and facts about people released from prisons and jails, in addition to responding to high-profile incidents. This includes the public safety issues related to their reentry—and to what extent services may be able to increase community safety.

States may also wish to publicly recognize outstanding faith-based and community partners that serve high-risk populations. Highlighting success stories and crediting community partners can help sustain strong working relationships and may also help those organizations in securing additional funding from private donors and foundations.

3 | Facilitate appropriate information sharing among government agencies and faith-based and community organizations working with individuals who are at high risk of reoffending or have special treatment and service needs.

Community-based providers, law enforcement officers, and supervision officers often encounter the same individuals, yet many jurisdictions lack formal mechanisms for information exchanges among them and others in the reentry network. Frequent and regular interaction with community-based providers can help officers anticipate and address any public safety concerns and help ensure individuals meet their conditions of parole or probation.

Montgomery County Re-Entry Collaborative Case Management Meetings (Maryland)
The Re-Entry Collaborative Case Management group meets biweekly to develop case management plans for high-risk individuals who are about to be released from the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. The group is composed of corrections staff (case managers, treatment staff, and a social worker), local law enforcement officers, representatives from parole and probation, human service agency officials, and faith-based and community service providers. The group conducts these 90-minute meetings to coordinate programming and provide an effective continuum of services. Between meetings, the Re-Entry Unit Manager at the correctional facility communicates with members of the group via an e-mail list, providing meeting minutes and updates on upcoming cases to be discussed.

When appropriate, government agencies should share pertinent information with providers working with high-risk individuals, or those convicted of serious and violent offenses, in keeping with all legal mandates. Government agencies must comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations and have a full understanding of what kinds of information can be shared directly and what necessitates a waiver signed by the individual. For example, properly providing information on an individual's criminal history, conditions of supervision, and treatment plan can help a reentry provider take the necessary precautions to ensure public safety and place the individual in an appropriate housing arrangement. Though federal laws apply to all, other rules that govern information sharing vary from state to state, and even between jurisdictions. State personnel can educate representatives from agencies and community groups on mandates and help establish internal policies and protocols that facilitate information exchanges.

GOAL 5

Ensure Accountability for the Efficient Use of Funds and Gather Critical Data

THERE IS AN INCREASING EMPHASIS IN STATE GOVERNMENT ON ACCOUNTABIL-ity and, more precisely, performance measurement. Elected officials responsible for state budgets, understandably and appropriately, want to know how allocated funds have been spent. They also want to know the impact of those expenditures.

However justifiable this process is, faith-based and community organizations often find themselves victims of its unintended consequences. Initially excited to begin delivering services to their clients, faith-based and community organizations that receive a state grant or contract frequently find themselves consumed with trying to understand and fulfill reporting requirements. Sorting through the forms and reports they must complete, these grant recipients are frustrated that their precious resources are spent administering the grant instead of providing important services.

The recommendations that follow explain the need to clearly identify what should be measured when a grant or contract is awarded. Next, they discuss how to minimize the burden that these requirements generate for grantees while providing both the state and the faith-based and community organizations with extremely valuable data. They offer strategies for organizations to get the most they can from routine data collection and reporting. Finally, they review the characteristics of studies that will provide policymakers with information they need to determine whether to continue funding for a program and suggest ways to partner with other entities to conduct these studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 | Clearly define which measures faith-based and community organizations should use to assess their services.

When state officials enter into an agreement with a grantee or contractor to provide certain services within a particular program model, the parties should agree on which quantifiable measures matter in tracking progress toward desired outcomes and ensure they are reflected in the written agreement. *Process measures* might include tracking the number and type of interventions the service provider made, the timing of these actions, and the number of participants that have completed various progressive stages in the program. In some cases, faith-based and community organizations may not have the capacity to determine outcomes, and indeed conflict of interest issues arise when an organization conducts outcome evaluations of its own programs. (For strategies to overcome some of these challenges, see recommendation 4.)

Once grant and contract administrators have agreed on what information should be tracked, they should then develop a system for how grantees and contractors should capture and report the information. States may want to consider developing standardized reporting forms to facilitate information processing. States also may want to simplify reporting metrics for smaller organizations.

Service Level Inventory, Ohio Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
The Ohio Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives gathers data on all grants it administers to assess whether program implementation is consistent with the model established in the award. To streamline data collection from numerous grantees, it has developed a Service Level Inventory form, which can be tailored to each grant program. The form identifies eight service areas and lists specific activities that fall under each category. For example, housing is identified as one of the service areas, and grantees must indicate how many people were provided with emergency rental assistance, housing deposits, and temporary housing. Grantees must complete the form monthly and submit it to the grant administrator.

If resources are available, it may be possible to set up a computerized case record management system that not only gives grantees or contractors access to clients' records but can also be used to generate statistical reports. For example, a case record management system should track, among other things, program completion information for each service area and generate statistical reports on the reasons for any terminations. These systems can also facilitate information sharing among program providers and can support subsequent recidivism research or other studies discussed in recommendation 4.*

*When computerized systems are not available, a paper-based template can be used, and the information entered into an off-the-shelf database to achieve some of these same benefits.

Although crucial to grant and contract administration, written reports do not provide a complete picture of how a program is implemented by the faith-based or community organization. State officials should consider conducting announced and unannounced site visits, which can be useful in verifying information in written reports and can help state officials gain a better understanding of the day-to-day operation of reentry activities. Site visits typically involve conversations with staff at various levels of the organization, interviews with recipients of services, observation of a class or group session, and review of the service provider's current caseload. If there have been administrative or logistical problems, or they are anticipated, capitalizing on a site visit to resolve them face-to-face can expedite troubleshooting.

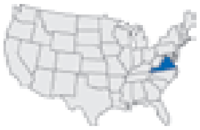
Expectations for what information contractors and grantees must track, how this information must be reported, and how compliance with these reporting requirements will be monitored should be clearly spelled out in the grant solicitation and further explained in bidders' conferences, preproposal meetings, and other events where state administrators discuss funding opportunities with potential applicants. Administrators should also communicate to applicants how this information will be used by the state and when, if at all, the results of analyses will be made available.

2 | Help faith-based and community organizations meet reporting requirements.

Although many providers may understand what the expectations are for tracking and reporting information, they still may need help incorporating these activities into their daily work and fulfilling the sometimes time-consuming requirements once the grant or contract begins. States can minimize the onus on providers while ensuring that they get information that can guide decision making about funding particular programs. To minimize reporting challenges, government officials can provide trainings for any organization receiving a grant award or contract from a state agency. Such trainings could address some of the following questions:

- How are standard measurements defined?
- How do you determine who is eligible for services?
- How do you address "double-counting" issues for individuals who receive multiple services?
- How, if at all, do you count services that an individual receives that is not specifically a component of the program funded by the state?
- What constitutes a referral?
- What constitutes a meeting?
- How is attendance in meetings determined? Do late arrivals or partial attendance count?
- How can these new data be used to help improve the reentry program or how it is currently implemented?

Virginia Department of Social Services



The Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) administers a number of grant programs that provide funding support to faith-based and community organizations serving people released from prisons and jails and their families. All solicitations that DSS issues state that providers receiving funding must complete training on program and reporting requirements within 90 days of the grant award. This training is administered by the Office of Community Partnerships and is meant to ensure that grantees have a uniform understanding of what information about financial, administrative, and program activities must be reported.

Regularly collecting and reporting data is a time-intensive undertaking and will require allocating a portion of a person's time to fulfill these responsibilities. Even with initial training from the funding agency, the staff person charged with this work may need ongoing assistance. The following strategies may help alleviate some of the burden of reporting obligations.

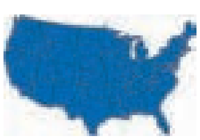
First, state's grant or contract administrators can directly help recipients build administrative capacity and streamline accounting procedures. Second, state agency officials can refer contractors and grantees to nonprofits and private consulting firms that offer this type of training and technical assistance. Officials can also consider working with an intermediary specifically to provide instruction and support in this area to grantees or contractors.

JAE Enterprises, Inc. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

JAE Enterprises, Inc. is a business consulting firm that offers organizational development services and technical assistance to small businesses and nonprofit organizations seeking to build organizational capacity. In 2006–2007, JAE contracted with the Philadelphia Department of Human Services to provide a series of 12 workshops for grantees of the department's Support Community Outreach Program. In addition to providing training on budgeting, accounting, and establishing 501(c)(3) status, the workshops helped grantees learn how to track data about their programs and how to produce accurate reports for funders.

Third, states can contract directly with intermediaries that assume the reporting responsibilities of its subcontractors. The subcontracting faith-based or community organization must provide information to the intermediary that can be used in the reports to the state.

Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Initiatives



The Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Leadership is a national intermediary organization committed to strengthening the capacity, enhancing the programs, and expanding the reach of faith-based and community organizations. The Coalition primarily seeks to work with organizations serving Latino at-risk or adjudicated youth. As an intermediary, it provides funding, technical assistance, and organizational development using a cadre of consultants and on-the-ground city project directors, who are responsible for local implementation, accountability, and coaching of subgrantees. The Latino Coalition employs the "Efforts to Outcomes" software to educate subgrantees on how to collect, enter, and create data reports for all clients served. City project directors then work with subgrantees to ensure that information is properly recorded in the

RESOURCES FOR INTERMEDIARIES
Compassion Capital Fund (CCF), National Resource Center

THE COMPASSION CAPITAL FUND—which is coordinated by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—established the National Resource Center (NRC) in 2002. NRC has developed a number of reports and tools available online for intermediary organizations:

- *National Resource Center E-Newsletter: Best of the Best*
  (www.ccfbest.org/)

  This website compiles the most useful articles and resources from the NRC's e-newsletter, which is intended as a resource for intermediary organizations funded by CCF, published between October 2003 and September 2005.

- *Toolkit for Faith-Based and Community Organizations*
  (www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/ccf/resources/toolkit.html#gbks)

  This toolkit features eight guidebooks for intermediary organizations on a number of topics including establishing partnerships with faith-based and community organizations, managing sub-awards, and delivering effective technical assistance.

- *Breakthrough Performance: Ten Emerging Practices of Leading Intermediaries*
  (www.hhs.gov/fbci/Tools%20&%20Resources/Pubs/breakthough.pdf)

  This report highlights promising practices of leading intermediaries that have built successful partnerships with faith-based and community organizations and have expanded the capacity of these organizations to serve people in need.

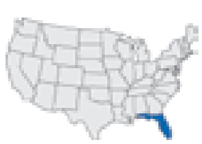
database on an ongoing basis. The Latino Coalition can easily draw statistics from the database for monthly and quarterly reports to the primary funders and can also use the information for subgrantee evaluations.*

3 | Help faith-based and community organizations leverage data collection.

States should communicate to faith-based and community organizations that data collection is not just for the benefit of state officials and it is not solely an evaluation tool. Data collection can be beneficial for faith-based and community organizations because it requires them to develop the organizational infrastructure needed to meet reporting requirements that can help with other aspects of their work. In particular, it encourages staff and administrators of smaller faith-based groups and grassroots organizations to establish systems and habits that will help them to better track bills and payments, articulate program goals, demonstrate a track record of service for future funders, increase professionalism, and improve general office efficiency.

Apart from the indirect benefits associated with the processes involved in data collection and reporting, the data can be immediately useful in determining whether a program is on the right track. Data about program participants that capture demographic information, screening and test results, and attendance records for meetings and classes can help staff determine what adjustments in the program model or implementation are needed.

States should provide or connect faith-based and community organizations to training and technical assistance on how to translate data already being collected for routine reports into useful information about how to improve program models or implementation. For example, an organization launching a GED program for 30 high-risk individuals may discover, after a few weeks of recruiting participants and conducting initial literacy screenings, that the majority of eligible participants are reading at or below the third-grade level and thus not yet ready for GED instruction. Staff and administrators may need help translating this information to decide what program changes to make and how to adjust the goals and outcome measures accordingly.



Participant Assessment Forms, Operation New Hope (Florida)

Operation New Hope (ONH) is a nonprofit community development corporation that provides case management, life coaching, job training, and job placement services to people released from prisons and jails as part of the Ready4Work Initiative. In partnership with the University of North Florida, ONH developed a comprehensive, 80-question assessment form that populates a database of standardized case files for program participants. The assessment form captures information about a person's demographic background, criminal history, employment history,

*For more information on the Latino Coalition for Faith and Community Initiatives, see www.latinocoalition.org/missionsandgoals.html.

education level, physical and mental health issues, and past and current substance use, among other elements. It also identifies *weighted factors,* or indicators that are most important in identifying the service needs of an individual. Graduate students at the University of North Florida verify information in the database such as recidivism rates for reentry program participants.

ONH staff partner with substance abuse and mental health treatment specialists to review assessment outcomes and determine what programs and treatments will most benefit an individual's transition to the community. The case file database enables ONH to conduct comprehensive quarterly reviews of reentry programs. The University of North Florida also assists ONH staff in analyzing these data continuously, so that improvements can be made to ensure efficient allocation of resources and effective programming.

4 | Determine through impact studies whether, and to what extent, the services provided have had their intended effect.

To assess whether programs and services are positively affecting an individual's transition from prison or jail to the community, states must conduct outcome evaluations. These studies consider both short- and long-term effects of a given program and quantify the benefits of a program.

Policymakers typically are most interested in a program's impact on recidivism, which may be difficult to measure because it is defined and tracked in different ways: as rearrest, reincarceration, or revocations. Furthermore, reliable recidivism research often requires at least a one–three-year study period, making it time-consuming and expensive to complete.

Recidivism is not the only measure of a program's impact. For example, in evaluating an employment program, researchers may track and analyze the number of job interviews that resulted in a job offer, the number of months participants were employed during a given time period, the length of job retention, and the wages participants earned at these jobs. For a housing program, researchers may track the number of months participants lived in a stable housing arrangement, the number of months participants experienced homelessness, and the number of address changes participants had during a given period of time.

Ideally these evaluations would follow an experimental design, which compares, for a particular period of time, a randomly assigned group that receives services and completes a program with a control group that does not receive any services. When this approach is not feasible, researchers may use quasi-experimental design, in which a group of people who did not complete the program but are matched for specific characteristics (such as age, ethnicity, criminal history, and area of residence) are compared with program graduates. The characteristics of the population served are important to detail in any recidivism study, as they can greatly impact the outcomes. An anger management program serving a group of people convicted of felony forgery will likely have very different outcomes than an identical program serving people convicted of assault and battery.

Researchers may also want to collect baseline data that reflect the characteristics of program participants before they start the program. This can help researchers assess the impact of a program by comparing how participants are doing before and after the program intervention. Baseline data may capture such factors as the percentage of participants who are unemployed, their average yearly salary, and the number of criminal convictions.

It is unrealistic for most faith-based and community organizations to conduct impact evaluations because of the resources, time, and expertise required. And even if they did have the qualified researchers within their organization to conduct such studies, their results would lack credibility because they evaluated the effectiveness of their own services.

While state governments do not have a good track record of setting aside the resources necessary to conduct such an evaluation—or waiting for the results—states looking for in-depth statistical analyses of grant programs are encouraged to make the investment in studies that do not appear biased by working with intermediaries, universities, and other third-party organizations to conduct formal evaluations of reentry programs funded by government grants.

Ohio Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (GOFBCI) in Ohio contracted with three local organizations to provide reentry services as part of its Children of Incarcerated Parents program, which seeks to strengthen families, reduce recidivism, and decrease the likelihood that children whose parents have been incarcerated will become incarcerated themselves. To assess the effectiveness of the programs, the GOFBCI set aside a portion of the overall Children of Incarcerated Parents grant funds for conducting program evaluations in partnership with the University of Cincinnati. After conducting a process evaluation at the end of the first year of the grant period, researchers analyzed the impact of the program based on recidivism over a 12- and 24-month follow-up period. Researchers then formulated recommendations for how to improve both the program model and its implementation. These recommendations, along with the impact analyses, were used by policymakers to inform decisions about where to direct funding dollars in the future.

Rigorous evaluations are a critical aspect of any reentry program or initiative and can complement process data that are routinely and efficiently collected by grantees and contractors. Evaluations not only will reveal the need for changes in program design and implementation but also will help policymakers make efficient use of dollars and help ensure the sustainability of programs that can demonstrate their positive impact.

CONCLUSION

POLICYMAKERS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT ARE SHOWING UNPRECEDENTED interest in the record number of people coming out of prisons and jails. This steady increase of individuals released from correctional facilities has serious implications for budgets, public safety, and the stability of neighborhoods disproportionately affected by reentry. In response, there has been much activity by government agencies to implement policies, programs, and initiatives to improve the likelihood that people released from prisons and jails will safely and successfully rejoin communities. For such reentry efforts to be effectual, they largely will depend on the government agencies' ability to establish, develop, and maintain relationships with faith-based and community organizations. State officials, in particular, need to take a leadership role in fostering statewide partnerships and reliable networks with faith-based and community groups that have the capacity to deliver effective services to their reentry population as well as meet standards of performance and accountability.

The goals and recommendations outlined within this guide offer strategies for states to build networks with faith-based and community organizations, simplify pathways to funding support, recognize and understand distinct organizational cultures, tailor responses to the populations who will be served by reentry services, and ensure accountability that will help sustain and improve reentry initiatives. By achieving these goals, state officials can make the most of community resources to help initiate or enhance reentry efforts.

APPENDIX A: ADVISORY GROUP*

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*Focus group participants' titles are reflective of the positions they held at the time of the focus group meeting in April 2008.

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About the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice

The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), a component of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, supports law enforcement, courts, corrections, treatment, victims services, technology, and prevention initiatives that strengthen the nation's criminal justice system. BJA provides leadership, services, and funding to America's communities by:

- emphasizing local control, based on the needs of the field;
- developing collaborations and partnerships;
- providing targeted training and technical assistance;
- promoting capacity building through planning;
- streamlining the administration of grants;
- creating accountability of projects;
- encouraging innovation; and
- communicating the value of justice efforts to decision makers at every level.

■ **Read more at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/.**

About the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, U.S. Department of Labor

The work of the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) stems from a simple conviction: Americans can do better for our neighbors in need when we draw upon the unique strengths of every willing partner.

CFBCI works collaboratively with DOL agencies to fulfill the Department's fundamental goal of creating a prepared and competitive, safe and secure American workforce. To accomplish this, CFBCI empowers faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) that help individuals in their communities prepare for, enter, and thrive in the workforce. CFBCI's goal is to help more Americans overcome barriers to employment, find jobs, and advance in employment through the unique work of local FBCOs. To accomplish this goal, DOL has increased collaboration with both faith- and community-based nonprofit organizations that are trusted institutions providing valuable services, regardless of whether they have a history of partnering with government.

Specifically, CFBCI works to remove administrative and regulatory barriers to FBCO participation in DOL grant programs. It also shapes DOL's community outreach and grant-making policies to utilize the strengths of FBCOs and the role they play in their communities. CFBCI works with various DOL agencies to foster innovative partnerships between DOL-funded programs and FBCOs. Further, CFBCI educates FBCOs about local opportunities to collaborate with government and about opportunities to participate in Federal grant programs. CFBCI also works with public workforce system administrators and staff to integrate FBCOs into their strategic planning and service delivery process.

■ **Read more at www.dol.gov/cfbci/.**

About the Council of State Governments Justice Center

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization serving policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. The CSG Justice Center provides practical, nonpartisan advice and consensus-driven strategies, informed by available evidence, to increase public safety and strengthen communities.

■ **Read more at www.justicecenter.csg.org.**

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