

The goal of reentry ministry is to provide a continuum of care that helps ex-prisoners succeed in life on the outside. Needs in all areas of life must be addressed in order for returning citizens to be whole again.

Finding resources to help ex-prisoners is an ongoing activity for most reentry teams. Once the resources are identified, it is important to have a system for cataloging the information for easy retrieval in the future. Creating a computer database is one good way of organizing and managing these resources.

National Organizations/Agencies

The following is a starter list of large nationally-recognized organizations and agencies that offer a variety of services for ex-prisoners and their families. Most have very helpful websites explaining their services and providing information about their state and local offices. This is an excellent place to begin your research.

- **Catholic Charities USA:** Local Catholic Charities agencies help families and individuals who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless or who struggle with racism and poverty. Being Catholic is not a requirement for receiving assistance. Phone: (703) 549-1390 www.catholiccharitiesusa.org
- **Goodwill Industries:** Goodwill Industries is one of the world's largest nonprofit providers of job training and employment services for people who have a history of welfare dependency, illiteracy, criminal history, and homelessness. Phone: (800) 466-9455 www.goodwill.org
- **Salvation Army:** The Salvation Army works in cooperation with prison, probation, and parole offices in prison rehabilitation and crime prevention. Services include job-training, employment opportunities, material aid, and spiritual guidance. Salvation Army rehabilitation centers and Harbor Light centers have been designated as halfway houses for ex-prisoners to participate in work-release programs. Phone: (703) 684-5500 www.salvationarmyusa.org
- **Social Security Administration (SSA):** The SSA can help ex-prisoners who need a replacement Social Security card or a Social Security number. Some ex-prisoners may be eligible for retirement benefits or disability assistance, depending on their age and health. Phone: (800) 772-1213 www.ssa.gov
- **U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA):** The ETA offers programs, resources, and online tools to help workers in all stages of job and career development, including job training programs and job placement services for economically disadvantaged adults. Locally, these programs are offered through workforce centers (also known as One-Stop centers or Job Service centers). Phone: (877) 872-5627 www.doleta.gov
- **United Way:** United Way's focus is on improving life for people in three areas: financial stability, education, and health. To promote financial stability, United Way supports programs that help families meet their basic needs, while also gaining the skills to obtain long-term financial goals such as manageable expenses, affordable housing, and adequate income to support their family. Phone: (703) 836-7100 or (800) 892-2757 www.unitedway.org
- **YMCA:** The Y offers services that help people be self-reliant, productive, and connected to the community. Local Ys address the unique needs of their communities and provide services focused

on critical areas such as child welfare, community health, job training, environmental education, and family needs. Phone: (800) 872-9622 www.ymca.net

- **YWCA:** Local YWCAs provide services to meet the needs of women in their communities. Depending on local programs, these may include: child care, rape crisis intervention, domestic violence assistance, shelters for domestic violence victims and their families, job training, and career counseling. Phone: (202) 467-0801 www.ywca.org

State-Level Resources

The following are a few important state agencies that are helpful with meeting the needs of ex-prisoners. Agency names may vary from state to state. The easiest way to find these resources is through your state's official website or the state government pages in most local phone books. This is not an exhaustive list, but a starting place for further research.

- **State Employment Commission:** Although the exact name may vary, all states have agencies that offer job training and rehabilitation, help people find employment, and promote the well-being of those in the workforce.
- **Housing Authority (Public Housing):** Housing Authority services vary, but usually include emergency shelters, housing for the homeless, housing for those with chronic substance abuse problems or mental illness, group homes, shelters, and transitional housing.
- **State and County Health Departments:** Medical and psychiatric services provided by state and county health departments vary, but this is a viable source of free or nearly free healthcare for ex-prisoners and their dependents.
- **Department of Health and Human Services:** Low-income households may qualify for the food stamp program offered by the state's Department of Health and Human Services. Each state has its own requirements and guidelines for receiving help.
- **Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV):** Most ex-prisoners will need to visit the local DMV office to obtain a new driver's license or for help with automobile registration and/or license tags. In some states, the DMV offers a picture ID card with an ID number for those who do not drive.

Local Resources

Newly-released prisoners frequently need local community-support services. You can find available assistance in your community by searching the internet or contacting nearby churches, the public library, or the police department. The following are some examples of local resources that are very helpful with reentry ministries.

- **Food Banks:** To meet immediate needs for food, ex-prisoners may be referred to a local food bank or soup kitchen until they get food stamps and/or a job that provides regular income.
- **Temporary Shelters:** Many communities meet the short-term needs of the homeless by referring them to temporary shelters operated by government agencies, large non-profits, or private charities.
- **Public Health Clinics:** Help with prescription drugs, physical check-ups, and other medical needs may be available through low-cost health clinics operated by government agencies or private charities.
- **Resale Shops or Clothes Closets:** Help with clothing and basic household items is often found through local resale shops or clothes closets operated by churches or other non-profits.
- **Job Training Opportunities:** Most ex-prisoners don't have money to pay for job training, so they will need referrals to local businesses, government agencies, or non-profit groups that offer on-the-job training, apprenticeships, or other job-skill training.