

ISSUE BRIEF

Continuously Improving Public Safety Outcomes for Individuals Reentering the Community After a Period of Incarceration through a Statewide Reentry Council

What's the Problem?

The Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform convened the Statewide Reentry Roundtable in 2019. Justice reinvestment stakeholders around the state gathered for a full-day to identify ways to continuously improve public safety outcomes for nearly 4,000 individuals returning home from state correctional facilities in Maryland. Of those released, about 75 percent will return because they do not have a reentry plan that continues after release. Moreover, 50 percent will face significant barriers to successful reentry caused by criminal records, including access to employment, education, housing, civic engagement, and volunteering.

What's the Proposal?

Stakeholders across the region, including the Department of Public Safety and Corrections are in support of establishing a Statewide Reentry Council in Maryland that will specifically focus on building safe and strong communities through successful reentry. Suggested services and activities include:

- Increase collaboration between state, local, and community based programs relevant to reentering the community.
- Recommend system and policy changes to support reentry goals.
- Expand access to safe, stable, and affordable housing.
- Expand employer hiring incentives to encourage more companies to embrace second chance hiring.
- Remove barriers to successful reentry caused by criminal records.
- Expand access to education and treatment both inside and correctional facilities and following release.
- Support Justice Reinvestment plans.
- Develop and monitor nationwide goals relevant to reentry and offer recommendations to the Legislature.

Will this Work?

Many states across the nation have found benefits in these councils. In 2016 Washington State Established a reentry Council. On the local level, Prince George's Council established a Reentry Advisory Board. Since these councils are new, there is no data available on its impact. However, the Council of Economic Advisors published a report that found for every dollar the state spends on reentry, and it saves about 5.27 in correctional costs. We can assume that the benefit would be seen in reducing Maryland's prison population, correctional costs,

administrative costs associated with arresting, an overall reduction in crime in both violent and non-violent crime.

Status of Proposal?

The Assistant Secretary of DPSCS is currently exploring the creation of the Statewide Reentry Council. DPSCS is presently determining the potential structure, mission, and objectives of the Council and intends to share what they come with during a forum with Roundtable participants and other community stakeholders.

Learn More!

Washington State Reentry Council

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/statewide-reentry-council/>

Local Reentry Council Advisory Committee

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ednc/file/840371/download>

Prince George's County Reentry Advisory Board

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LmUUrMkD5hKofzFDuSgJgtfc-4vrFU4-/view>