

# Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry Toolkit

Open your doors...  
and open your hearts

**American Baptist Home Mission Societies**  
[www.abhms.org](http://www.abhms.org)



# Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry Toolkit

## General description of the ministry

We envision each American Baptist church as an open door, a Station of Hope for persons re-entering society following a period of incarceration.

The ministry seeks to provide awareness and resources for churches and their communities to help them become centers of encouragement, education and advocacy for returning citizens and their families.

We want to “advocate for a restoration of relationships between victims, offenders and communities through the development of restorative justice practices”  
The American Baptist Resolution on Restorative Justice (8212:11/01).

## Purpose of this toolkit

This toolkit seeks to provide American Baptist churches and individuals with tools that facilitate conversation about aftercare ministry with congregation members entangled in the criminal justice system—both accused and victims—and their families.

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) is committed to offering resources that encourage, enlighten, educate, energize and empower church members to help free families from the isolation, pain, stigma, shame and self-incarceration often associated with the criminal justice system.



# Introduction

## What is Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry?

More than 2 million people are behind bars in the United States. Approximately 600,000 prisoners are released each year—about 1,600 daily. Where do these individuals go? Are they given a second chance? Do they find welcoming, open doors that offer opportunity to start over?

The re-entry process is as difficult as learning to walk. Without proper support, falling is likely. Because of the stigma against former prisoners, among other factors, recidivism rates are extremely high (approximately 67%). Returning citizens face great challenges, from staying free of drugs to finding and holding steady jobs.

## What is the church expected to do?

- Pray for this ministry. It faces spiritual forces and systems set to dehumanize our brothers and sisters who are willing to be restored and redeemed, and who need a second chance in society.
- Be prepared to open your arms to new members, to “enlarge the site of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out” (Isaiah 54:2).
- Join the Welcome Home Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry Network by visiting the Web page to share your experiences with people nationwide who are doing the same.

# Recommended Process

1. **Assessment and discernment.** Congregation leadership reviews the assessment tools, prays and decides whether engaging in this ministry is part of its calling.
2. **Concept introduction.** A pastor or team member introduces the Stations of Hope for prisoner aftercare vision to the congregation.
3. **Team selection.** When the decision has been made, a welcome home team is appointed to be trained. The pastor should be included on the team.
4. **Training.** The team is trained and becomes part of the Stations of Hope in the Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry Network.

- 5. Leadership.** The team works closely with the rest of the leadership structure within the congregation for adoption and implementation of the model.
- 6. Education.** Leadership continues ongoing education efforts to learn more about the impact of crime, incarceration and re-entry on its community. The team learns about the criminal justice system in its state and community.
- 7. Outreach and welcome.** The pastor teaches and reaches out to members of the congregation to create a culture of healing and restoration for people affected by crime and incarceration.
- 8. Leadership partnerships.** The leadership may reach out to other faith leaders to form a prayer circle or other shared learning structure to study, pray for and develop a Station of Hope for prisoner aftercare within other congregations.
- 9. Congregational education.** The congregation learns how crime, incarceration and re-entry affect its members and what they can do to minister to them.
- 10. Volunteer engagement.** Congregation members volunteer to spread the message and share responsibility for transforming their house of worship and for supporting individuals and families affected by crime, incarceration and re-entry.

## Assessment Tool

**This assessment tool has been created to help discern your participation in Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry.**

This much-needed ministry is also a sensitive one, and more harm than good could result if volunteers are not well-equipped and properly trained. Therefore, consider participating in this powerful and healing experience only after evaluating factors related to the reality of your church.

Does your congregation sense it is being called to minister to persons who are released from prison? Knowing whether your church is called, ready or willing to participate is vital. Although all churches should participate in this ministry, not all churches can participate.

The intention of this congregational readiness assessment is to provide an approach to this question: “How

ready are we to engage in Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministries?”. After you complete the assessment, you and your church leadership will have a clearer idea about your readiness for this ministry.

It is recommended that one assessment be completed by the church, with various members participating, contributing to and responding to questions. If you have questions regarding the assessment or the ministry, please do not hesitate to contact Fela Barrueto, national coordinator, Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851; 1-800-ABC-3USA, x2493; and [Fela.Barrueto@abhms.org](mailto:Fela.Barrueto@abhms.org).

### Tips for completing the assessment:

- Read the questions prayerfully and carefully.
- Discuss questions in a group, allowing the Spirit to guide you in openness and sensitivity to each person’s response.
- Write your responses as if you were presenting them to a larger audience.
- Be honest. Share your reality, which may be painful.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please take time to pray for guidance, so that God will show you what to do next. If you conclude that you are ready, please continue with the next steps. If you decide that you are not ready, do not feel guilty or discouraged. Keep doing ministry and, if you later feel that God is leading you to do so, contact Fela Barrueto, national coordinator, Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851; 1-800-ABC-3USA, x2493; and [Fela.Barrueto@abhms.org](mailto:Fela.Barrueto@abhms.org).

## Are We Ready?

### A Readiness-Assessment Tool for Congregations Considering Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry

1. How do you perceive your congregation’s willingness to address the issues around persons involved in the prison system (prisoners, families, and victims)?
2. How do you perceive your congregation’s readiness to participate in Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry?
3. Does the issue of welcoming returning citizens res-



onate with the vision of your church? Why or why not?

4. How would your congregation respond to a call to provide support for families of incarcerated people?
5. What concerns might your church have in terms of ministering to returning citizens and their families?
6. Do you currently have a prison ministry? Please share about it.
7. Would your church members who do prison ministry be the same ones to do re-entry and aftercare? What other qualities may be needed to successfully pursue this ministry?
8. What can your congregation offer to returning citizens and their families?
9. Do you envision your congregation participating in Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry in the near future?
10. What questions or suggestions do you have? Direct questions to Fela Barrueto, national coordinator, Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851; 1-800-ABC-3USA, x2493; and Fela.Barrueto@abhms.org.

## Tools for Churches

### A Prayer for Healing and Hope

Help us, God, to forgive the blood that has stained many hands, the bruises that have hurt many bodies and the ruins that have come to many families. In the midst of all that has plagued our communities and challenged our families and faith, it is our hearts' desire to be healed. As we desire to be healed, we want the scales of justice to balance while the grace of God prevails. We want love to be released and healing to come to our communities. We are now moving toward being a Station of Hope.

### Litany of Dedication

#### Becoming a Station of Hope for Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry

By Fela Barrueto

National Coordinator, Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry, American Baptist Home Mission Societies

**Leader:** God of our fathers and mothers, we come to you in humility and awe. Sometimes when we look around us, it seems like there is no hope.

**People:** We wait in hope for you, God. Only you are our help and our shield.

**Leader:** God of our brothers and sisters that suffer and live without hope, we come to you in intercession. We recognize that there are systems and forces that steal the freedom and the hope you intend for us.

**People:** We wait in hope for you, God. Only you are our help and our shield.

**Leader:** You call us to be a Station of Hope, to proclaim freedom and recovery, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

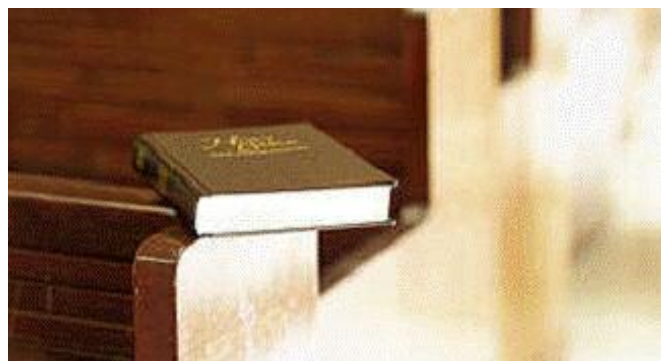
**People:** We wait in hope for you, God. Only you are our help and our shield.

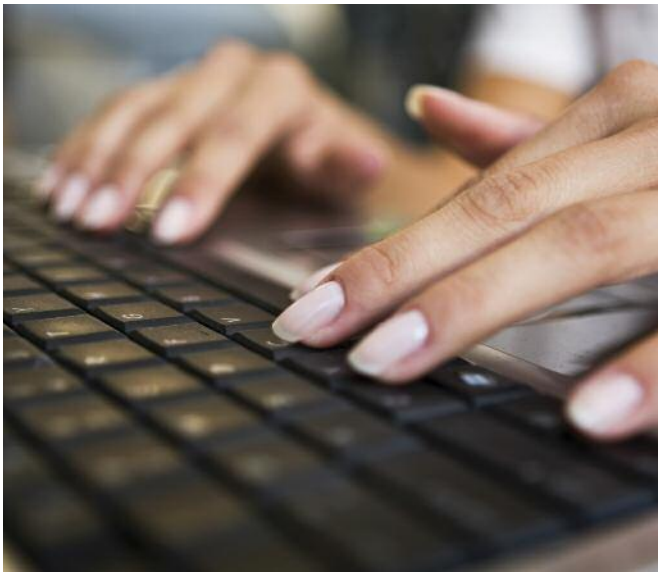
**Leader:** "I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Use us, God, to shine your light for those in need of hope.

**People:** We wait in hope for you, God. Only you are our help and our shield.

**Leader:** As a Station of Hope, we dedicate ourselves to bring the message of the Gospel, to proclaim freedom and recovery, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

**All:** As we stand before you, God, we proclaim our commitment to support families affected by crime and to open our hearts and our doors to returning citizens. Help us, God, to be a place of forgiveness, acceptance, relationship building, mercy and restoration. We want to be a Station of Hope.





## Internet Tools for Churches

**Prison Fellowship** ([www.prisonfellowship.org](http://www.prisonfellowship.org)) partners with local churches across the United States to minister to prisoners, former prisoners and their families. Its policy arm, Justice Fellowship ([www.justicefellowship.org](http://www.justicefellowship.org)) is a national leader in criminal justice reform. The Web site includes the following resources:

- a volunteer application,
- volunteer information,
- organizational commitment to volunteers,
- “Making It: A Prison Survival Guide” and
- “Shortimer: Preparing for Release”.

Prison Fellowship also includes Restorative Justice Online ([www.restorativejustice.org](http://www.restorativejustice.org)).

**Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign** ([www.outreachextensions.com/innovations/reentry\\_national\\_media/](http://www.outreachextensions.com/innovations/reentry_national_media/)) supports the work of community and faith-based organizations by offering free media resources to facilitate community discussion and decision-making about solution-based re-entry programs. At this site, churches and other groups can order and download e-excerpts of many award-winning videos, discussion guides and other resources on the challenges of prison life and re-entry for prisoners and families. You can also order the full videos for FREE!

**Fasten Network** ([www.fastennetwork.org](http://www.fastennetwork.org)) offers informational resources and networking opportunities to faith-based practitioners who minister to prisoners and their families and collaborate to renew urban communities.

## Working with Victims and Returning Citizens: Participant Issues<sup>1</sup>

Working with participants—victims, returning citizens and supporters—in a restorative process can be difficult.

Each person brings to the process his or her own experiences and emotions, which can range from anger and pain to shame and guilt. It is important to be sensitive to and respectful of the needs of these individuals. The following are principles for working with participants in a restorative process.

### 1. Allow victims to vent and share their feelings about the crime.

Crime victims need to tell their stories and express their emotions. They need to feel that they have been heard. Although it can be difficult to listen to a victim’s story and comments about the returning citizen, the victim needs a compassionate, nonjudgmental ear to listen to feelings and concerns.

When the victim is ready, explain the process and answer his or her questions. Useful questions to include in a preparation meeting are as follows:

- Can you tell us what happened?
- How did you feel at the time?
- How has it impacted you?
- What has been the most difficult aspect for you?
- If the returning citizen were here, what would you like to say to him or her?

### 2. Let returning citizens vent and share their feelings about the crime.

It is important to listen when returning citizens tell their own stories, both of the crime and its aftermath. They will have questions about the process, how it benefits them, and how they will be treated in the meet-

ing. They will be dealing with issues of shame and remorse that could lead to belligerence and denial of responsibility that will be challenged by a restorative encounter. Meetings with returning citizens often reveal attitudes that can be problematic in moving toward a meeting between them and victims. These attitudes include minimizing the amount of harm done, taking a victim stance, blaming others, or refusing to acknowledge victims' needs. Remember to accept returning citizens as they are at the moment and not get hooked by harmful attitudes.

Useful questions for the preparation meeting include the following:

- Can you tell us what happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you been thinking since then?
- How has it affected you?
- Who else has been affected? How?
- What would you do differently in the future?

### **3. Allow skeptical individuals to participate as long as they understand and accept the process.**

Preparation meetings with victims and returning citizens can reveal harsh and uncomfortable attitudes and emotions. However, these thoughts and feelings need not stop you from organizing a restorative encounter. Each case will be different, and it is important to evaluate each one separately.

If the returning citizen indicates at least some acceptance that he or she has done harm, then an encounter with the victim could be helpful. If an angry victim is willing to respectfully speak with the returning citizen, then the process can help him or her in working through these emotions. Let the individuals determine whether they want to move forward.

### **4. Remember the support people.**

In these encounters, support people for either the victim or the returning citizen can play an important role. Their stories help to develop common understanding of what happened and the crime's impact on all involved. At the same time, just like other participants, support people need preparation, including an explanation of the process, steps in the program and possible

outcomes. Support people will also need to tell their stories and have questions answered.

### **5. Let the parties make their own decisions.**

The encounter process is not restorative justice. Restorative justice is a way of seeing crime as harm done to people and relationships; justice is done when that harm is addressed. The best way of addressing that harm is to allow those impacted to have a voice in the response.

The victim must decide whether to decline participation, which could mean telling him or her about the returning citizen's attitude and the possibility of hurt in the encounter meeting. The opportunity to make other decisions must also be offered. For example, both parties must decide on an agreement for repairing the harm; ideas should not be imposed upon them.

## **Working with Victims and Returning Citizens: Process Issues<sup>1</sup>**

It can seem intimidating to facilitate restorative encounters between victims and returning citizens. However, simple principles can increase the likelihood that the experience will be positive for all involved.

This fact sheet will explore principles related to the restorative process.

### **1. Prepare all individuals.**

Preparation is key to a successful restorative process. By having individual meetings with participants before the actual encounter meeting, you give yourself the opportunity to build rapport and a level of trust with each person. You will explain the process and look for any obstacles they face in participating in the restorative process. This preparation provides individuals the opportunity to ask questions, to think about what they want to say to the other person and to begin considering ways to repair the harm. This preparation allows you to address individuals' unrealistic expectations, such as a victim assuming the returning citizen will express deep remorse or a returning citizen expecting

the victim to forgive. Unrealistic expectations can turn what would otherwise be a good experience into a bad one simply because participants anticipated more than was reasonable.

## **2. Don't take it personally if victims are angry or upset.**

Victims have suffered trauma from the crime and the criminal justice process. The anger and pain arising from such trauma can be directed toward the facilitator in the restorative justice process. The victim may link you with the offense, the returning citizen or the justice system.

The best response is to remember that this anger is not personal and listen to the victim. If possible, direct the anger to the appropriate person or agency responsible. Honest, transparent and compassionate treatment will help to build a relationship with the victim.

## **3. Use caution in defining successful outcomes.**

The way you define success can impact how you treat parties in a restorative process. If the focus is on completing meetings between victims and returning citizens, then it is possible to coerce parties to participate in the process when they are uncomfortable with it. If success means forgiveness or reconciliation, then it's possible to push individuals toward these outcomes before they are ready. In either case, the definition of *success* could lead to behavior that could harm participants.

For a facilitator in a restorative process, success is providing a safe place—both physically and emotionally—for all participants to tell their stories, listen to the stories of others, dialog about the impact of the crime and decide on steps for moving forward.

## **4. Never assume that participants automatically understand the process.**

The restorative justice process will be new to the victim and returning citizen. For this reason, it is important to be open and supportive of individuals who are considering participation. Let them know the purpose of preparation meetings and that the other person will not be present. Explain each step of the process from scheduling to the actual encounter meeting to the follow-up.

## **5. Be prepared to develop alternatives.**

One process does not fit all individuals. A victim may choose not to participate in a direct encounter but want some input or need other services. It is important to be open to the victim's needs and to help him or her find the kind of help necessary.

As for the restorative encounter, a victim could write a letter explaining the impact of the crime or send a representative. If a victim doesn't wish to participate, the returning citizen can meet with a community representative to discuss the impact of the crime on the community and ways to repair the harm. For a victim wishing to participate in a restorative encounter when the returning citizen is unavailable, a meeting with another returning citizen can provide an opportunity for discussing the harm.

## **Obstacles to Successful Reintegration into the Community**

The following is a list of obstacles that returning citizens may face and need to overcome. As you are thinking about working with returning citizens, **you are not expected to have solutions to these problems**, but it is helpful to gain insight into the frustrating circumstances they face.

Unfortunately, no easy solutions exist. As the church, when you decide to become a Station of Hope and open doors for this ministry, you will probably maintain a team of mentors. The greatest way mentors can assist returning citizens is by encouraging returning citizens to keep a persevering attitude as they face and work through obstacles.

### **Socially paralyzed**

The term used is *institutionalized*. Institutionalization may be the case when an individual exhibits the following signs:

- accepts the terms of the jail/prison environment as his or her environment, which differs from making the best of a situation;
- functions more easily in prison than out;
- feels more like his- or herself while in prison than out;



- has learned to be dependent and loses the ability to make choices on his or her own;
- commits crimes to be returned to jail; and
- is fearful in traffic, when using new technologies and around unfamiliar people and places.

### **Lack of appropriate identification**

Identification cards are critical for obtaining employment, cashing a check, signing a lease and boarding a plane. Since 9/11, identification cards are more important than ever, and the rules to obtain them are stricter. The key cards are as follows:

- photo identification (driver's license, state ID, passport);
- birth certificate; and
- Social Security card.

### **Lack of education and job training**

Typically, the average inmate reads from a fourth- to eighth-grade level and has few marketable skills. Few have graduated from high school.



### **Little to no money**

People earn little or no money in prison. The few who do have prison jobs typically earn very little; in federal prisons, the inmates earn 19 cents per hour for prison-maintenance chores. From these wages, deductions are made for restitution, fees, costs and child support. The small, one-time payment provided upon release ranges from \$50 to \$200, depending on the state.

### **Debilitating debt**

Without income, debts can accrue and grow to enormous sums while a person is in prison. Debts accrue

from child support orders going unmodified and from the imposition of court fines, costs, fees, restitution to the victim, and interest and fines from unpaid debts.

### **Lack of housing**

- Family members may not welcome the person back into their homes.
- Public and Section 8 housing are not always available to those with criminal records.
- Private landlords are often reluctant to rent to people with criminal records.
- Rents are unaffordable to people just starting to work.
- Shelters are often full and unavailable.
- States, counties and cities maintain restrictions regarding places in which people with a past sex offense may reside.

### **Lack of employment**

The inability to find and keep a job immediately after release is strongly associated with being reincarcerated. Reasons for being unable to find and keep a job are as follows:

- States have created thousands of job restrictions based on criminal records.
- Employers who are permitted to legally hire people with records are afraid to do so.
- Returning citizens have little or no employment history.
- Returning citizens possess few soft skills (such as interpersonal skills) and hard work skills (such as technical skills).
- Returning citizens lack identity papers, such as a state driver's license or Social Security card.
- Parole stipulations require being at appointments during working hours.
- Returning citizens lack transportation.
- Returning citizens experience fear and an institutionalized mentality.
- Returning citizens may have untreated addiction, health and mental health problems.

### **Addiction**

Addiction is both an internal and external obstacle, as it involves not only the addiction but the lifestyle of addiction, which affects every area of life, including all of those listed above. Treatment may have to precede employment or, at the very least, be done simultaneously.



## Poor family relationships

- Parental rights may have been lost.
- Families are strained because of the length of separation.
- Men entering the home have a difficult time re-establishing their role in the home.



■ The person and his or her family members are holding anger, resentment and blame for years of hurt.

■ Family members may have been direct or indirect victims of the returning citizen's crimes or other forms of misconduct.

## Lack of medical care, insurance and benefits

Many entered jail with or are exposed to hepatitis C, AIDS/HIV, tuberculosis, and bacterial infections as well as mental health issues that require ongoing treatment and/or medication.

## Stigma: being labeled

The label of *ex-offender* marks the person and is a constant reminder of past choices. Even as the language is changed to *returning citizen*, the stigma persists.

Being labeled, along with other obstacles, can lead to negative thoughts such as the following: "I am no good," "They're right—I'm never going to make it," "It's too hard," and "I can't ever get a break." These thoughts can lead to feelings of anxiety, frustration, hopelessness, depression, anger and loneliness. If negative thoughts and feelings are left unchecked, then the person can quickly fall back into destructive behavior that will lead to only more trouble.

## Tools for Families

- Know this: YOU ARE NOT ALONE. We offer you a network of caring, loving people to support your family.
- Let your faith leader and congregation know your family needs—whether they be emotional, financial or other.
- Get to know the prison chaplain. He or she can be a link between the family and your loved one.
- Write letters to your loved one to let him or her know that you care. Call your loved one whenever financially possible.

■ Remember special dates, such as birthdays, and send cards to show your love and support. Send photographs of family activities and events. Pictures of sports games, family activities or school functions work well. Encourage children to write a story about the activity to accompany photographs.

■ Seek your loved one's perspective when the family faces a major decision.

■ Visit as often as possible. Your family visits will help keep your loved one and the entire family grounded.

■ Talk about your loved one to the children so that the incarcerated parent remains important in their lives.

■ Let your loved one know about gift-giving programs, such as Prison Fellowship's AngelTree® program.

■ Encourage your loved one's extended family (siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, etc.) to write and call frequently. Staying in touch reminds those who are incarcerated that they are loved and reminds them of their ties to the community to which they will return.

## Specifically for children

■ Encourage the child to color and send age-appropriate drawings.

■ Encourage the child to keep a journal, which could include everyday items that the child would like to discuss with the incarcerated parent. On phone call day(s), determine the most important issues to discuss. If time runs out, continue the conversation in a letter.

■ Send holiday cards created by the children. Encourage children to acknowledge their parent's special days, such as birthdays.

■ Send the child's report cards, graded test scores and homework.

■ If a child is assigned to read a certain book in school, try to get a copy to the incarcerated parent so he or she can read the book. Encourage the child and incarcerated



parent to discuss the book.

■ Find out whether the prison has facilities for video-conferencing between parents and children. If not, talk to the chaplain about setting up such a system.

## The Amachi Program

Amachi is a unique partnership of organizations collaborating to provide mentoring to children of incarcerated parents. Faith institutions work with human services providers and public agencies (particularly justice institutions) to identify children of prisoners and match them with caring adults.

To learn more about the program, its history and its founder, Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode Sr., visit [www.amachimentoring.org](http://www.amachimentoring.org).

## Other Internet tools

- The Family and Corrections Network ([www.fcnetwork.org](http://www.fcnetwork.org)) is a national resource center that provides tools for people concerned about families of prisoners to share information and experiences. It sponsors conferences, creates liaisons with other agencies, does presentations, and offers consultation. It provides information on children of prisoners, parenting programs for prisoners, prison visiting, incarcerated fathers, hospitality programs and a variety of other topics. Its mission is to uphold the value of prisoners' families.
- International Network of Prison Ministries ([www.prisonministry.net](http://www.prisonministry.net)) catalogs links to thousands of prison ministries across the world. It is organized by category, such as prayer support groups, family support, aftercare, and Christian legal aid; by denomination/church; by location; in alphabetical order; and by affiliation.

## Tools for Returning Citizens



Please know that you are not alone. Many resources can help you overcome the obstacles that make reintegration a difficult process.

- Get the proper documentation. Proper identification is critical for obtaining employment, cashing a check, signing a lease and boarding a plane. In most cases, the agencies listed in our directory will provide you with help on how to get proper identification. (See next page)
- Obtain your rap sheet. Because employers will likely see your information when they conduct background

checks, you should obtain your rap sheet to verify the accuracy of the information.

- Seek support. You may need specific support for different areas, from improving your education and addiction problems to whatever your need.
- Connect with agencies and centers that provide help for job seekers. Check for location, although most of these organizations have Internet access. A list of organizations that offer support for returning citizens is provided on the next page.

## Where Can I Get Help?

The following organizations that work with returning citizens are listed by city and state. A few of the organizations are national and may refer you to a place closer to you.

### California

#### Oakland:

Allen Temple Housing and Economic Development Corp.  
Allen Temple Baptist Church  
8501 International Blvd.  
Oakland, CA 94621  
510-544-8910

Allen Temple Housing and Economic Development Corp. works to transform lives through training and career development for formerly incarcerated individuals and other community members facing employment obstacles.  
[www.allen-temple.org](http://www.allen-temple.org)

America Works of California Inc.  
1212 Broadway, 11th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94612  
510-891-9100

Since 1984, this private workforce-development firm has found jobs for returning citizens. Offices are located in various parts of the United States.  
[www.americaworks.com](http://www.americaworks.com)

#### Richmond:

Rubicon Programs Inc.  
2500 Bissell Ave.  
Richmond, CA 94804  
510-235-1516

Rubicon Programs provides a wide array of social services, including housing assistance, mental health care services and other support services.  
[www.rubiconprograms.org](http://www.rubiconprograms.org)

## District of Columbia

East of the River Clergy, Police, Community Partnership  
4105 First St. S.E.  
Washington, DC 20032  
202-373-5767

This group of organizations provides many of the necessary supports for returning citizens, including drug treatment facilities and transitional housing.

[www.ercpcp.org](http://www.ercpcp.org)

Offender Aid and Restoration  
1400 N. Uhle St., Suite 704  
Arlington, VA 22201  
703-228-7030

Offender Aid and Restoration is the leading provider of services for returning citizens in Arlington County and the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church as well as Washington.

[www.oaronline.org](http://www.oaronline.org)

## Florida

*Jacksonville:*

Operation New Hope  
1830 N. Main St.  
Jacksonville, FL 32206  
904-354-4673

Operation New Hope offers job-readiness training for returning citizens. All participants are required to enroll in a two-week course upon entry into the program. After one week of soft-skills workshops, participants meet one-on-one with a job placement specialist. If a placement does not occur quickly, the participant returns for additional employment preparation.

[www.operationnewhope.com](http://www.operationnewhope.com)

*Miami:*

Rehabilitative Services Bureau, Miami-Dade County  
2525 N.W. 62nd St.  
Miami, FL 33147  
786-263-7000

Rehabilitative Services Bureau offers a program that prepares incarcerated persons for re-entering the world of work and meaningful independent communal living. The bureau strives to produce quality lifestyle changes in the clients it serves.

[www.miamidade.gov/corrections](http://www.miamidade.gov/corrections)

## Illinois

*Chicago:*

Safer Foundation  
571 W. Jackson  
Chicago, IL 60661  
312-922-2200

Safer Foundation helps returning citizens re-enter their communities. Safer has been working for more than 30 years to reduce recidivism by helping people with criminal records obtain employment and social services.

[www.saferfoundation.org](http://www.saferfoundation.org)

## Michigan

*Detroit:*

America Works  
2990 W. Grand Blvd.  
Detroit, MI 48202  
313-875-9084

Since 1984, this private workforce-development firm has found jobs for returning citizens. Offices are located in various parts of the United States.

[www.americaworks.com](http://www.americaworks.com)

## Maryland

*Baltimore:*

America Works of Maryland Inc.  
22 Light St., Fifth Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410-625-9675

Since 1984, this private workforce-development firm has found jobs for returning citizens. Offices are located in various parts of the United States.

[www.americaworks.com](http://www.americaworks.com)

## New Jersey

*Newark:*

America Works of New Jersey Inc.  
C/O Opportunity Reconnect @ Essex County College  
303 University Ave., Room 3295  
Newark, NJ 07101  
973-624-0194

Since 1984, this private workforce-development firm has found jobs for returning citizens. Offices are located in various parts of the United States.

[www.americaworks.com](http://www.americaworks.com)

Newark Reentry Legal Services (ReLeSe) Network  
P.O. Box 32040  
Newark, NJ 07102  
973-645-0022  
e-mail: [ReLeSe@vljnj.org](mailto:ReLeSe@vljnj.org)  
A legal services program of the Volunteer Lawyers for Justice, ReLeSe is designed to help individuals with criminal records address civil legal matters that are barriers to successful community reintegration.  
[http://vljnj.org/Newark\\_ReLeSe.html](http://vljnj.org/Newark_ReLeSe.html)

## **New York**

### *Albany:*

America Works of Albany Inc.  
194 Washington Avenue, Suite 320  
Albany, NY 12210  
518-465-5627  
Since 1984, this private workforce-development firm has found jobs for returning citizens. Offices are located in various parts of the United States.  
[www.americaworks.com](http://www.americaworks.com)

### *New York City:*

America Works locations  
Since 1984, this private workforce-development firm has found jobs for returning citizens. Offices are located in various parts of the United States.  
[www.americaworks.com](http://www.americaworks.com)

### *Manhattan*

228 E. 45th St., 16th Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
212-599-5627

### *Brooklyn*

6810 Third Ave., Ground Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11220  
718-833-5042

### *Queens*

1600 Central Ave., Fifth Floor  
Far Rockaway, NY 11691  
718-337-6365

### *Center for Employment Opportunities*

32 Broadway, 15th Floor  
New York, NY, 10004  
212 422 4430  
Center for Employment Opportunities has provided employment training and services for people with criminal records since late 1970.  
[www.ceoworks.org](http://www.ceoworks.org)

Exodus Transitional Community  
2271 Third Ave. (between 123rd and 124<sup>th</sup> streets)  
New York, NY 10035  
917-492-0990  
This fellowship of formerly incarcerated individuals helps the newly released to build stable lives and fully reintegrate into society.  
[www.etcny.org](http://www.etcny.org)

## **Pennsylvania**

### *Philadelphia:*

Impact Services Corp.  
1952 E. Allegheny Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19134  
215-739-1600  
Impact Services provides training programs for returning citizens.  
[www.impactservices.org](http://www.impactservices.org)

### *Norristown:*

In His Eyes  
P. O. Box 2103  
Norristown, PA 19404  
888-521-1812  
In His Eyes provides services for women only. Its mission is to offer the proper resources that will enable a smoother transition back into the community.  
[www.inhiseyes.org](http://www.inhiseyes.org)

## **Tennessee**

### *Memphis:*

The City of Memphis, Second Chance Ex-Felon Program  
444 N. Main St.  
Memphis, TN 38105  
901-545-0343  
A private/public partnership among the city of Memphis and local businesses, the Second Chance program is designed to connect ex-offenders who are willing to work with employers who are willing to hire.  
[www.cityofmemphis.org](http://www.cityofmemphis.org)

## **Wisconsin**

### *Milwaukee:*

Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative  
Word of Hope Ministries Inc.  
Holy Cathedral Church of God in Christ  
2677 N. 40th St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53210  
414-447-1967  
This ministry provides training and transitional job placement to individuals with no work history. Training often



leads to careers in high-growth industries, such as construction, manufacturing and graphics.  
[www.holycathedralwi.org](http://www.holycathedralwi.org)

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This is a noncomprehensive list. For resources on other states, please visit the federal government re-entry Web page at [www.reentry.gov](http://www.reentry.gov) and click on “State Activities & Resources” in the left column. Please feel free to also contact Fela Barrueto, national coordinator, Prisoner Re-entry and Aftercare Ministry, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, at P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851; 1-800-ABC-3USA, x2493; and [Fela.Barrueto@abhms.org](mailto:Fela.Barrueto@abhms.org).

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is a “Station of Hope?”

A “Station of Hope” is a church that serves as a refuge of healing and center of teaching for returning citizens, their families and communities. It also offers a renewed vision.

### 2. What is a returning citizen?

A returning citizen is a person coming home from jail or prison—what some, but not we, might call an “ex-con” or “ex-offender.” The term *returning citizen* emphasizes what one is, rather than what one was. It spotlights the fact that the civil rights of those who have paid their debt to society should be recognized and means working to change laws that, for example, restrict voting rights or deny job opportunities to returning citizens.

### 3. Why should we get involved in this kind of ministry?

We are called to serve “the least of these,” including people who are facing charges, enduring incarceration, and coming home from prison. We are called to serve their suffering families. And we are called to serve the victims of crime.

### 4. Should we set up a prison ministry program?

No. We are suggesting that you fulfill the duty that the church is called to do (Matthew 25:43-45) by reaching out and supporting the people in your own congregation.

### 5. Do we need to establish a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to do this?

No. We are not suggesting a program at all—rather, ministry. Think about how your church reaches out to

people who are hospitalized or sick. You don’t need a “program” to do that. You don’t need a program to do this work, either!

### 6. Do we need to raise funds to do this work?

No. You don’t need to raise money to create a Station of Hope. Government and charitable funding for work with prisoners and returning citizens is extremely limited. We are hoping to build upon good but underfunded programs to help those in your congregation by starting with what we have—the strength and commitment to build Stations of Hope—and not relying on a program strategy.

### 7. How could we start?

You can start by organizing a group in your local church to pray for this ministry. It is not a simple process; instead, it is painful and long, but, because it involves healing and restoration, it is a wonderful process.

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**Please note:** Much of this toolkit has been adapted from “What Shall We Then Do? A Family Freedom Kit for Creating Healing Communities,” written by Linda Mills, developed by a partnership of the Progressive National Baptist Convention and The Annie E. Casey Foundation, and published online at [aecf.org](http://aecf.org).

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from the “Focus on Justice” article series from Prison Fellowship International’s Centre for Justice and Reconciliation, available at [www.pfi.org/cjr/downloads](http://www.pfi.org/cjr/downloads).