



Season's Greetings to All PROWD Grantees and Stakeholders!

As the holiday season approaches, we want to extend our warmest wishes to each of you. Your unwavering commitment and dedication to supporting reentry initiatives have made a tremendous difference in the lives of program participants, their loved ones, and the community-at-large. May this festive season bring you joy, peace, and time to cherish the moments with loved ones.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Share Your Program Resources with the PROWD Community

The [PROWD Resources page on WorkforceGPS](#) features a collection of resources, promising practices, and success stories intended to support PROWD grantees in effectively serving program participants and achieving their objectives. The page includes a dedicated section for resources generated by PROWD grantees. Grantees are encouraged to submit additional resources for potential inclusion on this page.

To contribute to the PROWD Resources page, grantees can submit resources to their designated technical assistance coach.



U.S. Sentencing Commission Votes to Allow Retroactive Sentence Reductions

The U.S. Sentencing Commission, through a majority vote, has approved the delayed retroactive application of Amendment 821, specifically regarding criminal history. This means that certain presently incarcerated individuals may qualify for reduced sentences, effective as of February 1, 2024. Additionally, the Commission has adopted its latest policy priorities. These priorities encompass a review, and potential amendment, of the guidelines concerning acquitted conduct for sentencing purposes. The Commission also aims to assess the effectiveness of specific Bureau of

Prisons practices in achieving the goals of sentencing.

According to the Commission's July 2023 [Impact Analysis](#), the retroactive application is anticipated to have a substantial effect on currently incarcerated individuals:

- 11,495 incarcerated individuals will experience a decrease in sentencing range under Part A of Amendment 821, pertaining to "Status Points," with an average possible sentence reduction of 11.7%.
- 7,272 incarcerated individuals would qualify for a lower sentencing range based on specified criteria outlined in Part B of Amendment 821, addressing "Zero-Point Offenders," with an average potential sentence reduction of 17.6%.

For more information, access the [complete press release](#) on the U.S. Sentencing Commission's website.

BEST PRACTICE

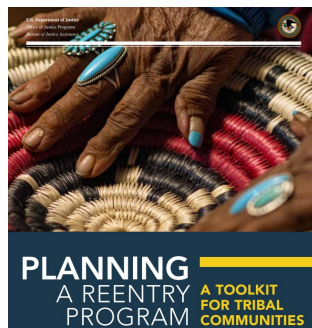


Bowie State University Celebrates Successful First Semester of Prison Education Program

[Bowie State University](#) (BSU) commemorates the successful completion of its inaugural semester of the prison education program, granting incarcerated individuals the chance to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology or an optional Entrepreneurship Certificate. Developed in partnership with the [Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services](#), the program aims to break the cycle of recidivism and equip participants for successful societal reintegration. Tailored courses align with workforce demands, providing essential skills for employment.

Launched with seven students in January 2023, the inaugural cohort has shown remarkable progress and remains on the path to graduation. BSU remains dedicated to program expansion, planning to introduce additional courses and programs in the coming years. This initiative stands as a model for other states seeking to implement college degree programs within correctional facilities.

To discover more about the Bowie State prison education program, visit [this link](#).



Navigating Reentry for Tribal Communities: Insights from 'Planning a Reentry Program Toolkit'

The *Planning a Reentry Program: A Toolkit for Tribal Communities* offers an extensive guide specifically designed to aid tribal justice system practitioners in establishing or enhancing reentry programs tailored for American Indians and Alaska Natives returning from incarceration. This resource supports practitioners through each stage, starting with forming a planning team and progressing through critical steps like cultivating partnerships, refining the reentry program, assessing program impact, and planning for

sustained effectiveness.

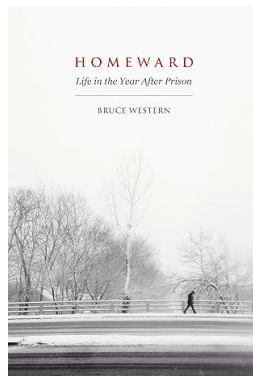
Leveraging insights from reentry programs in Indian Country, this toolkit integrates expertise from distinguished institutions such as the [Center for Court Innovation](#), known for its pioneering reentry courts like the [Harlem Parole Reentry Court](#), and the [American Probation and Parole Association](#).

While recognizing the limitations of evidence-based practices in tribal communities, the toolkit underscores their potential benefits in improving client outcomes, reducing recidivism, and fostering community safety. It advocates for flexible adoption, acknowledging that some evidence-based practices might not align with cultural contexts or could pose financial challenges. By emphasizing crucial evidence-based strategies like motivational interviewing, family support approaches, cognitive behavioral therapy, and peer support, the toolkit underscores the importance of integrating indigenous teachings into reentry programs.

Tribal nations increasingly recognize the necessity of tailored services that address individual needs, acknowledging the unique challenges faced by each person returning to the community. This toolkit empowers practitioners to proactively address the diverse needs of individuals reentering tribal communities, aiming for a future-focused, inclusive, and culturally attuned approach to reentry.

Access the [complete report on the Bureau of Justice Assistance website](#) for further details.

BOOK OF THE MONTH



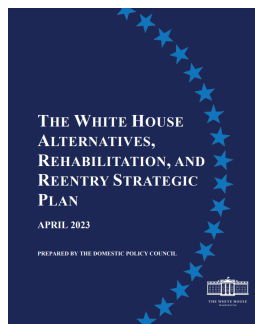
Book Spotlight: "Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison"

In a nation where hundreds of thousands reenter society after incarceration yearly, the challenges of navigating life post-prison are vividly portrayed in Bruce Western's book, *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison*. As a sociologist, Western delves deep into the lives of those reintegrating into society after time behind bars.

Drawing from over a hundred in-depth interviews with individuals formerly incarcerated in Massachusetts, Western shines a light on the trials and tribulations they face. Most struggled with poverty, health issues, financial hardship, lack of adequate housing, and unemployment, especially among communities of color, where systemic barriers and discrimination hindered their access to stable jobs. Contrary to common stereotypes, Western uncovers a poignant truth: many former prisoners experienced lifetimes of violence and abuse, with violence often being a precursor to their incarceration. Addressing the cycle of violence and vulnerability they face is crucial for both their integration and public safety.

The book is an insightful read that challenges perceptions, urging a more compassionate and effective approach to reentry, emphasizing the importance of social integration in breaking the cycle of incarceration. Western emphasizes the urgent need for increased support in the critical first year post-release, advocating for guaranteed housing, healthcare, substance abuse treatment, and transitional employment. By highlighting these stories, *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison* prompts a reevaluation of reentry systems and justice policies, urging a shift towards a more rehabilitative approach.

RESOURCES



White House Alternatives, Rehabilitation, and Reentry Strategic Plan

The *White House Alternatives, Rehabilitation, and Reentry Strategic Plan* is a comprehensive initiative aiming to enhance public safety, equal justice, and trust by addressing systemic barriers and creating opportunities for post-release success. The plan centers on three primary goals: enhancing public safety by reducing unnecessary interactions within the criminal justice system, supporting rehabilitation during incarceration, and facilitating successful reentry.

Regarding reentry, the plan outlines several key objectives, including:

- **Removing employment barriers:** The plan advocates for eliminating legal and regulatory constraints preventing individuals with arrest or conviction records from accessing job opportunities, promoting the expansion of "ban the box" policies.
- **Enhancing housing accessibility:** It emphasizes increasing affordable housing options for individuals with criminal records, expanding rental assistance vouchers, and enhancing supportive housing programs.
- **Restoring voting rights:** The plan supports the restoration of voting rights for those with felony convictions, encouraging legislative efforts at state and local levels to reinstate these rights.
- **Broadening education and training access:** It promotes increased access to educational and training opportunities for individuals with criminal records, advocating for expanded Pell Grant availability and improved access to vocational training programs.
- **Removing occupational license barriers:** The plan aims to eliminate obstacles to obtaining occupational licenses for individuals with criminal records by reforming licensing laws that disproportionately deny licenses based on criminal records.

Additionally, the plan emphasizes developing and implementing evidence-based reentry programs. These programs aim to provide tailored support and services to incarcerated individuals, addressing their underlying needs like addiction, mental health issues, and trauma, while equipping them with necessary skills for successful post-release integration.

To view the complete plan, visit the [White House website](#).

Do you have organizational members or partners who would benefit from the latest updates and resources from the PROWD newsletter? Share **this link**, so they can subscribe and stay informed!

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