



COMING HOME:

A GUIDE TO SUPPORTIVE & HOLISTIC REENTRY



**APRIL-MAY
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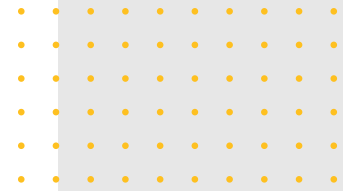
Prepared by

**TELESA JONES &
COOPER MERTENS**

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INTRO TO REENTRY



Reentry is a pivotal moment in the lives of individuals leaving incarceration—a journey marked by both hope and uncertainty. For many, the transition from incarceration to community presents numerous obstacles. However, reentry also holds the potential for transformation and redemption, offering individuals the opportunity to rebuild their lives and contribute meaningfully to society. This publication seeks to explore the complexities of reentry, offering insights into the challenges faced by returning citizens and highlighting strategies to support their successful reintegration into the community.



95%

of incarcerated individuals will return to the community



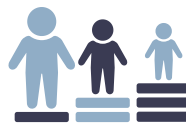
Reducing Recidivism

One of the primary goals of successful reentry is to prevent individuals from returning to incarceration. High rates of recidivism not only contribute to cycles of oppression but also strain resources and contribute to overcrowding in prisons. By supporting successful reentry, we can reduce recidivism rates and promote public safety.



Rehabilitation

Reentry provides a pathway to rehabilitation, helping individuals address underlying issues such as substance use, mental health, trauma and lack of education or job skills. By investing in supportive services and interventions, we can empower returning citizens to lead productive, fulfilling lives and contribute positively to society.



Equity & Justice

Barriers disproportionately affect marginalized communities, perpetuating inequality and social injustice. Successful reentry efforts aim to address these disparities by providing returning citizens with access to resources, opportunities, and support systems that promote equity.



Family & Community

When individuals are able to reintegrate into society successfully, they can reconnect with their families, support networks, and communities. This not only benefits the individuals themselves but also helps restore social bonds, promote stability, and foster community cohesion.



Economic Benefit

Successful reentry efforts that focus on providing returning citizens with job training, employment opportunities, and financial support can have positive economic impacts



PILLARS OF SUCCESSFUL REENTRY

Employment and Job Training: Securing stable employment is one of the most critical factors in successful reentry. Access to job training programs, education and support services that assist with resume building, job searching, and interview preparation are essential. Employment not only provides financial stability but also promotes a sense of purpose and belonging.

Accessible & Affordable Access: Returning citizens often face challenges finding housing due to their legal history, financial constraints, or discrimination. Access to transitional housing programs, supportive housing initiatives, and rental assistance can help individuals secure safe and stable housing.

Substance Use Treatment and Mental Health Services: Access to comprehensive treatment programs, counseling services, and support groups can help individuals overcome substance use, manage mental health challenges, and maintain sobriety, promoting long-term stability and well-being. This includes access to healthcare to maintain their overall health and wellbeing.

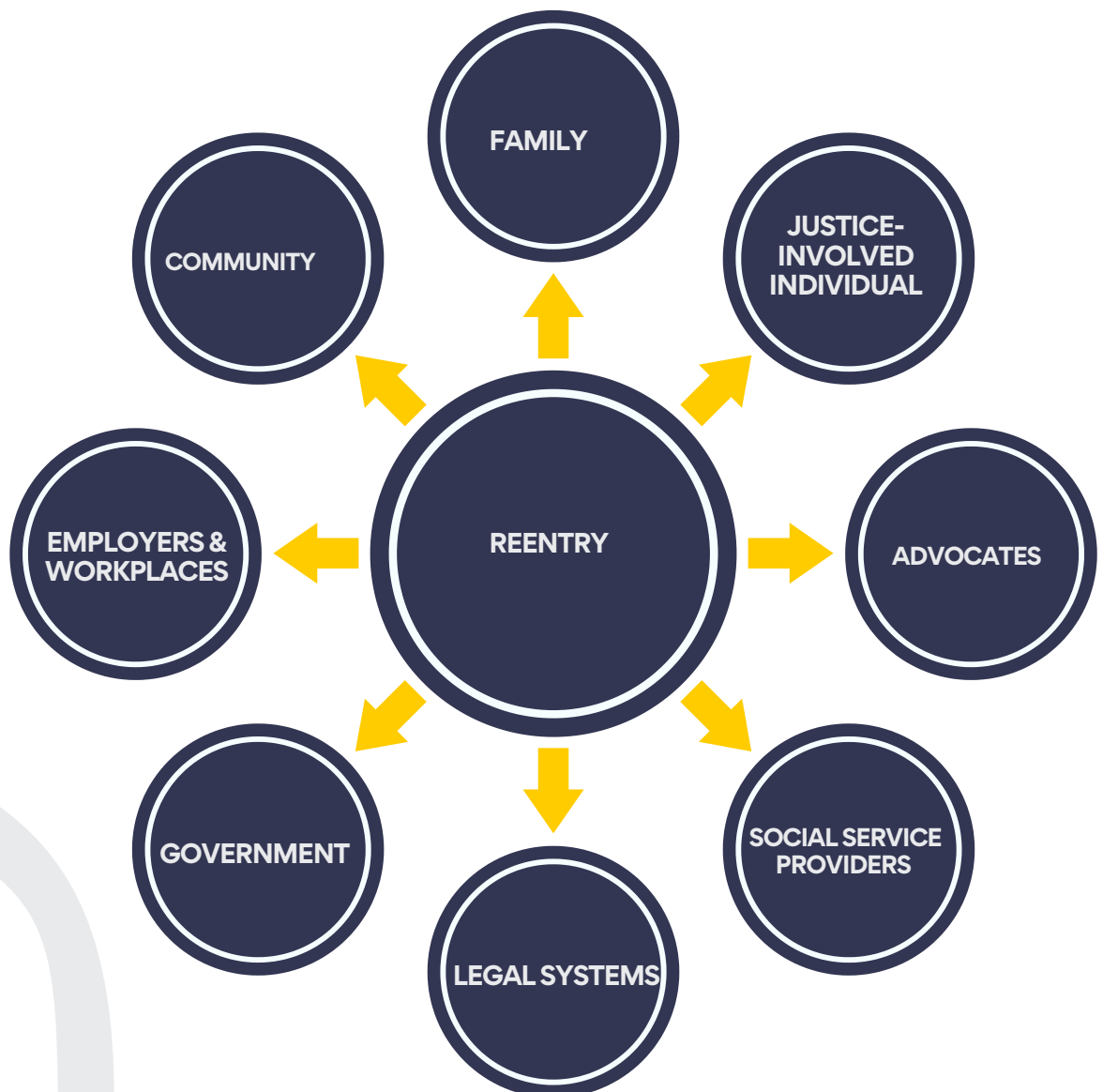
Family and Social Support: Strong social support networks are instrumental in successful reentry. Reconnecting with family members, building positive relationships, and accessing community-based support services can provide emotional support, encouragement, and practical assistance when returning home.

Community Engagement and Reentry Programs: Engaging individuals in community-based reentry programs, peer support networks, and restorative justice initiatives can help foster a sense of belonging and promote positive social connections. These programs offer opportunities for personal growth, skill-building, and civic engagement, empowering individuals to become active and productive members of society.

Legal Assistance and Reentry Planning: Providing legal assistance, expungement services, and reentry planning support can help individuals navigate legal barriers and overcome challenges related to their criminal records. Access to legal aid programs, reentry case management, and advocacy services can facilitate a smooth transition and mitigate the impact of collateral consequences. Supporting individuals in obtaining valid driver's license can also support with economic and community engagement.

WHO IS IMPACTED BY REENTRY?

It is a common misconception, that incarceration and reentry only impact the individual directly involved. However, this could not be further from the truth. Reentry impacts justice-involved individuals, their families, and the community. Reentry can also have resounding impacts on our political landscape and economic development. Social service organizations and providers play a crucial role in supporting justice-involved individuals during the reentry process. They offer a range of services, including housing assistance, substance abuse treatment, mental health support, and job training, to facilitate successful reintegration into society. Advocates and activists work to raise awareness of the challenges faced by justice-involved individuals during reentry and advocate for policies and reforms aimed at improving outcomes. They may focus on issues such as access to housing, employment discrimination, and barriers to reentry. Communities as a whole are impacted by Reentry in ways that may not seem as obvious. It's important the individuals are knowledgeable about reentry and are aware of how those efforts can impact those around them as well as their own family, friends and neighbors.





SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL REENTRY

Supporting successful reentry requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the various challenges faced by justice-involved individuals as they reintegrate into society. Here are some ways to support successful reentry:

- Access to Education
- Employment Opportunities
 - ban the box
 - second chance employers
- Affordable and accessible housing
- Alternative sentencing options
 - treatment courts
 - jail diversion
- Substance use and mental health treatment
- Supportive services (case management, peer support specialists, counseling, mentoring, community health workers)
- Reentry programs
 - LINC INC
 - Local Reentry Council
- Family reunification and support
- Legal assistance & advocacy
- Community outreach and engagement
- Policy reform & systematic change



Supporting successful reentry looks like removing the stigma that so often follows individuals beyond the bars of jail or prison. Initiatives like [Ban the Box](#) continue to break down barriers that are still in place surrounding affording individuals with justice involved histories access to all of the opportunities for success.



BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL REENTRY

BARRIERS

Barriers to successful reentry include and are often intersected by:

- Lack of employment opportunities
- Housing instability & food insecurity
- Limited access to education and training opportunities
- Untreated substance use disorders or mental health diagnosis
- Social stigma
- Collateral consequences
- Family and community support
- Healthcare access
- Legal system policies and practices

41-54%

Of people in prison or jails are below the annual poverty level

69%

Of individuals in prison or jails are considered minority races

CYCLES OF OPPRESSION

Cycles of oppression, especially concerning marginalized and vulnerable communities is critical to address when discussing successful reentry. Before entering the legal system or experiencing incarceration, vulnerable communities are more likely to be exposed to or experience poverty, systematic racism, disruption of family dynamics, health disparities, limited access to resources & opportunities, criminalization of poverty and marginalization, and lack of ability to participate in civic engagement. Once these individuals enter the legal system, these issues are exacerbated due to the added pressures caused by justice-involvement such as stigma and collateral consequences. The very system meant to provide justice only perpetuates further suffering and injustice.



CURRENT EFFORTS & LEGISLATION

* In NC, there are several great steps forward being had, but there are still bills that need our support in order to continue opportunities for success for justice involved individuals. Some of those bills in our state that could use your support are as follows:



- * HB 888: Ends the practice of suspending driver's licenses for unpaid fines and fees or missed court dates, removing barriers to employment from court debt.
- * S 339: Modify limited driving privilege, eliminates the additional 1 year suspension, the additional 2 year suspension, and the permanent suspension for reasons unrelated to public safety.
- * S 565: Removing barriers to jobs and housing, reinstates the automated expunction of dismissed and not guilty charges
- * HB 778: Prohibition of disclosing booking photographs, restricts law enforcement agencies from knowingly disclosing a copy of pretrial booking photo to a third-party, publish-for payment company.

CURRENT LEGISLATION
LEGAL EFFORTS

Bills in NC:

4

Bills to Support:

HB 888
S 339
S 565
HB 778

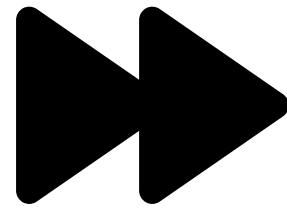
CURRENT EFFORTS

* **Reentry 2030:** Reentry 2030 is a national initiative that aims to dramatically improve reentry success for people exiting prison & for those under community supervision. As a key part of our mission, NCDAC is committed to helping offenders navigate the complex transition process - and we join our Reentry 2030 partners to work for reentry that is more coordinated, transparent & equitable.

* Community efforts, nonprofit programs, second-chance transitional housing, expanded funding opportunities for local reentry councils, and organizations such as Second Chance Alliance are all working together to push these efforts forward.



STEPS FORWARD



BY SIGNING EXECUTIVE ORDER 303, AND OFFICIALLY JOINING THE REENTRY 2030 NATIONAL INITIATIVE, NC HAS SET GOALS FOR MOVING FORWARD, INCLUDING:



VOCATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Emphasize the expansion and improvement of services around rehabilitation, reentry, and prison education, including job skills training and preparation.



MEDICAID ACCESS BEFORE RELEASE

This initiative would ensure all eligible incarcerated individual are offered an opportunity to apply for medicaid before release.



DRIVER'S LICENSE RESTORATION AND ACCESS

Resources being provided to educate incarcerated individuals on the process of obtaining a driver's license upon release.



HIGH SCHOOL AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Increase the number of high school and post-secondary credentials earned by individuals who are incarcerated by at least 75%.



HOUSING RESOURCES

Housing resources and support being strengthened to provide stable foundations for those reentering our communities.




LOCAL REENTRY COUNCILS

The further establishment and funding for statewide local reentry councils is a significant step toward providing tailored assistance to justice-involved individuals; connecting individuals with resources, support networks, and opportunities for successful reintegration.



SECOND CHANCE HIRING PARTICIPANTS

Recognizing the pivotal role employment plays in successful reentry, focusing on trying to increase the number of second-chance employer partners by 30%, creating more opportunities for secure meaningful employment.

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- The NC Justice Center's Fair Chance Criminal Justice project also hopes to see the SNAP felony ban be lifted and reformed as part of this initiative.
 - There is also continued urgency on continuing to pass comprehensive mugshot reform which would protect the reputation of justice-involved individuals.
 - Continued engagement with reentry providers and directly impacted community members needs to continue to be build for equitable access to reentry for all.

RESOURCES FOR RE ENTRY

* LINC'S REENTRY PROGRAMS

Reentry Programs such as LINC provide critical support for justice-involved individuals. Programs like the **Local Reentry Council, Pathway Home, Healthy Opportunities Pilot, NC Fit and Marvin E. Roberts Transitional Living Campus** work to address critical needs of individuals returning from incarceration by providing a supportive environment and empowering individuals to become productive members of society.



* COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The following organizations can also provide critical support for individuals returning to our communities. This is not an exhaustive list. Many organizations in our communities support second chances and can provide resources and opportunities:

- **Coastal Horizons:** "Reentry Services of Coastal Horizons' emphasizes linkage to and the provision of comprehensive behavioral health treatment for individuals transitioning from incarceration to New Hanover County"
 - Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC)
 - Recidivism Reduction Services (RRS)
 - Reentry Services
- **Forward Justice:** Forward Justice is a nonpartisan law, policy, and strategy center dedicated to advancing racial, social, and economic justice in the U.S. South.
- **NC Second Chance Alliance:** The NC Second Chance Alliance is a statewide alliance of people with criminal records, their family members, service providers, congregations, community leaders and concerned citizens that have come together to address the causes of criminal records and the barriers they create to successful reentry.
- **Legal Aid of North Carolina:** Legal Aid of North Carolina is a statewide, nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services in civil matters to low-income people in order to ensure equal access to justice and to remove legal barriers to economic opportunity.
 - Second Chance Wilmington: This project provides no cost expunction and driver's license restoration services to individuals residing in New Hanover County. A statewide team also provides these services in Raleigh.
- **North Carolina Justice Center:** Their mission is to eliminate poverty in North Carolina by ensuring that every household in the state has access to the resources, services, and fair treatment it needs to achieve economic security.
- **Cape Fear Literacy Council:** Cape Fear Literacy Council's mission is to provide personalized education so adults can transform their lives and contribute to a stronger community
- **United Way of Cape Fear:** United Way of the Cape Fear Area works with our community to leverage resources and improve the lives of local people.
- **The Harrelson Center:** Their mission is to provide humanitarian services campus of nonprofit organizations that offer hope, opportunity and empowerment. Here are a **few** organizations housed at the Harrelson Center that provide support for justice-involved individuals:
 - Peer Recovery Resources
 - A Safe Place
 - Foster Pantry
 - PHILIPPIANS 3 Ministries
 - Salvation Army
 - United Way
 - Help Hub

AUTHOR'S NOTES



TELESA JONES, JUSTICE SERVICES COORDINATOR

The journey of reentry is often fraught with challenges, stigma, and systemic barriers that can impede one's ability to successfully reintegrate into society. At LINC we strive to explore the complexities of reentry and highlight the intrinsic worth and dignity of every individual, regardless of their past mistakes or circumstances. It is crucial to recognize that incarceration does not define a person's identity or determine their potential for redemption and growth. It is my sincere belief that by extending empathy, understanding, and support to those who have experienced incarceration, we can foster a more just and compassionate society for all. It is my hope that readers will gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted challenges justice-involved individuals face and the importance of offering support, resources, and opportunities for their successful reintegration into society.



COOPER MERTENS, DATA & IMPACT COORDINATOR

To consider any person less than due to circumstance is to lose humanity. When we talk about reentry, we are at its core speaking about how important it is to view every person, regardless of circumstance, as a person. So often the path to reentry is blocked because of biases, barriers, and stigma that are still upheld within the systems where there should be opportunity. Working for LINC, we work to break down those barriers and create spaces where justice-involved individuals can be met with resources and opportunities. I believe that if we lead with empathy, create spaces of opportunities and resources, and continue to remain person-centered, we could lead a society where those 95% or more citizens who are returning can return to spaces that are set up for everyone to be successful.



RESOURCES

- <https://www.ncjustice.org/a-step-forward-for-second-chances-bold-moves-taken-to-transform-reentry-in-north-carolina/>
- <https://www.dac.nc.gov/divisions-and-sections/rehabilitation-and-reentry/reentry-2030>
- https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2024.html?c=pie&gad_source=1&gclid=EAlalQobChMlyNi7z7HwhQMVFUtHAR1mSgLAEAAYASAAEgJTfPD_BwE
- <https://lincnc.org/>
- <https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/>
- https://www.themarshallproject.org/records/2214-re-entry-programs?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCCQjwltKxBhDMARIsAG8KnqXQHvaaLDdnhmRyDJIVJDRzZG62_z1utZNIH80A6MbEwXYbNYSh3soaAuPLEALw_wcB