



Social, Economic and Workforce Programs Division  
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## National and Federal Initiatives on Prisoner Reentry

One of the goals of the NGA Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy is to assist states in building on and coordinating with other ongoing large-scale prisoner reentry projects. NGA has done this by including representatives from these organizations as faculty members for the academy meetings; by encouraging academy states to coordinate with other initiatives during their strategic planning process; and by including representatives from these organizations in providing technical assistance.

The following provide brief overviews of these organizations.

### Urban Institute

[Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center](#) (JPC) manages a [portfolio](#) of prisoner reentry projects and research designed to advance knowledge and identify effective methods of reintegrating offenders with their families and communities. NGA also brought the Urban Institute on as a partner to the Prisoner Reentry Academy and commissioned a series of "snapshots" of what prisoner reentry looks like in these states. Click [here](#) to read more about reentry in the states.

Two projects, in particular, are worth noting:

- [Reentry Roundtable](#). Urban's Reentry Roundtable aims to sharpen the nation's thinking on sentencing and prisoner reintegration, as well as to foster policy innovations that will improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities. The Institute has convened the roundtable a number of times since 2000. Initial meetings informed the development of a research agenda on reentry. Subsequent discussions explored the nexus between reentry and the institutions of civil society, employment, public health, and youth development. Other roundtables addressed the role of community policing in promoting successful reentry; the role of faith and faith institutions in reentry; and the connection between incarceration, reentry, and drug policy.
- [Reentry Mapping Network](#). Urban's Reentry Mapping Network partners with local jurisdictions in using mapping technologies to identify neighborhoods that experience high concentrations of returning prisoners and to examine the extent to which such communities are equipped to address the challenges that prisoner reentry creates. Network partners then use the analytical findings from the data to help mobilize community members and leaders to devise targeted responses to effectively address reentry related problems.

### Council of State Governments

The [Council of State Governments](#) (CSG), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization serving elected and appointed state government officials, is supporting two projects aimed at improving prisoner reentry and the services they receive while in institutions.

- **Reentry Policy Council.** Established in 2001, the [Reentry Policy Council](#) (RPC) brought together a bipartisan network of over one-hundred policymakers and practitioners from across the country with the goal of identifying policy recommendations to improve the likelihood that people leaving prisons and jails would have a successful reentry. The RPC was divided into three main advisory groups—public safety and restorative activities, supportive health and housing, and workforce development and employment opportunities. NGA is working with CSG to identify policy recommendations from the RPC that are most salient to Governors’ priorities. Read a report [preview](#).
- **Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project Report.** Similar to the RPC, the Mental Health Consensus Project brought together leading criminal justice and mental health policymakers and practitioners from across the country with the goal of identifying recommendations to improve the criminal justice system's response to people with mental illness. Read the [report](#).

### **The Federal Serious and Violent Offender Initiative**

The Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI), provides funding to develop, implement, enhance, and evaluate reentry strategies that will ensure the safety of the community and the reduction of serious, violent crime. SVORI is supported by the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) (DOJ), [Office of Justice Programs](#) (OJP) and [National Institute of Corrections](#) (NIC), and their federal partners: the [U.S. Departments of Education](#) (ED), [Health and Human Services](#) (HHS), [Housing and Urban Development](#) (HUD), [Labor](#) (DOL) and [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) (VA) and [Social Security Administration](#) (SSA).

To date, SVORI has invested more than \$120 million in designing and carrying out adult and juvenile reentry strategies in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands. These strategies were developed collaboratively by state departments of corrections and 69 communities. The initiative includes the development of model programs that first engage the offenders while incarcerated, and provide the necessary oversight and support services during the transition back into the community. SVORI allows communities to identify the current gaps in their reentry strategy and present a developmental vision for reentry that seeks to fill those gaps and sustain the overall strategy. Additionally, communities can enhance existing reentry strategies with training and technical assistance that will build community capacity to effectively, safely, and efficiently reintegrate returning offenders. Read more about [SVORI](#) and the ongoing [evaluation of SVORI](#).

### **The National GAINS Center for People with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System**

[The National GAINS Center for People with Co-Occurring Disorders in the Justice System](#) (GAINS) was created in 1995 as a national locus for the collection and dissemination of information about effective mental health and substance abuse services for people with co-occurring disorders in contact with the justice system. GAINS’ primary focus is on expanding access to community based services for adult and juvenile offenders with co-occurring disorders.

Although designed primarily for reentry from jails, GAINS has developed a model for reentry that may have applicability elsewhere. The APIC Model is a set of critical elements that, if implemented, are likely to improve outcomes for persons with co-occurring disorders who are released from jail. APIC emphasizes four core elements—assess, plan, identify, coordinate. Read more about [The APIC Model](#).

### **National Institute of Corrections**

The [National Institute of Corrections’](#) (NIC) Transition from Prison to Community Initiative (TPCI) aims to help states improve offenders’ transition from prison to communities. The main goals of TPCI are to promote public safety by reducing the threat of harm to persons and their property by returning offenders and by increasing the success rates of returning offenders by fostering effective risk management and treatment programming; offender accountability, and community and victim participation.

TPCI is based on the following premises:

- Corrections, law enforcement and human service agencies are stakeholders in the transition process. These stakeholders need to articulate and promote common interests, integrate and coordinate policies, and develop mutual ownership of an improved transition process;
- Stakeholders should freely share information relating to transition within and among stakeholders' organizations;
- Transition should be built upon proven reforms and best practices;
- Transition reforms should be affordable, transferable, and adaptable;
- Basic transition reforms should apply to all imprisoned offenders, including those given discretionary release and those who leave at the end of their prison terms; and,
- The allocation of resources for programming, supervision and services should vary directly with the level of risk that those groups of offenders pose.

Read more about [TCPI](#).

## State and Local Initiatives

In addition to large-scale efforts, NGA is also working with a number of leading state and local initiatives, including the following.

### La Bodega de la Familia

[La Bodega de la Familia](#), or "the Family Grocery," is an innovative approach that relies on an integrated system of Family Case Management (FCM) to mobilize families in order to improve community supervision outcomes and family well-being. This innovative approach brings together the individual being supervised, family members, the supervision officer (police, parole, or probation, or a court officer in the case of drug courts), and treatment providers to identify the family's assets and to build a network of healthy relationships around the family.

Using the tools of the FCM model, including family visits, supportive inquiry, the family assessment, and family and systems mapping (also called genograms and ecomaps), treatment teams work together to develop a concrete family action plan. The plan sets forth goals and objectives for each team member, service interventions to be undertaken by the family case manager and the supervising agent, and strategies for dealing with family crises that might lead to increased stress, relapse, and incarceration.

La Bodega de la Familia is a component of [Family Justice Inc.](#), a national, nonprofit organization that aims to improve how families and communities are utilized as a resource for helping individuals succeed under community-based supervision. Family Justice's mission is to identify, apply, and disseminate effective practices in using family supports to improve the success of individuals under justice system supervision and, in so doing, to enhance the well-being of their families.

### Women's Prison Association

[The Women's Prison Association & Home, Inc.](#) (WPA) is a nonprofit agency working to create opportunities for change in the lives of women prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families. WPA provides programs through which women acquire life skills needed to end involvement in the criminal justice system and to make positive, healthy choices for themselves and their families. WPA has a 160 year tradition of public information and advocacy designed to ameliorate jail and prison conditions for women. WPA also strives to increase public awareness of, and support for, effective, community-based responses to crime.

Every year WPA serves 2000 women and 300 children. Fifteen hundred women are served while in a correctional facility and 500 are served in the community. WPA's goal is for clients to lead drug-free, crime-

free lives; establish stable residences; take care of their children; earn living wages and contribute to the community. WPA's programs are designed to provide a holistic, comprehensive continuum of care to women and their children and families. WPA emphasizes:

- Self-reliance through the development of independent living skills
- Self-empowerment and peer support
- Client involvement in the community
- Assistance from dedicated staff, advisors, and volunteer

### **The Rhode Island Family Life Center**

[The Rhode Island Family Life Center](#) (FLC) is a private non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide support for the reintegration of ex-offenders into the community. The organization's goals are to:

- Stabilize offenders returning to the community so that they are less likely to recidivate.
- Strengthen families to help offenders reintegrate and reconnect with their loved ones.
- Tighten the weave of the fabric of the community to create an environment that discourages criminal behavior.

FLC utilized a holistic, family-based approach to support offenders as they prepare to leave prison and return home. FLC will begin to work with clients while they are still incarcerated and then offer a one-stop service center for them (and their families) for up to eighteen months after release.

In addition to supporting individual families and ex-offenders, the Family Life Center also advocates on behalf of communities affected by crime and incarceration and utilizes data analysis—including mapping where ex-offenders are returning—policy research, and community education.

### **Safer Foundation**

[The Safer Foundation](#) is a non-profit organization based in Chicago, Illinois that for the last 30 years has provided a range of direct care services to nearly 40,000 former and current inmates, both adults and juveniles. The Safer Foundation supports a range of services and programs aimed at helping ex-offenders gain the skills and education necessary to succeed in the workplace, including GED preparation, transitional jobs, and a network of locally-based employers and job counselors.

Safer also supports several adult transitional centers where Illinois inmates but are required to participate for a minimum of 35 hours per week in outside employment, education, life skills, and/or community service, while also assuming responsibility for daily in-house assignments. Residents of the transitional centers are provided with a range of services, including case-management services, cognitive therapies, mental health services, substance abuse treatment and family support services. A daily regimen of structured activities help residents develop a sense of responsibility and self-sufficiency, facilitate their ability to pay rent, restitution and taxes and provide opportunities to establish critical ties to family and community.