



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

NATIONAL REENTRY WEEK

AFTER ACTION REPORT

NATIONAL REENTRY WEEK: AFTER ACTION REPORT

April 24 – April 30, 2016

OVERVIEW

During the inaugural National Reentry Week, the Department of Justice sponsored over 550 events designed to improve reentry outcomes and raise awareness of the importance of successful reentry. U.S. Attorney's Offices alone hosted over 200 events, and Bureau of Prisons facilities held more than 370 events. Our partners across the federal government also held events, as did state, local, and nonprofit agencies across the country. Events took place in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Leaders from across the Administration traveled during National Reentry Week in support of these many events and encouraged federal partners and grantees to work closely with stakeholders like Federal Defenders, legal aid providers, and other organizations to increase the impact of this effort. We made full use of the media to further the public awareness campaign: Department representatives granted media interviews, issued press releases, published op-ed articles, posted blog entries, tweeted (#reentryweek), and attended live-streamed events. For example:

- Over 75 **resource fairs** connected individuals with housing, legal aid, community-based reentry services and other vital resources. Many fairs gave people an opportunity to reinstate a driver's license or obtain an identification card in preparation for a successful transition to society. There were also opportunities to learn more about public benefits, including Medicaid, Social Security, and veteran's benefits.



Attorney General Loretta Lynch and HUD Secretary Julian Castro announce DOJ initiatives to promote reentry and HUD initiatives that support juveniles with criminal backgrounds who live in public housing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
Photo provided by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

- At over 65 **employment-related events**, recently-released individuals had the opportunity to connect with employers and job search resources. Many Bureau of Prisons facilities hosted mock interview sessions, resume workshops, and workshops on financial literacy.
- Over 75 **reentry presentations** were made to inmates and reentering individuals on the barriers they may face upon reentry. Presentations were made both by community representatives and those who have reintegrated successfully.
- Over 35 **family-related events** provided individuals with information that will assist them with their release, including key information on child support modifications. At many of these events, inmates were able to engage and interact with their children through arts and crafts, board games, poetry slams, puzzles, and other family-building activities.

- Over 30 *stakeholder meetings* brought together all parties that have a stake in the reentry process (e.g., courts, probation, public defenders, prosecutors, community groups, and legal aid). Discussion topics included employers’ concerns about hiring people that have been formerly incarcerated and ensuring that reentering individuals have the resources they need to be successful.
- Over 25 *graduation ceremonies* were held—from reentry court programs to GED and vocational training programs.
- During more than 25 *reentry simulations*, community partners experienced the real-life issues facing reentering individuals, focusing on such hurdles as job searching, drug testing, having a probation officer, dealing with outstanding warrants, and finding affordable housing.



*Department of Labor Secretary Tom Perez tours the Montgomery County Correctional Facility in Boyds, Maryland, to discuss educational programs promoting rehabilitation.
Photo provided by the Department of Labor*

The variety of events and announcements highlighted both the momentum behind reentry improvements and the diverse array of stakeholders that have a critical role in a person’s transition from incarceration back into the community.

HIGHLIGHTS

President Obama announced National Reentry Week in his [weekly address](#) on April 23, noting that “Good people from both sides of the aisle and across all sectors are coming together on this issue From businesses that are changing their hiring practices, to law enforcement that’s improving community policing, we’re seeing change.”

Federal Officials at Events Across the Nation

Attorney General Loretta Lynch and Secretary of Housing & Urban Development Julian Castro traveled to Philadelphia (April 25) to announce **new DOJ initiatives to promote reentry**, as well as **HUD initiatives that will support juveniles with criminal records who live in public housing**. They met with public housing advocates, legal service providers, and community leaders and announced new efforts to improve outcomes for justice-involved youth through Juvenile Reentry Assistance Program (JRAP) grants, developed by DOJ’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. At the event, **Attorney General Lynch released the *Roadmap to Reentry***—the Justice Department’s strategy to reduce recidivism through federal reentry reforms. This major reform package lays out a number of significant changes to how the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) prepares inmates for release, from their first day of incarceration to their first months of freedom. Among many other initiatives, the Roadmap outlines how BOP is working to strengthen job training opportunities, through programs like Federal Prison Industries, to ensure that released individuals are job-ready the day they leave prison.

AG Lynch sent a letter to all state governors calling on them to allow citizens returning from federal prisons to **exchange their federal BOP inmate ID card for a state-issued ID**, or to use BOP identification cards and release papers as supporting documentation when applying for a state-issued ID. As a practical matter, this basic step would standardize the current patchwork of state policies around providing returning citizens with identification and would eliminate one of the most common – and most harmful – barriers to reentry across the U.S. “But even more important,” said AG Lynch, “is the message that such a program would send to returning citizens: that they are welcome back into society; that their government is invested in their success; and that they can now – quite literally – exchange their old identity as a federal inmate for a fresh start.”



*Department of Education Secretary John King at a roundtable focused on the needs of children of currently or formerly incarcerated parents.
Benjamin Banneker High School in Washington, D.C.
Photo provided by the Department of Education*

Education Secretary John King hosted a roundtable at Benjamin Banneker High School in Washington, D.C. (April 25), focusing on the needs of children of parents who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated. During this event, Secretary King heard from students, educators, and other stakeholders and discussed how reentry affects families and a child’s education. The discussion was held as the U.S. Department of Education announced \$5.7 million in new grants targeted at assistance for students who have been involved in the criminal justice system and a new toolkit with resources for guidance educators to support

formerly incarcerated youth, adults, and their families.

Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates turned the focus on **women in the criminal justice system** (April 26). With BOP Acting Director Thomas Kane, DAG Yates toured Federal Prison Camp Bryan in the Houston metropolitan area. The tour included FPI production control data operations and call centers (including the new Reentry Hotline); the Residential Drug Abuse Program Unit; the Dental Apprenticeship and Cosmetology Programs; the visitation and video-conferencing area; and a roundtable with current inmates.

Later that day, DAG Yates gave remarks and took questions from the press during a tour of **Santa Maria Hostel in Houston**, a specialized residential substance abuse, mental health, and trauma treatment facility for women (and former Second Chance grantee). Her remarks focused on women in the criminal justice system, BOP family engagement initiatives, best practices for supporting children of incarcerated parents, and the BOP reentry hotline. “Assisting inmates in maintaining family relationships while they are in prison is not only good for the individuals returning from prison and their families, it’s good for the community as well, because when a person has a strong support system when they are released, they are less likely to re-offend,” said DAG Yates. “Doing everything we can to equip inmates to be



*Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates talking to inmates while on a tour of the Santa Maria Hostel in Houston, Texas.
Photo provided by the Department of Justice*

successful when they leave prison ... is one of the most important things we can do for the safety of our communities.”

Second Chance Fellow Daryl Atkinson delivered remarks at a reentry simulation in Birmingham, Alabama (April 26) sponsored by **U.S. Attorney Joyce Vance**. At this event, USAO personnel collaborated with reentry partners from federal, state, and local law enforcement and other government agencies, as well as medical providers, employers, and community service providers, to conduct a simulation game for local reentry stakeholders. Participants were asked to play the role of a returning citizen and were randomly given various realistic obstacles, such as lack of basic identification, transportation, family support, or housing. Participants included representatives from the U.S. District Court, BOP, HUD, ATF, FBI, DEA, U.S. Marshals, legal aid providers, community groups, and Second Chance Act grantees. State and local partners included the Alabama Department of Corrections, Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles, Jefferson County Community Corrections, Jefferson County Courts, Birmingham Police Department, Jefferson County District Attorney, and Jefferson County Public Defender.



Attorney General Loretta Lynch speaks to Bureau of Prisons staff on initiatives to promote reentry in Talladega, Alabama. Photo provided by the Department of Justice

In New Jersey, U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman hosted a ReNew Court graduation ceremony with Senator Cory Booker, and a resource and employment fair that brought together employers and returning individuals seeking employment. The District of New Jersey (DNJ) launched its first **“#reentrytuesday” Twitter campaign** during Reentry Week. Beginning on April 26, and each Tuesday thereafter, DNJ will tweet information about reentry resources, employment, or other topics of interest to the public to show the District’s commitment to reentry. Also during Reentry

Week, the DNJ, in collaboration with the U.S. District Court, U.S. Probation, and Essex County College, hosted a **“Reentry Technology Seminar,”** for individuals whose terms of incarceration prevented them from becoming fully acclimated and comfortable with technology. The seminar covered basic computer and internet skills, smartphone usage, and how technology can be a positive vehicle to propel the lives of reentrants forward.

On April 27, the **White House hosted the Fair Chance Opportunities Champions of Change Event**. AG Lynch gave opening remarks and DAG Yates moderated a panel discussion. In her remarks, AG Lynch noted, “The changes these champions we honor today have wrought are indeed borne out in the jobs created, the work done, the lives affected. But that change is borne in something deeper and more fundamental—in their choosing to see the person behind the label, the man or woman behind the prison number.”

Senior Advisor to the President Valerie Jarrett, Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason, and Washington D.C. U.S. Attorney Channing Phillips attended the monthly meeting of a **mentoring program for girls** (April 28) at The Youth Services Center, a secure residential facility for detained male and female youth awaiting adjudication and disposition by the courts.

Approximately 25 girls attend these bi-monthly mentoring sessions, which provide information on domestic violence, human trafficking, safe parenting choices, and how to interact with law enforcement. That evening, AAG Mason joined Acting Associate Attorney General Bill Baer at a reentry event at **Washington’s Central Union Mission**, also sponsored by USA Phillips.



*Senior Advisor to the President Valerie Jarrett and Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason of the Justice Department’s Office of Justice Programs attend monthly meeting of a mentoring group for girls with U.S. Attorney Channing Phillips at the Youth Services Center in Washington, D.C.
Photo provided by the Department of Justice*

Warden Angela M. Owens of BOP’s Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago hosted a **“Fathers Empowering their Sons and Daughters”** event for children of incarcerated parents, featuring Dr. Kirk E. Harris, CEO of Fathers, Families, and Healthy Communities, that included story readings, craft tables, face painting, waffle making, and other activities designed to strengthen family relationships during incarceration.

U.S. Attorney William Ihlenfeld of the Northern District of West Virginia (NDWV) and FCI Hazelton Acting Warden David R. Wilson, USP Hazelton Warden Joe Coakley, FCI Gilmer Warden Jennifer Saad, FCI Morgantown Warden Barbara von Banckensee, and FPC Alderson Warden Barbara Rickard hosted several events (April 25-27) featuring **Eugene Brown**, former federal inmate and **founder of the Big Chair Chess Club** and the **“Think Before You Move Prison Chess Program.”**

Acting U.S. Attorney Ben Glassman of the Southern District of Ohio hosted a “Returning Citizens Summit” (April 26) in the Cincinnati Reds Clubhouse that included resources and workshops on reentry and was attended by business leaders and several federal judges. USA Glassman also announced that event co-host Deanna Hoskins, director of Hamilton County’s Office of Reentry, would soon be joining DOJ as BJA’s new senior advisor for corrections and reentry.

In Pittsburgh, PA (April 22), the **Allegheny County Anchored Re-Entry Consortium**, along with **U.S. Attorney David Hickton**, Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto, and Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, welcomed 200 business leaders, elected officials, and heads of nonprofits to the Business Leaders’ Summit: Reentrants Work!—an event focused on encouraging employers to hire people with criminal records.

In **Boston**, several federal agencies co-hosted an **“Employer Information Summit”** (April 28). Business leaders and policymakers learned about vocational training provided to inmates while in federal custody and how such training can provide returning citizens with valuable experience and specific job skills. Representatives from U.S. Probation discussed resources that help returning citizens find jobs, and the Department of Labor’s Employment & Training Administration discussed grant programs that provide job training and placement, tax benefits for employers that hire returning citizens, and the Federal Bonding Program. “The Department of Justice plays a critical role in reducing recidivism,” said **U.S. Attorney Carmen M. Ortiz**. “We need to prepare individuals who have served prison sentences to reenter their communities and the workforce so that they can contribute in positive ways.”



Attorney General Loretta Lynch meets with inmates at the Bureau of Prisons facility in Talladega, Alabama.
Photo provided by the Department of Justice

Director Lisa Foster of the Office for Access Justice (ATJ) held a joint event in Los Angeles (April 25) with the **Department of Housing and Urban Development** to amplify JRAP grants—new efforts to improve outcomes for justice-involved youth—and attended a Conviction and Sentence Alternatives (CASA) Program Graduation Ceremony. In her remarks to the graduates, Director Foster said, “Our failure to provide opportunities to reentering individuals – particularly young people – is an enormous waste of human potential, and a betrayal of the principles of equality and opportunity that make this country strong. ... These grants will help hundreds of young

people clean their records and access needed legal services so that they can truly have a second chance in life.”

Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) Principal Deputy Director Bea Hanson traveled to Federal Prison Camp Alderson in West Virginia (April 29) with colleagues from OVW and BOP, as well as the White House Advisor on Violence Against Women, Carrie Bettinger-Lopez. They learned about the prison’s trauma and drug treatment programs, as well as vocational training programs that provide women with skills for employment post-release. They met with survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and child sexual abuse and heard about their experiences of victimization prior to incarceration, as well as their need for support and programming while incarcerated and during reentry.

Small Business Administrator Maria Contreras–Sweet delivered speeches before and after National Reentry Week that focused on millennial entrepreneurs and reentry efforts. “One of the great civil rights challenges of our time is the number of people we send to jail, and the lack of job opportunities available to them when they get out. In this way, America’s mass incarceration is also a mass unemployment problem. When someone serves their time, it means they’ve paid their debt to society in the eyes of the law. Yet for most returning citizens, that first day of freedom becomes the first day of a life sentence of unemployment or low-wage work. One out of three American adults has a criminal record. It’s in everyone’s best interests to help them reintegrate and become productive members of society.”

To mark the end of Reentry Week, **AG Lynch visited the Federal Correctional Institute in Talladega, Alabama** (April 29) where she spoke with staff and inmates involved in the facility’s job-training and educational initiatives. At an event hosted by U.S. Attorney Kenyen Brown, AG Lynch singled out the accomplishments of those who prepare citizens for release and reentry, giving people the skills they need to build a future, and “helping inmates find the men they were meant to be[.]” “I commend you for doing your part to create a more just and equal nation,” she said, “and I want to thank you for setting such an inspiring example.”

Events Hosted by Agencies of the Reentry Council

The **Department of Veterans Affairs'** medical center staff participated in 120 events held at Bureau of Prisons facilities, state prisons, local jails, local courts, VA medical centers and US Attorney's offices. These events include roundtable discussions, job fairs and mock interview programs, which help to address the real needs of individuals reentering their communities after incarceration.

The **Department of Labor** hosted several reentry film screenings and panels, as well as a DOL 50th Anniversary of the Federal Bonding Program, recognizing trailblazers in the field and sharing promising practices for promoting bonds. DAG Yates spoke at the Federal Bonding event.

The **Department of Health and Human Services** hosted several screenings and panels focused on prisoner reentry. The HHS Office of Child Support Enforcement hosted a pre-screening of the documentary [The Return](#), a panel with DOJ participation, a viewing of [Mothers of Bedford](#) (co-hosted with HHS-ASPE), and a [book drive](#) for prisoners. They also issued the Fair Chance Business Pledge "call to action" to the thousands of employers nationwide with which they have long-standing relationships for their role in payroll deductions of child support payments. And they reached out to state child support directors with a call to action on reentry, stating, "Children and families experience significant losses during a family member's incarceration, such as the loss of wage-earning household members, parenting partners, sources of emotional support, and more... Family-self-sufficiency and economic stability depends on regular payment of child support, and regular payment depends on a steady job. Children also need parents who love them and cooperate with each other to care for them. It is incumbent upon us to do what we can to serve all the families we touch equally and with respect."

"We must ensure that our returning brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers—our fellow Americans—can truly return home."

—Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch

[Justice.gov/reentry](https://www.justice.gov/reentry) #ReentryWeek

The **Department of Housing and Urban Development** hosted a webinar with DOJ, the Shriver Center, and the Vera Institute of Justice. Over 2000 people registered for the webinar, *Protecting the Fair Housing Rights of People with Criminal Records*.

Court Services and Offender Supervision

Office and DOJ's Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships held a forum, *Successful Reentry through Collaboration with the Community: A Convening of Faith-Based Leaders and Reentry Practitioners*.

Notable State and Local Executive Actions

Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe signed an [executive order](#) to restore voting rights to more than 200,000 persons who had been convicted of felonies in Virginia.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti launched the [Blue Ribbon Commission](#) on Employment Equity to "build on the work of the Mayor's Office of Reentry. Mayor Garcetti established the office last year to help formerly incarcerated Angelenos find stability, resources, employment, housing and reunification with their families—with the goal of reversing the cycle of long-term unemployment, instability and displacement." Mayor Garcetti also signed the Equitable Workforce and Service Restoration Executive Directive to remove barriers to employment faced by disconnected workers

in transition—including those who have been unsheltered, veterans, at-risk youth, and individuals with criminal records.

Washington Governor Jay Inslee signed an [executive order](#) directing state agencies to better support the successful transition of people leaving prison and returning to their communities. Inslee was joined by community leaders and formerly incarcerated people at the signing at FareStart in Seattle, as well as by **Director Lisa Foster of the DOJ’s Office for Access to Justice**. Director Foster also attended an Outstanding Warrants Working Group organized by the U.S. Attorney Office.

In Newark, **New Jersey Governor Chris Christie** visited the **Greater Newark Conservancy**, which is part of the New Jersey Reentry Corporation, a nonprofit working to remove barriers to employment for people returning from jails and prisons. The visit was part of a larger push from Governor Christie to implement a one-stop model for connecting people leaving incarceration with comprehensive services.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEW RESOURCES

- President Obama signed a [Presidential Memorandum](#) to Promote Rehabilitation and



*Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates speaks at the Department of Labor’s 50th Anniversary of the Federal Bonding Program
Photo provided by the Department of Justice*

Reintegration of Formerly Incarcerated Individuals. The Presidential Memorandum codifies the Federal Interagency Reentry Council and provides guidance regarding the use of criminal history information when evaluating federal employment and occupational licensing applicants. A [White House Fact Sheet](#) on reentry was also released, announcing new commitments to the Fair Chance Business Pledge.

- The [Office of Personnel Management](#) published the proposed “Ban the Box” rule in the [Federal Register](#). The rule establishes the federal government policy of assessing an applicant’s criminal history only after a conditional offer has

been extended, with some exceptions.

- The Department of Justice released the [Roadmap to Reentry: Reducing Recidivism through Reentry Reforms at the Federal Bureau of Prisons](#), a publication identifying five evidence-based principles guiding federal efforts to improve the correctional practices and programs that govern the lives of those who will reenter society after incarceration.
- AG Loretta Lynch sent a [letter to all state governors](#) calling on them to accept the Bureau of Prisons identification card as a predicate for state-issued photo identification cards upon release. The BJA-funded National Reentry Resource Center released [State Identification: Reentry Strategies for State and Local Policymakers](#)—a fact sheet designed to educate policymakers on the impact of, and models for, issuing state identification for people leaving prisons and jails across the country.

- The White House Council of Economic Advisors released the [Report on Economic Perspectives on Incarceration and the Criminal Justice System](#).
- DOJ released a [Fact Sheet](#) on the Reentry Council.
- BOP released [Reentering Your Community](#), a handbook to help guide people being released from jails and prisons through the reentry process. DOJ also released a [Fact Sheet](#) on the BOP's Reentry Programs.



*Attorney General Loretta Lynch speaks with inmates at a roundtable to learn about their experiences these programs and services for reentry.
Photo provided by the Department of Justice*

- The Department of Health and Human Services released [Medicaid Guidance for Individuals Involved in the Criminal Justice System and The Importance of Medicaid Coverage for Criminal Justice Involved Individuals Reentering Their Communities](#)
- The DOJ and Department of Health and Human Services released three tip sheets focused on providing practical information to support children who have parents in the criminal justice system. The series includes: [Tips for Incarcerated Parents](#), [Tips for Correctional Staff and Volunteers](#), and [Tips for Mentors](#).
- The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission released [Criminal Records & Your Job Rights](#).
- The National Institute of Corrections released [Reentry Tip Sheets for Women](#).
- The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau released [For Individuals in the Criminal Justice System: Identify Theft and Fraud Protection Tips](#), to help individuals in the criminal justice system protect their credit and prevent identity theft and other fraudulent use of their accounts while incarcerated.
- The US Interagency Council on Homelessness released a [tip sheet](#), “Connecting People Returning from Incarceration with Housing and Homelessness Assistance”

OP-EDS/BLOGS

- AG Loretta Lynch: Op-ed on the collateral consequences of incarceration describing how the Administration is taking a leadership role to reduce unfair barriers for returning citizens (cross-posted to *USA Today*). <https://www.justice.gov/opa/blog/remove-roadblocks-faced-former-prisoners-re-entering-society>

- AAG Karol Mason: Blog on discontinuing use of stigmatizing language to refer to people who are formerly incarcerated (*e.g.*, ex-offender, criminal, felon) in the *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/true-crime/wp/2016/05/04/guest-post-justice-dept-to-alter-its-terminology-for-released-convicts-to-ease-reentry/>
- AAG Karol Mason: Blog with Secretary of Education John King on education and reentry. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/blog/closing-opportunity-gap-america-s-young-people>
- AAG Karol Mason: Blog with HHS's Nadine Gracia on bridging opportunity gaps: <http://ojp.gov/ojpblog/reentry-bridging-gaps.htm>
- OVW Principal Deputy Director Bea Hanson: Blog on services for victims and survivors. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/blog/strengthening-communities-and-supporting-survivors-reentry>
- OJP Fellows Daryl Atkinson/Heather Warnken: Blog on connection between victimization and crime. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/blog/working-together-prevent-cycles-harm>
- Second Chance Fellow Daryl Atkinson: Blog on reentry on TalkPoverty.org. <https://talkpoverty.org/2016/04/26/from-the-criminal-justice-system-to-the-department-of-justice/>
- Office of Personnel Management: Blog on proposed "Ban the Box" rule. <https://www.opm.gov/blogs/Director/2016/4/29/Banning-the-Box-in-Federal-Hiring/>
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: Blog on protecting one's credit and identity while involved in the criminal justice system. <http://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/protecting-ones-credit-while-criminal-justice-system/>
- Social Security Administration: Blog on prerelease arrangements for social security benefits. <http://blog.ssa.gov/social-security-national-reentry-week-april-24th-30th/>
- Department of Veterans Affairs: Blog on helping veterans involved with the justice system access [VA health care](#) and other services that can increase the likelihood of a successful reentry. <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/27222/national-reentry-week/>



*Reentry Week event in Pasadena, Texas.
Photo provided by the Department of Justice*