

Venturing beyond the Gates

Facilitating Successful Reentry with Entrepreneurship

Nicole Lindahl

with assistance from Debbie A. Mukamal

**Prisoner Reentry Institute
at John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

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The Prisoner Reentry Institute was established in February of 2005 by Jeremy Travis, a national expert on prisoner reentry issues and the President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice. The mission of the Prisoner Reentry Institute is to spur innovation and improve practice in the field of reentry by advancing knowledge; translating research into effective policy and service delivery; and fostering effective partnerships between criminal justice and non-criminal justice disciplines.

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Dear Colleagues:

We are pleased to share with you this monograph, aimed to stimulate interest, ignite conversation and spur momentum for a national initiative promoting entrepreneurship as a reentry strategy. The rising number of individuals returning to our communities from prison and jail represents one of the defining issues of our time. Individuals reentering society face myriad challenges, not the least of which is securing viable employment; in addition, each individual has a unique set of experiences, needs and resources. This project stems from the understanding that to effectively address the unique characteristics of and challenges facing people reentering society, the best and brightest minds from a diverse array of fields must collaborate to develop a spectrum of approaches and solutions.

To this end, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation granted support to the Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to convene a series of Conversations between experts in the fields of entrepreneurship, criminal justice and workforce development, including academics, practitioners, funders, policymakers and formerly incarcerated entrepreneurs. During these Conversations – held in New York, NY and San Diego, CA in Fall 2006 – participants identified challenges and opportunities, grappled with complex questions regarding program design and sustainability and produced innovative ideas for a national initiative promoting self-employment among formerly incarcerated individuals. The discussions were rich and productive, and the ideas they generated serve as the conceptual framework for this monograph.

The monograph is designed to develop a vocabulary with which criminal justice and microenterprise representatives can effectively communicate, to address skepticism about the viability of entrepreneurship for this population and to equip both fields with the knowledge and tools to develop and sustain projects without reinventing the wheel. It begins with a background containing key information, terminology and statistics on the criminal justice system, entrepreneurship and microenterprise development. It then introduces five opportunities for facilitating successful reentry with entrepreneurship. These opportunities are infused with relevant research, case studies and examples, as well as profiles of thriving businesses founded by formerly incarcerated entrepreneurs. Finally, it provides a set of practical tools for the development of pilot projects and initiatives: resources for leveraging funding streams; contact points for state and local agencies that must be at the table to launch and sustain an effective project; and ideas for innovative program design provided through profiles of programs currently customizing business development services for people with criminal records.

Promoting self-employment among people coming home from prison will be challenging; it will require creativity, perseverance and the ability of professionals across fields to break down cultural barriers to build productive relationships. However, the inspiring stories and examples shared in this monograph demonstrate the potential that an initiative represents for individuals returning home from prison, their families and our communities. We hope the information, strategies and tools contained within will serve as a catalyst for the conversations that must occur to truly take advantage of this potential.

Robert Litan

Vice President of Research and Policy
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation

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Introduction

The phrase “*mass incarceration*” is now widely used to describe the current state of criminal justice in the United States. Over the past generation, this country’s rate of incarceration has more than quadrupled, rising every year since 1972, now exceeding 735 per 100,000 people (Harrison and Beck 2006). This growth has earned the U.S. the dubious distinction of incarcerating more people per capita than any other country in the world (Walmsley 2005).

Not surprisingly, the number of people reentering the community from prison has soared. Nearly everyone who goes to prison or jail eventually comes home. A high concentration of formerly incarcerated persons (FIPs)¹ return to impoverished communities ill-equipped to provide the resources and services they and their families may need to smoothly transition into society. Among FIPs’ most important short- and long-term needs is securing a job. But legal and practical barriers often prevent FIPs from accessing employment to earn a living wage and move out of or avoid poverty.

As the nation struggles to address the social and economic consequences of mass incarceration, entrepreneurship has emerged as a viable alternative to traditional employment opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals all over the world. The microenterprise development field, in particular, has demonstrated success assisting the hard-to-employ (e.g. welfare recipients, people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees) transcend poverty through business start-up and development. As more and more people return from prison, many lacking educational and vocational skills necessary to compete in today’s labor market, entrepreneurship may represent a means of capitalizing on an underutilized pool of human resources.

While self-employment may not be a viable option for many individuals leaving prison, exposure to entrepreneurship training can play an important role in fostering successful reentry. A small percentage may have the resources and mindset to use entrepreneurship as the key to their successful reintegration, either as their sole form of employment, or in addition to a traditional job. Others will open a business once they have achieved reentry stability through other forms of employment. For many, because entrepreneurial thinking is infused with the philosophy of empowerment, exposure to entrepreneurial training will reshape their perspective

¹ The development of a sophisticated and accurate lexicon within the reentry field is an issue of growing importance. Primarily as a result of education and advocacy efforts of individuals with direct experience in the criminal justice system, the reentry field increasingly understands the need to use terms acknowledging the humanity of people affected by the criminal justice system as well as terms that accurately convey an individual’s passage through it. The field needs language reflecting not only the experiences of people incarcerated for their crimes but also those who have a criminal record and have received a community sentence. Accordingly, this monograph avoids terms like “*ex-offender*,” “*ex-felon*” and “*ex-convict*” since they narrowly define people by one of many life experiences; instead several terms are used, including formerly incarcerated person (FIP) and person with a criminal record. Until a commonly agreed upon lexicon is developed, we acknowledge this language may be awkward and overly general.

on their role in society. These individuals may never become entrepreneurs themselves, but will use their entrepreneurship training to improve their performance as employees and to proactively engage with their families and communities.

Consequently, even if only a tiny fraction of the vast number of people returning home from prison pursued self-employment, it could make a significant impact. If between one and seven percent of people leaving state or federal prison next year started their own businesses (i.e., the percentage of welfare-to-work participants who start businesses in addition to or instead of securing traditional employment), 6,500 to 45,000 new businesses would be created in the United States.

Nationwide, many FIPs currently operate thriving businesses, and many microenterprise professionals work with currently and formerly incarcerated individuals to develop and grow their businesses. At the same time, representatives from the field of criminal justice are hungry for fresh approaches to prisoner reentry, and the nation's attention is focused on questioning the last several decades of mass incarceration and effectively addressing the challenges posed by prisoners returning home. Now is an opportune moment to take advantage of several opportunities that might emerge from collaboration between the fields of entrepreneurship and reentry:

- **Cultivate:** Foster individual and community empowerment through self-employment.
- **Collaborate:** Build relationships among and leverage the expertise, resources and structure of microenterprise programs, reentry programs, correctional agencies and other partners.
- **Educate:** Create synergy between the microenterprise and criminal justice fields by debunking myths and developing a common vocabulary.
- **Innovate:** Think creatively about modifying existing services and structures to address reentry challenges and support a spectrum of successful outcomes.
- **Initiate, Evaluate, Disseminate and Advocate:** Institutionalize an infrastructure to support and sustain a national initiative on entrepreneurship and reentry over an extended period of time.

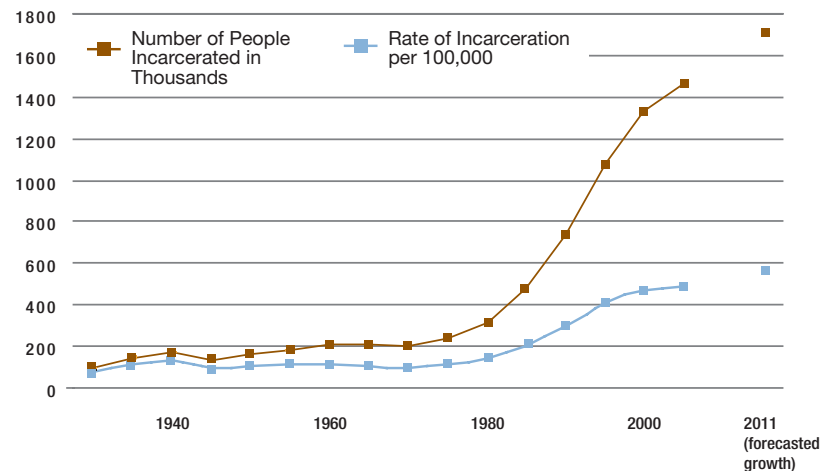
The information, case studies and stories contained in this monograph aim to inspire professionals across entrepreneurship, workforce development and criminal justice fields to recognize and embrace entrepreneurship and self-employment as appropriate and valuable tools for reintegration. Given the size of the population returning home from prison and jail, we cannot afford to ignore their potential as resources for community and economic development; nor can we overlook the opportunity that entrepreneurship represents as a path to financial stability and engaged citizenship.

Incarceration and Reentry 101

Reentry refers to the process of leaving prison or jail and returning to society irrespective of the method of release or form of supervision, if any. With the exception of those who die of natural causes, are executed or serve life sentences without the possibility of being released on parole, people incarcerated in prison and jail eventually reenter society.

- Today, more than 2.3 million individuals are incarcerated in state and federal prisons and local jails (Harrison and Beck 2006).
- This year alone, 650,000 people will return home from state or federal prison (Office of Justice Programs n.d.), and another nine million will cycle in and out of local jails (Osborne and Solomon 2006).
- A recent study forecasts the state and federal prison population will increase by nearly 200,000 in the next five years (JFA Institute 2007).

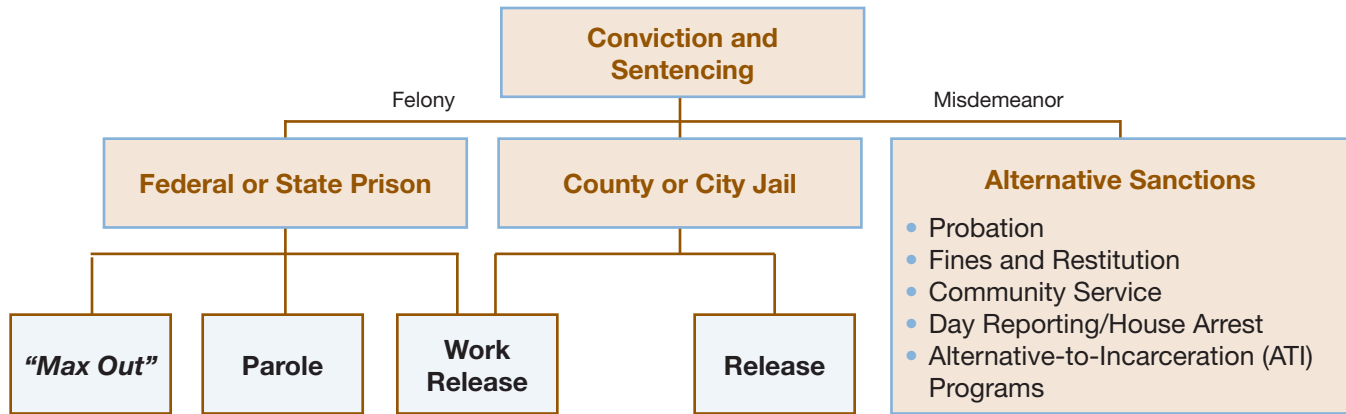
Growth of the State and Federal Prison Population



Source: JFA Institute (2007); Bureau of Justice Statistics (2005)

As the number of people going to prison has risen in our country, so has the number of people leaving prison. Facing myriad challenges, the unfortunate likelihood is that many will end up back in prison or jail within three years of returning home. Nationally, two-thirds of prisoners are re-arrested and nearly 52 percent are re-incarcerated for a new crime or a violation of their release supervision requirements within three years of release (Langan and Levin 2002). This cycle of incarceration inflicts enormous financial, social and emotional costs on victims, families and communities.

Pathways through the Criminal Justice System



Felony

A crime typically considered serious, such as murder, aggravated assault, rape, battery, arson and some levels of drug possession. Conviction for a felony generally results in more than one year of incarceration in a state or federal prison.

Misdemeanor

A crime typically considered less serious, such as petty theft, prostitution, disorderly conduct, trespassing, vandalism and minor drug possession. Conviction for a misdemeanor generally results in less than one year of incarceration in jail or probation.

“Max Out”

Release from prison without post-release supervision.

Community Corrections

Parole: A system of supervision under which individuals are released from state or federal prison, lasting from a designated number of months to years. While on parole, individuals must meet certain conditions, such as abiding by curfews, seeking and maintaining employment and/or participating in drug testing and substance abuse treatment.

Alternative Sanctions: Individuals who commit misdemeanors and some felonies may be sentenced to an alternative sanction to divert them from incarceration. Common alternative sanctions include supervision by a probation officer and community service. In the past several years, some jurisdictions have developed alternative-to-incarceration (ATI) programs, emphasizing drug treatment, education and career development, among other rehabilitative services.

Work Release

Work release provides incarcerated individuals close to their release date with the opportunity to work in the community while they are housed in a correctional facility. Work release acts as a transition from incarceration to the community.

Recidivism

Recidivism refers to the re-arrest, re-conviction and/or re-incarceration of an individual. Re-incarceration can occur due to violation of post-release supervision requirements or commitment of a new crime. To draw attention to high re-incarceration rates, the metaphor “*revolving door*” is often used to describe the correctional system in the United States.

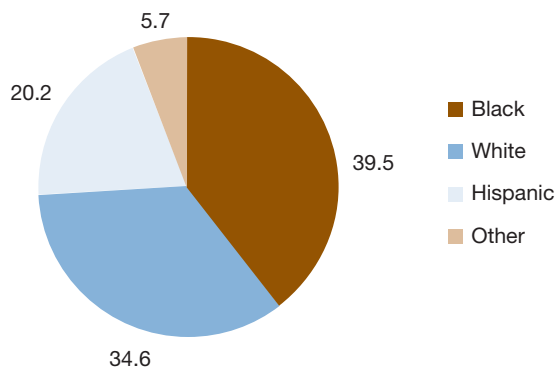
Incarceration Trends and Demographics

Incarceration and its collateral reentry effects do not occur evenly across communities, classes or races. In fact, the demographic disparities are large and growing.

Race

- Sixty percent of state and federal prisoners belong to racial or ethnic minorities (Harrison and Beck 2006).
- In an analysis of 2005 data on individuals incarcerated in prisons and jails (Harrison and Beck 2006), the Sentencing Project reported that the national incarceration rate for whites was 418 per 100,000, as compared to 2,290 for African Americans and 742 for Hispanics (Mauer and King 2007).

**State and Federal Prisoners in 2005
Racial Breakdown
(Percentages)**

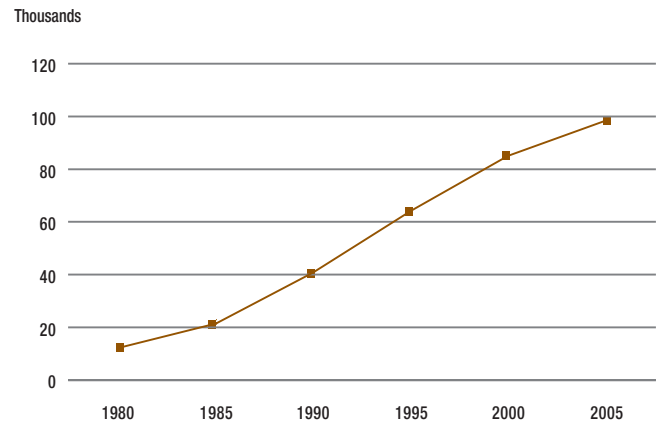


Source: Harrison and Beck (2006)

Gender

- Women comprise seven percent of the state prison population but also represent the fastest growing portion of the incarcerated population (Harrison and Beck 2006).
- In 1980, the U.S. imprisoned 12,331 women in state correctional facilities (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2005). By 2005, that number had ballooned to 98,602 (ibid), an increase of nearly 700 percent.

**State Female Prison Population
1980-2005**



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics (2005)

Educational Attainment

- A national assessment of adult literacy levels in 2003 found that incarcerated individuals had lower average prose, document and quantitative literacy levels than non-incarcerated adults. A higher percentage of the incarcerated population exhibited “below basic” quantitative literacy (39 percent compared with 21 percent), indicating at most an ability to perform simple operations using concrete and familiar mathematical information (Greenberg, Dunleavy, Kutner and White 2007).
- In 2003, 41 percent of individuals in state and federal prisons and local jails had less than a high school education, compared to 18 percent of the general population age 18 and over (Harlow 2003).
- Mass incarceration has had the largest impact on non-college educated African American men. Findings from 2004 show that among African American men born in the late 1960s who received no more than a high school education, 30 percent served time in prison by their mid-thirties; 60 percent of high school dropouts had prison records (Western 2006).

Demographics of the State and Federal Prison Population Year End 2005 (Percentages)

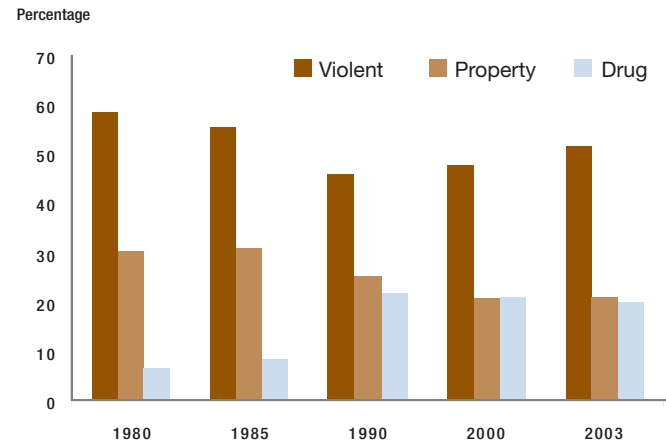
Age	Gender		Educational Attainment ²			
	Male	Female	8 th Grade or Less	GED/High School Diploma	Some College	College Graduate or More
18-24	16.8	0.9	16.3	44.8	3.6	0.1
25-34	32.1	2.2	12.1	50.9	8.3	1.5
35-44	26.9	2.5	12.7	31.3	11.3	3.0
45+	17.3	1.2	20.7	44.4	14.2	6.9

Source: Harrison and Beck (2006); Harlow (2003)

Type of Crime

- In 2005, approximately half of state prisoners were sentenced for a violent crime and 40 percent for a property or drug offense (Harrison and Beck 2006).
- Between 1980 and 2000, drug arrests increased by 170 percent, unlike arrests for violent crimes and property crimes (Western 2006).

State Prisoners 1980-2003 by Offense Type



Source: Harrison and Beck (2006); Beck and Gilliard (1995)

² The most recent data available on educational attainment for correctional populations are based on a survey of individuals incarcerated in state prisons in 1997 (see Harlow 2003).

The Consequences of Mass Incarceration

It is impossible to analyze and appreciate the consequences of mass incarceration and prisoner reentry without taking into account the families and communities from which people in prison come and to which they return.

Communities

The acute concentration of people cycling in and out of prison and jail in certain communities has led some criminal justice experts to coin the term “*million dollar blocks*.” This term refers to city blocks where the cost of incarcerating residents in prison or jail exceeds \$1 million per block. In Brooklyn, NY, for example, researchers have documented over 35 million dollar blocks, with the price tag for some surpassing \$5 million (Gonnerman 2004). Each dollar spent on corrections is a dollar unavailable for education and social and health services.

Mass incarceration can contribute to heightened social disorganization in impoverished communities by weakening community structures. Incarceration and bias in law enforcement practices generate cynicism and alienation from law enforcement, reduce social cohesion and trust, eliminate or defer voters and suppress the political participation of those returning to communities already lacking resources and political clout (Rose and Clear 1998).

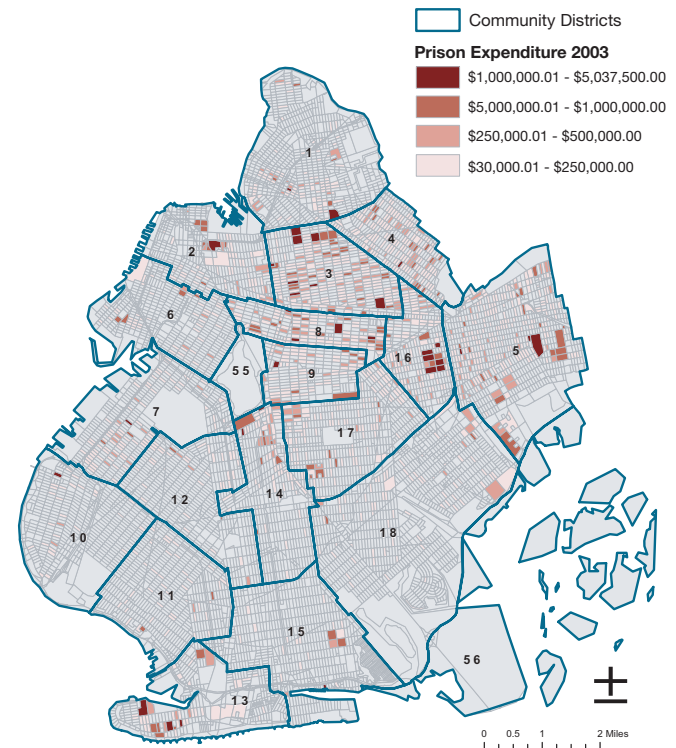
In addition, individuals returning home often carry public health risks for their communities.

- In 1997, 20 to 26 percent of all people living with HIV in the U.S. passed through a correctional facility (Hammett, Harmon and Rhodes 2002).
- Forty percent of those with tuberculosis and 29

to 43 percent of those with Hepatitis C were also incarcerated at some point during the same year (ibid).

- Among state prisoners, 73 percent of women and 55 percent of men report having a mental health problem (James and Glaze 2006).

Prison Expenditure by Block
Brooklyn, New York



Courtesy: Eric Cadora and Charles Schwarz
Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (2003)

Families

- Incarceration disrupts and disturbs family cohesiveness. For example, women whose male partners are incarcerated often have to take secondary employment, reducing time for parenting (Rose and Clear 1998). In addition to removing an important source of financial support, incarceration imposes additional expenses such as sending money to the incarcerated family member, accepting collect calls from prison and traveling long and expensive distances to visit (Smith, Grimshaw, Romeo and Knapp 2007).
- While issues regarding non-custodial parenthood make it difficult to calculate the exact number of children impacted by incarceration, it is estimated at least 1.5 million children under the age of 18 currently have a parent in prison, and over 10 million children have had a parent incarcerated at some point in their lives (Mumola 2000). Incarceration separates children from their incarcerated parents, and has been associated with decreased self-esteem as well as increased risk of juvenile delinquency, poor school performance, incidence of depression and anxiety and aggressiveness (Lengyel and Harris 2003).

Economic Impact

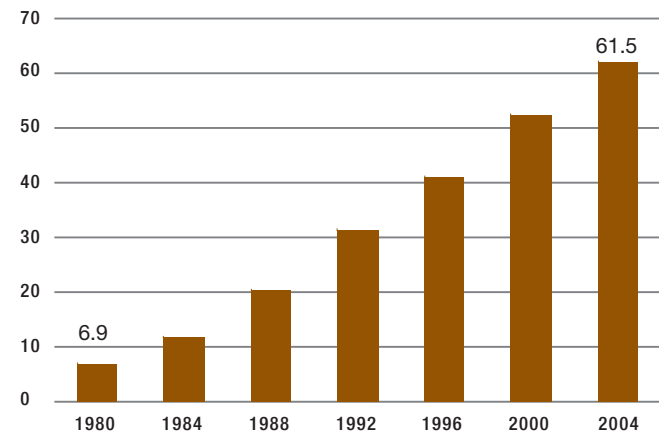
Significant portions of state budgets are now invested in the criminal justice system. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports expenditures on state corrections departments rose from \$6.9 billion in 1980 (BJS 2006a) to nearly \$62 billion in 2004 (BJS 2006b), nearly an 800 percent increase.

The impact of incarceration on the labor market is equally severe. Imprisonment itself prevents hundreds of thousands of people from participating in the labor force and from contributing to the economy, resulting

in reduced tax revenue and productivity.

On an individual level, audit studies in Milwaukee, WI and New York, NY found that a criminal record is associated with a 50 percent reduction in employment opportunities for whites and 64 percent for African Americans (Pager 2003).

**Total State Corrections Expenditures
1980-2004
(Billions of Dollars)**



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics (2006a and 2006b)

Recent Developments in the Reentry Movement

Reentry as an Emerging Policy Field

Identifying effective ways to stem the devastating impact of crime by successfully reintegrating people into their communities represents a formidable challenge – one our nation’s policymakers are struggling to address.

- In his 2004 State of the Union address, President Bush declared “*America is the land of second chances, and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life*” (Bush 2004).
- Also in 2004, a coalition of 37 Senators and 114 U.S. Representatives cosponsored the **Second Chance Act**, which would authorize research and demonstration projects, establish an interagency taskforce on federal programs and activities and launch a national resource center on a broad range of reentry issues. The legislation has been reintroduced in 2007 and continues to enjoy broad bipartisan support.
- A number of federal initiatives fund youth and adult demonstration projects aimed at improving reentry outcomes by providing mentorship and employment services to returning prisoners through community- and faith-based organizations.
- Many cities and states have established interagency coalitions, recognizing that to address reentry successfully, many sectors and agencies must be at the table, coordinating service delivery, resources and policies.

While the reentry field has garnered national attention in the past several years, individuals and organizations in the criminal justice field have been working for decades to provide self-development opportunities for incarcerated individuals and to address the challenges facing them when they return home. Following are examples of emerging innovative trends and programs.

Alternatives to Incarceration

The development of alternatives to incarceration is based on the philosophy that providing individuals convicted of certain offenses with access to services such as employment training and drug treatment may be a more effective strategy to prevent recidivism than incarceration. To curb reliance on incarceration and emphasize treatment, jurisdictions have increased the use of alternative sanctions such as alternative-to-incarceration (ATI) programs and drug courts. These program models allow for an individual to complete employment training, education or drug treatment while under supervision in the community.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an approach focusing on repairing and resolving the harm experienced by the community due to crime by bringing together all the stakeholders – the person convicted of the crime, victim and community. Restorative justice principles typically hold that a justice system should show equal concern and commitment to victims and people who commit crimes, involving both in the process of justice; work towards the restoration of victims, empowering them and responding to their needs; support people who commit crimes while encouraging them to understand, accept and carry out their obligations;

and involve and empower the affected community through the justice process, increasing its capacity to recognize and respond to community sources of crime (Zehr and Mika 1998). Reentry courts – which bring together the person convicted of a crime, the judiciary, government agencies and various community stakeholders to address the reintegration of an individual – exemplify the application of restorative justice principles within the reentry context.

Reentry Programs Operating within Prisons

Community- and faith-based reentry programs within prisons help individuals prepare for release. They identify housing arrangements and provide links to employment, health and educational services in the community. These programs may offer vocational training, education opportunities and self-development courses, such as parenting, anger management, life skills, nutrition, financial planning and creative writing, among others. In some facilities, administrators have established separate housing units for these programs, creating a focused and supportive environment where individuals can dedicate themselves to their courses and prepare for release.

Reentry Programs with an Employment Focus

In recognition of the importance of and obstacles to employment during the reentry process, numerous government agencies and community- and faith-based organizations have developed specialized programs to provide job skills training and placement services to people with criminal records.

The **Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)**, a workforce development organization in New York, NY, is dedicated to providing immediate, effective and comprehensive employment services to men and women returning home from prison and detention

facilities. The CEO model consists of job readiness training, paid transitional employment, long-term job placement and post-placement services. Clients are matched with a job counselor who provides holistic services throughout the process, including intensive counseling for struggling participants; conflict mediation; assistance obtaining clothing, food vouchers, housing, banking services, childcare and health care referrals; and bilingual services. Within two to three months, 60 percent of CEO participants who begin a job search are placed in permanent jobs. Source: <http://www.ceoworks.org/jobplacement.htm>.

The **Safer Foundation**, based in Chicago, IL, has worked for over 30 years to reduce recidivism by helping people with records obtain employment and social services. The Safer Foundation's philosophy is based on respect for the individual by tailoring services to best meet individual needs. Services include specialized assessment and the development of a client-specific plan of action directing the client to employment services, education programs and intensive case management.

In January 2004, Safer established the Sheridan Job Preparedness/Placement Program within Sheridan Correctional Institution, focusing exclusively on drug treatment and reentry preparation. Since April 2004, 1,150 individuals have participated in the Safer External Job Preparedness/Placement Program following their release. Forty-five percent of eligible clients are currently employed. Of these, 69 percent are working full-time and 45 percent obtained their jobs within 30 days of release. Sheridan participants see an average starting wage of \$9.94, and recidivism and arrest rates of Sheridan clients are more than 50 percent lower than those released from other prisons in Illinois during the same time period. Source: <http://www.saferfoundation.org/viewpage.asp?id=387>.

Entrepreneurship 101

Entrepreneurship refers to the process of starting a business venture with the aim of becoming self-sufficient.

Entrepreneurship is broadly applied to describe a variety of undertakings, ranging from innovative, high-growth ventures to much simpler forms of self-employment. Some definitions place strong emphasis on innovation, others on wealth creation. However, the term is also used to simply describe a method of generating income in lieu of or in addition to traditional employment.

Research shows that adversity plays a major role in spurring enterprise-building. Thus, the poor, the under-educated, minorities and immigrants are often at the forefront of entrepreneurial activity around the world. Studies of the informal (i.e., licit but unregulated) economy found that small enterprises have a “*strong and natural presence*,” pointing to higher entrepreneurial tendencies among those facing barriers to the traditional labor market (Thetford and Edgcomb 2004).

Individual motivations for pursuing entrepreneurial ventures are as varied as the life circumstances of those who choose this career path. The **Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO)** states that at the initial stage, self-employment can provide additional income to supplement a low-paying job. For those who lack the educational or language skills required for a professional position, starting a business is preferable to minimum-wage employment. Self-employment further offers the opportunity to use talents and find fulfillment in ways rarely possible in traditional employment. Meanwhile, many women choose self-employment for the flexibility they need to balance family and work responsibilities. People with disabilities are attracted by the opportunity to work from home. For most individuals, the prospect of being their own manager is the most appealing aspect of entrepreneurship.

There appears to be some consensus that successful entrepreneurs share certain personality traits, including readiness to take risks, non-conformity, need for autonomy and creativity. The barriers most frequently cited to successful entrepreneurship include lack of assets and capital, social networks, business skills and prior self-employment experience (AEO 2005).

A **microenterprise** is a business with five or fewer employees requiring \$35,000 or less in start-up capital.

Microenterprise

According to the **Microenterprise Fund for Innovation, Effectiveness, Learning and Dissemination (FIELD)**, more than 22 million microenterprises operate in the U.S. today (Edgcomb and Klein 2005). Of these, an estimated 10 million experienced difficulty accessing commercial credit markets and other business development services. Many microenterprises are run by women, minorities, low-income individuals, immigrants, refugees, individuals with disabilities and welfare recipients. They often employ members of the same family and sometimes grow into larger entities, employing others in the community. However, in the majority of microenterprises, the owner is a sole operator and worker.

Common microenterprises include repair services, cleaning services, specialty foods, jewelry, arts and crafts, gifts, clothing and textiles, computer technology, childcare and environmental products and services.

In a longitudinal study tracking clients and seven microenterprise programs over four years, FIELD found microenterprises show survival rates of approximately 78 percent, gains in net worth and employment generation (Economic Opportunities Program 1997). Fifty-five percent of microenterprises show income gains over time, while 25 percent generate income gains large enough to move out of poverty (ibid).

Microenterprise Client Profile³

Ethnicity	
African American	42%
Hispanic	18%
Asian	2%
Gender	
Women	78%
Education	
High School Graduates	83%
Post High School	58%
Four-Year College	19%
Graduate Degree	8%

³ The percentage of women served by microenterprise development organizations (MDOs) is disproportionately high in part because of the pioneering role women's organizations played in the development of the microenterprise industry in the United States. Even today, many MDOs target their services exclusively to women.

Source: Self-Employment Learning Project (1998)

Microenterprise development is an income-generating strategy helping poor, low-income and other disadvantaged individuals to start or expand a microenterprise. The strategy fulfills personal, family and community needs by creating income, building assets and contributing to local employment creation.

Microenterprise Development

According to FIELD, an estimated 500 **microenterprise development organizations (MDOs)** exist in the U.S. today, funded through a variety of public and private sources (Edgcomb and Klein 2005). Their aim is to increase the chance of business success by providing disadvantaged entrepreneurs with the tools needed to start or expand their enterprises. MDOs represent the only opportunity to access the capital and business tools necessary for business start-up for many low-income entrepreneurs with poor credit records (AEO 2006).

Comprehensive microenterprise development programs include the following key elements (AEO 2005):

- **Training and technical assistance:** Programs include teaching business skills to entrepreneurs with little formal training, limited time to engage in learning, and various levels of education. Typical training topics include business plan development, integrating technology, bookkeeping, business management and marketing. Training is offered through various settings including classroom type lectures, one-on-one counseling, peer networking and mentoring programs.
- **Credit and access to credit:** Some MDOs offer credit directly from an in-house loan fund, typically lending from \$100 to \$35,000. Other MDOs partner with community organizations or institutions to provide access to credit.
- **Economic literacy and asset development:** Programs stress the importance of establishing checking and savings accounts, a credit rating and, in many instances, learning about credit rehabilitation. In addition, many entrepreneurs need training in tax laws, regulatory issues, sound accounting principles and insurance.
- **Follow-up services:** Services are provided to clients after completing the core training or taking a loan. Their services help fledgling entrepreneurs successfully negotiate the challenges they face in marketing, increasing sales, quality control, legal issues and business expansion.

FIELD's research indicates that MDOs present an exit route from poverty.

- Program-administered surveys of 813 clients revealed that 24 percent entered the microenterprise program in poverty (FIELD 2005). Among survey participants, there was a 36 percent net reduction in poverty.
- A five-year study found that low-income entrepreneurs (those with household incomes less than 150 percent of the poverty line) reduced their reliance on government assistance on average by 61 percent (Clark et al. 1999).

According to AEO, providing funding to all disadvantaged people interested in self-employment would produce the following results (AEO 2002):

- An estimated \$16.5 billion in income to the new business owners.
- Approximately \$10.3 billion in income for employees.
- \$3.3 billion in increased net worth for new business owners.
- \$416 million in total welfare savings.

A Brief History of Microenterprise Development

Over the past 40 years, individuals from traditionally disadvantaged populations around the world – including immigrants, refugees and women – have demonstrated that entrepreneurship can play a pivotal role in creating a path from poverty to financial security. Indeed, self-employment has provided a source of empowerment for individuals often relegated to the margins of society by fostering economic independence and providing an opportunity to redefine their role in society. In response to individuals' efforts and their impact on community economic development, organizations around the world have invested in microlending, the provision of small loans to individuals with limited access to resources.

In 2006, microlending drew international attention when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Mohammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh for the promotion of business start-up and development among the rural poor. In an interview after receiving the Nobel Prize, Dr. Yunus stated, *"From this day on, microcredit will become part of the financial center, it can't be kept as some kind of subsector. As a bank you have to reach the poor people"* (Moore 2006).

In the U.S., the microenterprise development field emerged in the 1980s. Women's economic development organizations, anti-poverty agencies and other public and private entities incorporated microenterprise development training into existing services. They also piloted programs aimed at promoting economic independence through self-employment. Over the past 20 years, these fledgling programs have expanded and evolved into a sophisticated field offering a variety of services, in addition to access to capital, to a wide and diverse array of populations.

Lessons Learned: Microenterprise and Other Disadvantaged Populations in the United States

Welfare Recipients

Welfare recipients and people with criminal records often share certain characteristics such as low education attainment, sporadic work histories and physical and mental health issues, as analyzed by the Welfare to Work Partnership (as cited in Solomon, Johnson, Travis and McBride 2004). Despite these serious and complicated issues, MDOs have demonstrated success in moving welfare recipients off the welfare rolls and out of poverty.

- MDOs working with welfare recipients found that two years after intake, only 25 percent of clients reported receiving funds from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – the federal public assistance program – down from 94 percent (Klein, Lisultanov and Blair 2003).
- Thirty-six percent of clients in a demonstration project focused on welfare-to-work participants moved out of poverty in a two-year period (FIELD 2005).

Refugees

When refugees first settle in the U.S., they face a challenging transition period comparable in some ways to the reentry process from prison to the community. Refugees must adjust to a new social, cultural and economic environment, many do not speak English, and they are often processing traumatic disruption and loss. While these challenges can make it difficult to pursue self-employment shortly after arrival, they have not prevented refugees from starting and sustaining successful businesses once they have achieved stability.

- In a study of 34 MDOs assisting refugees in 24 states, the **Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED)** found 21 percent of participants started, expanded or strengthened businesses. Of these, 73 percent were business start-ups, 16 percent were business expansions and 11 percent were business strengthenings, i.e., increased revenues or profitability (Else, Krotz and Budzilowicz 2003).
- Among these clients, 53 percent relied on loans to achieve business start-up, expansion or strengthening. The default rate on these loans was 2.1 percent of the total number of loans and two percent of the total amount of money loaned (ibid).

Opportunity 1: Cultivate

The Relationship between Employment and Crime

Experts agree there is a strong correlation between employment and a reduction in crime.

- According to a preliminary study conducted by the U.S. Office of Probation and Pretrial Services, individuals released from federal prisons who are employed at the beginning and end of their parole supervision are seven times less likely to violate conditions of parole supervision than individuals who are unemployed (Johnson 2007).
- In New York State, 89 percent of individuals who violated their terms of parole supervision were unemployed at the time of the violation (as cited in New York State Department of Labor, n.d.).
- Moreover, common sense and anecdotal evidence affirm that if individuals are working and able to provide for themselves and their families, they are less likely to recommit a crime.

What:

Foster individual and community empowerment through self-employment. The latent talents and acquired skills of individuals returning home from prison represent a largely untapped resource for community and economic development.

Why?

The traditional labor market is often closed to people with criminal records.

Incarceration rates are increasing and prisons offer insufficient educational and vocational programs.

In 2000, only half of state and federal prisoners were engaged in any kind of work activity. Those who were involved participated primarily in general maintenance jobs necessary to keep correctional facilities operating (Solomon, Johnson, Travis and McBride 2004). In 1997, just 32.2 percent of state prison inmates awaiting release had participated in vocational programs (Harlow 2003).

Even when individuals are fortunate enough to receive job training and other kinds of education inside prison, many find their acquired skills do not lead to viable labor market opportunities in the community.

Incarcerated individuals may have received training on outdated equipment or in industries that no longer exist in the communities to which they are returning. An increasing number of federal and state laws either bar or restrict people with criminal records from holding particular occupations in fields such as finance, insurance, healthcare, childcare, transportation and aviation. Ironically, these restrictions exist in the same industries for which prisoners often receive vocational training, in occupations like barbering and plumbing.

Many FIPs are not job ready.

FIPs have been removed from the traditional labor market for a substantial period of time. They may have spotty work histories, and many suffer from drug and alcohol dependence and other physical and mental health issues. Compared with the general population, many have lower education levels.

Employers often do not want to hire people with criminal records.

A survey of over 3,000 establishments in four major urban areas found that over 60 percent of employers indicated they would “*probably not*” or “*definitely not*” knowingly hire a formerly incarcerated individual (Holzer, Raphael and Stoll 2002). Beyond the stigma associated with a criminal record, liability concerns and the lack of robust employment discrimination protection for people with records make it difficult for FIPs to obtain employment.

As a result of the events of September 11th, an increasing number of employers now conduct background checks on job applicants.

The Society of Human Resource Management estimates that 80 percent of medium- and large-size employers rely on criminal record checks (Esen 2004). However, criminal records are often inaccurate and their use unregulated. A 1995 study in New York State found 87 percent of criminal records contained at least one error. The most common type of mistake is missing disposition information, i.e., the record will reveal the range of arrest charges but will not include the final outcome of the case - often a conviction for a single, less serious offense (Legal Action Center 1995). Moreover, criminal record information can be complicated for employers to interpret. Thus, employers’ reliance on background checks may prematurely foreclose employment opportunities to qualified jobseekers.

The stigma of a conviction is long-lasting.

Most states do not permit an individual to seal or expunge a conviction (though many do seal arrest and juvenile records). Therefore, employers who inquire about an applicant’s criminal history will have access to the information even if it occurred many years ago and the individual has been crime-free and productive ever since.

Individuals leaving prison may have aptitude for self-employment.

Research suggests many individuals with criminal records possess high entrepreneurial aptitude, especially those convicted of drug dealing, and share common traits ascribed to successful entrepreneurs.⁴

- Thirty-five years ago, a study of FIPs who pursued self-employment found that the risk associated with self-employment was lower for people with criminal records than the general population due to their marginal position in the labor market.

⁴ While research suggests incarcerated individuals may possess high entrepreneurial aptitude, additional factors contribute to an understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurship and incarceration. For example, some microenterprise experts assert people are naturally entrepreneurial until social and other factors stifle these qualities. According to this logic, individuals from disadvantaged populations, perhaps due to their limited experience in the traditional workforce, may be more likely to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Many incarcerated individuals employ strategies for increasing their resources and connections – such as selling sandwiches, doing legal work or washing other prisoners’ laundry – suggesting the lack of resources available in prison may also contribute significantly to enterprising behavior.

On the other hand, individuals with criminal records attracted to the unstructured nature of self-employment may employ strategies outside the acceptable and legal norms of business. While research suggests an aptitude for entrepreneurship, legitimate concerns about business ethics should be addressed and considered by professionals considering the promotion of self-employment among this population.

Formerly incarcerated business owners cited three primary motivations for pursuing self-employment: greater independence (both in terms of self-reliance and freedom from supervision); a desire to retain all the profits from one's labor; and the opportunity to earn large amounts of money (Jansyn, Kohlhof, Sadowski and Toby 1969).

- Research conducted by business professor Matthew Sonfield indicates incarcerated individuals possess similar or higher entrepreneurial aptitude than various types of entrepreneurs. The results were the same regardless of type of crime, first-time versus repeat conviction or enrollment in business/self-employment courses (Sonfield, Lussier and Barbato 2001).
- In a study examining the relationship between drug dealing as a youth and legitimate self-employment in later years, economist Robert Fairlie found that drug dealing has a large, positive and statistically significant effect on the future probability of self-employment. He also found that young people who deal drugs are 11 to 21 percent more likely to choose self-employment in later years than are young non-drug-dealers, all else equal (Fairlie 2002).

Interest among currently and formerly incarcerated individuals in self-employment is high.

Individuals with criminal records are interested in pursuing entrepreneurship as an alternative to traditional employment in the community.

- In August 2006, **Mercy Corps Northwest (MCNW)**, an MDO, conducted a preliminary survey at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Portland, OR. Seventy-eight percent of respondents indicated they considered self-employment an option after release, and 90 percent of the same group were interested in a pilot self-employment program.
- To address the high interest among incarcerated individuals in starting small businesses and learning general business skills, members of the Lifers and Long-Termers Organization at the Shawangunk Correctional Facility in New York State founded the **Self-Education Economic Development (SEED)** program. SEED consists of a 36-week course culminating in the production of a business plan and preliminary designs for a website. Since its inception in 2005, SEED has expanded to Clinton Correctional Facility, another prison in New York State.

How:

The entrepreneurs profiled on the following pages exemplify how self-employment can benefit FIPs, their families and the communities to which they return. These stories demonstrate that, in addition to fostering economic independence, self-employment provides an opportunity to nurture creativity, capitalize on skills and expertise acquired during incarceration as well as give back to the community in productive and meaningful ways.

Three months after returning home from a two-year prison sentence for drug dealing, Yusef Ismail was shot six times and nearly died. This experience gave Mr. Ismail a new insight on life and a clear vision: he and six colleagues cofounded Stop Shootin' Inc., an organization that advocates for peace and provides youth with productive activities and opportunities. Mr. Ismail is a graduate of the Prudential Young Entrepreneurs Program (PYEP) in Newark, NJ.

Yusef Ismail – Stop Shootin' Inc.

“Stop shootin’, start thinkin’ and keep livin’”

An Interview with Yusef Ismail

Source: Wilson and Truitt (2007)

When did you first consider starting your own business?

I always wanted to be in business even as a young child. At age 11 me and my friends built a Lemonade stand and sold Kool Aid and popcorn to people in the neighborhood. Later in life, I grew very tired of the lack of employment opportunities and dead-end jobs so I decided that I would start my own business and create jobs for other people.

What drives you to be successful?

I want to blaze my own trail. I want people to see that all of us are not drug dealers – that some of us have other talents and skills that we can bring to the table. There are a lot of talented people out here who just haven't had the opportunities to sell their dreams. I mean, in our neighborhood, it's easy to get liquor. It's easy to get drugs. It's easy to do any of this illegal stuff. But it's harder to find out about a class like PYEP because the information is just not there.

What kind of assistance do you think is necessary to help other formerly incarcerated entrepreneurs succeed?

We need all the assistance we can get from government, microenterprise organizations and people in the community to truly deal with this problem. Society needs to understand that people make mistakes. After their debt is paid, they should be able to support our families just like anyone else.

Venture Name: Stop Shootin' Inc.

Date Founded: November 2005

Funding Sources: The organization is funded by members and sustained by sales of its products. Funding support and training has been provided by the Greater Newark Business Development Consortium.

Mission: To assist in reversing the trend of senseless gun violence by providing young people in Newark, NJ with educational, cultural and economic alternatives to crime.

Description of Services: Stop Shootin' Inc. provides a host of programs for at-risk youth. To fund these programs, Stop Shootin' Inc. launched a clothing line, including t-shirts, buttons and wrist bands embossed with the Stop Shootin' logo. Youth are involved in design, production, marketing and sales.

Growth to Date: While first year gross revenue totaled less than \$50,000, projected revenue for 2007 is over \$100,000.

Plans for the Future: In addition to securing a facility for day-to-day business operations and programs, plans are underway to partner with New Jersey State Senator Ron Rice to rehabilitate houses in low-income areas and work on a documentary depicting the ills of gang culture.

Website: <http://www.on-que.com/stopshootin.html>

Robert Casas translated the skills he acquired on a prison work crew into a thriving landscaping business. He now exclusively employs other FIPs.

Robert Casas – Cut and Trim Landscaping

“I’m successful if I have enough to live and support my family. I can sit back and say, ‘I did this on my own.’”

An Interview with Robert Casas

What motivated you to start your business?

Working as a substance abuse counselor, I came in contact with a lot of vocational training programs that were all about creating resumes but had no job placement piece. To me, the real work of the vocational caseworker is to get employers to hire people. I wanted to provide people with records with a means of employment and training. I mentor my employees and teach them how to save their money.

What has helped you to run your business?

What’s helped me the most is advertising and selling myself. The main piece is looking and acting professional. I just talk to people, am honest and do the work. I also cover up my tattoos when I meet with people at first. I allow them to meet me instead of who they *would* see.

What has been the biggest challenge so far?

The biggest stress I have is making sure I have work for the next week. But so far it’s worked out. I can’t bid on federal or state contracts, and I can’t get a general contractors license because of my record, so I do the outside landscaping work. It hinders me to a certain degree, but where there’s a will there’s a way.

What do you like best about owning your business?

I like showing people that no matter what you’ve been through, you can succeed.

Venture Name: Cut and Trim Landscaping

Date Founded: 2000

Funding Sources: The sale of services.

Description of Services: Cut and Trim Landscaping provides all forms of yard work and landscaping services to residences and businesses in the San Diego, CA area. The vision is to provide people in recovery and with criminal records with an opportunity to make a living wage and learn a vocation.

Growth to Date: While working as a substance abuse counselor, Mr. Casas started Cut and Trim Landscaping, doing small jobs on the weekend and after work. In mid-2004, he made the decision to operate his own business full-time. He saved money for six months, quit his job and has run Cut and Trim Landscaping ever since. He currently employs three staff full-time and uses three other workers on a freelance basis. He recently contracted with several McDonald’s franchises in the San Diego area, among other commercial businesses. Cut and Trim Landscaping currently grosses between \$120,000 and \$150,000 per year.

What are your plans for the future?

One of my goals is to open my own treatment center. In the next few years, I would also like to bring together a coalition of recovering addicts and former felons who own businesses.

Adrienne Smalls' experience in prison enabled her to recognize a need and translate it into a business opportunity, culminating in a successful entrepreneurial venture. A graduate of the Workshop in Business Opportunities, she was named "*Entrepreneur of the Month*" by the Harlem Venture Group and is a recipient of the 2001 and 2002 Rising Star Award from the Business Women's Network.

Adrienne Smalls – Small Quality Packaging Corp *"The Personal Shopper for Prisoners"*

An Interview with Adrienne Smalls

What motivated you to start your own business?

My motivation was my late uncle and my son. I wanted to give something back to my family, for all the years of being unproductive.

What were the biggest challenges you faced in starting your own business?

My biggest challenge was failure, but I knew that I had little choice but to go ahead and try my hand or try welfare. The latter choice was not something I could or would see as a long term life choice.

What kind of assistance is necessary to help other formerly incarcerated entrepreneurs succeed?

When you are incarcerated you need to view positive people who were once inside themselves and have come back to speak about their success and what helped them. The next step is to get a mentor to help you put your plan down on paper and make the right contacts. You should also carefully review what licenses you can rightfully obtain once you are released, and reach out to programs that are geared towards persons who are "*freedomly challenged.*"

What do you like best about owning your own business?

I make the rules. For the past seven years, my business has been the primary source of a great, successful income. I am leaving a legacy for my family, and I am down in the books of history.

Venture Name: Small Quality Packaging Corp

Date Founded: 1999

Funding Sources: Start-up funds were provided by family and Count-Me-In, a microlending institution. Revenue is generated through product sales and commission on services.

Mission: To help prisoners and their families navigate the prison system and prepare for successful reentry into society.

Description of Services: Small Quality Packaging Corp assists the families of incarcerated individuals with purchasing and sending high quality, state-approved products to their loved ones in New York State prisons. The website has an inventory of 75 items and offers its clients bus schedules to over a dozen state correctional facilities and information on visiting hours.

Growth to Date and Plans for Future Expansion:

Ms. Smalls began her business with \$500 and a shopping cart to haul her inventory. She currently reaches over 4,000 prisoners and their families daily. Plans are underway to expand services to several other states and to provide information to assist other people coming out of prison to own and operate small home-based businesses. Small Quality Packaging Corp's net profits are nearly \$50,000 per year.

Website: <http://www.prisonhelp.com>

Opportunity 2: Collaborate

What:

Build relationships among and leverage the expertise, resources and structure of microenterprise programs, reentry programs, correctional agencies and other partners.

Why?

Productive collaborations will take advantage of what each partner brings to the table to avoid reinventing the wheel and duplicating services.

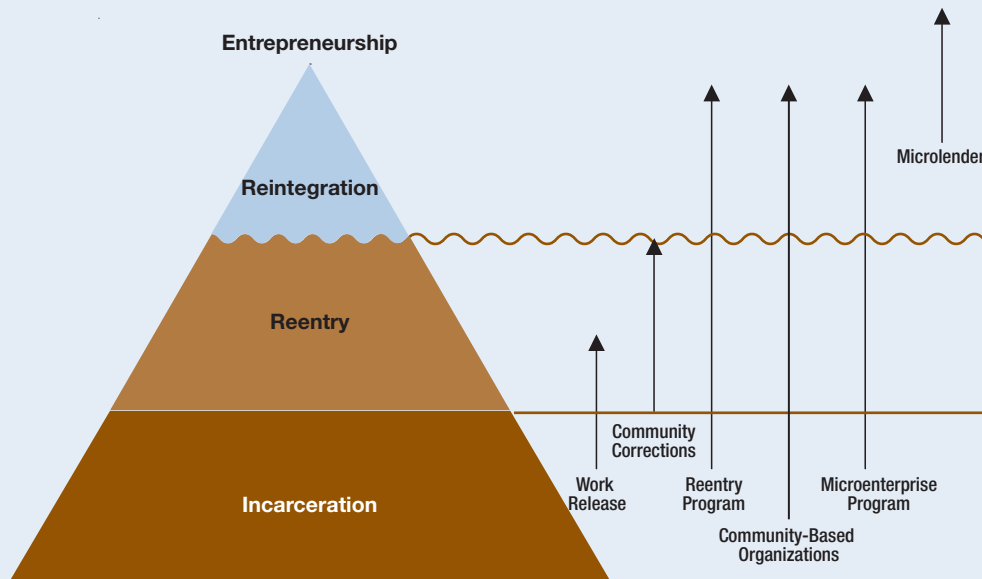
- MDOs offer their passion, business development services and access to capital. The microenterprise field is interested in working with people with criminal records and brings valuable experience promoting economic self-sufficiency among other typically disadvantaged populations.
- Corrections professionals can offer referrals, resources and expertise on correctional policies and culture at each phase of the process. In addition, correctional facilities offer the time and access to prospective clients before they become absorbed with the stresses and distractions of reentry.
- Reentry programs can provide additional support and services crucial to easing the reentry process – such as referrals to housing, employment, substance abuse treatment and health services; counseling; and family reunification services. Reentry programs also provide expertise on the particular needs of and challenges facing people returning home from prison.

Effective partnerships will facilitate smooth transitions during reentry.

Given the web of agencies and service providers engaged during transition from prison to the community, strong relationships and clear lines of communication are essential to ensure clients

receive a continuum of services, preventing them from falling through the cracks. When a client is ready, effective partnerships will ensure systems are in place to empower their success.

Passing the Baton: Engaging Prospective Entrepreneurs from Incarceration to Business Start-Up



How:

Embed programs in existing correctional vocational or educational systems.

To engage individuals while they are incarcerated, existing educational, vocational and other self-development programs can provide the infrastructure required to initiate a project within a correctional facility. These existing programs have already broken down many of the barriers MDOs might encounter in establishing a new project. MDOs can avoid reinventing the wheel by taking advantage of pre-established protocols for initiating new courses, disseminating information to potential students and navigating prison bureaucracies.

Initiating a whole new program can strike correctional administrators as burdensome and lead to resistance and delays due to the dedication of space and equipment, approval of personnel and institutional paperwork. In Oklahoma City, OK, the **Training and Supporting Ex-Offenders as Entrepreneurs** program is housed within the education department of the correctional facility in which it operates. Staff of the program were able to facilitate its initiation by marketing their services to correctional administrators as another *“tool for the toolkit”* within existing education programs, and not another entirely new program.

Engage the support of community corrections.

Community corrections staff supervising individuals on parole or probation can be engaged to support program goals. At the least, staff might screen potential clients for interest in and readiness for self-employment and provide referrals.

The entrepreneurship program at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Portland, OR is an example of the innovative outcomes resulting from an effective partnership between an MDO and community corrections agency. The **Coffee Creek Prison Project** provides business planning, business-related soft skills and life skills training to incarcerated women. It also plans to provide continuous services as clients transition from prison to the community. This project grew out of existing relationships formed through a collaboration initiated by the Multnomah County Department of Community Corrections with government agencies and community-based service providers. As a result of the trust built, the Department of Community Corrections dedicated several beds in a transitional housing facility for MCNW’s Coffee Creek clients, supporting continuity of service and strengthening the positive social relationships developed through program participation.

Partner with reentry programs.

Reentry programs provide holistic services to address the needs of people transitioning from prison. These services play a crucial role in preparing and stabilizing FIPs to realistically consider and thrive in self-employment. Reentry programs can also co-sponsor entrepreneurship training or serve as a referral resource for outside training programs. These entities might include male-focused fraternal organizations, faith-based institutions and other non-traditional service providers.

Connections to Success, a faith-based reentry program, is housed within a Kansas City, MO municipal jail. It provides reentry services for individuals both within county, state and federal correctional systems and during their transition into the community. Connections to Success staff identify and refer clients who demonstrate dedication to the idea of starting a business and have achieved stability in the community to the **First Step Fund**, a local MDO. In addition, Connections to Success partners with the First Step Fund to hold mock job fairs inside the federal prison in Leavenworth, KS. During these mock job fairs, incarcerated individuals connect with prospective employers and hone their interview skills. Staff from the First Step Fund attend the job fairs to provide information on self-employment and meet with participants who express interest in entrepreneurship upon release. This partnership leverages each organization's skills and expertise: The First Step Fund provides business training and development services, while Connections to Success provides additional key support for a smooth transition, such as job readiness courses, referrals to traditional employment and mentoring.

Think creatively about engaging additional partners.

Collaborations should develop strong ties with the business community and enlist the support of additional agencies, organizations and individuals who can offer other resources and expertise relevant to the target population.

The **Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP)** offers self-employment courses to prisoners in several correctional facilities in Texas. PEP relies on volunteer business executives and MBA students to teach classes and become mentors. PEP garners the interest of prospective volunteers by inviting them to participate in a variety of activities leading up to a business plan competition. In addition to one-on-one and group workshops on business plan development, activities include a “*speed selling*” night, based on the concept of speed dating. Participants make brief sales pitches to executives and at the end of the evening, find out who persuaded the most customers. Upon release, participants can continue taking classes and meeting with their business mentors.

The **Nurturing a New Start** program offers services to women in residence at the Community Reentry Center, a work-release program of the Grand Rapids, MI county jail. Nurturing a New Start is a collaboration between Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women, Planned Parenthood of West Michigan, the Women's Resource Center and the YWCA's Domestic Assault program. This collaboration enables the program to address additional challenges facing its clients, such as histories of domestic and/or sexual abuse.

Theo Tiger and his new business exemplify the potential of effective collaborations among correctional agencies, reentry programs and MDOs. With a childhood spent in the foster care system and 20 years of his life in and out of correctional facilities, Mr. Tiger did not have a traditional support network to rely on upon his release from prison. However, the training he received and connections he made while incarcerated provided the support necessary for him to transition from incarceration to entrepreneurship.

Theodore Tiger, Jr. – Ocean Touchless Cleaning Systems and Air Scents

“There have been times when I didn’t know whether I was going to get another contract, but I put in a little effort, made some calls and – bam! – another door opened. You have to be honest, stay on track, and remember the power of effort, because it all pays off in the end.”

An Interview with Theo Tiger

What motivated you to start your own business?

When I was going through commercial cleaning class in prison, I started to think about it. When I read about successful cleaning businesses, I found out that 40 percent of successful businesses make almost \$2 million per year. That knowledge, combined with the skills I was gaining in the apprenticeship and the basic business start-up class, led me to believe that I would be able to run my own business. I chose carpet cleaning because it had low start-up costs. I felt that I could probably open up this business and survive.

What were the biggest challenges you faced in starting your business?

My parole officer requires that I let my clients know I have a felony conviction because I’m going to be inside their buildings. That is a challenge: how do I let this person know I can do a quality job, but I also have this history that they should be aware of? So far, I’ve told my clients and it hasn’t been a problem.

Venture Name: Ocean Touchless Cleaning Systems and Air Scents

Date Founded: 2007

Funding Sources: Mr. Tiger used his first tax refund for start-up costs, a decision he describes as the most difficult of his life.

Description of Services: Ocean Touchless provides multiple cleaning and sanitation services to companies in the Kansas City, MO metropolitan area.

Growth to Date: Less than a year after his release from prison, Mr. Tiger began developing a client base, purchasing equipment and organizing the finances for Ocean Touchless. During this time, he worked full-time as a baker, developing Ocean Touchless as an additional source of income. In April 2007, Ocean Touchless received a minority business contract with the city of Kansas City, MO. As of July 2007, the business had grossed \$12,000 for the year.

When will you consider yourself a success?

Success will be when the business has the potential and resources to grow on its own. And to be able to see my children getting a decent education through my work.

Opportunity 3: Educate

Addressing the “Work First” Philosophy of Welfare Caseworkers

Cross-education can foster the dialogue required to build effective partnerships and dispel myths regarding self-employment and correctional policy and culture. Indeed, the microenterprise field successfully addressed similar resistance among welfare system administrators and caseworkers after federal welfare reform took effect in the late 1990s. According to a study conducted by FIELD in conjunction with the **Center for Law and Social Policy**, high caseloads and a lack of awareness and training among welfare caseworkers resulted in policies and practices discouraging or preventing eligible welfare recipients from accessing the services offered by MDOs. A “*work first*” philosophy among caseworkers and administrators emphasized traditional employment opportunities and discouraged other activities that might delay entry into the traditional workforce (Patel and Greenberg 2002). Nevertheless, microenterprise professionals established self-employment as an effective addition to traditional employment placement by building relationships with and educating caseworkers.

What:

Create synergy between the microenterprise and criminal justice fields by debunking myths and developing a common vocabulary.

Why?

The philosophies behind the fields of entrepreneurship and corrections conflict.

On a fundamental level, entrepreneurship is a form of creative expression. It thrives among people and in environments that are unencumbered by conventional authoritative structures. Correctional institutions, on the other hand, are designed first and foremost to confine and control their occupants. This control continues for individuals released under supervision by parole and probation officers. Indeed, a primary objective for parole and probation departments is to enforce structure and supervision. The tools at their disposal are numerous, including mandatory curfews, travel limits and consistent supervision by an employer during work hours. Nurturing entrepreneurial spirit while conforming to the rules and policies of the criminal justice system can present a considerable challenge. Cross-education can create a common language, dispel myths and stereotypes as well as build relationships to bridge philosophical and cultural divides that might otherwise prevent successful collaborations.

Myths about what entrepreneurship is and who it can benefit are abundant.

Skepticism and misinformation about entrepreneurship are widespread across the criminal justice and reentry fields. For example, the **Microenterprise Outreach Initiative**, a partnership between the New York, NY MDO Project Enterprise and the microlender Trickle Up works to obtain referrals of people who are interested in self-employment from reentry

organizations. In a launch meeting for the project, the partner organizations faced initial skepticism from some attendees who lacked understanding of the microenterprise field. Many associated self-employment with the start-up of large, capital-intensive businesses far beyond the range of their clients' resources and abilities. They were unaware of the history of the microenterprise field in effectively serving traditionally hard-to-employ populations. Nor did they realize that most businesses begin as microenterprises with small staffs and limited initial budgets, some as small as \$500.

How:

Develop educational tools.

The microenterprise, criminal justice and reentry fields should create educational tools to develop a vocabulary and facilitate discussion of self-employment with each other and their clients.

Following are suggestions for the types of information each field might include:

Microenterprise

- Key terms and definitions.
- Success stories, i.e., profiles of FIPs who have successfully started businesses and how they overcame common challenges.
- Statistics and relevant experience related to the microenterprise field's promotion of self-employment among other disadvantaged populations, such as refugees, immigrants and welfare recipients.

Reentry

Information on the particular challenges facing FIPs:

- Relevant federal and state bars to occupational licenses and permits.
- Challenges in addressing debt.
- Substance abuse, other mental and physical health issues as well as the impact of institutionalization.

Criminal Justice

- Key definitions and vocabulary related to the criminal justice system.
- A demographic profile of the population in the particular jurisdiction.
- Relevant correctional/parole and probation regulations.
- A description of the pressures and stresses faced by staff.

In 2005, the United Kingdom's **National Offender Management Service** and **Department of Trade and Industry** jointly issued *Unlocking Potential: Working for Yourself*. This booklet aimed to inspire people in prison to consider self-employment upon release. It features profiles and interviews of 15 formerly incarcerated entrepreneurs who run a diverse array of businesses throughout the United Kingdom. The booklet ends with descriptions and contact information of public and private entities supporting entrepreneurship and reentry. This booklet is available at: <http://www.renewal.net/Documents/RNET/Research/Unlockingpotentialworking.pdf>

Establish opportunities for cross-field conversations.

To effectively educate each other about the key vocabulary, expertise and concerns of each field, criminal justice, reentry and microenterprise professionals must take a proactive approach to creating forums and mechanisms for information sharing.

Strategies for fostering productive cross-field dialogue include the following:

- Participating in jurisdiction-specific reentry taskforces. Reentry taskforces exist in jurisdictions throughout the country. Public offices or entities such as the mayor's office, parole and probation departments, Workforce Investment Boards or the district attorney's office usually establish these collaborations. They might include representatives of the law enforcement community, criminal justice and social service agencies as well as community- and faith-based organizations.
- Holding trainings, orientations, breakfasts and workshops.
- Proposing workshops and panels at trade conferences. In the microenterprise field, relevant conferences might include those hosted by AEO, the **Opportunity Finance Network**, and **State Microenterprise Associations (SMAs)**. In the criminal justice field, relevant conferences might include those hosted by the **Correctional Education Association**, the **American Probation and Parole Association**, the **American Correctional Association** and the **National Institute of Corrections**.

In 2004, AEO launched the **Microenterprise Domestic Violence Initiative** to build bridges between the fields of microenterprise development and domestic violence. The goal of the initiative was to increase domestic abuse survivors' opportunities to start and grow businesses. By convening a national peer-learning exchange, the initiative succeeded in (1) increasing understanding among programs in both fields about one another's operations, resources and areas of expertise; and (2) identifying opportunities for partnership. The initiative culminated in several presentations and workshops at national trade organization conferences. It also led to the publication of an article in AEO Exchange, the quarterly newsletter for the microenterprise development industry, and the development and dissemination of a Fact Sheet coauthored by AEO and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The Fact Sheet includes key information on both fields as well as suggestions and examples to foster collaborative relationships between them. This and other Fact Sheets developed by AEO can be found at: <http://www.microenterpriseworks.org/index.asp?bid=149>.

Build relationships on an individual level.

To sustain interest in and commitment to the project, professionals across fields must be willing to spend time to develop relationships with each other on an individual level.

- Establish meetings with the leadership of potential partner organizations to create buy-in from the top down.
- Develop and maintain relationships with frontline staff. In particular, parole and probation officers

have wide discretion to make decisions impacting a client's ability to pursue self-employment. With the proper training, they and caseworkers from reentry organizations may be able to act as effective screening mechanisms for prospective clients and support program goals in other ways.

Cross-education not only addresses skepticism while creating a common language, but also opens doors to new opportunities. One of the highlights of the Conversations convened by the Prisoner Reentry Institute exploring the viability of entrepreneurship as a reentry strategy was the commitment made by Howard Skolnik, now Director of the **Nevada Department of Corrections**. During discussions, Director Skolnik announced he would allocate \$50,000 for a pilot project to introduce self-employment training within several Nevada correctional facilities. Director Skolnik, who spent the past 20 years as Deputy Director of Prison Industries, was unfamiliar with the microenterprise field before attending the meeting. The enthusiastic education offered by representatives of the microenterprise field opened his eyes to approaching his work from this new perspective.

Opportunity 4: Innovate

Income-Patching and Welfare Recipients

The microenterprise field's experience with the welfare-to-work program supports the ideas of customizing services and business start-up assistance for hard-to-employ populations. Individuals who combine self-employment with traditional employment, a process known as income-patching, demonstrate the strongest growth in income and generally experienced lower levels of unemployment. MDOs can customize their services by introducing income-patching as an option in orientation sessions. They can structure training services to accommodate the needs of individuals holding traditional jobs and provide access to child care to support the high number of hours worked by income-patchers. In addition, programs can examine their approaches to assessment and screening, business financing and economic literacy (Klein, Lisultanov and Blair 2003).

What:

Think creatively about modifying existing services and structures to address reentry challenges and support a spectrum of successful outcomes.

Why?

FIPs face significant challenges, even those who exhibit the motivation and aptitude for entrepreneurship.

Parole and probation policies can prohibit individuals from numerous activities while serving a period of community supervision, including the following:

- Traveling interstate and within certain areas of the community.
- Engaging in employment without direct supervision by an employer.
- Borrowing money, signing contracts and owning, operating or engaging in a new business or enterprise.

When individuals leave prison, the period of confinement may have led to issues with debt and documentation.

- Many individuals do not have valid driver's licenses, birth certificates or other forms of government-issued identification when they return to the community.
- Some have a questionable history of paying taxes and may need to resolve outstanding tax issues before operating their own business.
- Many have accrued debt while incarcerated. In particular, many non-custodial parents who spend time in prison accumulate huge child support arrearages, negatively impacting their credit histories.

The transition from prison to the community can be unstable, as FIPs juggle new-found freedom with the responsibilities associated with supporting themselves and, in some cases, their families.

In addition to securing employment, a fundamental challenge during reentry is finding safe and affordable housing. Although many FIPs return home to their families, their financial dependency or criminal record may pose risks to the family and cause tension. If their family lives in public housing, the household could risk eviction if someone with a criminal record returns to live with them. In some cases, root causes of a person's incarceration could have originated in destructive family dynamics. In addition, landlords often review applicants' credit references and job histories, which can present a problem for individuals unable to maintain a job and establish a good credit history due to incarceration. As a result of these challenges, many FIPs end up moving between family, friends, shelters, mental institutions and the street (Travis 2005).

Other obstacles may stem from the life experience of FIPs before and during incarceration.

Many people with criminal records have histories of substance abuse. In 1997, nearly 57 percent of individuals incarcerated in state prison reported having participated in drug or alcohol treatment programs (Mumola 1999). In addition, many people in prison have negative experiences with traditional institutions such as family and school, leading to a deep lack of self-confidence. Among women incarcerated in state prisons in 1998, nearly 60 percent reported having experienced sexual or physical abuse (Greenfield and Snell 1999).

Additional challenges derive from the psychological impact of being isolated and alienated from the outside world during incarceration.

Alan Mobley, a formerly incarcerated criminology professor at the School of Public Administration and Urban Studies at San Diego State University, argues it is incredibly difficult for anyone who has not suffered a similar trauma to understand the world view of people in and coming home from prison. He describes the collective *"failure to appreciate the gravity of prisonization,"* and asserts *"people tend to emerge from prison edgy, distrustful, frightened, and insecure."* The *"period of separation and brutalization"* has a *"profound effect on one's perceptions, and we are misled if we believe [current and former prisoners] will react to circumstances and events in ways similar to those folks who have not experienced like hardships."* (Mobley 2004).

FIPs, particularly those who have served terms of several years or more, often describe the difficulties they experienced in adjusting to life after incarceration. Not only are they unfamiliar with the advances in technology – such as cell phones, ATM machines and the Internet – they may also be unaccustomed to making seemingly minor decisions for themselves. Years of being told when to wake up, shower, eat and go to work can lead to difficulties adjusting to a life where they are the decision makers.

How:

Create specialized curricula and services.

Curriculum Development

MDOs should think creatively about developing a curriculum addressing the skills and issues necessary for achieving the reentry stability required to start a business. This might entail incorporating modules

focusing on the unique needs of FIPs into core microenterprise curricula or modifying the pedagogical approach of the program.

As the staff of **Mercy Corps Northwest (MCNW)** approached the idea of customizing a business development curriculum for incarcerated women at the Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Portland, OR, they spent considerable time meeting with individuals and organizations to educate themselves about the female prison population and the particular challenges they faced. Through this process, they identified several general characteristics to be addressed in order to work effectively with their clients and promote successful outcomes:

- A high percentage of incarcerated women have suffered emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, often engendering issues of poor self-worth, lack of self confidence and unhealthy relationships to power, especially male power.
- The dynamic created by the prevalence of abuse also points to one of the absolute bedrocks of a successful program: the need for trust. Generally speaking, many incarcerated females' relationships have been exploitative or self-serving. As a result, they developed healthy suspicions concerning any relationships. Unfortunately, these self-protective suspicions also prevent them from investing themselves in promises, dreams or offers of help.

- Much of the increase in female incarceration is a result of substance abuse issues. Small business success rests on the competent management of time, competing priorities, conflict, stress and frustration, goals planning and other personal skills. MCNW staff realized they needed to address potential deficits in interpersonal and emotional skills as a result of substance abuse as part of their curriculum, in addition to traditional business topics.

Based on these insights, staff developed a curriculum seamlessly addressing the issues of personal and interpersonal management skills, along with basic concepts and issues of self-employment and small business. They chose to partner with the **Children's Justice Alliance**, a non-profit with a successful curriculum for incarcerated parents which emphasized many soft skills directly applicable to business development and start-ups.

The results are a 26-week course, still being fine-tuned as MCNW runs its first course within the Coffee Creek facility. The expertise of the Children's Justice Alliance in creating content specifically for the incarcerated population proved invaluable. This process is an example of the thoughtfulness and sensitivity required to effectively customize services, as well as the benefits of partnering.

Mentoring

To help establish and reinforce pro-social relationships and provide access to information and resources, MDOs should consider developing or collaborating with established mentoring networks. While pairing participants with formerly incarcerated entrepreneurs might be an ideal model, selecting mentors with similar backgrounds is a promising alternative. The creation of an alumni network would also reinforce similar goals.

Questions Regarding Program Design

MDOs targeting people with criminal records must decide how best to screen prospective participants and at what point(s) to initiate services. Current programs have approached these questions from a variety of angles, as evidenced by the profiles included in the Ideas and Examples section of Part III. However, without formal evaluation of these program models, it is difficult to draw conclusions about which approaches are most effective.

- **Screening:** Some programs conduct rigorous application processes while others operate under the assumption that the process of developing a business plan will organically weed out those participants for whom self-employment is not a viable option.
- **Timing:** Some programs provide courses during incarceration and continue providing business development services during reentry. Others work with reentry programs to gain referrals for individuals who are interested in pursuing self-employment once they have settled in the community. Some MDOs, particularly those targeting urban, low-income populations, work with FIPs who seek out self-employment training programs after release.

Corrections professionals should think expansively about marshalling institutional structures and resources to support self-employment, where appropriate.

Following are potential ideas:

- Allocating a small percentage of the supervision fees gathered by community corrections departments to fund start-up costs for microenterprises initiated by parolees and probationers.
- Designating entrepreneurship as an authorized employment option for FIPs on parole and probation, thus enabling prospective entrepreneurs more flexibility to develop their business plan and engage in start-up.
- Developing and/or displaying self-employment marketing materials in corrections, parole and probation offices and waiting areas.

At **Cereso I Prison** in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, administrators encourage entrepreneurial ventures by allowing prisoners to create their own miniature cash economy. Prisoners earn money inside the prison by shining shoes, washing clothes or doing odd jobs. They can use the earnings from their enterprises to purchase food from the prison's five snack bars; split rent to live in cells with their own toilet and shower; and purchase small refrigerators, stoves, fans and TVs. Cable is available for \$30 a month and some individual cells have window-unit air conditioners. For more information, go to: http://www.npr.org/programs/atc/features/2002/june/mexican_prison/index.html.

Think creatively about the definition of success and the development of outcome measures.

Given the unique characteristics of and challenges facing FIPs, initiatives focused on self-employment and reentry should embrace a continuum of successful outcomes. Outcome measures should reflect that for some, exposure to entrepreneurship training may not lead to immediate business start-up. Rather, FIPs may increase the likelihood that they will acquire and retain a job, receive a promotion or increase their total income by simultaneously working a traditional job and operating a small business. In addition, measures should focus on the potential impact on community and family involvement, by tracking such factors as participation in volunteer activities, voting patterns and reunification with loved ones. Thoughtful program evaluation can capture the transformation exposure to entrepreneurial skills can yield.

In the criminal justice field, “*success*” tends to be narrowly defined on the basis of recidivism rates, i.e., the rate at which FIPs are re-arrested, re-convicted or re-incarcerated. There is growing debate in the field about the appropriateness of recidivism rates as an exclusive indicator of successful reentry and reintegration into society. The microenterprise field can spur the criminal justice field to think outside the box when it comes to developing outcome measures. Microenterprise programs internationally have used their intimate relationships with clients to develop creative and specialized measures such as the number of children in a family attending school or the increase in calories in a client’s daily diet. Microenterprise and criminal justice professionals should work together to create outcome measures geared toward the interests and concerns of both fields, and accurately representing the experiences and goals of clients.

Simple Steps for MDOs to Serve Currently and Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

For MDOs unable to launch full-scale pilot projects, following is a short list of smaller steps to serve formerly incarcerated clients:

- Address child support arrearages by contacting the state child support agency.
- Research state employment and licensure barriers to ensure clients can pursue the careers they desire by contacting the state Attorney General’s office or local public defender or legal services office.
- Link FIPs to culturally competent mentors.
- Conduct focus groups among FIPs to gain information about their particular goals, needs and perspectives.
- Collaborate with the vocational department at a local correctional facility to add an introductory self-employment curriculum to existing vocational programs and/or provide students with information on the MDOs in the communities to which they will return.
- Because the majority of FIPs are male and many MDOs have worked primarily with female clients, programs might develop gender-specific marketing and training materials to attract and serve prospective male clients.

Despite a long battle with substance abuse and several stints in prison, Dave Dahl's entrepreneurial spirit led him to develop the idea, recipes and marketing strategy for a line of high-quality, organic breads. He initiated this specialty food line within the structure of his family's business, Nature Bake.

Dave Dahl – Dave's Killer Bread

"The best thing about my example is that I changed from a complete knucklehead to someone making a positive difference in the world."

Mr. Dahl describes the transformation he underwent while incarcerated, enabling him to gain the skills and motivation to start Dave's Killer Bread

The first few years of my bit were pretty tough, to say the least. I fell in with guys I had known on the streets or in my other prison sets. I hooked up with a supply of drugs for a minute, but it dried up and I was facing myself once again. My depression and hopelessness were just about unbearable. I withdrew as much as possible, wishing I didn't have to leave my cell for chow, wishing I didn't have to share the room with another pathetic soul.

I slipped in and out of this state for months, then years. I had heard of antidepressants, but somehow, I told myself I was tougher than that. Sure, and that's why I "self-medicated" all of those years, right? I don't know when I finally found the humility to see a shrink, but it turned out to be just the tool I needed to start seeing things as they really are. And the more I started seeing the truth, the more humble I became. And the more humble I got, the more I began to see.

I had been playing my guitar during these painful years, and writing some pretty painful songs. But when I started taking the medication, I began to make incredible progress as a musician. I also went to school for computer drafting, and found that I seemed to excel

Venture Name: Dave's Killer Bread

Date Founded: 2005

Funding Sources: Support from Nature Bake and income generated through the business.

Growth to Date: Dave's Killer Bread currently employs 12 full- and part-time workers, including Mr. Dahl and his nephew. Products can be purchased online, at local farmers' markets, and at natural food stores. Currently, Dave's Killer Bread provides bread to over 75 food stores in Portland, Eugene and Klamath Falls, OR and recently expanded to serve clients in Seattle, WA. In 2006, Dave's Killer Bread grossed over \$500,000. Mr. Dahl expects gross revenue to triple in 2007.

Website: <http://www.daveskillerbread.com>.

at everything I did, and that suddenly I was incredibly hungry for knowledge. Life had not suddenly become easy; life had just become something worth living.

As I completed various assignments on the computer, I began to think of designing *bread* the same way. A lot of years had passed since I worked in the family bakery, and I hadn't even considered whether doing it again was an option, but suddenly it all seemed to make perfect sense. I *belonged* back with my brother, Glenn, and his bakery more than I ever had. I had something to contribute this time: a clear-headed dream of making some really great bakery products. Source: <http://www.daveskillerbread.com>.

Opportunity 5: Initiate, Evaluate, Disseminate and Advocate

What:

Institutionalize an infrastructure to support and sustain a national initiative on entrepreneurship and reentry over an extended period of time.

Why?

Most programs facilitating successful reentry with entrepreneurship are in the early stages of development. A robust national initiative requires formal dialogue, rigorous evaluation and dedicated funding streams, all of which are currently lacking.

MDOs have begun to identify currently and formerly incarcerated individuals as a specific population that could benefit from self-employment, but little formal support exists for their efforts.

Throughout the country, successful businesses started by FIPs abound, and a handful of microenterprise programs have piloted programs customized to people in or coming home from prison. However, formal lines of communication between and among these individuals and programs are virtually nonexistent. In addition, no rigorous evaluation has been conducted to document program outcomes or identify promising practices.

While some programs have garnered the financial support of foundations, government agencies or private donors, many rely on their general operating budgets to support these projects.

Reliance on operating budgets is particularly risky and unsustainable for the FIP population due to the unstable period directly after an individual returns home from prison. Should programs engage FIPs prior to stability, FIPs may require program services for lengthier periods than other populations.

Little discussion has taken place across the microenterprise, criminal justice and workforce development fields as to the role entrepreneurship can play in reentry and the responsibilities of each field.

Numerous questions remain unanswered, including the following:

- How do we define success and modify program design accordingly?
- When is it reasonable to expect or encourage a FIP to start a business?
- What are best practices for addressing the needs of this population?
- When is the most effective time for people to be exposed to entrepreneurship training: upon entry to correctional facilities, when they are nearing release, during the transition back into society or after they have achieved stability in the community?
- Or should exposure come at various points along the spectrum?

How:

Initiate a multi-site learning demonstration and evaluation.

The microenterprise field has initiated demonstration projects to test the viability of entrepreneurship for welfare recipients, urban young adults and refugees.

Using the lessons from these initiatives, an ideal demonstration project targeting FIPs would include partnerships with qualified organizations providing the following components:

- Longitudinal evaluation of participant outcomes, including the collection of program performance data documenting outputs and costs to understand the cost-benefit implications of each program model.

In 1998, the **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation** partnered with **FIELD** to initiate a rigorous five-year demonstration project aimed at exploring the viability of entrepreneurship for welfare recipients. The demonstration granted funding to 10 MDOs working with TANF recipients for a three-year period, during which time FIELD conducted an evaluation.

The evaluation, completed in 2003, included longitudinal tracking of program participants and outcomes, policy case studies and meetings of grantee and evaluation staff. FIELD and the **Center for Law and Social Policy**, its evaluation partner, issued publications detailing outcomes, best practices and recommendations for customizing services to this population. This evaluation helped convince welfare professionals that entrepreneurship can be a legitimate source of employment for traditionally “*hard-to-employ*” individuals (Klein, Lisultanov and Blair 2003).

The welfare reform experience is particularly relevant to a reentry initiative because it required the microenterprise field to build relationships with government agencies, dispel myths and create buy-in, as well as develop program components and curricula suited to a specific population. Information on the demonstration project and links to the publications are available at: <http://fieldus.org/Projects/wtw.html>.

- Technical assistance, including site visits by a team of experts representing microenterprise development, workforce development and criminal justice; the development of peer-learning mechanisms to spur dialogue and information-sharing among pilot project partners; and the dissemination of lessons learned.
- Analysis of the policies in the states and local jurisdictions in which pilot programs are conducted to determine effective policy structures and funding streams for supporting the initiative.

From 1991 to 2002, the U.S. **Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)** funded dozens of MDOs throughout the country to help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency through entrepreneurship. The ORR contracted with the **Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED)** to evaluate the initiative and provide technical assistance, including site visits, biannual training workshops focused on program operation, information sharing and dissemination. ISED produced a series of papers documenting the outcomes of participants and best practices based on the experiences of the 34 MDOs serving refugees in 24 states (Eise, Krotz and Budzilowicz 2003).

This initiative provides a valuable model for an evaluation with an extensive technical assistance component, conducted in partnership with a government agency. Publications documenting the achievements and lessons learned through this initiative are available at: <http://www.ised.us/template/page.cfm?id=19>.

Develop pilot projects.

Initiating a pilot project requires productive collaboration between an MDO, reentry program and correctional agency.

Following are potential strategies for productive collaboration:

- Establish a task force, including representatives from each partner sector and agency, to facilitate formal communication among organizations and provide a forum in which concerns and interests can be addressed.
- Develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to guide the pilot project. An MOU can institutionalize responsibilities and relationships to address stakeholders' priorities.

Each partner must bring the necessary infrastructure and resources to the table to ensure a pilot project can effectively meet the needs of its clients and sustain services throughout the reentry process.

Following is a list of the characteristics and capacities each entity should be able to provide:

Microenterprise Programs

- A primary focus on microenterprise development with relevant experience serving low-income or other hard-to-employ populations.
- The capacity to establish performance measures and track intermediate and long-term outcomes.
- Staff capacity to support a new project. Business development and technical assistance are long-term endeavors to which MDO staff must be dedicated. Ideally, the MDO would dedicate at least one full-time staff member to project

operation. In addition, staff affiliated with the project must be comfortable working with FIPs.

- A market-driven approach. Clients must be directed to develop business plans based on the current and projected markets for goods and services in the communities to be served.
- Depth and quality of services continuing beyond business development courses. Such services might include one-on-one technical assistance, mechanisms for assisting clients to access markets, productive relationships with the local business community, connections to mentors and assistance diversifying income streams.
- Access to capital either in-house or through a partnership with a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) or other microcredit institution in which the MDO functions as an intermediary between the client and the microlender. The capacity to provide additional business financing products, such as Individual Development Accounts (IDAs), is also ideal.

Reentry Programs

- An established track record of providing FIPs with holistic services and/or referrals, ranging from practical assistance (e.g., gathering identification documents and addressing debt) to more in-depth support around securing and maintaining housing, obtaining workforce development services, substance abuse treatment as well as mental and physical health services.
- The capacity to track client outcomes.
- Staff capacity to interface with partner organizations and provide services to additional clients throughout the process of business development and start-up.

Correctional Facilities

- Physical locations where courses and services can be provided.
- A significant number of prisoners who will be released within a relatively short period of time.
- A staff person to act as the primary contact for the project, who can help the partner organizations disseminate information, navigate facility regulations and protocols as well as trouble-shoot.
- Comprehensive, updated files on potential program participants and the willingness to broker a relationship with the appropriate community corrections agency for access to data.

In 2007, AEO launched three initiatives aimed to improve microenterprise services in rural areas. These **Rural Initiatives** support networks of organizations in developing strategic alliances and defining and disseminating policy recommendations. One initiative also examines and supports new and cost-effective models of service delivery. AEO provides technical assistance support, peer-learning opportunities, re-granting to some of the participating organizations and case study development.

AEO will share the progress of the three projects, including lessons learned and best practices, with the larger microenterprise and rural economic development community. The Rural Initiatives set an example of rigorous technical assistance and peer-learning strategies that would enhance an initiative focused on promoting entrepreneurship among FIPs. More information about AEO's Rural Initiatives is available at: <http://www.microenterpriseworks.org/index.asp?bid=2189>.

Institutionalize mechanisms for disseminating information and advocating for policy change.

To gather and disseminate information, an entity should be identified or established to serve as a clearinghouse for training materials, curricula, best practices and “turn key” protocols for initiating programs specialized to the population. The reentry and microenterprise fields have initiated clearinghouses that focus on specific issues or

The **Abilities Fund** is the only nationwide community developer and financial institution targeted exclusively to advancing entrepreneurial opportunities for Americans with disabilities. It offers a range of financial products, customized training, technical assistance, policy recommendations, linkages to resources and advisory supports. Major projects of the Abilities Fund include:

- A Capital Access Program funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Rehabilitation Services Administration designed to help MDOs and microlenders work with their local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) system.
- A comprehensive training manual for microenterprise practitioners on working with individuals with disabilities. The manual includes an explanation of the VR system, how to access funding, successful case studies of MDOs working with their state VR agencies, quotes from entrepreneurs and issues to consider and understand when working with individuals with disabilities.

For more information, go to: <http://www.abilitiesfund.org/>

populations within each field and advocate for related policy change. These organizations provide invaluable resources and technical assistance to their fields and can serve as models for a clearinghouse dedicated to entrepreneurship and reentry.

Established by the Legal Action Center, the **National H.I.R.E. (“Helping Individuals with criminal records Re-enter through Employment”) Network** is both a national clearinghouse for information and an advocate for policy change. The mission of the H.I.R.E. Network is to increase the number and quality of job opportunities available to people with criminal records. The H.I.R.E Network provides:

- Legislative and briefing papers to support specific policy priorities.
- Solutions to help employers access qualified workers, protect themselves from negligent hiring concerns and maximize cost-savings.
- Peer exchange of ideas and innovative practices to be utilized locally.
- Effective strategies to address barriers to employment for individuals with criminal records.
- Leadership on federal legislation directly impacting harder to employ populations, including people with criminal records.
- Information about research on workforce development and criminal justice initiatives.

For more information, go to: <http://www.hirenetwork.org>

Lessons Learned: Entrepreneurship and Reentry in the United Kingdom

Over the past 10 years, a network of government agencies and community organizations in the U.K. have worked together to promote self-employment as a reentry strategy through a multi-pronged initiative. Following are the major components of this initiative:

- Promotion of business start-ups in disadvantaged areas and support of existing businesses in those areas to diversify, provide better services and become more profitable. More information on this project of the **Phoenix Development Fund**, established by the Department of Trade and Industry in 2000, can be found at: <http://www/dti.gov.uk/bbf/small-business/building-enterprise/enterprising-people/Phoenix%20Fund/page37783.html>.
- **Pilot projects**
 - **Business in Prison** assists incarcerated individuals with reintegration into the labor market and focuses on self-employment as a viable option post-release.
 - **In Credit** established a network for women released from prison who demonstrate an interest in starting a business.
 - The **Women into Work** program combats discrimination and inequality experienced by disadvantaged women. One component of the project is the Creative Business Pilot, a course providing a basis for incarcerated women to initiate self-employment upon release, particularly in the creative industries.
- Publication of *Reducing Re-offending: The Enterprise Option*, which provides an overview of the relationship between individuals in the criminal justice system and self-employment, the entrepreneurial aptitude of people with criminal records, existing enterprise support for currently and formerly incarcerated individuals and recommendations for moving forward. The report is available at: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file38350.pdf>.
- Publication of *Unlocking Potential*, a series of two booklets. The first details various approaches to encouraging currently and formerly incarcerated individuals to explore their potential for self-employment. The second profiles a variety of formerly incarcerated business owners.

Lessons Learned: Entrepreneurship and Reentry in the United Kingdom (Cont.)

Recent Developments

To cement support for the initiative, in 2004 multiple government agencies issued a Joint Ministerial Statement announcing the investment of £1.8 million (approximately \$3.6 million) over two years to support pilot projects. The statement declared, *“For a small, but significant number of prisoners, self-employment presents a positive and practical way of re-entering the labour market.”* The joint ministerial statement is available at: <http://www.businessinprisons.com/news.htm>.

In 2006, support available through the Phoenix Development Fund was funneled through the Regional Development Agencies as a means of entrenching the Fund’s function within local government structures and embedding the knowledge and best practices accumulated through pilot projects in mainstream provision of business support.

Resources: Funding Streams

Pilot projects and initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among currently and formerly incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to leverage funding streams available for prisoner reentry, workforce development, community and economic development and microenterprise development, among others. Funding to support demonstration initiatives, programs, training and technical assistance as well as research in these fields often comes from a diverse array of sources, including: foundations, local, state and federal governments, individuals and corporations. Partner organizations should think creatively and expansively about developing collaborative funding arrangements from public and private entities supporting each field.

General Resources and Directories

Because funding priorities for government agencies, foundations and corporations constantly shift, it is important to stay updated. The following list includes important resources on current funding opportunities:

- The **Council of State Governments'** *Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community* includes a chapter on securing funding streams for reentry initiatives with comprehensive information and suggestions: http://www.reentrypolicy.org/reentry/THE_REPORT.aspx.
- The **Foundation Center** offers a comprehensive directory of U.S. private foundations: <http://foundationcenter.org>.
- **Grants.gov** is a comprehensive resource for identifying new federal funding opportunities. This website allows users to search for grant opportunities and sign up to receive daily updates: <http://www.grants.gov>.
- The **Microenterprise Fact Sheets** issued by AEO, FIELD, the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) and other partners

contain comprehensive information on state and federal funding sources for MDOs and emerging entrepreneurs. A complete index of fact sheets is available at: <http://www.microenterpriseworks.org/index.asp?bid=149>.

- The **U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs** provides information about reentry initiatives around the country at: <http://www.reentry.gov>.
- The **Workforce Alliance** tracks the major federal funding streams supporting workforce development, including the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Higher Education Act (HEA) and others: http://www.workforcealliance.org/site/c.ciJNK1PJtH/b.1068105/k.923D/Federal_Funding.htm.

Major Sources of Funding for Reentry and Workforce Development

Federal Sources

Funding for reentry programs focused on employment is often provided through the **U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL)** Employment and Training Administration. A list of current grant opportunities is available at: <http://www.doleta.gov/grants>.

The following is a sample of funding streams for reentry initiatives:

- **Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP):** Funds support homeless veterans to prepare for and reenter the workforce after a period of incarceration. More information is available at: <http://www.dol.gov/vets/programs/hvrp>.
- **Prisoner Reentry Initiative:** Provided nearly \$20 million in 2005 and 2006 to support faith-based and community organizations to reduce recidivism by helping incarcerated individuals find work, incorporating mentoring, job training and other comprehensive transitional services. More information is available at: <http://www.doleta.gov/PRI>.
- **Ready4Work:** A three-year, 17-site, \$22.5 million program, jointly funded by DOL, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Ford Foundation and managed by Public/Private Ventures. Ready4Work helped faith-based

and community organizations provide employment, case management and mentoring services to men and women returning to the community from prison and juvenile facilities. For more information, including early evaluation results, see: http://www.ppv.org/ppv/community_faith/community_faith_initiatives.asp?section_id=3&initiative_id=2.

In addition, **DOJ** allocates funds through the National Institute of Corrections' Center of Effective Public Policy and the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance. A list of current and upcoming funding opportunities is available at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/funding/index.html>.

Following are a sample of the sources of funding for reentry initiatives available currently and in the past through DOJ:

- **Edward Byrne Memorial Discretionary Grants Program:** Currently provides funding for a number of priorities including to improve reentry outcomes for individuals leaving local adult criminal justice systems. More information is available at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/07ByrneDiscSol.pdf>.
- **Transition from Jail to Community Initiative (TJCI):** The National Institute of Corrections is currently funding an 18-month cooperative agreement beginning Fiscal Year 2007 for the design of a transitional model to reduce the likelihood that individuals released from jails will commit crimes post-release. The grant announcement is available at: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20061800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/E6-21978.htm>.
- **Serious and Violent Offender Re-Entry Initiative (SVORI):** A comprehensive effort supported by the U.S. Departments of Justice, Labor, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Veterans Affairs and the Social Security Administration, addressing juveniles and adults considered high-risk. SVORI provided over \$100 million to 68 sites, mostly state agencies, to support the development, implementation and enhancement of reentry strategies. The initiative is currently being evaluated by the Urban Institute and RTI International. More information is available at: <http://www.svori-evaluation.org/>.
- **Transition from Prison to the Community Initiative (TPCI):** Supports eight state-level efforts to ensure the successful and crime-free transition of individuals as they complete their incarceration and return

to the community. More information about the initiative is available at: <http://nicic.org/TPCI> and details on state implementation can be found at: <http://nicic.org/TPCStateProfiles>. An additional round of multi-year assistance may become available to states for competitive application in Fiscal Year 2009.

The **U.S. Department of Education (DOE)** has also allocated funding for reentry programs that provide educational and employment services. DOE provides a forecast of funding opportunities for the fiscal year at: <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html> and comprehensive information on current programs at: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/gtep/index.html?src=fp>.

Following are recent funding sources for reentry initiatives available through DOE:

- **Life Skills for State and Local Prisoners Program:** Provided financial assistance for establishing and operating programs designed to reduce recidivism through the development and improvement of life skills necessary for reintegration of incarcerated adults into society. The program supports the development of communication, job and financial skills as well as education. Two of the initiatives profiled in the Ideas and Examples section received funding through this grant program. More information about the program is available at: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/lifeskills/index.html>.
- **Youth Offender State Grants:** Currently provide funding to state correctional education departments to assist and encourage incarcerated youth to acquire functional literacy, life and job skills through the pursuit of post-secondary certificates and Associate of Arts and Bachelors degrees. Youth may receive this assistance while incarcerated, and employment counseling and other related services may continue during reentry. More information on this program is available at: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/transitiontraining/index.html>.

New Developments in Federal Funding

The federal funding sources described in this section represent how reentry programs have been funded to date. The proposed federal Fiscal Year 2008 budget indicates a dramatic change in the funding structure. Under the new budget, the \$64.6 million allocated for reentry initiatives will be consolidated into a single program, the **Prisoner Reentry Initiative**. A number of smaller initiatives will also be combined to form new programs such as the **Byrne Public Safety and Protection Program** and the **Violent Crime Reduction Partnership Initiative**.

In addition, the **Second Chance Act**, with broad bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress, is the first piece of comprehensive legislation designed to reduce recidivism, increase public safety and help ensure the safe and successful return of prisoners to the community. It establishes an interagency taskforce on federal programs/activities and launches a resource center on a broad range of reentry issues. The House and Senate bills authorize millions of dollars in grants to state and local governments and community- and faith-based organizations to develop and deliver prisoner reentry initiatives. As of the writing of this document, the House of Representatives bill number is HR. 1593 and the Senate bill is S. 1060. Updates on the status of this legislation and the full text of the bills are available at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

State and Local Sources

- **Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998:** Funds are provided for a spectrum of workforce development activities promoting an increase in employment, job retention, earnings and occupational skills for a wide range of individuals (e.g., employment seekers, youth, individuals with disabilities and laid-off workers). People with criminal records are eligible to receive these services as well through local one-stop career centers. WIA funding is funneled through state and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). WIBs have broad discretion over the spending of their allocated funds, the design of services and outreach, the selection of providers and the creation of a local workforce system. In several jurisdictions around the country, WIA funds have been directed to support job training and placement services for people

with criminal records through special initiatives within local one-stop career centers. More information is available at: <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/onestop>.

- **State and local correction agencies** generally have discretionary funding within their budgets which may be allocated to support pilot projects.

Private Sources

Private foundations that support reentry programs and initiatives nationally include:

- **Annie E. Casey Foundation:** <http://www.aecf.org>
- **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation:** <http://www.mott.org>
- **Ford Foundation:** <http://www.fordfound.org>
- **JEHT Foundation:** <http://www.jehtfoundation.org>
- **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation:** <http://www.macfound.org>
- **Joyce Foundation** (provides funding to initiatives in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin): <http://www.joycefdn.org>
- **Open Society Institute's U.S. Justice Fund:** <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/justice>
- **Public Welfare Foundation:** <http://www.publicwelfare.org>

Major Sources of Funding for Entrepreneurship and Microenterprise Development

Funding for Microenterprise Development Organizations

A large portion of the federal funding available for MDOs is provided through the **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)**. The SBA issued

the first federal program to focus on providing training and business assistance to low-income and very low-income entrepreneurs. Information on grant opportunities is available at: <http://www.sba.gov/services/financialassistance/sbaloantopics/microloans>.

The primary funding opportunities currently available include:

- **SBA Program for Investments in Microentrepreneurs (PRIME):** Funds can be used by qualifying non-profit organizations to provide training and technical assistance to low-income entrepreneurs who are starting or expanding businesses. Funds can also be used for capacity-building activities targeted to MDOs serving low-income entrepreneurs.
- **SBA Microloan Program:** Provides very small loans to start-up or newly established small businesses. Under this program, SBA makes funds available to non-profit community-based lenders (intermediaries) which, in turn, make loans to eligible borrowers in amounts up to \$35,000.

In addition, the U.S. Office of the Treasury administers the **Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) Fund**. The Fund uses federal resources to invest in and build the capacity of CDFIs to serve low-income individuals and communities lacking adequate access to affordable financial products and services. To be eligible for CDFI funding, an organization must meet several requirements. More information on eligibility requirements and funding opportunities is available at: <http://www.cdfifund.gov>.

Title 1 of **WIA** allows States to “provide adults and dislocated workers occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment, and entrepreneurial training” (WIA §134(d)(4)(D)(vi); 29 USC §2864(d)(4)(D)(vi)). For more information on this provision and other efforts to support self-employment through the federal workforce investment system, see: http://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/dmstree/tegl/tegl2k4/tegl_16-04.htm.

Funding for Emerging Entrepreneurs

Microcredit organizations provide small loans to individuals for business start-up and development. For MDOs without the in-house capability to provide grants and loans, partnerships with microcredit organizations are an effective mechanism to provide access to resources for formerly incarcerated clients.

- Organizations that provide microloans, microgrants or microequity in multiple regions of the U.S. include:
 - **Trickle Up:** <http://www.trickleup.org>
 - **Accion USA:** <http://www.accionusa.org>
- **State Microenterprise Associations (SMAs)** are an excellent source of information regarding the microcredit organizations operating statewide and locally. A directory of SMAs is available at: <http://www.microenterpriseworks.org/index.asp?bid=70>.
- **CDFIs** are local financial institutions – such as non-profit credit unions and lenders – providing credit, capital and financial services to underserved populations and communities in the United States. A full listing of CDFIs is available at: http://www.opportunityfinance.net/industry/industry_locator.asp.

Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) reward the monthly savings of working-poor families who are trying to buy their first home, pay for post-secondary education or start a small business. The match incentive – similar to an employer match for 401(k) contributions – is provided through a variety of government and private sector sources. MDOs are increasingly incorporating IDA programs into their array of services as a means to develop the financial resources of their clients. For more information, see: <http://www.cfed.org/focus.m?parentid=31&siteid=374&id=374>.

Private Sources

- The **Microenterprise Funders Group:** In Spring 2005, FIELD published *Opening Opportunities, Building Ownership: Fulfilling the Promise of Microenterprise in the U.S.*, identifying a set of eight directions to move the field toward long-term growth and stability. Later that year, a group of private foundations dedicated to supporting microenterprise development began meeting to discuss the challenges facing the field and to identify how they could respond to and address the eight directions. Since the first meeting, the Microenterprise Funders Group has grown from approximately 12 to 52 private foundations. Several, including Citigroup, the Kellogg Foundation and the Ms. Foundation for Women, have developed major initiatives addressing one or more of the eight directions. More information on the eight directions, including a downloadable copy of the FIELD report, and the initiatives undertaken

by the Funders Group is available at: <http://fieldus.org/Projects/MovingForward.html>.

- The **Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation** is dedicated to advancing entrepreneurship through its support of education and training efforts, policy initiatives and the commercialization of new technologies by entrepreneurs and others. For more information, including grant guidelines, see: <http://www.kauffman.org>.

Overlapping Funding Sources

The following funding sources may be accessed by both reentry service providers and the microenterprise field.

Federal Sources

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):** Operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, CDBG funds promote new employment and business development opportunities for low-income individuals. Funds may be used by community-based development organizations to carry out neighborhood revitalization through activities that either benefit low- and moderate-income persons, aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight or meet other community development needs. More information is available at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/index.cfm>.
- **The White House's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI):** Funding is provided to faith-based and community organizations serving disadvantaged populations. Funding is made available for a number of areas including employment, reentry and microenterprise development. For more information, see: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/grants-catalog-index.html>.
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program:** Under TANF, states, territories and tribes each receive a block grant allocation, which may be used to reduce the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. TANF offers states great flexibility in designing individual programs. More information is available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa>.

Private Sources

- **Bank and corporate foundations**, such as JP Morgan Chase, Prudential, American Express and Goldman Sachs, are mandated to designate funds for underserved communities by the federal Community Reinvestment Act.
- **Community foundations** are likely sources of funding for local initiatives benefiting a particular community. As indicated in the program profiles included in the Ideas and Examples section, community foundations have provided funding to several projects aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among FIPs. The Council of Foundations' website allows users to identify community foundations by state: *<http://www.cof.org/Locator>*.

Contact Points: State and Local Agencies and Organizations

To explore projects and initiatives promoting entrepreneurship during reentry, it is crucial to identify potential partner organizations and agencies on the state and local levels. A key to building productive relationships is to identify and engage individuals across fields who can act as ambassadors to their organizations and are personally invested in the success of the project. The following resources provide some initial contact points to initiate the process of identifying potential partners.

Criminal Justice

General Resources

- The **National H.I.R.E Network** provides contact information by state for the department of labor, criminal justice repository, attorney general, department of corrections, department(s) of parole and probation and a sampling of reentry programs in the “*Resources & Assistance*” section of its website: <http://www.hirenetwork.org/>.
- The **U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs** maintains a database containing many of the federal and state agencies as well as community organizations that provide services for FIPs. The database is organized by state and is available at: <http://www.reentryresources.ncjrs.gov/>.

Reentry Programs

- The **Reentry Policy Council**, a project of the Council of State Governments Justice Center, provides a working list of reentry programs organized by state: http://www.reentrypolicy.org/reentry/Program_Examples.aspx.
- The **Urban Institute** published a report in 2004 highlighting a sampling of reentry programs in communities across the U.S. entitled *Outside the*

Walls. This report organizes the programs based on their primary focus (education, employment, housing, etc.) and is available at: <http://www.urban.org/publications/410911.html>.

Reentry Taskforces

Increasingly, state and local jurisdictions are establishing reentry taskforces convening government and community-based entities to address the challenges of reentry. These collaborations are excellent arenas for introducing innovative ideas and building the relationships necessary for initiatives bridging multiple fields. While a national directory of reentry taskforces does not yet exist, those at the local level are usually facilitated by one of the following local government agencies or offices:

- District Attorney's office
- Mayor's office
- Workforce Investment Board
- Parole and probation departments

Federal Bureau of Prisons

- The **Federal Bureau of Prisons'** website provides contact information for each federal correctional facility and regional office: <http://www.bop.gov/locations/locationmap.jsp>.
- **Industries, Education and Vocational Training Division**, Central Office: <http://www.bop.gov/about/co/index.jsp>.
- **Federal Probation:** A directory of federal probation offices is available at: <http://www.uscourts.gov/contact.html>.

State Departments of Corrections, Parole and Probation

- The **American Correctional Association** provides a directory of adult and juvenile corrections departments at: <http://www.aca.org/research/directory.asp>.

- Each state correctional department website generally provides a listing of specific adult and juvenile facilities, contact information for the state education/programs department and a directory of adult and juvenile parole and probation departments.
- **The American Probation and Parole Association** provides a directory of state adult probation and parole agencies: <http://www.appa-net.org/resources/directory/>.

Local Jails

- Jails are often administered through the sheriff's office in each city or county. Information can be found by searching for the sheriff's office on the Internet or by going to the local jurisdiction's government website.
- Sheriff offices' websites generally provide information about the location of each adult and juvenile facility, the available programs and a directory of the adult and juvenile probation offices.

Entrepreneurship

General Resources

- **State microenterprise associations (SMAs)** are an excellent resource for information about microenterprise organizations and microlenders at the local level. SMAs can help identify the organizations and lenders best equipped to partner on an initiative targeting currently and formerly incarcerated individuals. As of the writing of this document, an SMA at some phase of development exists in most states. AEO provides a directory of SMAs on its website: <http://www.microenterpriseworks.org/index.asp?bid=70>.
- The **U.S. Small Business Association (SBA)** provides contact information for regional and local offices, women's business centers (WBCs), and small business development centers (SBDCs) in the "Local Resources" section of its website: <http://www.sba.gov>.

Microenterprise Development Organizations

- **AEO** provides a directory of member MDOs by state: <http://www.microenterpriseworks.org/index.asp?bid=282>.
- **FIELD** provides a directory of microenterprise programs nationwide: <http://fieldus.org/Publications/Directory.asp>.

Microlenders

Some MDOs provide loans and links to capital. Others do not have the capacity to provide this service internally. In the latter case, it is essential that projects engage a microlender to facilitate access to capital once clients develop a viable business plan.

- The **Opportunity Finance Network** provides a member locator service by state, type of organization and lender type, among other categories: http://www.opportunityfinance.net/industry/industry_locator.asp.
- Some microfinance institutions provide credit, grants and/or loans in multiple regions of the country through partnerships with local MDOs. These organizations include:
 - **Accion USA:** <http://www.accionusa.org/>
 - **Trickle Up:** <http://www.trickleup.org/>

Workforce Development

Local workforce and economic development offices and business groups can offer information and services such as current labor market forecasts, links to job training and placement services and links to the business community as a potential source of mentors and instructors.

General Resources

- A directory of state departments of labor and other related agencies is available on the **U.S. Department of Labor** website under “state activities” at: <http://www.dol.gov/>.

One-Stop Career Centers

- Information on one-stop centers is available at: <http://www.careeronestop.org>.
- To locate the one-stop center(s) in a particular jurisdiction, see: <http://www.servicelocator.org>.

Workforce Investment Boards

- The **National Association of State Workforce Board Chairs** provides a listing of state Workforce Investment Boards: <http://www.subnet.nga.org/workforcecouncilchairs/Links/StateWDC.asp>

Chambers of Commerce

- The **U.S. Chamber of Commerce** provides state and county chamber of commerce contact information: <http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/directory/default.htm?n=tb>.

Ideas and Examples: Current Programs

Central Ohio Regional Ex-Offender and Family Reentry Program

Location: Columbus, OH

Founder: The Economic Community Development Institute (ECDI). Services are provided by four local collaborative partners: Ex-Offenders Family and Community, Teen Challenge Columbus, Opening Doors of Ohio and Rachel's House.

Date Founded: May 2006

Funding Source: Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and the Ohio Strengthening Families Initiative.

Mission Statement

To provide females transitioning from Ohio correctional facilities with an array of services to facilitate reentry.

Main Program Components

- **Reentry services:** Employment and housing referrals, recovery support, linkages to community resources, peer-to-peer mentoring, spiritual growth support, conflict management, parenting skills and family reconciliation and support groups.
- **Business development services:** Classes in financial literacy and microenterprise development.
- **Individual Development Accounts (IDAs).**

- **Mentoring:** Successful program participants serve as peer mentors and coaches.

Timing of Services

Participants have access to services from six months prior to release to six months after release.

Eligibility and Screening

To qualify for programs and loans, participants must have earnings 150 percent below the federal poverty line and a minor dependent in the home.

Evaluation Statistics

The program is in the process of compiling data to evaluate client outcomes.

Definition of Success

Program facilitators have concluded that starting a business and/or establishing an IDA are not appropriate outcome measures given the instability of the reentry period. Additionally, participants are eligible for services only for six months post-release. Instead, success is defined by accessing traditional employment, finding permanent housing and reuniting with family members, among other factors.

Contact Information

Josh Summer

Director of Ancillary Programs

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<http://www.ecdi.org>

Coffee Creek Prison Project

Location: Portland, OR

Founder: Mercy Corps Northwest (MCNW)

Date Founded: Project development began in 2005; the first class was held in February 2007.

Funding Source: Initial steps funded by MCNW's general budget.

Mission Statement

To prepare participants for initiating and succeeding in small business or self-employment after their release.

Main Program Components

- **Curriculum:** Classes are delivered by MCNW staff along with help from qualified prisoners and community experts. Topics include math fundamentals, basic financial literacy and business plan development. Soft skills development includes conflict resolution, goal setting and time management as well as practical planning for reentry.
- **Transitional services:** MCNW provides referrals to employment opportunities related to clients' entrepreneurial interests and group placement in transitional housing units run by the Multnomah County Department of Community Corrections. Additional supports are provided by an informal coalition of reentry-focused community organizations.
- **Traditional client services:** Upon release, participants may access additional MCNW services, including one-on-one work with staff

on the development and refinement of business plans, preparation of loan application documents, ongoing support of daily operations of businesses and the establishment of IDAs.

Timing of Services

Clients begin taking classes 18-24 months prior to release and may access traditional MCNW client services in the community.

Eligibility and Screening

Participants must have earned a GED and pass a math pre-screening test.

Evaluation Statistics

The first class includes 18 women. Because the project is still in an initial phase, outcome data are not yet available.

Definition of Success

Reduced recidivism; increased economic self-sufficiency and independence as measured by increases in income, accumulation of assets and housing stability; and involvement and participation in community life. Notably, business start-up is not included as an outcome measure.

Contact Information

Douglas Cooper

Manager, Business Development Services

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Portland, OR 97232

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<http://www.mercycorpsnw.org>

Community Success Initiative (CSI)

Location: Raleigh, NC

Founder: Dennis Gaddy, a formerly incarcerated individual who spent over five years in federal prison after a 20-year career assisting low-income individuals build home-based businesses.

Date Founded: May 2004

Funding Source: Private donations, foundations and fee-for-service contracts.

Mission Statement

To help make the world a better place through programs that raise individual and community awareness of personal growth and “success” principles, inspire others to reach their potential, and build vibrant and healthy communities.

Main Program Components

CSI’s Resource Center without Walls is a collaborative program focused on addressing the challenges individuals face during reentry. It includes the following components:

- **Small group trainings and individual mentoring** in life skills, leadership and entrepreneurship.
- **Connections to community resources:** CSI links with businesses that may hire FIPs; training programs that enhance the participants’ opportunities of obtaining a job with opportunities for advancement and career development; housing programs; family counseling programs; substance abuse counseling and recovery programs; and mental health counseling.

- **Networking opportunities:** CSI brings together people with life experience with the criminal justice system to network with each other, exchange knowledge and resources and solve problems.
- **Advocacy:** CSI convenes roundtables for people and organizations to learn more about the criminal justice system from those with real life experiences as well as to organize advocacy efforts around related issues.

Timing of Services

During incarceration and in the community.

Eligibility and Screening

Formerly incarcerated men and women as well as those preparing for release from prison are eligible for the program. An intake process is utilized to determine each client’s needs and connect him/her to appropriate services.

Evaluation Statistics

CSI has served approximately 500 clients since its inception. In the next 12 months, the Resource Center without Walls plans to reach 200 FIPs, 400 people in prison and 100 youth currently incarcerated or at risk of incarceration.

Definition of Success

Progress toward the fulfillment of a worthy goal.

Contact Information

Dennis Gaddy

Executive Director

Community Success Initiative

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<http://www.communitysuccess.org>

Curry New Venture Initiative

Location: Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Founder: Asper Centre for Entrepreneurship and Restorative Resolutions, an alternative-to-incarceration program based on restorative justice principles.

Date Founded: Project development began in June 2007; the first class will be held in September 2007.

Funding Source: London, England-based private foundation with additional support from local organizations and government agencies.

Mission Statement

To provide participants with the resources necessary to launch or work in a small business.

Main Program Components

- **Curriculum:** The 13-week curriculum, in addition to covering basic business topics, emphasizes the development of math and reading skills as well as increasing self-esteem. Classroom lectures are supplemented with guest speakers from the local community and visits to local businesses.
- **Employment coaching:** Working with such organizations as Destination Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the program will provide employment advice and introductions to potential employers.
- **Business development services,** through resources and programs available from such groups as the Canada/Manitoba Business Service

Centre, Manitoba Business Start, Women's Enterprise Centre and Aboriginal Business Canada.

- **Alumni program** for program graduates to share ideas and build networks.

Timing of Services

Services are provided within the community as an alternative to a prison sentence.

Eligibility and Screening

Screening is conducted jointly by staff of the Asper Centre and Restorative Resolutions program based on a written application and in-person interview.

Evaluation Statistics

The Curry New Venture Initiative includes a three-year study tracking the progress of program graduates.

Definition of Success

Self-employment or a position with a firm within six weeks of graduation; increased self-esteem; and involvement in the community.

Contact Information

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Executive Director

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<http://www.umanitoba.ca/entrepreneur/>

How to Start Your Own Small Business

Location: New York, NY

Founder: The Five O’Clock Club

Date Founded: Fall 2005

Funding Source: General operating funds

Mission Statement

To provide women incarcerated at Bayview Correctional Facility with skills and knowledge to help them become more marketable employees or successful entrepreneurs as they reenter society.

Main Program Components

Through a volunteer program run by its members, the Five O’Clock Club offers the following services:

- **Curriculum:** “*How to Start Your Own Small Business*” consists of a 10-week course aimed at teaching basic and advanced business skills. The syllabus includes tools to help participants decide whether entrepreneurship is an appropriate option; research and develop a business plan; obtain economic and financial literacy; and understand marketing. This hands-on learning experience uses a supplemental textbook entitled *Your Great Business Idea: The Truth about Making It Happen*. The goal of the course is to take a business idea and turn it into a reality, not to teach business theory.
- **Access to capital:** Micro-financing and grants up to \$1,000 are provided through links with Project Enterprise and Trickle Up.

- **Support services:** Clients attend weekly support programs to monitor the progress they are making in their businesses.

Timing of Services

Classes are provided during incarceration and follow-up services are available after release, including access to capital and weekly support programs.

Eligibility and Screening

Participants must have a high-school diploma or GED.

Evaluation Statistics

Twenty-seven women have participated and completed the first two sets of courses. Due to a change in administration at the prison, classes have ceased temporarily, but will resume in September 2008. Because the program is relatively new, its impact has not yet been evaluated.

Definition of Success

Business start-up or gainful employment on a career track.

Contact Information

Kate Wendleton

Founder and President

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<http://www.fiveoclockclub.com>

Leaders under Construction®

Location: Middletown, OH

Founder: Freedom Community Development Corporation, Inc.

Date Founded: Founded in January 2006; services will be initiated in 2007.

Funding Source: Private donations

Mission Statement

Leaders under Construction® aims to implement an innovative rehabilitation model for low-level drug dealers and those at-risk for involvement in drug trafficking. The program will enable them to positively re-direct their entrepreneurial aptitude and leadership abilities to bring about restoration within the individual, the family and the community.

Main Program Components

Leaders under Construction® is an alternative-to-incarceration program aimed to serve individuals convicted of drug-related felonies. The following services will be provided within the community as an alternative to a prison sentence:

- **Hands-on training in the construction industry.**
- **Microenterprise development training** to assist clients develop skills and resources to start businesses in the construction trades. Services will be provided through links with local business development organizations. They will include a microlending program and technical assistance geared toward low- to moderate-income individuals.

- **Leadership development training.**
- **Restorative justice program:** This rehabilitation program model uses an innovative seven-step approach including victim advocacy efforts. The program is designed to bring restoration to the community by giving program participants the opportunity to provide valuable community services while they learn specified trades. As a result, participants will have the opportunity to re-build the neighborhoods in which they live.

Eligibility and Screening

Participants must be referred from local drug courts, parole or probation departments or local social service agencies servicing people with a criminal record who have been convicted of drug-related felonies, particularly drug dealing.

Evaluation Statistics

Data will be gathered on successful program completion, reduction in recidivism rates, the number of new businesses created and the number of jobs created by each new enterprise. In addition, statistics will be gathered on those who have been successfully placed within the construction industry, other sectors and/or job skills training programs.

Definition of Success

An individual's transition from drug trafficking to earning and sustaining a legitimate income.

Contact Information

Katrina Wilson

Founder/Director

Leaders under Construction®

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Middletown, OH 45044

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Learning to Earn Project

Location: Cobb County, GA

Founder: A collaboration between the Edge Connection, a Small Business Association Women's Business Center housed at Kennesaw State University; Cobb/Douglas County Community Services Board; and the Cobb County Sheriff's Department.

Date Founded: Project development began in 2006; the first session was held in April 2007.

Funding Source: The U.S. Department of Education, through the Life Skills for State and Local Prisoners Program.

Mission Statement

To reduce recidivism through the development and improvement of life skills necessary for the reintegration of incarcerated adults into society. The Learn to Earn Project is designed to provide the education and support necessary to develop successful business plans and resources for self-employment.

Main Program Components

- **Curriculum:**
 - *"Exploring Entrepreneurship:"* a six-hour class providing tools and resources to research a business idea and complete a feasibility study.
 - *"Plan for Success:"* a 12-week course combining business development, economic literacy and life skills/leadership training. Participants acquire skills and discipline to perform essential business functions and become successful entrepreneurs. Each

participant must present a business plan to graduate.

- **Ongoing consulting and mentorship:** One-on-one business consulting for entrepreneurs.
- **Additional support and counseling,** provided by the Cobb County Community Services Board and community-based organizations.

Timing of Services

Courses are provided during incarceration. Ongoing consulting and mentorship are available after release.

Eligibility and Screening

Learning to Earn targets incarcerated individuals 18 years of age and older; less than 120 days before scheduled release; charged with a misdemeanor or non-violent felony; and diagnosed with a mental health, substance abuse and/or learning disability.

Evaluation Statistics

In 2006, 124 individuals attended an information session about the Learning to Earn Project. Of these, 70 moved on to the *"Exploring Entrepreneurship"* course, 29 participated in the *"Plan for Success"* workshops and 12 graduated.

Definition of Success

The launch, growth or sustaining of a business.

Contact Information

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Men's Employment and Business Ownership Program (MEBOP)

Location: Chicago, IL

Founder: A group of African American entrepreneurs and economic development practitioners representing the Egan Urban Center at DePaul University, the Chicago International Development Corp. and other entities.

Date Founded: 2004

Funding Source: Grants provided by the Chicago Community Trust, the Field Foundation of Illinois, Polk Bros. Foundation, Washington Mutual, the Illinois Department of Corrections, and individual contributions.

Mission Statement

To empower low-income African American fathers in Chicago to generate income to support themselves and contribute to the financial well being of their families through entrepreneurship.

Main Program Components:

- **Curriculum:**
 - The “*Entrepreneurial Training Program*” (ETP): a 10-week training module covering the basics of starting a business, accounting and bookkeeping, marketing, legal and tax issues as well as developing a business plan. ETP also provides a technical assistance module to address the unique needs of clients who have completed the training module and been approved for credit to finance their business.
 - The “*Entrepreneurship Partnership Program*”

(EPP): offers apprenticeship-training opportunities in collaboration with established businesses.

- **Support services:** MEBOP partners with community-based organizations that offer services, including substance abuse counseling and treatment; temporary housing; job readiness and placement; and life-skills training in parenting.
- **Access to capital** through links to local Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs).
- **Networking opportunities:** MEBOP participants learn from each other by offering their services and exchanging practical knowledge.

Timing of Services

In the community.

Eligibility and Screening

Community-based organizations refer clients to MEBOP.

Evaluation Statistics

MEBOP clients are low-income African American men, 20 to 55 years-old, who have on average 2.5 dependent children. Over 60 percent of clients have felony records. Outcome data are not yet available.

Contact Information

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Microenterprise Outreach Initiative

Location: New York, NY

Founder: Project Enterprise, a microlender providing business loans, business training and networking opportunities.

Date Founded: In September 2006, Project Enterprise began a collaborative effort with microgrant provider, Trickle Up, targeting FIPs. As of September 2007, Project Enterprise is continuing the initiative on its own.

Funding Source: General operating budget

Mission Statement

To support and develop entrepreneurs and small businesses in under-resourced communities in New York City. Through business loans, business development services and networking opportunities, entrepreneurs are able to increase their standard of living, create jobs for their communities and build financial assets.

Main Program Components

- **Orientation and training of reentry program staff** aimed to educate them about microenterprise development and help them identify appropriate candidates for referrals.
- **Microenterprise development courses.**
- **Access to capital** for clients who complete the microenterprise development courses and develop a viable business plan.

Timing of Services

In the community.

Eligibility and Screening

Program services are available to formerly incarcerated men and women in the New York, NY area who have been referred by partner community-based reentry organizations. Candidates for referral must have a specific business idea or existing for-profit business. Project Enterprise does not require credit history or collateral in order to provide microloans.

Evaluation Statistics

As of July 2007, six trainings for reentry program staff had been held and 12 formerly incarcerated prospective clients were referred.

Definition of Success

Business start or expansion of existing businesses.

Contact Information

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New Visions, New Ventures

Location: Richmond, VA

Founder: Ann Parker Maust

Date Founded: 1999

Funding Source: General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Mission Statement

The original mission was to promote economic independence for women transitioning from the correctional system by providing opportunities for self-employment and microenterprise development. The target population has expanded to include economically and socially disadvantaged women in the Richmond metropolitan area, including those living in public housing and correctional institutions as well as those referred by domestic violence and sexual assault agencies.

Main Program Components

- **Curriculum:** The Micro-Entrepreneurial Training program covers financial literacy, microenterprise instruction and creative thinking, and culminates in the development of a business plan.
- **Reentry assistance:** Clients transitioning from correctional facilities are linked to employment and social services to facilitate a smooth reentry.

Timing of Services

During incarceration, clients participate in the Micro-Entrepreneurial Training program. Upon release, they receive assistance through a range of partnerships with employers and social service organizations.

Eligibility and Screening

Incarcerated women must be within six months to one year of release. In addition to expressing interest in self-employment, applicants are required to undergo screening for entrepreneurial aptitude, as well as intensive psychological and social interviews.

Evaluation Statistics

During year one, New Visions, New Ventures served approximately 30 women transitioning from the Virginia correctional system. Of the 30 participants, three women are considered “successes,” i.e., two have started businesses and the third has acquired the education and training toward her goal, but has yet to demonstrate “business success” (though she has been gainfully employed for the six years since her release from prison). New Visions, New Ventures is confident that other clients’ lives have been positively impacted even though they have not yet attained business success.

Definition of Success

Business start-up, either independently or as an income enhancement to gainful employment.

Contact Information

Ann Parker Maust

President

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Nurturing a New Start

Location: Grand Rapids, MI

Founder: A collaboration among four organizations: Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW), a non-profit women's business center; Planned Parenthood of West Michigan; the Women's Resource Center; and the YWCA's Domestic Assault program.

Date Founded: 2004

Funding Source: The Nokomis Foundation

Mission Statement

To reduce the rate of recidivism by providing incarcerated women with the opportunity to engage with supportive organizations that may be able to help them change their lives.

Main Program Components

Nurturing a New Start began serving women housed in the Sober Living Unit at the county jail, and has since expanded to offer a series of workshops within the Community Reentry Center, a work-release program operated by the county jail. The workshops focus on the following topics:

- **Non-violent communication.**
- **Financial literacy and self-employment:** GROW staff provide workshops on the basics of financial literacy, budgeting, goal setting and self-employment. Participants who show the motivation to pursue self-employment can access additional GROW services, including business training, economic training, UpClose workshops,

business counseling, monthly networking opportunities on rotating topics, access to IDAs and mentoring.

- **Job search preparation.**
- **Domestic abuse prevention.**
- **Healthy relationships.**

Timing of Services

Workshops are provided during incarceration; participants are encouraged to access additional services provided by the partner organizations during incarceration (with permission of the correctional administration) and upon release.

Eligibility and Screening

All women incarcerated at the Community Reentry Center are eligible to participate.

Evaluation Statistics

Outcome data are not yet available.

Definition of Success

Completion of the workshop series and continued access of services.

Contact Information

Kym Duursma

Nurturing a New Start Program Coordinator

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Prison Entrepreneurship Program (PEP)

Location: Houston, TX

Founder: Catherine Rohr

Date Founded: May 2004

Funding Source: A range of public and private sources and in-kind donations.

Mission Statement

To stimulate positive life transformation for executives and incarcerated individuals, uniting them through entrepreneurial passion, education and mentoring.

Main Program Components

- **In-prison Business Plan Competition (BPC).**
- **Pre-release services:** Assistance with housing and job placement post-release.
- **Executive Mentoring Program**, in which volunteer business executives provide life/business coaching to graduates of the BPC.
- **Entrepreneurship School** to enable participants to continue taking classes post-release.
- **Access to capital.**

Timing of Services

While incarcerated, PEP clients participate in an entrepreneurship “boot camp” and write complete business plans for companies they might start upon their release. Once released from prison, clients can participate in a job placement program, continue their

education through the Entrepreneurship School, and receive coaching through the Executive Mentoring Program.

Eligibility and Screening

PEP serves incarcerated men in several medium-security prisons in Texas. Prospective participants are generally within six months of release.

Evaluation Statistics

More than 400 participants have graduated from BPC since 2004, 80 percent of whom have been released from prison. Of these, 86 percent were employed upon release, 43 percent were paired with executive mentors and 14 percent have started their own businesses. More information on participant outcomes is available at: <http://www.pep.org/>.

Contact Information

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Rising Tide Capital, Inc.

Location: Jersey City, NJ

Founder: Alex Forrester and Alfa Demmellesh

Date Founded: May 2004

Funding Source: Private contributions and corporate sponsorship (Goldman Sachs, Bank of America and Fidelity Investments).

Mission Statement

To help disadvantaged inner-city entrepreneurs in Northern New Jersey start and grow businesses to increase their income and better support their families.

Main Program Components

Rising Tide Capital offers a 10-session course in basic business management and planning called the Community Business Academy. It offers hands-on training in the fundamental skills, tools and concepts of planning for and running a business.

- **Curriculum:** The Community Business Academy is based around the business simulation modules of the MicroPlan curriculum (offered by Making Cents) and a complementary curriculum developed by Rising Tide Capital. This curriculum provides business planning and management skills since many low-income entrepreneurs are already operating on an informal level and need assistance learning how to grow and strategically manage their businesses. The program also strongly believes in utilizing an adult participatory learning methodology.
- **Ongoing assistance:** Graduates of the Community Business Academy receive year-round

advanced business development services through a program called Club CEO. It provides one-on-one consulting and technical assistance, coaching, advanced seminars, and networking events.

- **Access to capital:** Rising Tide Capital connects clients to local microlending programs and assists them to finalize their business plans and prepare the necessary paperwork. Rising Tide Capital also offers a Trickle Up grant program.

Timing of Services

In the community.

Eligibility and Screening

The program accepts only participants whose income falls below the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's low- and middle-income guidelines and who present a specific business idea they want to pursue.

Evaluation Statistics

The average client is a 39 year-old single African American woman with two children earning under \$27,000 per year. Twenty percent of clients are formerly incarcerated. Preliminary outcome measurements are currently underway.

Definition of Success

Increased personal/household income and financial stability through the establishment and growth of a business.

Contact Information

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Self-Education Economic Development (SEED) Program

Location: New York State prisons

Founder: Members of the Shawangunk Correctional Facility's Lifers and Long-Termers Organization. The same program is now also taught by members of the Lifers and Long-Termers Organization at Clinton Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison.

Date Founded: 2005

Funding Source: Personal funds and private donations are used to acquire materials and texts.

Mission Statement

To educate incarcerated people so they can enrich their community upon returning home. SEED uses the motto "*Each one, teach one*" to define its goal of training incarcerated individuals to become socially responsible citizens, support themselves and contribute to their communities.

Main Program Components

SEED was designed solely by incarcerated individuals with the aim of teaching other people in prison. The curriculum consists of a 36-week course taught in weekly, three-hour modules. It is designed to teach basic business skills culminating in the production of a realistic business plan and preliminary designs for a website. Participants are required to pass exams on various topics, including business terminology, oral presentations, macro- and micro-economics, computer literacy, product development and design as well as market research. These topics are covered

using various sources, including textbooks donated by the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE).

Timing of Services

During incarceration.

Eligibility and Screening

Admission to the SEED program is open to those who demonstrate an interest in starting a small business or learning general business skills.

Evaluation Statistics

Thirteen men participated in the first SEED course at Clinton Correctional Facility. Of these, seven graduated. Other initial participants were transferred to other correctional facilities before completing the course. All of the graduates are still incarcerated and have not yet been able to test their newly acquired skills.

Definition of Success

Financial stability through employment and/or business start-up upon release.

Contact Information:

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98-A-5648

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Self-Education Economic Development Program

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The Prince's Trust

Location: London, England

Founder: The Prince of Wales

Date Founded: 1976

Funding Source: Major fundraising events and donations.

Mission Statement

To help youth who are long-term unemployed, underachieving in education and currently or formerly incarcerated to reach their full potential. The Prince's Trust helps 14 to 30 year-olds realize their potential and transform their lives through practical support, including training, mentoring and financial assistance.

Main Program Components

The Prince's Trust operates the Start-up Programme aimed at supporting youth to start their own businesses. Services include:

- **Mentoring:** Participants are paired with volunteer business mentors to provide training and ongoing advice.
- **Training/curriculum:** The Prince's Trust does not offer formal classes, but has developed a series of guides for participants to use with assistance from their mentors. The guides cover a variety of topics, including Starting Your Business, Sales and Marketing, Managing Your Finances, Legal Low-Down and Professional Business Behavior.
- **Financial assistance:** Low-interest loans of up to £4,000 (approximately \$8,200) are provided to sole

applicants; £5,000 [approximately \$10,200] for partnerships.

- **Additional services:** Patent, copyright and trademark guidance provided through a legal hotline, insurance services, accounting software and discounts in membership fees to several trade organizations.

Timing of Services

While The Prince's Trust provides workforce development services to incarcerated youth, services through the Start-up Programme are available only in the community.

Eligibility and Screening

Participants must have a business idea and demonstrate readiness to make it a reality. Applicants proving a lack of financial resources submit details on their business plans for evaluation.

Evaluation Statistics

In 2006, The Prince's Trust supported 12,793 young entrepreneurs through the Start-up Programme. Of these, nearly 3,500 started their own business and over 6,000 received support developing their enterprises. Approximately 11 percent of the total number of youth served by The Prince's Trust in 2006 were currently or formerly incarcerated.

Contact Information

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Training and Supporting Ex-Offenders as Entrepreneurs

Location: Oklahoma City, OK

Founder: Oklahoma Department of Corrections

Date Founded: May 2004

Funding Source: U.S. Department of Education, through the Life Skills for State and Local Prisoners Program.

Mission Statement

To promote the positive reentry of incarcerated individuals into the community by enhancing entrepreneurial, personal, and professional development among program participants.

Main Program Components

- **Curriculum:**
 - A series of 15 modules on business development designed for people with a criminal record entitled “*Owning Your Own Business.*”
 - Life skills instruction.
- **Assistance developing a business plan.**
- **Support services:** Assistance accessing traditional employment opportunities, housing and counseling are provided upon release.

Timing of Services

Courses are provided during incarceration with links to services during reentry into the community.

Eligibility and Screening

Participants must have a high school diploma or GED; 10th grade reading and math levels; release date within 18 months with at least six months of actual time remaining; a score within the top range of the Entrepreneurial Selection Scale assessment; and strong interest in becoming self-employed.

Evaluation Statistics

The Institute of Social and Educational Research is performing an evaluation. As of the writing of this document, 362 individuals have graduated from the program. Of these, 101 are employed and 15 have started their own businesses.

Definition of Success

“*Good citizenship,*” including but not limited to a reduction in recidivism.

Contact Information

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Veterans Behind Bars Program: From Cell to Sell

Location: Albany, NY

Founder: New York State Small Business Development Center (NYS SBDC)

Date Founded: 1999

Funding Sources: The U.S. Small Business Administration, New York State and the Veteran's Business Opportunity Program contribute funding through the NYS SBDC.

Mission Statement

To assist incarcerated veterans within three to four years of release to develop business concepts and plans that can be turned into successful businesses upon return to society.

Main Program Components

- **Curriculum:** Certified, experienced NYS SBDC business advisors voluntarily conduct classes in basic business concepts, leading to the preparation of a complete and detailed business plan. The curriculum is a compilation of materials and techniques, practical advice and business training topics designed to produce results in the highly specialized environment of medium-security correctional facilities. It is a compendium of the best practices developed over several years of business training experience within correctional facilities.
- **Access to information:** The NYS SBDC has placed a basic business reference library in both participating facilities.

- **Business advice:** NYS SBDC business advisors offer individualized entrepreneurial advising on business plan development and the myriad of topics necessary for successful small business operation.

Timing of Services

Courses and advising are available during incarceration. Once in the community, participants are encouraged to continue accessing advising services to finalize their business plan and start and grow their businesses.

Eligibility and Screening

Participants must be honorably discharged veterans eligible for the Veteran's Residential Program who are within four years of release and are residents at Arthur Kill Correctional Facility (New York City) or Groveland Correctional Facility (Rochester).

Evaluation Statistics

Thus far, more than 500 participants have completed the coursework, although only a small portion have been released. Of the released participants, several have made the connection with NYS SBDC advisors after release.

Definition of Success

Reduced recidivism, employment in an area of interest, and/or business start-up.

Contact Information

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Conclusion

Entrepreneurship can offer a viable path to economic self-sufficiency and successful reentry for some of the increasing number of people coming home from prison each year. In addition, entrepreneurship can provide an opportunity for restorative justice. As exemplified by several of the entrepreneurs profiled within this monograph, individuals can utilize their businesses to support themselves and their families while addressing some of the pressing economic and social issues facing their communities.

Small businesses often begin as one-person, part-time enterprises that offer supplemental income to a traditional job, such as selling baked goods or crafts at a farmers market. Emerging entrepreneurs might initiate a business on the side, switch to part-time work as the business grows, and only rely on it as an exclusive source of income once they have acquired the assets and resources to do so. In some cases, these businesses grow into sophisticated corporations or non-profits that employ numerous individuals and generate significant revenue.

The examples set by the programs profiled in this monograph demonstrate that reentry initiatives using entrepreneurship as a tool must be customized to utilize the resources available through partner organizations at the local level. Some of these initiatives provide business development services to individuals while they are still incarcerated. Others are designed as alternative-to-incarceration programs, using exposure to entrepreneurship as a strategy to prevent individuals from entering the justice system in the first place. Others only provide business development services once clients have achieved stability in the community.

This diversity is emblematic of the creativity and innovation that define entrepreneurship and microenterprise development, and make those fields such an exciting resource for professionals in the criminal justice and reentry fields. It also demonstrates that the promotion of entrepreneurship as a reentry strategy is in an embryonic stage. Many questions must be answered regarding how, when and under what circumstances people with criminal records can most benefit from exposure to formal entrepreneurial training.

The time is ripe to establish funding streams, create pilot projects and develop the infrastructure necessary to identify, evaluate and share promising practices. We must take advantage of the opportunities to pool our collective knowledge and resources, capitalize on the talents and skills of individuals leaving prison and empower them to become agents of change in their lives and contribute to the vibrancy and health of our communities.

Vickie Stringer's business — Triple Crown Publications — has grown from a one-woman operation to the world's leading independent publisher of urban and hip-hop literature. Ms. Stringer's life experience, creative ability and entrepreneurial talent have coalesced into a tremendously successful enterprise that continues to expand and flourish.

Vickie Stringer – Triple Crown Publications

“Today I am spiritually whole. I am an entrepreneur and a legal hustler.”

Ms. Stringer wrote her autobiography, *Let That Be the Reason*, while serving a seven-year sentence for drug trafficking at Bryan federal prison in Texas. Upon release in 2001, and after several major publishing houses rejected the manuscript, she scraped together \$2,500 from friends and family to self-publish 1,500 copies. In the first week, she sold over 1,000 books from the trunk of her car at gas stations and beauty salons. When a small publisher gave her a \$25,000 advance to release the book, she launched Triple Crown Publications, using her kitchen as the company's first office.

Today, Triple Crown Publications is a fast-growing leader in the world of urban and hip-hop literature, a genre known for gritty portrayals of inner-city life. In addition to increasing the company's visibility and expanding its reach, Ms. Stringer plans to start a foundation aimed at bridging the gap between incarcerated parents and their children.

Venture Name: Triple Crown Publications

Date Founded: 2001

Funding Sources: Book sales and commissions from deals with major publishing houses.

Mission: To uplift, enlighten and empower urban readers and writers from around the world by bringing quality literature and literary products to a new generation of customers.

Description of Services: Triple Crown Publications purchases quality manuscripts, and publishes and distributes them throughout the urban community and within mainstream literary circles.

Growth to Date: Triple Crown Publications has published over 36 titles by 30 different authors, distributed over one million books to bookstores and libraries worldwide, and in 2005, translated 10 publications into Japanese. Triple Crown Publications currently grosses nearly \$2.5 million per year.

Website: <http://www.triplecrownpublications.com>

Appendix: Conversations on Reentry and Entrepreneurship – Participants

September 29, 2006

“Entrepreneurship and Prisoner Reentry: The Concept, The Nuts & Bolts, The Pitch”

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National Correctional Industries Association
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Catherine Barnett
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Project Enterprise
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Mike Caslin
Executive Vice President, Public Policy
National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship
New York, NY

Rex Davidson
President and CEO
Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and
Northern New Jersey
Astoria, NY

Fred Davie
President
Public/Private Ventures
Philadelphia, PA

Elaine Edgcomb
Director
FIELD - The Aspen Institute
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Mark Fabry
Founder
Access International
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Alex Forrester
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Rising Tide Capital
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Richard Greenwald
President/CEO
Transitional Work Corporation
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New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services
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Alexandra Fisher-Lamari
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Alan MacKenzie
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ISED Ventures
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The Ridley Group and Associates
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Lisa Servon
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Matthew Sonfield
The Robert F. Dall Distinguished Professor in Business
Department of Management, Entrepreneurship and
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Mindy Tarlow
Executive Director
Center for Employment Opportunities
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Douglas E. Thompkins, Jr.
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Julius Walls, Jr.
President
Greyston Bakery
Yonkers, NY

David Williams
Co-Founder
Self-Education Economic Development Program
Waldorf, MD

Appendix: Conversations on Reentry and Entrepreneurship – Participants (Cont.)

December 4, 2006

“Entrepreneurship and Prisoner Reentry: Ready, Set, Go”

San Diego State University
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The Workman Fund
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Loree Byzick
Special Projects Manager
Superior California Economic Development District
Redding, CA

Robert Casas
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Cut and Trim Landscaping
El Cajon, CA

Douglas Cooper
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Mercy Corps Northwest
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Mark Fabry
Founder
Access International
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Erica Forman
Counseling Supervisor
San Diego County Sheriff's Office
Las Colinas Women's Jail
Santee, CA

Jeff Foss
Vice President of Resource and Program Development
ACCION USA
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Robb Freda-Cowie
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Multnomah County Department of Community Justice
Portland, OR

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Women Entrepreneurs of Baltimore, Inc.
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John Hensley
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Adult Field Services
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Dan Horvath

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Oklahoma Department of Corrections
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Free at Last
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Catherine Marshall

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Patti Mason

President and CEO

ACCION San Diego
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Alan Mobley

Assistant Professor

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Sandra Moreland

Industry Training Specialist

San Diego Workforce Partnership
San Diego, CA

Scott Silverman

Executive Director

Second Chance
San Diego, CA

Howard Skolnik

Deputy Director of Prison Industries

Nevada Department of Corrections
Las Vegas, NV

Cheryl Swanson

*Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and
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University of West Florida
Pace, FL

Elizabeth Wilson

Senior Director

Association for Enterprise Opportunity
Atlanta, GA

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