Successful Reentry:

A Playbook for Building an Ecosystem
That Works for Returning Citizens
in Prince George's County

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Introduction

Located within the Office of the County Executive, and reporting to the Chief of Staff, the Returning Citizen Affairs Division (RCAD) is a specialized division dedicated to coordinating, advocating for, monitoring, and improving Prince George's County's ecosystem of services relating to returning citizens and the justice involved.

The RCAD's mission is to lead Prince George's County in being a regional and national model reentry ecosystem that provides county residents released from incarceration in state, local, and federal facilities with opportunities to transform their lives in such a way that they will become fully engaged and productive members of the community. The RCAD is tasked with developing a countywide reentry strategy that aligns government, community, and private sector service providers in sourcing and leveraging resources, and partnering to improve the outcomes of returning citizens in Prince George's County. The RCAD is Prince George's County Government's principal group communicating the County's reentry vision, identifying, and developing best practices, and leading the County in meeting the its reentry goals. These goals include:

- Enhancing operational efficiency of systems that serve citizens returning to the County from periods of incarceration in local, state, and Federal facilities;
- Strengthening relationships with nonprofit and faith-based organizations who provide services to returning citizens;
- Building partnerships with County, State and Federal agencies to ensure that returning citizens have access to public services; and
- Enhancing community engagement including the returning citizens community.

In order to accomplish these goals, the RCAD will:

1. Develop, monitor, coordinate and enhance Prince George's County's ecosystem of returning citizen service providers and services

2. Ensure previously incarcerated residents are connected to the appropriate essential employment, health, education, housing, social assistance programming and services

3. Develop evidence-based policies, strategies, and legislation that removed barriers to services and equitable economic and social outcomes of returning citizens

4. Serve as the principal convener, communicator, and advocate of returning citizens and those serving returning citizens

This playbook will inform the activities of the RCAD staff over the short and long term. The goals, action steps, and resources detailed within the playbook were derived from national best practices research into reentry ecosystem across the country, promising practices in reentry work from think tanks and other research organizations, and direct feedback from stakeholders in Prince George's County – including public agencies, community-based and faith-based nonprofits, and returning citizens from Prince George's County.

Housing

Goal To reduce homelessness and housing instability among returning citizen populations.

Action Steps

1 **Implement a comprehensive housing screening assessment to use while pre-release or transition services are being rendered.**
Reentry professionals should assess an individual's unique housing needs and risk of homelessness upon returning to the community. Departments of correction, reentry service providers, service intake coordinators, case managers, and others should use a screening tool as a supplement to existing intake or case planning processes. This can help coordinate better service delivery between partner organizations, improve continuity of care, and reduce the likelihood of returning citizens experiencing housing instability immediately following release.

2 **Collect and combine information about housing options for returning citizens into a useful tool for individuals, families, case workers, and other re-entry stakeholders.**
When it comes to housing options for returning citizens, there is not a singular place to go with information about different types of housing, contact information, eligibility or restrictions for some housing, and more. A carefully crafted guide could help simplify some of the information about existing publicly funded housing resources and give users a clear next step on how to obtain more information.

3 **Advocate for policies and programs that allow and fund the redevelopment of unused property into transitional or permanently affordable housing for returning citizens.**
Already within Prince George's County, there has been research and planning into the reuse of old school property for returning citizens to have access to affordable housing. RCAD and other stakeholders need to put forth a proposal to start the project, including funding needs, projected timeline, and community engagement strategy to ensure support from neighbors.

4 **Provide training, resources, and more to inform service providers, community-based organizations, government officials, mentors, and others working with returning citizens about housing-related issues.**
Find out what resources and training are desired by staff working with returning citizens. Webinars, workshops, and other resources can help partners get more comfortable with various housing-related topics.

Resources & Tools

Assessing Housing Needs and Risks: A Screening Questionnaire
This is an easy-to-use tool for departments of correction, community-based and faith-based organizations , law enforcement agencies, courts, and others offering pre-release and post-release services, to better assess a person's unique housing needs and risk of homelessness upon arrest or return to the community from jail or prison. It was created by the National Reentry Resource Center, Bureau of Justice Assistance, and Council of State Governments Justice Center. The assessment is intended to be a starting point that provides supplemental information that may not be covered in a typical intake process.

Questions will elicit:

- Personalized housing needs
- Histories of homelessness
- Risk of homelessness.

After using this or any other tool, it can be linked to an individual's case file and shared with referral agencies if permission is granted to do so.

Guide for Developing Housing for Ex-Offenders
This guide can be used with stakeholders who are involved in moving forward any housing-related initiatives with RCAD. It presents a step-by-step approach for developing housing for returning citizens, acknowledging that there are many different paths to success in these ventures.

Philadelphia Reentry Coalition Housing Guide
The Philadelphia Reentry Coalition created a flowchart to help re-entry stakeholders navigate housing options in the city. It also includes the contact information for various resources to give correctional staff, case managers, service providers, mentors, family members, and returning citizens a clear next step for referral or outreach.

Policymakers Guide to Re-entry Housing
When advocating and lobbying for more housing options for returning citizens in Prince George's County, it will be helpful to demonstrate what types of housing options are possible. This guide includes a chart profiling the six different alternatives for reentry housing, providing a starting point for discussion and later decision-making. Each type of housing in the chart includes the features of each of the six housing options, along with their related benefits and limitations.

Transportation

Goal   Reduce transportation barriers impeding an individual's ability to reenter the community successfully.

Action Steps

1

Ensure transportation barriers are screened for in pre-release assessments so accommodations and resources can be arranged.
Returning citizens will often face challenges to transportation including affordability, accessibility, and availability. Individuals working directly with returning citizens before release should have specific questions to ask about transportation and mobility plans post-release that can help screen for potential barriers. The first 48-hours after release are critical for the transition from incarceration to community, so screening and assessment can help make necessary arrangements for a ride home, transportation to services needed immediately following release, and more.

2

Put resources for obtaining proper identification inside prison and jail facilities for pre-release preparation.
Successful reentry is easily be thwarted by a lack of proper identification which can directly affect housing, employment, and transportation options[1]. Knowing this, many states have enacted legislation that requires state identification to be issued to returning citizens prior to release.

3

Advocate for dedicated funding to supply returning citizens with transportation resources immediately upon release.
One promising practice for addressing transportation barriers is to provide returning citizens with transportation from the correctional facility to their release destination in Prince George's County and evaluate whether the releasee will have access to transportation to services, work and other locations mandated in their release plan[2]. Programs around the country that help returning citizens access transportation immediately following release (like those highlighted in the Resources & Tools section below) require funding to operate. RCAD should advocate for dedicated funding to support transportation efforts based on what community stakeholders and partners want and believe would be most effective.

1 https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/leaving-prison-without-a-government-id-can-block-access-to-housing-jobs-and-help
2 https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/32056/411767-Release-Planning-for-Successful-Reentry.PDF

Resources & Tools

State Identification: Reentry Strategies for State and Local Leaders
This fact sheet details various strategies that can be implemented to eliminate the barrier of lack of proper identification for returning citizens. It includes information about state legislation, partnerships between state departments of corrections and motor vehicles, and technology to make execution easier.

California Identification Card Program
The California Identification Card (CAL-ID) Program provides a valid California ID to eligible incarcerated individuals upon their release from prison, helping streamline access to support services like medical care, housing, and right-to-work documents.

Providing Identification for Those Released From Incarceration
The National Conference of State Legislature's (NCSL) policy snapshot gives a general overview of state policies about identification upon reentry. It highlights the states that have elected to provide identification cards upon release through legislation. However, other states have chosen to provide these services through public administration agencies, in which case a partnership may require a memorandum of understanding or other binding document to elaborate on the relationship and expectations of the public agencies.

Behavioral Health & Wellness

Goal To create direct connections to physical, mental, and behavioral healthcare for returning citizens with treated and untreated mental illness

Action Steps

1 **Identify the current process for enrolling/reenrolling returning citizens in Medicaid**
Justice-involved individuals will often lose their private healthcare coverage while they are incarcerated due to loss of employment/income and will experience challenges with enrolling in Medicaid upon release due to system delays. Since those who were enrolled in Medicaid pre-incarceration experience in gap in their Medicaid coverage due to the "inmate exclusion policy" in Medicaid coverage, they often experience significant interruptions in healthcare services, medications and treatments after release due to a lack of coordination of systems and providers[3].

More information on Medicaid coverage for returning citizens can be found here: https://www.healthcare.gov/incarcerated-people/

Since Medicaid coverage is essential to ensuring returning citizens maintain continuous access to the mental health medication and services they were receiving while incarcerated (and to allow them access to new services if needed), it is vital that the Returning Citizens Affairs Division identify and map out the current process used to ensure qualified individuals are enrolled in Medicaid (or will not experience a gap in coverage) upon release to identify gaps, redundancies, and inefficiencies. When mapping out this process, RCAD should consider the following questions:

- Who does this for the citizens?
- When does it occur? Who could potentially fall through the gaps?
- What are the checks and balances to ensure this is happening?
- What barriers make it difficult for a returning citizen to enroll/reenroll?
- What is the average turnaround time from application to approval?
- Who works with the citizens to help them navigate the use of Medicaid (e.g., finding approved providers, setting appointments, help with understanding mailings, etc.)? Medicaid navigators? Are they overwhelmed? Have they been trained to help returning citizens?

3 https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2020/nov/medicaid-role-health-people-involved-justice-system

(2) **Map out Medicaid eligible behavioral health and wellness services in Prince George's County**

The next step in providing returning citizens with direct connections to mental health services in Prince George's County is to identify and map the services that are currently offered. For this to be effective in helping RCAD achieve its goal, first RCAD must identify the different types of medical mental health services available (e.g., medication-assisted therapy (MAT), psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, etc.). Then for each type of service, RCAD should identify the following information:

- Number of therapists/offices for that service
- Locations mapped to public transportation and/or distance from transitional housing
- Providers that offer virtual appointments
- Wait times for first time appointments
- Up-to-date contact information – including how to schedule an appointment

(3) **Map out non-medical behavioral and mental health services in Prince George's County**

To build a complete picture of mental health services in Prince George's County, it is also essential that RCAD use the same process listed above in Step 2 when mapping out non-medical mental health services for returning citizens, including (but not limited to) support groups and peer facilitated services (e.g., peer recovery coaches). The same criteria for Step 2 should be applied to this list as well to ensure it moves beyond just a list of resources to providing returning citizens with enough information to identify a serve that fits their needs.

(4) **Perform a gap analysis on current health services in Prince George's County to determine steps RCAD needs to take to improve connections between returning citizens and mental health services**

Once the current process for enrolling returning citizens into Medicaid has been identified and the health services in Prince George's County have been mapped in detail, RCAD should perform a gap analysis to determine gaps, redundancies, inefficiencies, and where the system is being significantly strained. This analysis will allow RCAD to identify clear and impactful action steps to help improve the mental health services ecosystem for returning citizens in Prince George's County.

One recommended gap analysis process to follow can be found here: https://www.uclahealth.org/nursing/workfiles/Education%20 Courses/ContinuingEducation/ce-GapAnalysis-052016.pdf

This process includes six steps:

1. **Summarize the current state of behavioral health and wellness care.**
   What is currently happening?

2. **Envision the desired state of behavioral health and wellness care.**
   What should be happening?

3. **Identify gaps.**
   These are the differences between what is happening and what should be happening.

4. **Decide if the gap is due to knowledge, qualified staffing, limited resources, transportation, etc.**
   Why do you think the current state exists?
   What is the underlying or root cause?

5. **List methods used to identify gaps.**
   What evidence do you have to validate the gap exists?

6. **Create clear action steps.**
   What specific actions can RCAD take to move Prince George's County towards the desired state?

(5) **Identify trauma-informed practices training for frontline staff**

Training staff that directly work with returning citizens, especially those that might interact with individuals either in crisis or dealing with a trauma response, in trauma-informed practices will ensure returning citizens are given the care, support, and guidance they need instead of further alienated from the ecosystem. RCAD can support this important section of the mental health supports ecosystem by identifying what type of trauma-informed practices training is already occurring, finding funding for and hosting consistent training opportunities available to frontline staff free of charge, and including training around dealing with secondary trauma.

One such training can be found here:

Trauma-informed Training for Community-Based Criminal Justice Professionals
- RCAD can also collect, review, and house resources that can be accessed by frontline staff at any time. These resources could include the following:
- Key trauma-informed responses
- Strategies for developing trauma-informed policies
- Community resource map to connect an individual quickly and easily in crisis with supportive services
- Ways to identify secondary trauma responses and steps to take to heal

Resources & Tools

Healthcare Access Maryland's Returning Citizens HealthLink Program
This program located in Maryland is made up of a team of 17 Certified Application Counselors (CACs) who are embedded across the state throughout multiple Maryland State prisons and the Baltimore City Jail, providing in-person Medicaid enrollment with soon-to-be-released returning citizens. The CACs are trained and certified by the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, work for Application Counselor Sponsoring Entities (ACSEs), provide in-person assistance with determining eligibility for insurance affordability programs, including Medicaid, on Maryland Health Connection, and aid with enrollment for soon to be released returning citizens into Qualified Health Plans and Qualified Dental Plans.

SAMHSA Guidelines for Successful Transition of People with Mental or SUDs from Jail and Prison
This resource provides implementation support to behavioral health, correctional, and community stakeholders with examples of how successful strategies for transitioning people with mental or substance use disorders from institutional correctional settings into the community have been executed across the country. The guide promotes jurisdictional implementation of the APIC Guidelines through the identification and description of various jurisdictional strategies that have been adopted in efforts to facilitate successful community reentry for justice-involved people with mental and co-occurring substance use disorders.

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics and The Justice Systems
Use of the CCBHC model offers a mechanism to coordinate, deliver – and often pay for – mental health and substance use services for justice-involved persons. Currently the CCBHC model extends to over 430 clinics across 42 states and raises the bar for the delivery of services by providing clinics with a financial foundation to expand access to care and improve coordination with community partners such as law enforcement, courts and the civil and criminal legal systems (justice settings). This model for care delivery allows staff to provide services outside the four walls of the clinic, including through 24/7/365 crisis response. General outcomes to date include reduced emergency department visits, hospitalization, incarceration and homelessness among clients served by the program.

Funding

Goal Ensure sustainability of the RCAD's work in perpetuity to support the Prince George's County community and its returning citizens.

Action Steps

1

Identify Funding Needs
The first step is for the organization to identify their funding needs. This may include identifying gaps in programming or services, or the need to serve additional individuals or specific populations. The organization should identify why it needs the funding, the need funding will meet, and what they will be able to achieve with additional funding. This should support the RCAD's mission, vision, goals or strategic priorities. Identifying the need will provide focus to the organization in deciding what funding opportunities to pursue.

2

Develop a Funding Action Plan
RCAD should develop a funding action plan to identify potential funding opportunities. The plan considers the organization's mission and goals while researching and identifying opportunities that support the organization's needs. The scan should research federal grants, foundation grants, and local, regional, and state funding streams. The funding action plan should include the following content and sections:
- Introduction and priority identification;
- Recommendations for the potential pursuit of specific funding opportunities;
- An opportunity ranking chart based on the alignment, capacity requirements, and competitiveness of each funding opportunity;
- Summary of relevant funding opportunities researched; and
- Recommended tentative calendar for approaching funding opportunities.

3

Create a Position Paper
The next step is to create a Position Paper which is an electronic document that contains a narrative and attachments for common grant sections. This may include sections about the RCAD's mission, vision, goals, statement of need, Prince George's County data, documents and information from the Re-entry Advisory Board, sustainability plan, evaluation plan, leadership team resumes, list of advisory board members, and current financial documents. This content can be incorporated into funding applications and accelerate the writing process.

4

Develop a Funding Deck

A Funding Deck is a is collateral that can be used with high-level donors and foundation. The deck provides an elevator pitch, organized into slides with concise language and compelling design. The deck should be designed in a way to allow for customization to specific audiences. Themes highlighted in the deck should include:

- History and overview of the program;
- The issue or challenge identified;
- How the organization is a champion for the cause;
- Projected outcomes through additional support;
- A clear call to action.

5

Pursue Funding Opportunities

The final step is to use the prepared materials to pursue funding opportunities. The first step is to review eligibility and requirements of the application. Once the organization decides to pursue the opportunity an outline should be created and content from the position paper should be utilized as a starting point and customized to fit the specific opportunity. Lastly, the organization should seek to learn from any applications not funding and use the feedback to improve future applications.

Resources & Tools

Federal Government Funding Examples (Federal, State, and Local)
- United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration
  - Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO)
- United States Department of Justice
  - Reimagining Justice: Testing a New Model of Community Safety
- United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
  - Grants to Expand Substance Abuse Treatment Capacity in Adult and Family Treatment Drug Courts

Philanthropic Funding Examples
MacArthur Foundation
Annie E Casey Foundation
Public Welfare Foundation

Reentry Program Sustainability Toolkit Resources for an Effective Sustainability Strategy
Because having a sustainability strategy is a key outcome for RCAD to be able to achieve its vision and mission, this toolkit will help think through ways to increase recognition of the Division and its work, expand stakeholders and champions of the work, and help secure reliable and consistent funding beyond the Office of the County Executive. This toolkit can guide RCAD through communications planning, branding, and funding strategy. Page 19 is a helpful checklist to break down different steps.

The Funding Toolkit For State Courts and Justice System Partners
The toolkit is designed to support local courts, state courts, and other justice system partners pursuing pursue federal and philanthropic funding opportunities. It includes resources that encompass the entire grant seeking, writing and management process, such as planning checklists, sample documents, frequently asked questions, and fact sheets.

Federal Funding Opportunities Database
CSG Justice Center's Find a Federal Funding Opportunity database includes potential federal funding opportunities for reentry work from criminal justice generally to mental health and housing specifically. There is information in the database about how to filter for the right opportunities and includes opportunities that may not currently have open applications. It should be used for identification of funding sources that align with RCAD goals and activities, as well as forecasting when funding may become available.

Coordination of Services

Goal   Improve coordination of re-entry services to reduce duplication and better leverage existing resources.

Action Steps

1 **Develop an online repository of services, programs, and other resources for returning citizens, categorized appropriately and regularly updated.**

Understanding the current landscape of reentry resources available to returning citizens in Prince George's County is vital to improving coordination of services. To ensure that every returning citizen can access services, a portal should be developed that houses information about services that help support successful reentry. This portal should collect and manage highly detailed information about the reentry-related services offered by Prince George's County organizations, including employment, education, training, housing, mental health, transportation, and other support. An established, up-to-date portal will enable practitioners to better differentiate who does what and for whom for more individualized referrals, deepen understanding of the full landscape of reentry services in Prince George's County, and serve as a repository for reentry program info that will be distributed to other local databases and directories, eliminating the need for organizations to go through the process of updating information on their services in multiple places.

At minimum, the following information should be collected and presented:

- Name of the organization providing the resource, service, or program
- Physical location or virtual accessibility information
- Hours of operation
- Any and all services rendered
- Descriptions
- Contact Information
- Requirements, Eligibility Determination
- Date indicating when each record was last updated
- If applicable, how to make a referral

One example of this is the Community Transition Coordination Network in Washington state. 4People is a nonprofit and provides online information and referral services for the state's 39 counties. 4People compiles information about social services and resources for the Community Transition Coordination Network. The extensive database includes government, nonprofit, and faith-based direct service providers in the state. Website users can fill out an online form soliciting information available programs and services. These are then submitted for the information to be included in the directory. Verifying information is done by volunteers, and service providers are asked to inform 4People staff about any changes that need to be made about their listing.

2 Create direct avenues for community-based organizations and faith-based organizations to start re-entry services while citizens are still incarcerated.

RCAD's strategic location within the Office of the County Executive can allow for the creation of direct avenues for various stakeholders offering crucial, high-quality services to access returning citizens prior to release, while simultaneously breaking down barriers to entry. Pre-release interventions are services delivered by either jail staff of community-based providers conducting jail "in-reach"[4]. Getting community-based organizations and faith-based organizations involved in pre-release transitions on the custody side of programming will improve outcomes by creating a system that provides continuous care, reduces duplicative or overlapping work, and can apply cost-sharing measures to lower the investments made by any one agency serving returning citizens. Interagency collaboration and investment by non-correctional agencies is critical and must be facilitated by RCAD for comprehensive, systemic results. Steps to developing and formalizing the relationships between corrections and community and faith-based organizations can include:

1. Identify and engage partners.

   This could look the following activities listed below[5] or other methods of finding and engaging potential partners:
   a. Attend local reentry-related meetings
   b. Convene forums in the community to interact closely with local providers in reentry service delivery, particularly in neighborhoods with the highest number of returning citizens residing in them
   c. Leverage the knowledge of parole and probation, and law enforcement officials who are familiar with local service providers
   d. Ensure that agencies are working with a wide variety of providers, such as faith-based organizations (from different faith traditions) of varying size, diverse community-based organizations, and those both new and experienced in serving the community

2. Working with corrections departments to clarify goals of collaboration with community partners during pre-release.

   Any partnership created with the support of the RCAD will have an central goal of facilitating successful reentry in to the Prince George's County community. However, individual partnerships between corrections agencies and community-based or faith-based organizations should be specific in who they will support (youth, individuals nearing their release date, English language learners, etc.).

3. Formalize collaboration with MOUs that determine roles and set the terms of the partnership. MOU sections could include:

   a. Purpose or goal of the collaboration or partnership
   b. Key assumptions
   c. Scope of the partnership
   d. Policies and procedures that must be followed
   e. The name of each partnering agency
   f. Each partner's responsibilities under the MOU
   g. Effective date and signatures
   h. Instructions for updates

4. Develop accountability and communication strategies. To achieve the best outcomes of partnerships between corrections and community partners, an agreed-upon strategy for holding each partner accountable to the MOU or to the informal partnership is important. Three options for regular communication, building trust, and maintaining accountability[6] are:

   a. Regular touchpoints between agency leadership, frontline staff, and/or RCAD with varying frequency dependent on need
   b. Information sharing with case conferencing, if allowed, or aggregate reports
   c. Reports on key performance indicators at regular intervals

4 https://apps.urban.org/features/tjctoolkit/Complete-TJC-Toolkit.pdf
5 https://www.justice.gov/archive/fbci/docs/reentry-partnership.pdf
6 https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/29146/412211-Partnering-with-Jails-to-Improve-Reentry-A-Guidebook-for-Community-Based-Organizations.PDF

3

Formalize referral process to be used between all reentry stakeholders from pre-release to community integration to track returning citizen progress through reentry and ensure access to services.

Formalized referral systems provide structured and clearly defined procedures processes around linking returning citizens to appropriate services and supports. While a digital referral system that is built out and implemented for use across all social services in Prince George's County would be ideal, it is resource intensive and can be difficult to administer at the appropriate level. However, developing a formal process for referrals and maintaining an updated repository of services, programs, and resources available to returning citizens before release, immediately upon release, and generally during their reentry is both possible and critical.

An ecosystem of referrals for returning citizens to get the help they need to be successful should include integrations between law enforcement agencies, community-based and faith-based organizations offering reentry services, social services agencies, and more.

Effective referral systems create efficient and quick connections for returning citizens. If referrals to services require substantial time and effort on the part of returning citizens to follow through on, it often means missed services and individuals falling through the cracks of service systems.

To create a referral system, RCAD should formalize partnerships with stakeholders so that there is buy-in and commitment on the part of agencies that will make, use, and accept referrals for returning citizens. MOUs and other such agreements can be developed to formalize these relationships and determine how the partners will work together, expectations for services, responsible parties for different aspects of the referral system, and more.

The development of policies and procedures around referrals should detail:

- Who will receive and process referrals
- Expected time of response between receiving a referral to rendering services
- How and where services will be accessed – virtually, telephonically, or in-person
- How the referring agency will assess if an individual is a good fit for the services of the desired agency for referral
- How tracking and follow-up should be conducted
- How returning citizen information will be protected
- What information should be shared to measure success

4

Ensure every returning citizen understands their next steps for accessing resources upon release.
Staff working directly with incarcerated individuals nearing their release date should take time to identify what the individual's plan is for their first day, week, month, and year upon release in different need categories.

The use of a checklist by either a pre-release staff person or returning citizen could be useful for preparing citizens for release, making necessary referrals, and other actions that make returning citizens feel comfortable with their situation and plan upon release. It should include:

Information about any supervised release and subsequent expectations:

- What, if any, are the conditions of release?
- Is drug use prohibited?
- If needed, how will drug testing be conducted?
- Does the individual need to maintain verifiable housing?
- Does the individual need to maintain verifiable employment?
- How does the individual report to supervised release?
- Where does the individual report to and how will you get there?
- Who is the point of contact?
- Does the individual have the proper means to get in touch with their supervisor?
- How can the individual develop a proper relationship with their supervisor?

Identification documents and personal records:

- Does the individual have a photo ID?
- Does the individual have a Driver's License?
    - » If not, do they need one?
- Does the individual have all arrest, jail, and court records?
- Does the individual have copies of participation and completion of programming while incarcerated?
- Does the individual have their social security card?
- Does the individual have their birth certificate?

Legal status, protections, and more:

- Is the individual's criminal record accurate?
- Is the individual eligible for expungement or record sealing now or in the future?
- Does the individual understand their legal rights and protections when:
    - » Applying for a job
    - » Applying for housing
    - » Applying for an occupational license
- Does the individual need to register for sex offender or child abuse registries?

Transportation:

- What is the individual's plan for transportation and mobility upon release?
- Does the individual have a car and proper identification and license?
- If relying on their social network, is that a permanent solution?
- If it is temporary, what is the timeline for obtaining a permanent transportation option?
- Is public transportation an option?
- Does the individual have a public transportation card?

Housing:

- Use a comprehensive housing screening assessment to determine individual's housing stability post-release.
- Does the individual qualify for any utility payment assistance?
- If so, what are the next steps for applying?

Healthcare:

- Does the individual qualify for Medicare or Medicaid?
- If the individual does not have health insurance and does not qualify for a public option, do they know where they can access healthcare without insurance?
- Does the individual have a primary care provider?
- What medications is the individual on currently and how will they be obtained upon release?
- Are they in need of behavioral health, mental health, substance abuse, or other services where a formal referral is required?

Miscellaneous:

- How will the individual stay connected?
- Do they have access to a mobile phone?
- Do they have an email address set up?
- Is the individual registered to vote, if eligible?
- Can the individual get a library card in order to access free library services?

Public Benefits:

- Has the individual applied for any benefits they may be eligible for?
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI)
- Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)
- Veteran's services
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Family Connections:

- Does the individual have children and understand their situation regarding child custody and visitation?
- Does the individual owe child support?
- What is the individual's marital status?
- If needed, does the individual understand how to file for divorce, get out of an unhealthy relationship, etc.?

Employment:

- What is the individual's plan for employment post release?
- Does the individual have proper employment identification documents secured?
- Does the individual have a resume?
- If not, would they benefit from engaging with a career services provider upon release?
- Is the individual interested in and a candidate for programs such as...
- Apprenticeship
- Occupational skills training
- Higher education

Financial Literacy:

- Does the individual have a bank account they can access upon release?
- Has the individual checked their credit score recently?
- What fines and fees are still owed to the court and how will those be paid?

Education

- What is the individual's highest level of education?
- Would they benefit from adult education?
- Are they interested in pursuing a degree?

Mentorship and Additional Support

- Does the individual have a mentor they can reach out to for encouragement, support, and assistance if necessary?
- What is the individual's support network?
- Are they members of a faith community?
- Do they have stable relationships with family?
- Do they have people they need to cut ties with in order to stay safe and out of any activity threatening their successful reentry?

Example reentry checklists can be found below:

West Virginia Reentry Guide
Cornerstone Assistance Network Reentry Checklist
Chatanooga Endeavors Prisoner Reentry Checklist

Because there are many needs that should be met to put returning citizens on the path to successful reentry, it can be difficult to address all of these at once. Staff working directly with returning citizens including case managers, navigators, probation and parole officers should offer intensive supports for the first 72 hours after release, and set up referrals and appointments for the first few weeks post-release.

Resources & Tools

Recovery Works: Updated Referral Process Guide
This Guidebook from the State of Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration details the process of making referrals into their Recovery Works program. It is designed to assist Direct Service Providers, Criminal Justice Partners, and other community stakeholders in understanding the essentials of this new process. As RCAD considers what a formalized referral process could look like, this process document could be helpful in codifying procedures to be used by reentry stakeholders and service providers.

Partnering with Jails to Improve Reentry: A Guidebook for Community-Based Organizations
The Urban Institute's guidebook for CBOs and FBOs to establish formal relationships with correctional agencies to offer services that are critical to the successful reentry of returning citizens prior to their actual release date. It gives a brief overview of the criminal justice system, with a focus on jails specifically. There is general information about how to build a partnership with a local jail and then concrete steps to develop and sustain this partnership.

Reentry Partnerships: A Guide for States & Faith-Based and Community Organizations
Long-term sustainable partnerships between faith-based and community organizations and government systems are notoriously difficult and often involve overcoming previous negative experiences or interactions. RCAD can use this guidance to foster and sustain these relationships, ultimately leveraging the wealth of resources in Prince George's County to increase its capacity to help people released from prisons and jails succeed in the community.
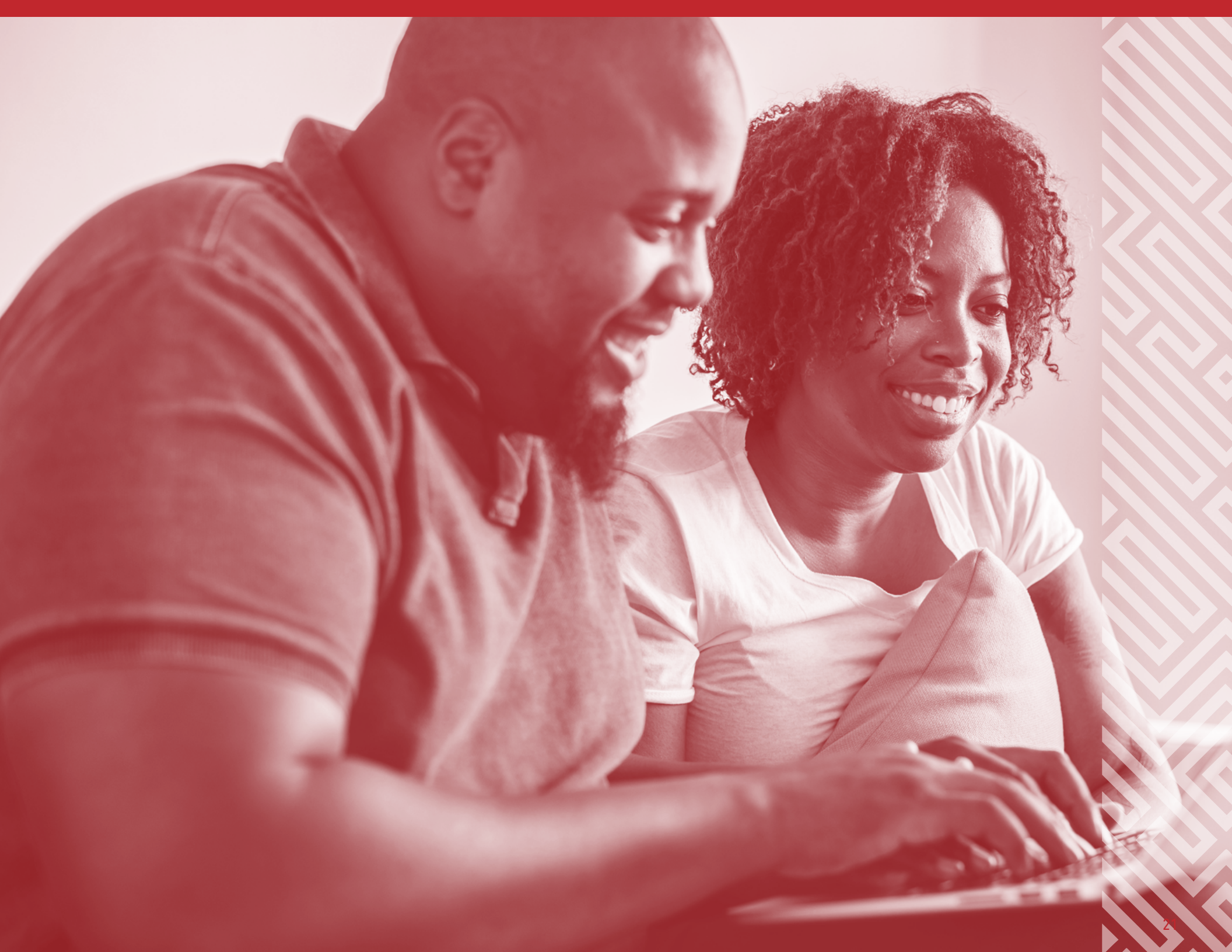
Defining Success

Goal Be able to demonstrate success of RCAD work to stakeholders, potential funders, government officials, and other decision makers.

Action Steps

1

Set strategic goals for each key area of impact.
Using the stakeholder data from August as well as federal, state, and county level strategic initiatives, RCAD should determine the key areas of impact that will be the driving focus of the division's work. Next, a strategic goal should be created for each key area. These strategic goals need to be specific enough to be quantifiably measured and tracked with various data sets, but general enough to allow RCAD space to pivot if necessary (e.g., loss of funding stream, new legislation, new government priorities, etc.).

This resource from Harvard Business School provides a breakdown of how to write a strong strategic goal: https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/strategic-planning-goals. It outlines the following process to use when writing strategic goals:

Purpose-Driven

- How does this goal help RCAD fulfill its vision and mission?
- How will it improve the lives of returning citizens in Prince George's County?

Long-Term and Forward-Focused

- What is the time-frame for achieving this goal?
- Is it realistic?

Actionable

- Does the goal have at least one active verb (e.g., an action that can be tracked a measured)?
- A list of verbs for goal statements can be found here

Measurable

- Can you objectively measure/track progress towards this goal?
- Are there concrete data sets that can be used to track this goal?

Set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
Strategic goals are typically lagging indicators, meaning they show past results. It is generally very difficult to influence lagging indicators since they are the result of multiple efforts. To measure progress towards these strategic goals at more frequent intervals and make any needed changes that might influence the successful meeting of the strategic goal, it is important to develop key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs are leading indicators – they predict future success.

For each strategic goal, RCAD should develop multiple KPIs that:

- Provide objective evidence of progress towards the strategic goal
- Measure what is intended to be measured to help inform better decision making
- Offer a comparison that gauges the degree of performance change over time
- Can track efficiency, effectiveness, quality, timeliness, governance, compliance, behaviors, economics, project performance, personnel performance, or resource utilization
- Are balanced between leading and lagging indicators

This list and other information on how to use KPIs can be found here.

3

Decide what data needs to be collected to effectively track progress toward KPIs.
For reentry ecosystems using recidivism as a metric for measuring success, they are usually tied to whatever is being collected and used by the prison or jail jurisdiction. These four measures are the most common among jurisdictions:

- Rearrest is the broadest measure of recidivism and an important measure of volume of the people returning to the justice system (courts, jails, etc.). This is a comprehensive indicator of an individual's interaction with the criminal justice system.
- Reconviction provides clear evidence that new criminal activity has been committed by someone with prior involvement in the criminal justice system.
- Reincarceration can be the result of both criminal and noncriminal behavior like technical violations and generally refers to prison incarceration. This indicator also demonstrates the financial burden for local jurisdictions.
- Revocation occurs when people who were on supervision have their status withdraw and are incarcerated as a result. Revocation can be the result of both criminal and noncriminal behavior and helps track why people are unsuccessful on supervision.

EXAMPLE: Establish a baseline recidivism rate and set reduction goals

Define the chosen recidivism measure(s) by time and event	The recidivism measure you intend to track must have a clear, specific, time-bound definition.
Select a specific population	Your baseline recidivism rate also should be limited to a specific cohort of people. You are likely most interested in tracking the recidivism rate for people returning to the community your local reentry coalition represents.
Determine your data source	Is there an existing data source that regularly reports on the recidivism measure you are using?
	If not, you need to partner with the relevant agencies to provide the analysis you need to establish a baseline recidivism rate for your community.
Identify a start date	Among other defining factors, a baseline recidivism rate is anchored by a specific point in time against which you can compare future progress.

4

**Build out an action plan for each strategic goal.**
Once strategic goals and KPIs are set, RCAD should build out an action plan with clear and detailed steps around what actions need to take place to achieve this strategic vision. These action steps should include timelines, roles, and responsibilities, as well as frequent check-ins to ensure the plan is being followed and that adjustments are being made when necessary. This action plan should be considered a "soft" document – while the strategic goals and KPIs will not change, the action plan can and should. Giving the team flexibility to pivot and adapt based on the KPI benchmark data is essential to the success of RCAD.

5

Design a Dashboard to Easily Track Progress
For RCAD to communicate its progress towards the strategic goals quickly, easily, and clearly, and to help tell the story of its success, a dashboard should be built to house and track the KPI and strategic goal data. To do this, RCAD needs to identify the primary audience for the dashboard (who will need access, who will see it the most often, etc.) and how it will be shared with that audience. From there, RCAD can determine a software to use for the dashboard (e.g., Google Sheets, Excel, Tableau, website, etc.). The dashboard should be as simple as possible, with the goal being that at first glance, someone not familiar with RCAD could get a sense of its progress towards the strategic goals.

For example, the state of Oregon hosts an interactive dashboard on their state website (made using Tableau) that allows any user to get a snapshot of recidivism quickly and easily in Oregon. A snapshot of the dashboard is below and can be found here.
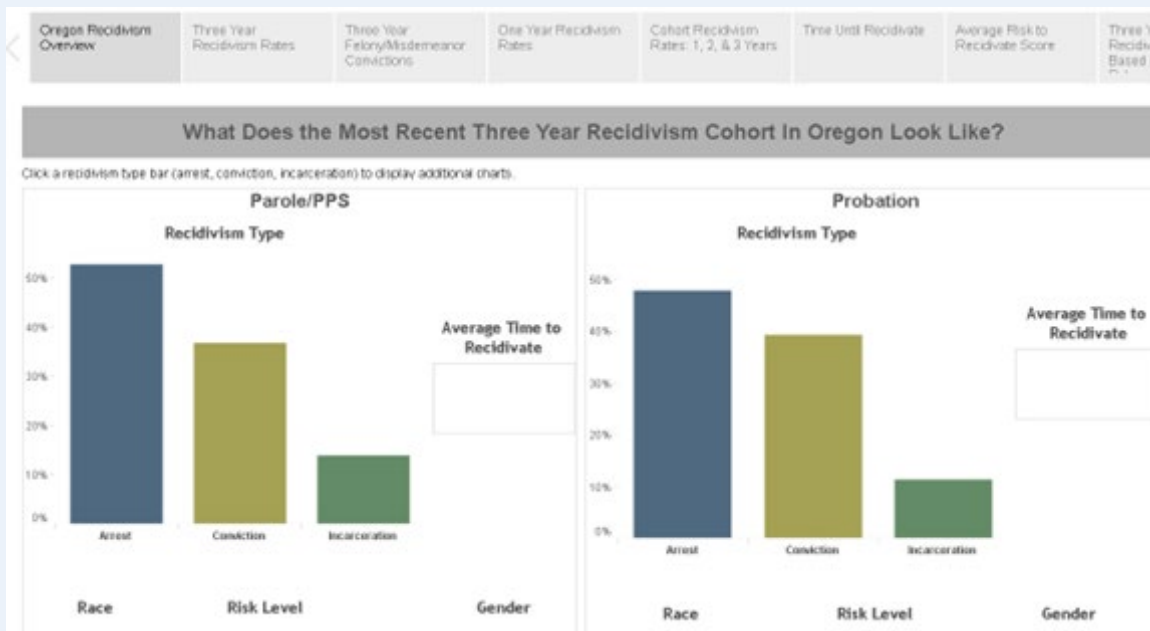
Building Second Chances: Tools for Local Reentry Coalitions

25

Resources & Tools

Template for identifying data sources
Collecting data to visualize and measure performance against goals can be challenging. This template organizes data sources by type, geographic area, who is the collector, how often is the information collected, and more. The RCAD can use this to think through what data is needed to measure performance, where it will come from, and how often is it collected in order to report accurately on progress and facilitate the use of a dashboard to publicly disseminate information. .

Building an Offender Reentry Program: A Guide for Law Enforcement
The section in this report that details "Methods/Tools for Measuring Success in Offender Reentry" is helpful in seeing how traditional and nontraditional methods of measuring success can be used. RCAD should take a look at this and other sections for support in going through the steps above for Measuring Success.

Serving All-Justice Involved Citizens

Goal All individuals affected by the Prince George's County justice system are supported by the work of RCAD and their partners.

Action Steps

1

Assess the use of any and all diversion programs and tactics in Prince George's County courts.
Pretrial diversion can be used as a front-end mechanism to promote public safety while also lowering the risk of recidivism that comes with entry into the criminal justice system. These attempt to keep individuals with low-level offenses and those without criminal histories out of the system on the front end and provide treatment pathways for those with drug abuse or mental health issues. Understanding the current landscape in Prince George's County will help determine what is missing, how effective current programs are, and how other stakeholders can effectively leverage these and other programs. RCAD should evaluate the current use of pretrial diversion efforts in Prince George's County courts and see if they can be leveraged better with additional support or resources.

2

Create avenues for engagement and participation in services for families of returning citizens
Families and other social supports are known to be important in helping returning citizens adjust to life outside of jail. In accordance with the notion that building and leveraging families and social support networks can result in better reentry outcomes for reentry populations. Reentry models that are family-inclusive or anchored in the community such as faith-based organizations have shown encouraging results. As a result, it would be very advantageous for the RCAD to facilitate or sponsor family engagement activities.

Additionally, working closely with community-based and faith-based organizations could allow for the implementation of widespread use of a family-inclusive case management model as the foundation of its suite of reentry services for those who have served time in prison because it would enable reentry populations to receive assistance from family members as well as the greater community.

One example of involving families in the reentry journey of returning citizens is the Reentry Advocacy Project (RAP) overseen by the Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable. They host a monthly conversation among individuals affected by incarceration to ensure their voices are heard and that they have a safe space to learn about resources that could positively impact their reentry journey.

3

Ensure that resource guides and repositories have information relevant to specific populations of returning citizens, including youth and women

Different populations of returning citizens have unique needs and ensuring that reentry resources meet the needs of returning women, young adults, non-English speakers, and other groups is important. The RCAD could explore partnership with higher education institutions that have students studying criminal justice, human services, social work, or other relevant programs to collect information about, implement strategies around, and ultimately serve specific populations of returning citizens.

One example of this is a program run by the University of Pennsylvania enabling Master of Social Work (MSW) students to work one-on-one, both before and after release, with people leaving the Philadelphia Department of Prisons to provide therapeutic case management support. The students collaborate with returning citizens to create tailored reentry plans while they are still incarcerated that focus on the individual's strengths and goals. Designing and implementing something similar in Prince George's County could provide support to reentry population while acknowledging potential staffing and resource challenges of the agencies providing services. This will ensure that reentry populations are connected to reentry/general support services to prevent future participation in the system while still incarcerated, which would aid in effective transitions into the community.

Building Exits off the Highway to Mass Incarceration
This report from the Prison Policy Initiative explains the various diversion programs that exist and how they work. There are many points in an individuals journey toward incarceration where they may be opportunities to exit the system without incarceration, and possibly before conviction. These various types of interventions are explored here for their benefits and challenges.
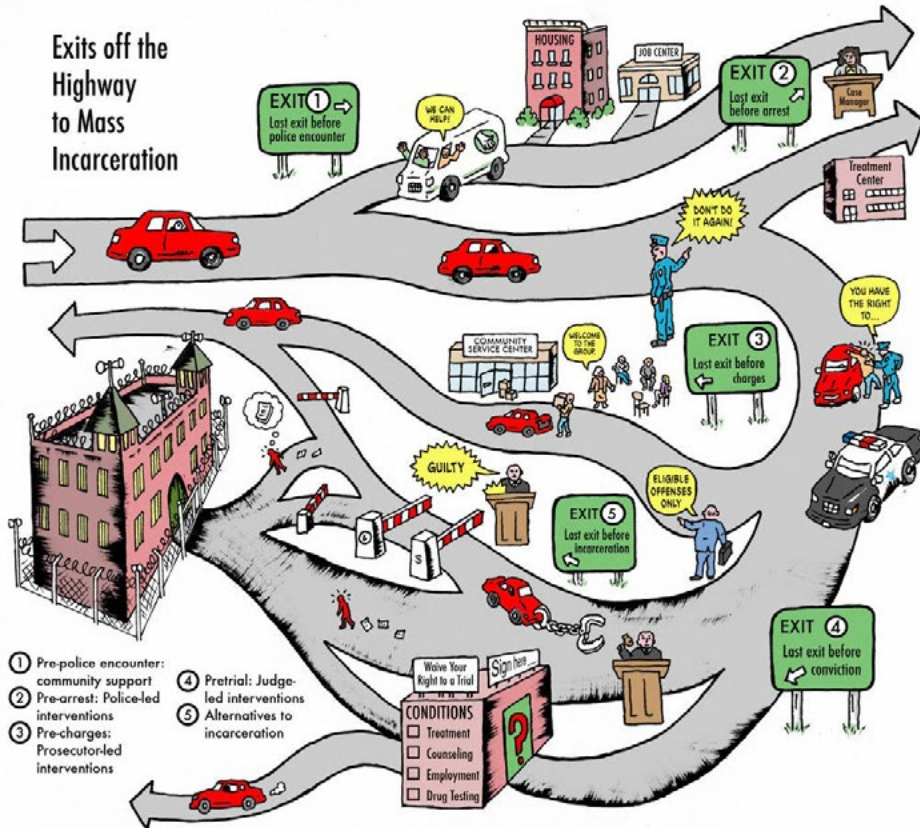

Image by Kevin Pyle

Pretrial Diversion
Most states have some semblance of pretrial diversion in their existing criminal justice system. Many of them provide alternatives routes for defendants away from traditional criminal justice processing after arrest but prior to adjudication or final entry of judgment. This tactic is often used to address social factors and other needs that contribute to criminal behavior of the accused. This webpage demonstrates the use of pretrial diversion across the country. Some are population-specific diversions for individuals with mental illness or history of substance abuse. Fifteen states even have worthless check diversion programs for first-time violators.

Screening and Assessment in Jails and Using Data to Improve Behavioral Health Diversion Programs
The need for behavioral health diversion programs has become more pronounced across the country in recent years. The CSG Justice Center published two workshop manuals developed after the live workshop series with California's Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC). They capture highlights and key resources from the workshops to improve behavioral health screening during incarceration and how to use data to leverage behavioral health services better for individuals in the justice system.

Reentry Court Toolkit: A Guide for Reentry Court Practitioners
This toolkit provides guidance to justice planners who would like to develop a new reentry court or improve an existing court with the use of evidence-based practices. Within the guide are sample documents and templates like a Pre-Release Questionnaire, Intake Flow Chart, and Sample Job Descriptions for key staff.

Family Support During Incarceration & Reentry: A Compendium of Resources
The resources listed in the document above share information, research, and strategies to support family engagement for justice-involved individuals. Understanding that families are often negatively affected by incarceration of their loved ones, but that family support is critical for many returning citizens to have a successful reentry journey means that there are complex dynamics at play. These resources can help the RCAD determine how to best support better engagement of families to achieve goals of facilitating successful reentry for the returning citizens of Prince George's County.

Youth Returning to the Community from Juvenile Justice Facilities: A Guide for Advocates
This guide can help the RCAD determine what existing resources (or initiatives) in Prince George's County support youth returning from juvenile justice and identify gaps and barriers.

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