



FEDERAL INTERAGENCY

REENTRY COUNCIL

Working together for safer, healthier communities

The Federal Interagency Reentry Council: Reducing Barriers to Successful Reentry

Prepared for the
Second Chances and Safer Communities Conference

May 22, 2012
Washington, DC

Presentation Overview

Introduction to the Reentry Council

Amy Solomon, Department of Justice

Housing Barriers

Ron Ashford, Department of Housing and Urban Development

Employment Barriers

Todd Cox, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Gregg Weltz, Department of Labor

Access to Benefits and Treatment

Linda Mellgren, Department of Health and Human Services

Assistance to Veterans

Sean Clark, Department of Veterans Affairs

Questions/Suggestions

Marlene Beckman, Department of Justice

Why Create a Federal Reentry Council?

- Included in Second Chance Act / early versions
- Multifaceted issue - federal agencies already working with population
- Coordinate resources / align policies
- Leadership
- Remove federal barriers to successful reentry

Reentry Council Inaugural Meeting - January 5, 2011



Cabinet-level Interagency Reentry Council

- Attorney General convened first meeting in Jan. 2011
- 7 Cabinet members and other Administration leaders in attendance
- Adopted mission statement and goals
- Substantial commitments
- Empowered staff – representing 20 federal departments and agencies – to work towards goals
- Bi-annual meetings (September 2011 + May 2012)

Reentry Council Agencies

DOJ	DOL	ED	HHS	HUD
USDA	VA	DOI	DPC	WHFBN
FTC	OMB	SSA	OPM	USICH
IRS	ONDCP	CSOSA	EEOC	SBA

Reentry Council Mission Statement

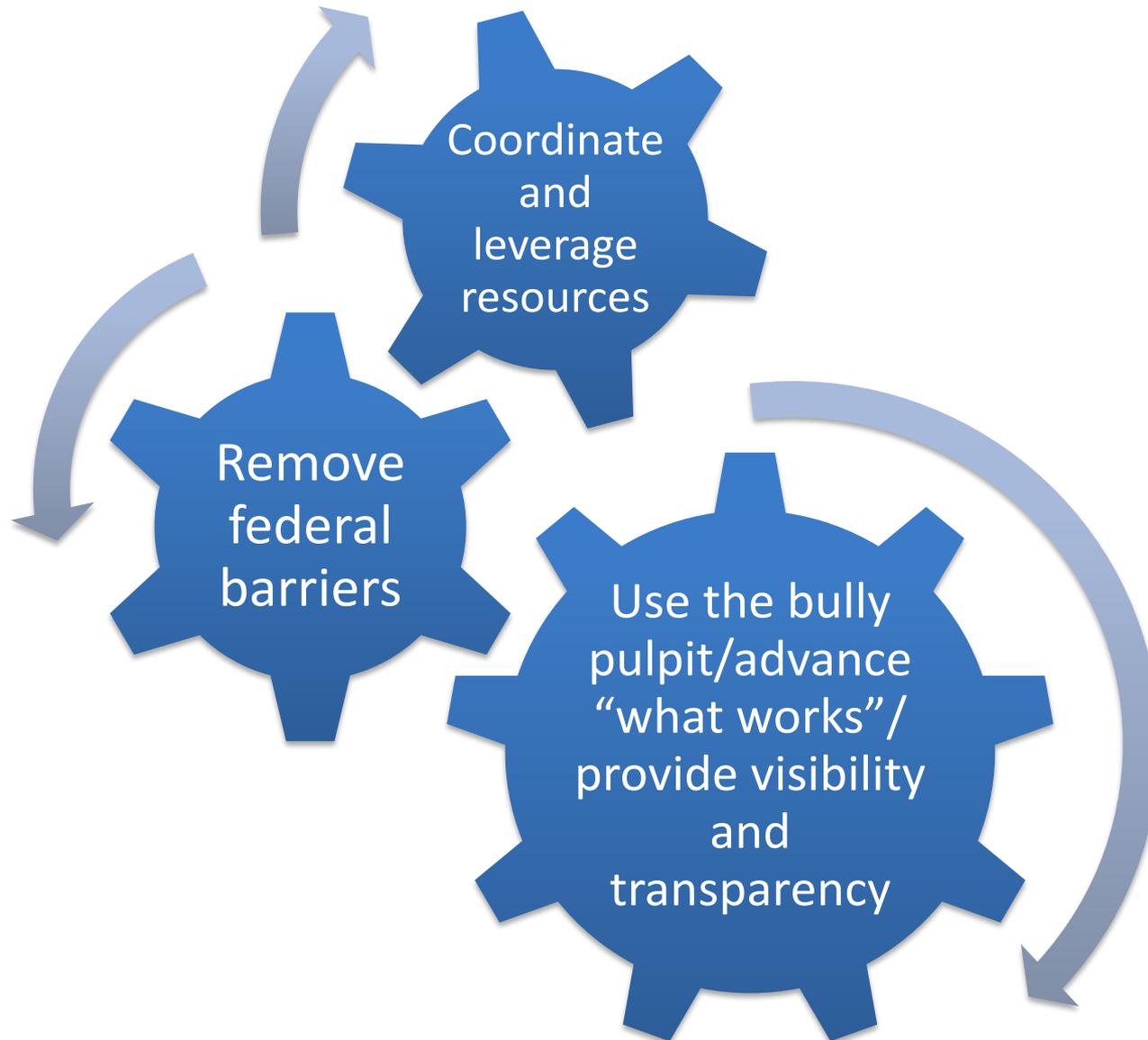
To support the Administration's efforts in advancing public safety and well-being through enhanced communication, coordination, and collaboration across Federal agency initiatives that:

1. Make communities safer by reducing recidivism and victimization;
2. Assist those returning from prison and jail in becoming productive citizens; and
3. Save taxpayer dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration.

Reentry Council Goals

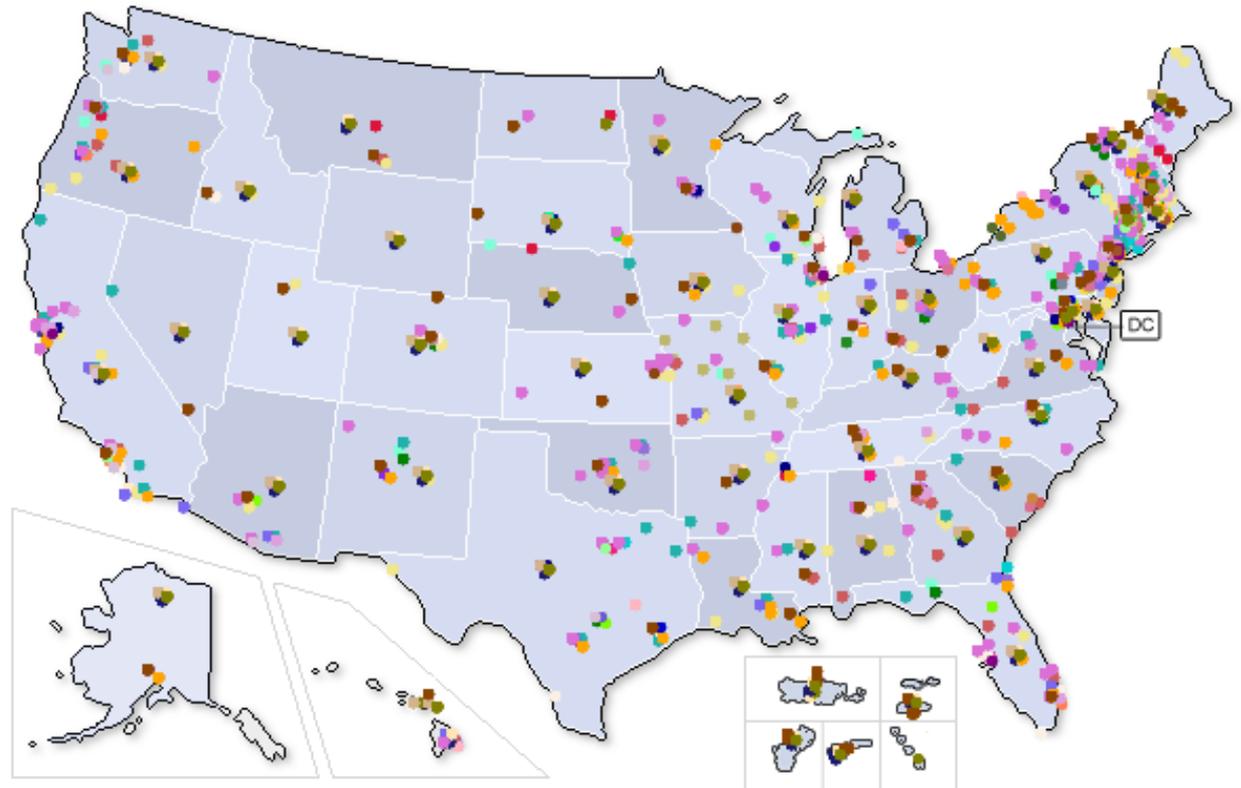
- To identify research and evidence-based practices, policies, and programs that advance the Reentry Council's mission around prisoner reentry and community safety.
- To identify Federal policy opportunities and barriers to improve outcomes for the reentry population.
- To promote Federal statutory, policy, and practice changes that focus on reducing crime and improving the well-being of formerly incarcerated individuals, their families and communities.
- To identify and support initiatives in the areas of education, employment, health, housing, faith, drug treatment, and family and community well-being that can contribute to successful outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- To leverage resources across agencies that support this population in becoming productive citizens, and reducing recidivism and victimization.
- To coordinate messaging and communications about prisoner reentry and the Administration's response to it.

What Can the Reentry Council Do To Make an Impact?



The Reentry Council is working to
Coordinate and Leverage Resources

**National Reentry
Resource
Center**
inventoried and
mapped major
federal reentry
resources
going to states
and localities



www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org

The Reentry Council is working to **Coordinate and Leverage Resources**

- Inventoried/mapped federal reentry investments
- Collaborative Reentry Solicitations
- Interagency Reentry Researcher Network
- Special populations:
 - Juveniles, Females, Fathers, Tribal, Fathers, Federal
 - Children of Incarcerated
- SCA conference
- Points of Contact Matrix

The Reentry Council working to Address Federal Barriers to Reentry



Public Housing



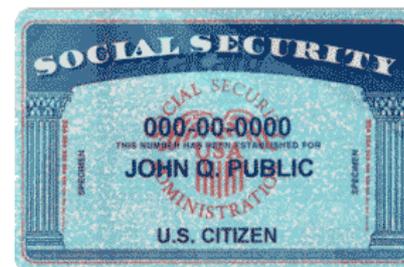
Barriers to Employment and Education



Veterans

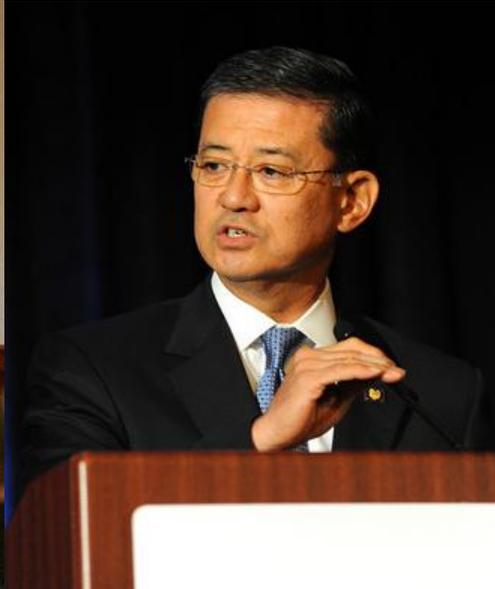
38,000

Collateral Consequences



Access to Benefits and Treatment

Using the Bully Pulpit to Advance the Reentry Agenda



The Reentry Council is working to Use the Bully Pulpit to Advance the Reentry Agenda



Reentry Council Website



Public Education Materials

www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/reentry-council

What are Myth Busters?

MYTH BUSTERS are a first product of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council.

They are **fact sheets**, designed to clarify existing federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated individuals and their families in areas such as public housing, access to benefits, parental rights, employer incentives, and more.

What are Myth Busters?

Each sheet addresses a common ‘myth’ about reentry, ranging from federal financial aid to employment issues.

It lists facts debunking the myth, answering common misperceptions...

...describes the details of each, including explanations of different state policies...

...and lists important suggestions and recommendations for readers.

At the end of the form, each sheet lists useful online resources.

REENTRY MYTH BUSTER!
A Product of the National Immigration Reentry Center

On Child Support

MYTH: Non-custodial parents who are incarcerated cannot have their child support orders reduced.

FACT: Half of all states have formalized processes for reducing child support orders during incarceration. Three-quarters of all states have laws that permit incarcerated parents to obtain a reduced or suspended support order.

Providing child support is an important responsibility for parents and non-custodial parents. Child support amount levels are set by guidelines that take into account parents' ability to pay. Child support orders are often associated with incarceration because parents who are incarcerated are unable to pay child support. However, many states have laws that allow incarcerated parents to request a reduction or suspension of their child support orders. In the range of \$45,000 to \$20,000.

Half of all states have the ability to suspend orders during periods of incarceration and 25 States have implemented formalized processes to reduce child support obligations. However, incarcerated parents in most states, an incarcerated non-custodial parent must file a request for a review of their order before any adjustments or modifications can be made.

Examples of state processes for incarcerated parents include:

- Orders set based on actual net (gross) income during incarceration. [11]
- If formal support agency notified that a non-custodial parent is incarcerated, it must review the order to determine whether it is appropriate under the guidelines and suspend it if needed. [12]
- Child support is reduced with respect to order, then modification request, and suspend enforcement. After release, a court hearing renews order. [13]
- Orders are reduced to zero if the parent is unable to make any payments, regardless of the amount of time, do more months and earn less than \$200/month. [10]

For more information:
Reentry Desk
<http://www.reentry.gov> and www.ice.dhs.gov will assist you in getting up to date on the latest information and use of the online tool:
<http://www.ice.dhs.gov/immigration-reentry-center>
Working with Immigrants and Refugees
<http://www.ice.dhs.gov/immigration-reentry-center>

What is a REENTRY MYTH BUSTER?

This myth buster is one in a series of fact sheets intended to clarify existing federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. Each year, more than 700,000 individuals are released from state and federal prisons, another 500,000 are released through local jails. While reentry into the social and economic systems can be challenging, many formerly incarcerated individuals are able to successfully reintegrate into society.

Because reentry intersects with health and housing, education and employment, family, faith, and community well-being, many federal agencies are focusing on initiatives for the reentry population. Under the auspices of the cabinet-level Interagency Reentry Council, federal agencies are working together to enhance community safety and well-being, assist those returning from prison and jail in becoming productive citizens, and increase job participation by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration.

For more information about the Reentry Council, go to www.reentry.gov or email reentry@ice.dhs.gov.

What topics are covered?

**CHILD
SUPPORT****FED'L
BONDING
PROGRAMS****SOCIAL
SECURITY
BENEFITS****PARENTAL
RIGHTS****TANF
BENEFITS****FED'L
STUDENT
FINANCIAL
AID****SNAP
BENEFITS****HIRING /
CRIMINAL
RECORDS****FED'L
HIRING
POLICIES****MEDICAID
ELIGIBILITY****VOTING
RIGHTS****VETERANS
BENEFITS****PUBLIC
HOUSING****WORK
OPPTY TAX
CREDIT****JUVENILE
RECORDS**

The Reentry Council working to Address Federal Barriers to Reentry



Public Housing



Barriers to Employment and Education



Veterans

38,000

Collateral Consequences



Access to Benefits

On Public Housing

myth **fact**

Individuals who have been convicted of a crime are “banned” from public housing.

Public Housing Authorities have great discretion in determining their admissions and occupancy policies for exoffenders. While PHAs can choose to ban ex-offenders from participating in public housing and Section 8 programs, it is not HUD policy to do so. In fact, in many circumstances, formerly incarcerated people should not be denied access.

“As President Obama recently made clear, this is an Administration that believes in the importance of second chances – that people who have paid their debt to society deserve the opportunity to become productive citizens and caring parents, to set the past aside and embrace the future. Part of that support means helping ex-offenders gain access to one of the most fundamental building blocks of a stable life – a place to live.”

Letter from Secretary Shaun Donovan and Assistant Secretary Sandra B. Henriquez to public housing authority directors, June 17, 2011.



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410-0001

THE SECRETARY

June 17, 2011

Dear PHA Executive Director:

Each year, more than half a million people are released from prisons in the United States, and an additional seven million are released from jails. Research shows that ex-offenders who do not find stable housing in the community are more likely to recidivate than those who do, yet people returning to their communities from prison often face significant barriers to obtaining housing. Studies have also found that the majority of people released from prison intend to return to their families, many of whom live in public or other subsidized housing.

The Department is engaged in several initiatives that seek a balance between allowing ex-offenders to reunite with families that live in HUD subsidized housing, and ensuring the safety of all residents of its programs. To that end, we would like to remind you of the discretion given to public housing agencies (PHAs) when considering housing people leaving the criminal justice system. The Department encourages you to allow ex-offenders to rejoin their families in the Public Housing or Housing Choice Voucher programs, when appropriate.

Within HUD statute and regulations, there are only two explicit bans on occupancy based on criminal activity. PHAs must establish a lifetime ban on admission to the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs for:

1. Individuals found to have manufactured or produced methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing (24 CFR 960.204, 24 CFR 982.553); and
2. Sex offenders subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program (24 CFR 960.204, 24 CFR 982.553).

Additionally, PHAs must establish standards that prohibit admission if the PHA determines that any household member is currently engaged in illegal use of a drug, or the PHA has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's illegal drug use, alcohol use, or pattern of drug or alcohol abuse may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. PHAs must also prohibit admission of an applicant for 3 years from the date of eviction if a household member has been evicted from federally assisted housing for drug-related criminal activity. In this case, however, PHAs retain discretion to consider the circumstances and may admit households if the PHA determines that the evicted household member who engaged in drug-related criminal activity has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program, including those supervised by drug courts, or that the circumstances leading to eviction no longer exist (24 CFR 960.204, 24 CFR 966.4, 24 CFR 982.553).

The Reentry Council working to Address Federal Barriers to Reentry



Public Housing



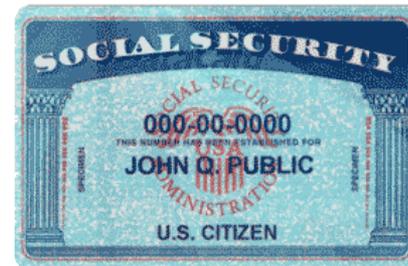
Barriers to Employment



Veterans

38,000

Collateral Consequences



Access to Benefits

Tackling Employment Barriers: Employer Responsibilities and Worker Rights

- EEOC Revised Guidance
- Pepsi Settlement
- Fair Credit Reporting Act
- Federal Employment



Barriers to Employment

Tackling Employment Barriers: Employer Incentives and Other Resources/Tools

- Federal Bonding
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit
- Grant Resources
- Training/guidance to grantees, staff, and contractors



Barriers to Employment

The Reentry Council working to Address Federal Barriers to Reentry



Public Housing



Barriers to Employment and Education



Veterans

38,000

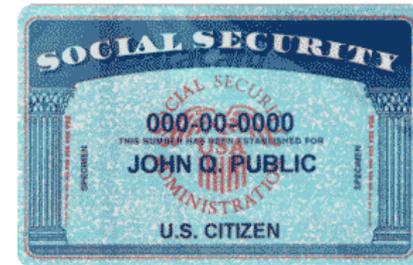
Collateral Consequences



Access to Benefits and Treatment

Access to Federal Benefits and Treatment

- 10 benefits-related MythBusters
 - Medicaid suspension vs termination
 - TANF, Social Security, SNAP benefits
 - Student financial aid
- Child Support
- Parental Rights
- Points of Contact Matrix



Access to Benefits
and Treatment

On Federal Student Financial Aid

myth fact

A person with a criminal record is not eligible to receive federal student financial aid.

Individuals who are currently incarcerated in a federal, state, or local correctional institution have some limited eligibility. In general, restrictions on federal student aid eligibility are removed for formerly incarcerated individuals (under parole, probation, or those residing in a halfway house).

[Click here to go to the Mythbuster!](#)

On Social Security Benefits

myth

Eligibility for Social Security benefits cannot be reinstated when an individual is released from incarceration.

fact

Social Security benefits are not payable if an individual is convicted of a criminal offense and confined. However, monthly benefits usually can be reinstated after a period of incarceration by contacting Social Security and providing proof of release.

[Click here to go to the Mythbuster!](#)

myth **fact**

Non-custodial parents who are incarcerated cannot have their child support orders reduced.

Half of all states have formalized processes for reducing child support orders during incarceration. Three-quarters of all states have laws that permit incarcerated parents to obtain a reduced or suspended support order.

[Click here to go to the Mythbuster!](#)

myth **fact**

Child welfare agencies are required to terminate parental rights if a parent is incarcerated.

Important exceptions to the requirement to terminate parental rights provide child welfare agencies and states with the discretion to work with incarcerated parents, their children and the caregivers to preserve and strengthen family relationships.

[Click here to go to the Mythbuster!](#)

myth

A parent with a felony conviction cannot receive TANF/welfare.

fact

The 1996 Welfare ban applies only to convicted drug felons, and ^{Linda} only eleven states have kept the ban in place in its entirety. Most states have modified or eliminated the ban.

myth **fact**

Individuals convicted of a felony can never receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) benefits.

This ban applies only to convicted drug felons, and only thirteen States have kept the ban in place in its entirety. Most States have modified or eliminated the ban.

[Click here to go to the Mythbuster!](#)

On Medicaid Suspension vs. Termination

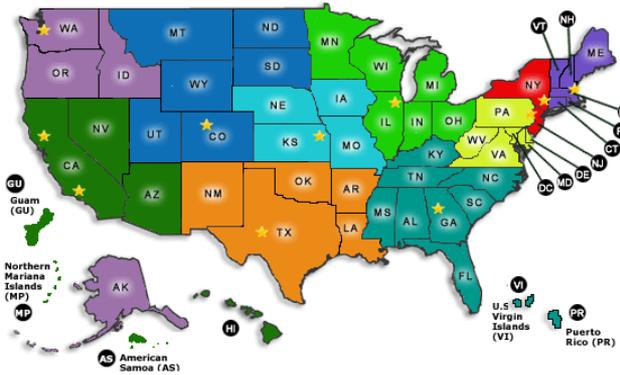
myth fact

Medicaid agencies are required to terminate benefits if an otherwise eligible individual is incarcerated.

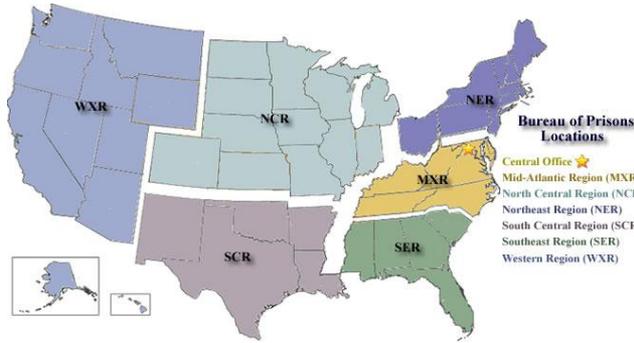
States are not required to terminate eligibility for individuals who are incarcerated based solely on inmate status. States may suspend eligibility during incarceration, enabling an individual to remain enrolled in the state Medicaid program, thereby facilitating access to Medicaid services following release.

[Click here to go to the Mythbuster!](#)

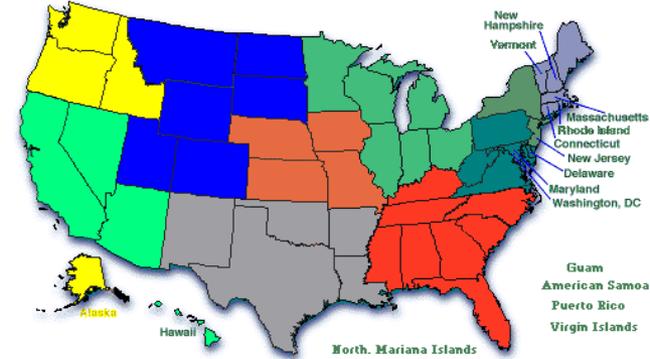
Coordinating Federal Resources



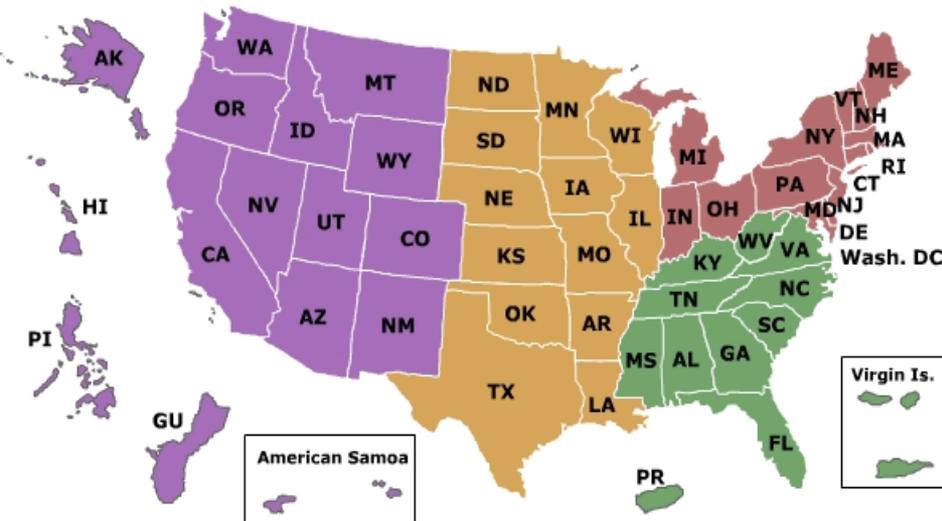
HUD



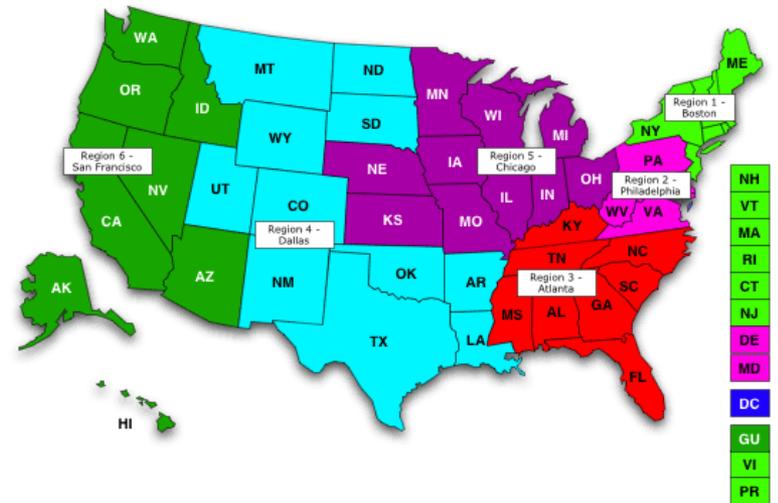
FBOP



Social Security



Veterans Benefits



DOL-ETA

The Reentry Council working to Address Federal Barriers to Reentry



Public Housing



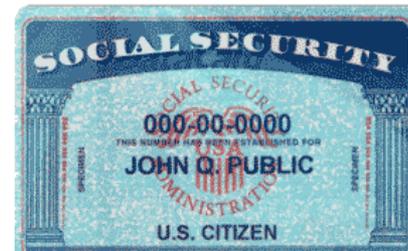
Barriers to Employment and Education



Veterans

38,000

Collateral Consequences



Access to Benefits

Assistance to Veterans

- Earlier access to incarcerated veterans
- Healthcare in community corrections settings
- Outreach Videos
- Legal Services



Veterans

Reentry Council Links

Reentry Council Website

<http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/reentry-council>

Reentry Council One-Pager

http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/documents/0000/1424/Reentry_Council_Overview_one-pager.pdf

Reentry MythBusters

http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/documents/0000/1090/REENTRY_MYTHBUSTERS.pdf

AG letter on Collateral Consequences

http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/documents/0000/1088/Reentry_Council_AG_Letter.pdf

HUD Secretary Letters

http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/documents/0000/1126/HUD_letter_6.23.11.pdf

http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/documents/0000/1344/3.30.12_MFamily_properties_Reentry_memo_6_2_.pdf

DOL Training and Employment Notice

http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/ten2011/TEN08_11acc.pdf

EEOC Updated Guidance

http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/arrest_conviction.cfm

Questions?

Suggestions?