by the Bureau of Census, 2000 (54 percent of prisoners from homes within 50 miles of their prison had visitors, while 44 percent of prisoners from homes within 50 to 100 miles from their prison had visitors and merely 30 percent of prisoners from homes between 101 and 500 miles from their prison had visitors).

[12] Sister Pat Davis (Assistant Director of Women's Programming, Prison and Family Ministry, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois), interview with Alison Nemirow, August 4, 2005.

[13] Lori Wilbert (Lutheran Chaplain, Northern Illinois District Office/Lutheran Church, Hillside, Illinois), personal communication with Alison Nemirow, August 23, 2005.

[14] Sister Pat Davis (Assistant Director of Women's Programming, Prison and Family Ministry, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois), interview with Alison Nemirow, August 4, 2005.

[15] Sister Pat Davis (Assistant Director of Women's Programming, Prison and Family Ministry, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois), interview with Alison Nemirow, August 4, 2005.

[16] For more information, please access the Illinois Department of Corrections website at http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/visitationrules/visitation.pdf.

[17] Gail T. Smith (Executive Director, Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers), interview with Ben Lumpkin, June 15, 2005.

[18] Arizona Department of Corrections, "Information Handbook for Family Members and Friends of Inmates" (Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Department of Corrections, 2003), http://www.azcorrections.gov/IFFL/GB.htm#VISITATION (accessed August 9, 2005); Missouri Department of Corrections, "For Family and Friends" (Jefferson City, MO: Missouri Department of Corrections), http://www.doc.missouri.gov/division/constser/FFWeb.mht (accessed August 9, 2005); California Department of Corrections, "Inmate Visiting Guidelines" (Sacramento, CA: California Department of Corrections, 2003), http://www.corr.ca.gov/CDC/PDFs/InmateVisitingGuidelines.pdf (accessed August 9, 2005).

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[21] Key, Debra, "Someone To Come Home To: Parenting Programs for Men in Prison," *The Fourth North American Conference on the Family & Corrections* (Quebec City, Canada: October 10-12, 1993) http://www.fcnetwork.org/4thnorth/someone.html (accessed November 5, 2005).

[22] One recent study in Illinois conducted by researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago of 166 women exiting prison in 2001 found that women who had visits from a partner, child, or mother were less likely to be arrested after release than women who had no visits. See O'Brien, Patricia and Robin Bates. "Formerly Incarcerated Women's Recidivism and Reintegration" (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, 2003), http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/college/research/womens.html (accessed November 1, 2005).

[23] Florida House of Representatives, Justice Council, Committee on Corrections, *Maintaining Family Contact When a Family Member Goes to Prison: An Examination of State Policies on Mail, Visiting, and Telephone Access* (Tallahassee, 1998), http://www.fcc.state.fl.us/fcc/reports/family/famcont.html (accessed, July 18, 2005), under "Exhibit 12: Telephone Contracts and Commissions."

[24] Center for Constitutional Rights, "Docket: Arsberry v. State of Illinois, AT&T, Invision Telecom, MCI Telecommunications Corp, et al.," http://www.ccr-ny.org/v2/legal/justice/justiceArticle.asp?ObjID=Yfs9J0lfmx&Content=79 (accessed July 15, 2005).

[25] Florida House of Representatives, Justice Council, Committee on Corrections, *Maintaining Family Contact When a Family Member Goes to Prison: An Examination of State Policies on Mail, Visiting, and Telephone Access* (Tallahassee, 1998), http://www.fcc.state.fl.us/fcc/reports/family/famcont.html (accessed July 18, 2005), under "Findings."

[26] Florida House of Representatives, Justice Council, Committee on Corrections, *Maintaining Family Contact When a Family Member Goes to Prison: An Examination of State Policies on Mail, Visiting, and Telephone Access* (Tallahassee, 1998), http://www.fcc.state.fl.us/fcc/reports/family/famcont.html (accessed, July 18, 2005), under "Findings."

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[28] Pearson, Jessica, "Building Debt While Doing Time: Child Support and Incarceration," *Judges' Journal* 43, no. 1 (2004): 7.

[29] Turetsky, Vicki, "The Child Support Program: An Investment that Works," Center for Law and Social Policy, July 2005, http://www.clasp.org/publications/cs_funding_072605.pdf (accessed August 11, 2005).

[30] Sachs, Heidi, "Support Services for Incarcerated and Released NonCustodial Parents," *Welfare Information Network Issue Note* vol. 4, no. 6 (2000), http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/heidijune2.htm (accessed August 11, 2005), under "Policy Questions."

[31] Pearson, Jessica, "Building Debt While Doing Time: Child Support and Incarceration," *Judges' Journal* vol. 43, no. 1 (2004): 7.

[32] Leonhardt, David, "As Prison Labor Grows, So Does the Debate," *New York Times*, March 19, 2000.

[33] Pearson, Jessica, "Building Debt While Doing Time: Child Support and Incarceration," *Judges' Journal* vol. 43, no. 1 (2004): 6-8.

[34] Sachs, Heidi, "Support Services for Incarcerated and Released NonCustodial Parents," *Welfare Information Network Issue Note* vol. 4, no. 6 (2000), http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/heidijune2.htm (accessed August 11, 2005), under "Background."

[35] Pearson, Jessica, "Building Debt While Doing Time: Child Support and Incarceration," *Judges' Journal* vol. 43, no. 1 (2004): 7.

[36] Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, H.R. 3734, http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?c104:1:./temp/~c104PYXk8Y:e323953 (accessed August 11, 2005).

[37] Brenner, Eric, "Fathers in Prison: A Review of the Data," National Center on Father and Families Brief, 1998, http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu/briefs/brennerbrief.pdf (accessed August 11, 2005), 1.

[38] Karen Newton-Matza (Co-Manager of Community Outreach, Division of Child Support Enforcement, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services), interview with Alison Nemirow, August 11, 2005.

[39] Davis, Lanae, Esther Ann Griswold, Jessica Pearson and Nancy Thoennes, "Father Reintegration Project: Final Report" (Denver, CO: Center for Policy Research, 2004).

[40] Pearson, Jessica, "Building Debt While Doing Time: Child Support and Incarceration," *Judges' Journal* vol. 43, no. 1 (2004): 8.

[41] Pearson, Jessica, "Building Debt While Doing Time: Child Support and Incarceration," *Judges' Journal* vol. 43, no. 1 (2004): 9.

[42] Pearson, Jessica, "Building Debt While Doing Time: Child Support and Incarceration," *Judges' Journal* vol. 43, no. 1 (2004): 9.

[43] Shapiro, Carol, "Coming Home: Building on Family Connections," *The Corrections Management Quarterly* vol. 5, no. 3 (2001): 56.

[44] Travis, Jeremy and Michelle Waul, *Prisoners Once Removed: The Children and Families of Prisoners* (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 2004), http://www.urban.org/pubs/prisoners/ (accessed August 26, 2005), Chapter 1.

[45] Family and Corrections Network-Children of Prisoners Library website, "Introduction to Children of Prisoners," http://www.fcnet-work.org/cpl/CPL101-Introduction.html (This Internet resource provides 19 free information sheets for people working with children of prisoners and their caregivers.)

[46] Paula Davis (Co-Founder, Sankofa), interview with Alison Nemirow, August 3, 2005.

[47] Travis, Jeremy, Amy Solomon and Michelle Waul, "Background Paper: The Effect of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families and Communities," *From Prisons to Home Conference* (Washington, D.C.: January 30-31, 2002), xix.

[48] Hirsch, Amy E., Sharon M. Dietrich, Rue Landau, Peter D. Schneider, Irv Ackelsberg, Judith Bernstein-Baker, and Joseph Hohenstein, *Every Door Closed: Barriers Facing Parents with Criminal Records* (Philadelphia, PA: CLASP and Community Legal Services, Inc., May 2002).

[49] United States Congress. 1997. Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. 105th Congress. Public Law 105-89.

[50] Andrea Ingram (Chief of Strategic Partnerships and Information, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services), email correspondence with Julie Wilen, November 4, 2005. It is important to note that the required reunification process relates to a child who is *already* in state care at the time that a parent is incarcerated. A child does not come into state care *because* a mom or dad is incarcerated. DCFS only takes children for substantiated cases of abuse and neglect; the agency does not get involved every time a single mom or dad goes to jail or prison. DCFS is only involved when someone reports abuse and neglect, or abuse and neglect is found likely to be the case. Sometimes, these events may cross (e.g., it could be that a mom has been arrested and just couldn't figure out an appropriately safe plan for the children on her own, and they end up in an unsafe situation).

[51] Gail T. Smith (Executive Director, Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers), interview with Ben Lumpkin, June 15, 2005.

[52] The following description was provided by Debbie Denning (Deputy Director, Department of Women & Family Services, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Ben Lumpkin, Aug. 15, 2005.

[53] The following description was provided by Terry McDermott (Executive Director, Department of Women's Justice Service, Cook County Jail), interview with Julie Wilen, October 24, 2005.

[54] The Sheriff's Female Furlough Program (female day reporting) enables women who are incarcerated to leave the facility and return to their homes each evening to care for their families. The Sheriff's MOM Program (Maternity Objectives Management Program) is a therapeutic community drug treatment program for female pre-trial Cook County Jail detainees at various stages of pregnancy.

[55] Gail T. Smith (Executive Director, Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers), interview with Ben Lumpkin, June 15, 2005.

[56] Mumola, Christopher, "Incarcerated Children and Their Parents," Special Report (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000), 7.

[57] Federal Resource Center for Children of Prisoners website, http://www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/

Chapter 3: Family (cont.)

[58] United States Senate. 2000. Departments of Commerce, Justice and the State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill. 106th Congress. Senate Report 106-404. This Senate Report indicates that "children of prisoners are six times more likely than other children to be incarcerated at some point in their lives." Quoted in "Services for Families of Prison Inmates," Special Issues in Corrections, U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections (February 2002), http://www.nicic.org/pubs/2002/017272.pdf (accessed November 5, 2005).

[59] Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago, "Our Program Works!" http://www.bbbschgo.org/program.html (accessed August 12, 2005).

[60] In the 2003 State of the Union Address, President Bush talks about $450 million for mentoring programs; one-third of that money was intended for children of prisoners. Bush, George W., "2003 State of the Union Address" (speech, United States Capitol, Washington D.C., January 28, 2003), http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html (accessed July 18, 2005).

[61] For more information about the funding opportunity through the Mentoring Children of Prisoners Initiative, see the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families website, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/HHS-2004-ACF-ACYF-CU-0001.html.

[62] The Mentoring Center website, "About Us" http://www.mentor.org/about_us.html and The Child Welfare League of America website, "Main Page" http://www.cwla.org/programs/incarcerated/

[63] See, for instance, Newby, Gretchen and Nell Bernstein, "Children of Incarcerated Parents: A Bill of Rights" (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Partnership for Incarcerated Parents, 2003) which sets forth eight rights that should be recognized on behalf of children of incarcerated parents.

[64] Goode, W. Wilson Jr. and Thomas J. Smith, "Building From the Ground Up: Creating Effective Programs to Mentor Children of Prison; The Amachi Model" (Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures, July 2005), http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/185_publication/pdf (accessed November 14, 2005).

Chapter 4: Community Safety

[1] We recognize that "community" is often determined by geographic area. But, viewed broadly, it is not defined solely by street corners and lines on a map. It consists of people as much as brick and mortar. It is made up of neighbors, colleagues, family, friends, clergy, associations, organizations, businesses, institutions that form a loose social network. For us, in the context of reentry, we think "community" is best viewed as the collection of people who are most affected by and most influential in an individual's return from prison. Community, therefore, is fluid and relative to the formerly incarcerated individual. We are viewing community as those people who have the ability and means to directly impact the returning prisoner, who can be impacted by the returning prisoner, who have a clear stake and vested interest in the outcome.

[2] Visher, Christy, and Jill Farrell, "Chicago Communities and Prisoner Reentry," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2005), 1.

[3] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 46.

[4] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 46.

[5] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 46.

[6] Unpublished data provided by Steven Karr (Manager, Planning and Research Unit, Illinois Department of Corrections).

[7] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 51.

[8] "Prisoner Reentry and Community Policing: Strategies for Enhancing Public Safety" (working paper from the Urban Institute Reentry Roundtable Meeting, May 12-13, 2004), 5.

[9] Visher, Christy, and Jill Farrell, "Chicago Communities and Prisoner Reentry," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2005), 2-3.

[10] Mary Pattillo and others, eds., *Imprisoning America: The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration* (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), 139.

[11] U.S. Department of Justice, "Illinois Going Home Program Abstract," http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/reentry/sar/pdf/wp1_il.pdf (accessed July 12, 2005).

[12] Christine Rothwell (Program Director, Illinois Going Home Program), interview with Julie Wilen, October 28, 2005.

[13] Christine Rothwell (Program Director, Illinois Going Home Program), interview with Julie Wilen, October 28, 2005.

[14] Christine Rothwell (Program Director, Illinois Going Home Program), interview with Julie Wilen, October 28, 2005.

[15] The likelihood of rearrest is highest during the period immediately following release—30 percent of arrests occur within six months of release, 14 percent occur within 6-12 months after release, 15 percent occur 12-24 months after release, and eight percent occur 24-36 months after release. See "Prisoner Reentry and Community Policing: Strategies for Enhancing Public Safety" (working paper from the Urban Institute, Reentry Roundtable Meeting, May 12-13, 2004), 5.

[16] Petersilia, Joan, *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 196.

[17] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Christine Visher, "Chicago Prisoners' Experiences Returning Home" (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, December 2004), 3.

[18] Richard Guzman (Manager, Office of Reentry Management and Placement Resource Unit, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Ben Lumpkin, April 28, 2005.

[19] Richard Guzman (Manager, Office of Reentry Management and Placement Resource Unit, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Ben Lumpkin, April 28, 2005.

[20] Effective January 1, 2002, House Bill 2011 (enacted as Public Act 92-240) made changes to the Illinois Identification Card Act and the Unified Code of Corrections. See Illinois House of Representatives. 2001. Illinois Identification Card Act. 92nd General Assembly. PA 92-240.

[21] Roberta Fews (Deputy Director, Programs and Supportive Services, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Julie Wilen, October 27, 2005.

[22] Roberta Fews (Deputy Director, Programs and Supportive Services, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Julie Wilen, October 27, 2005.

[23] Illinois Compiled Statutes. 730 ILCS 5/3-14-1(e). (http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs.asp, accessed November 14, 2005).

[24] Illinois Compiled Statutes. 730 ILCS 5/3-14-1(e). (http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs.asp, accessed November 14, 2005).

[25] Illinois Compiled Statutes. 15 ILCS 335/4 and 15 ILCS 335/12. (http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs.asp, accessed November 14, 2005).

[26] Roberta Fews (Deputy Director, Programs and Supportive Services, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Julie Wilen, October 27, 2005.

[27] Roberta Fews (Deputy Director, Programs and Supportive Services, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Julie Wilen, October 27, 2005. First-time applicants for state identification cards need a valid Social Security card, a birth certificate or certified copy, proof of address (e.g., a check or piece of mail with address), $20 and must personally go to a Secretary of State facility.

[28] The average adult prison sentence is 4.1 years, and the average adult prison stay is only 1.1 years. See Illinois Department of Corrections, "2004 Departmental Data Fact Sheet" (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 2005), http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/reports/department_data/Department%20Data%202004.pdf (accessed June 6, 2005).

[29] It may be possible for IDOC to help facilitate this personal appearance requirement. The Secretary of State's Office has maintained a successful program with the Cook County Department of Corrections Boot Camp for more than three years. Boot Camp staff members assist them in obtaining the necessary documents to obtain a state identification card. Through pre-arrangement and after being cleared through the Secretary of State, the individuals are taken to an Illinois Driver Services facility to obtain their identification cards. See Office of Secretary of State, Illinois Secretary of State ID Card Programs and Policies for Prisoner Re-Entry, May 2005.

[30] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 43.

[31] The eight ATCs are: Crossroads (Chicago), Decatur, Fox Valley (Aurora), Jessie "Ma" Houston (Dixmoor), North Lawndale (Chicago), Peoria, Southern Illinois (Carbondale), and West Side (Chicago).

[32] Visher, Christy, and Jill Farrell, "Chicago Communities and Prisoner Reentry," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2005), 43.

[33] Debbie Denning (Deputy Director, Department of Women and Family Services, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Ben Lumpkin, Aug. 15, 2005.

[34] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 21.

[35] Hughes, Timothy, Doris Wilson and Allen Beck, "Trends in State Parole, 1990-2000," (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001), http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/tsp00.pdf (accessed November 11, 2005), Table 2.

[36] Illinois Department of Corrections, "2004 Departmental Data Fact Sheet" (Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Corrections, 2005), http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/reports/department_data/Department%20Data%202004.pdf (accessed November 15, 2005).

[37] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 22.

[38] Solomon, Amy and Michelle Waul, Asheley Van Ness, Jeremy Travis, "Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Programs," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2004), 129.

[39] Travis, Jeremy, "But They All Come Back: Rethinking Prisoner Reentry," (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, 2000), 3.

[40] Illinois Department of Corrections, Office of Communications, "Operation Spotlight" (Springfield, IL: December 2003), http://www.idoc.state.il.us/subsections/assistant_director/Press%20Paper%20—%20Operation%20Spotlight%20(march%202005).doc (accessed November 14, 2005).

[41] Currently, the Cook County Office of Adult Probation employs resource officers who identify organizations in the community where probationers can obtain help. The resource officers work in conjunction with probation officers to refer individuals to community services, and follow up to ensure needed services are received. Many probation and resource officers have college degrees in human service or social service fields. Veronica Ballard (Former Director, Cook County Office of Adult Probation), interview with Julie Wilen, October 14, 2005.

[42] Solomon, Amy and Michelle Waul, Asheley Van Ness, Jeremy Travis, "Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Programs," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2004), 130.

[43] Sullivan, Julie, "Keeping Tabs on Offenders; Community Corrections Officers in Some Parts of Spokane Work in the Neighborhood Where Felons Live," *The Spokane Spokesman-Review*, June 19, 1998.

[44] "During 2001, 97 percent of all men and women released from Illinois prisons returned to communities in Illinois." La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 46.

[45] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003).

[46] Gonnerman, Jennifer, "Million Dollar Blocks," *Village Voice*, November 16, 2004.

[47] Open Society Institute, U.S. Programs, "Justice Reinvestment," *Ideas for an Open Society* Occasional Papers Series Vol.3, No.3 (November 2003), 2.

[48] Open Society Institute, U.S. Programs, "Justice Reinvestment," *Ideas for an Open Society* Occasional Papers Series Vol.3, No.3 (November 2003), 2.

[49] Council of State Governments, "Building Bridges: From Conviction to Employment. A Proposal to Reinvest Corrections Savings in an Employment Initiative, One Year Later," February 2004 http://www.csgeast.org/pdfs/justicereinvest/BuildingBridgesReportUpdate.pdf (accessed October 5, 2005); Council of State Governments, "Options for Policymakers Considering a Justice Reinvestment Initiative in Louisiana," January 2004 http://www.csgeast.org/pdfs/justicereinvest/LAjustreinvestmentreport.pdf (accessed October 5, 2005); Council of State Governments, "Building Community Capacity to Reduce Crime and Save Prison Space," April 2005 http://www.csgeast.org/pdfs/justicereinvest/KSSummit41805Final.pdf (accessed December 1, 2005).

[50] Gonnerman, Jennifer, "Million Dollar Blocks," *Village Voice*, November 16, 2004, 2.

[51] Skogan, Wesley, Susan Hartnett et al, "Public Involvement: Community Policing in Chicago" (Chicago, IL: Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University, September 2000), 17.

[52] See the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign website, http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/.

[53] Finn, Peter, "Washington State's Corrections Clearinghouse: A Comprehensive Approach to Offender Employment" (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Justice, 1999), http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/174441.pdf (accessed on November 16, 2005), 10-11.

[54] Council of State Governments, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," Introduction http://www.reentrypolicy.org/report/introduction.php (accessed November 7, 2005) and Policy Statement 19 "Housing" http://www.reentrypolicy.org/report/ps19-housing.php#2-anchor (accessed November 7, 2005).

[55] Council of State Governments, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," Policy Statement 19 "Housing" http://www.reentrypolicy.org/report/ps19-housing.php#2-anchor (accessed November 7, 2005).

[56] Richard Guzman (Manager, Office of Reentry Management and Placement Resource Unit, Illinois Department of Corrections), meeting with Michelle Light, Ellen Sahli, and Elizabeth Benito, October 12, 2005.

[57] Stephen Metraux and Dennis P. Culhane, "Homeless Shelter Use and Reincarceration Following Prison Release," *Criminology & Public Policy* vol. 3, no. 2 (2004): 139-160.

[58] Stephen Metraux and Dennis P. Culhane, "Homeless Shelter Use and Reincarceration Following Prison Release," *Criminology & Public Policy* vol. 3, no. 2 (2004): 139-160.

[59] "Facing Homelessness: A Study of Homelessness in Chicago and in the Suburbs," (Chicago, IL: Mid-America Institute on Poverty of Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights), http://homeless.cued.uic.edu/facing_homelessness.pdf, (accessed November 7, 2005), 16.

[60] Council of State Governments, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," Policy Statement 19 "Housing" http://www.reentrypolicy.org/report/ps19-housing.php#2-anchor (accessed November 7, 2005).

[61] "Safe at Home: A Reference Guide for Public Housing Officials on the Federal Laws Regarding Admission and Eviction Standards for People with Criminal Records," (New York, NY: Legal Action Center, Fall 2004).

[62] In dealing with this enormous pressure to help address the housing needs of various populations and simultaneously address the very real public safety concerns, some public housing authorities across the country have drafted overly broad policies that disqualify individuals who pose little or no risk to the general health and safety of the community. "No Second Chance: People with Criminal Records Denied Access to Public Housing," (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2004).

[63] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Christine Visher, "Chicago Prisoners' Experiences Returning Home," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, December 2004), 3.

[64] Elizabeth Benito (Projects Administrator, Plan to End Homelessness, Chicago Department of Housing), meeting with Michelle Light, Ellen Sahli, and Rick Guzman, October 12, 2005.

[65] The *McKinney* definition, as set forth in the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, defines "homeless" as "an individual [or family] who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and who has a primary nighttime residence that is a temporary shelter, institution, or public or private place not designed for regular sleeping accommodation. . . . The HUD definition is similar, but it includes those individuals about to be evicted or released from an institution with no subsequent residence identified." See "Facing Homelessness: A Study of Homelessness in Chicago and in the Suburbs," (Chicago, IL: Mid-America Institute on Poverty of Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights), http://homeless.cued.uic.edu/facing_homelessness.pdf (accessed November 7, 2005), 4.

[66] Currently, IDOC pays a small number of local organizations, like St. Leonard's Ministries, just under what it costs IDOC to supervise a given number of parolees. In return, the organizations not only provide housing and other social services for the parolees but also assumes a large share of responsibility for their supervision. IDOC should increase its investment in these types of operating subsidies targeted to help former prisoners. It's also possible that both the new Statewide Rental Support Program and the Chicago Low Income Housing Trust Fund could be used to assist households with formerly incarcerated individuals.

[67] See http://www.edenir.org/rover_moms.html

[68] Council of State Governments, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," Policy Statement 19 "Housing" http://www.reentrypolicy.org/report/ps19-housing.php#2-anchor (accessed November 7, 2005).

[69] Jackie Reed (Founder and Executive Director, Westside Health Authority) remarks made at public hearing, Governor's Community Safety & Reentry Working Group, March 14, 2005.

[70] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 46.

[71] La Vigne, Nancy G. and Cynthia A. Mamalian, "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois," (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2003), 60.

[72] Niuris Ramos (Lead Community Organizer, Near Northwest Neighborhood Network), interview with Ben Lumpkin, July 7, 2005.

[73] Richard Guzman (Manager, Office of Reentry Management and Placement Resource Unit, Illinois Department of Corrections), interview with Ben Lumpkin, April 28, 2005.

[74] Joanne Archibald (Associate Director, Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers), interview with Ben Lumpkin, May 20, 2005.

[75] Zehr, Howard, "Restorative Justice: The Concept," *Corrections Today,* December 1997, vol.59, issue 7.

[76] Zehr, Howard, "Restorative Justice: The Concept," *Corrections Today,* December 1997, vol.59, issue 7.

[77] See the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Restorative Justice Resource Center webpage http://www.icjia.state.il.us/public/index.cfm?metaSection=Publications&metaPage=RestorativeJustice.

[78] See Prison Fellowship International "Restorative Justice Online" webpage http://www.restorativejustice.org/intro/tutorial/.

[79] See Prison Fellowship International "Restorative Justice Online" webpage http://www.restorativejustice.org/intro/tutorial/.

[80] See Prison Fellowship International "Restorative Justice Online" webpage http://www.restorativejustice.org/intro/tutorial/.

[81] See Prison Fellowship International "Restorative Justice Online" webpage http://www.restorativejustice.org/intro/tutorial/.

[82] Pranis, Kay, "Engaging the Community in Restorative Justice" (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, June 1998), 1.

[83] See http://www.co.deschutes.or.us/go/government/departments/juvenile-community-justice/community/community-justice-corps. *See also* Open Society Institute, U.S. Programs, "From Prisons to Parks in Oregon," *Ideas for An Open* Society Occasional Papers Series vol. 3, no. 3 (November 2003), 5-6.

[84] Editorial, "Phantom Constituents in the Census," *New York Times,* September 26, 2005, (www.nytimes.com/2005/09/26/opinion /26mon3.html).

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