



Community Re-entry

ISSUE

Support Successful Post Incarceration Community Re-entry

BACKGROUND

Most individuals who are incarcerated in the criminal justice system will eventually return to their home community. Repeated crime after release from prison, and repeated prison sentences are major drains on New York's finances and quality of life. Comprehensive rehabilitation and re-entry planning must begin near the first days of incarceration, and be updated as needed. Programs to allow fulfillment of that plan require funding, so as to enable provision by the Department of Correction Services during incarceration and by community services after release.

Many individuals who enter the criminal justice system have mental health, alcohol or substance abuse problems that are amenable to treatment. There is a growing recognition that treatment programs work and are a more cost effective approach than incarceration for those who can benefit from them.

When returning to the community, many formerly incarcerated individuals have a difficult time finding and keeping employment. Providing these men and women with education programs, job training opportunities and meaningful skills development while incarcerated will give them the tools they need to secure employment upon their release. In addition to employment, released prisoners are also in need of housing, medical care and other support systems in order to make effective re-entry back into society after a period of incarceration

MESSAGE POINTS

- Treatment works!
- Therapeutic, educational and vocational programs must be available to inmates in state correctional facilities to prepare them for eventual community reintegration.
- Provide services that support successful re-entry of those returning to the community from prison.
- Resources are better spent on community-based rehabilitation than on incarceration for many offenders who could benefit from treatment.
- The overwhelming majority of those in prison will return to the community. The individual and society both benefit from rehabilitation and successful community re-entry.
- Planning for successful re-entry must begin in the earliest days of incarceration.

Church Teaching

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.” —Mt 5:7

“What Christ is looking for is trusting acceptance, an attitude which opens the mind to generous decisions aimed at rectifying the evil done and fostering what is good.” —Pope John Paul II Message for the Jubilee in Prisons, July 9, 2000

“Now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.” —Lk 15:32