# PRESS Release

## Successful Inmate Re-entry Depends on Four Key Strategies

**ROCKVILLE, MD (February 3, 2020) —** The Maryland Public Policy Institute today released a new study on successful re-entry for released prisoners. The study from Visiting Fellow Sean Kennedy finds that four strategies can successfully reduce recidivism and help incarcerated individuals successfully re-enter society.

The four strategies include:

- Following a "wrap-around" or "inside-out" approach providing services and support during incarceration, prior to release, and post-release.

- Adhering to the three pillars approach in designing and implementing curriculum and service delivery.

- Striving for continuous improvement through data tracking, evaluation, iteration, and adaptation.

- Demonstrating and expecting accountability and transparency from participants, staff, partners, and funders.

"We are effective at punishing offenders, but not successfully rehabilitating them. Prison time is often not spent productively," says Sean Kennedy, visiting fellow, Maryland Public Policy Institute. "But some innovative programs over the past two decades have sought to change that."

The Institute examined five recidivism models, including a privately managed program in state facilities; a nonprofit program in a privately managed, state-owned facility; a nonprofit program outside prison coordinated within state facilities; a university-run college education program in a state-run facility; and a state-run program coordinated with outside providers.

Florida- and Georgia-based **Continuum of Care (CoC)** offers pre- and post-release support. Those who engaged in in-prison therapy programming and post-release services recidivated at a 12-month return to prison rate, 35% less than those who refused CoC options.

The nonprofit re-entry program **Prisoner Entrepreneurship Program (PEP)** is independently operated in two all-male Texas state prisons, where it also provides post-release services for returning offenders. Admission is highly selective — applicants must have or be working toward a high school diploma or equivalency, be within three years of their official release date, and not be an active gang member or convicted sex offender. Since 2010, 100% of PEP graduates were employed within 90 days of release. Its three-year reincarceration rate is just 7%—one-third the Texas state average.

The Maryland-based non-profit **Vehicles for Change (VFC)** is a post-release training, support, and employment agency for returned citizens seeking to become auto mechanics. Admission is open to all former inmates, including women. While most participants are on full release with or without probation or parole restrictions, VFC also accepts inmates who are within eight months of their final release from a correctional institution. For those who finish, VFC has a 100% job placement rate with the majority entering the automotive field.

The **University of Baltimore (UB)** in Maryland offers enrolled inmates bachelor's degree courses. It provides re-entry and case management support to participants pre- and post-release. Participation is selective and limited, with 60 inmate-students enrolled each semester. Of the 25 students who have been released from prison, two have been rearrested for new offenses and one has been re-incarcerated since 2017.

The **Georgia Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (PRI)** focuses on pre- and post-release, including educational and behavioral health needs, as well as the services and resources needed for re-entry, like housing and employment. While PRI reduced participants' two-year reconviction rate by 14%, it did so unevenly across the 13 participating counties.

To read the full report, visit mdpolicy.org.

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