



The Cabinet-level Reentry Council is working to enhance community safety and well-being, assist those returning from prison and jail in becoming productive citizens, and save taxpayer dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration.

Women and Reentry

Men and women face significant challenges to community reentry when they leave jail and prison settings. These challenges contribute to high rates of rearrest, failure on community supervision and eventual returns to incarcerative settings. When addressing women's reentry challenges, emerging research and practice indicate that areas of need

commonly experienced by women, if left unaddressed, can contribute to their involvement in the criminal justice system. Substance abuse and mental health issues—often linked to histories of physical and sexual abuse beginning in childhood and extending into adulthood—are not effectively addressed if reentry programs lack a trauma-informed behavioral health component. Parenting, another critical issue for women who will assume responsibility for children, is often overlooked as an important aspect of reentry. These and many other factors point to the need to identify effective gender-responsive strategies to guide and support women as they transition to the community.

Accomplishments to Date

- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with other Reentry Council agencies and community partners, sponsored a conference, "Meeting the Reentry Needs of Women: Policies, Programs, and Practices," attended by researchers, practitioners, federal employees, and advocates to discuss improving reentry outcomes for women.
- Department of Labor (DOL) is developing tip sheets, with input from the field, for women leaving incarceration.
- HHS commissioned a research review to examine characteristics, pathways, and interventions to promote healthy relationships and successful reentry for justice-involved women.
- Reentry Council agencies convened listening sessions across the country with service providers and women to learn about the challenges and successes of women returning to their families and communities.
- The National Institute of Corrections (NIC/DOJ) has developed materials specific to justice-involved women to include: a [Gender-Responsive Policy and Practice Assessment \(GRPPA\)](#) to assist agencies in assessing current and developing policy and programs for women; a weekly news blast "[Gender Responsive News for Women and Girls](#);" "[Pregnancy and Child-Related Legal and Policy Issues Concerning Justice Involved Women](#);" and "[Video Visiting in Corrections: Benefits, Limitations, and Implementing Considerations](#)."
- The BJA-funded National Resource Center on Justice-Involved Women held a [jail summit specific to women](#), with proceedings developed to increase the awareness of jail leadership and staff regarding gender-responsive strategies that can improve effectiveness when working with women inmates, as well as enhance facility safety and security.
- NIC and the National Resource Center on Justice-Involved Women has engaged with Johns Hopkins researchers on a project to gather updated, national statistics on pregnancy and its outcomes among women in custody. The project will also put in place systems for ongoing tracking of this data.
- The Office on Women's Health (OWH/HHS) is in the final year of a multi-year project with three demonstration sites incorporating trauma-informed and gender-responsive approaches for women's reentry preparation. The final product will be an online best and promising practices guide to implement and support successful reentry across the country.

Agenda Moving Forward

Increase Information and Resources Available to Meet the Needs and Challenges Facing Justice-Involved Women through funding opportunities, policy guidance, regional collaboration, and outreach related to access to health care.

Identify and Address Barriers to Successful Reentry for Women through listening sessions, accessing current and emerging research and practice to support development of topical resource materials for providers and justice-involved women.

Increase Evidence-Based and Research-Informed Program Practices through collaborative activities between Reentry Council agencies.

Continued Development of Public-Private, Cross-Discipline Communications Network to links public/private program providers, intermediary networks, and federal partners to improve flow of critical information.

Key Resources (Women and Reentry)

Federal Interagency Reentry Council

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/firc/>

National Institute of Corrections (women)

<http://nicic.gov/WomenOffenders>

National Reentry Resource Center (women)

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/>

National Resource Center on Justice-Involved Women

<http://cjinvolvedwomen.org/>

SAMHSA's Gains Center for Behavioral Health and Justice Transformation

http://gainscenter.samhsa.gov/topical_resources/women.asp