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# Prisoner Reentry Services in New Jersey: A Plan to Reduce Recidivism

**Prepared for**  
The Office of the Governor  
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## **I. Current Services for Ex-Offenders: Agencies, Expenditures, and Outcomes**

By some measures, recent years have seen major improvement in New Jersey's corrections and parole systems and, by extension, in the effectiveness of those other agencies in state government that serve incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. For instance, commonsense but innovative changes in the terms of parole—such as the reduction in the use of technical but non-dangerous parole violations to trigger a return to incarceration—have significantly reduced the state's total prison population.<sup>1</sup> Between 2000 and 2009, the number of inmates in New Jersey Department of Corrections facilities fell by 15 percent—from 29,784 to 25,436.<sup>2</sup>

But this nominally good news is countered by some disturbing trends. First, incarceration rates have reached a plateau and are no longer decreasing. Annually, according to Department of Corrections estimates, some 12,000 individuals—or half the total 24,808 prison population—exit state prison.<sup>3</sup> An equal number, however, are *entering* state prisons,<sup>4</sup> leaving total population unchanged and making reductions in either the number of correctional facilities or their staff levels elusive—at a time when the state faces a daunting budget deficit. Second, recidivism rates remain high: Department of Corrections officials report that more than 57 percent of those who are released from prison are rearrested within three years,<sup>5</sup> bringing into question the effectiveness of programs serving the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated to help break cycles of crime and incarceration. Third, the public pays dearly for these programs. Criminal-justice spending contributes significantly to an upward pressure on the state

budget; in the 2011 fiscal cycle, New Jersey will spend over \$2 billion of its \$28.3 billion budget, or nearly 10 percent, on public safety and criminal justice.<sup>6</sup> The \$1 billion budget for the Department of Corrections makes it the state's single largest operating agency.<sup>7</sup>

The extensive current expenditures of state agencies go well beyond the Department of Corrections. Currently, the state parole board spends about \$100 million<sup>8</sup> to oversee those 58 percent of newly released offenders in its purview.<sup>9</sup> Other state agencies—including the Departments of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD), Corrections (DOC), Human Services (DHS), and Law and Public Safety—spend an additional \$180 million on (approximately) fifty-five distinct programs designed to help individuals returning to their communities after time in prison. (This figure includes federal, as well as private philanthropic, grants, which complement state appropriations.)<sup>10</sup> For example, the Department of Human Services budget includes \$59,290,281<sup>11</sup> for such directly targeted efforts and \$29 million for the state's "drug court,"<sup>12</sup> a program designed to divert from imprisonment those nonviolent offenders with substance-abuse problems who agree to enter and complete treatment programs.

Given this significant level of effort, the question must then be asked: Why is recidivism—with all its implications for crime rates and continued high levels of corrections costs—so high, notwithstanding significant efforts on behalf of those who "recidivate"?

The state puts forth an enormous effort into solving the difficulties in assisting this population group. The DOC reports that in 2010, 32 percent of state inmates had at least one diagnosed chronic or communicable physical or mental-health condition.<sup>13</sup> While estimates vary, at least 50 percent of individuals coming out of prison have substance-abuse issues.<sup>14</sup> Individuals leaving prison have an average sixth-grade reading

level and fifth-grade math level, while 67 percent have no GED or high school diploma.<sup>15</sup> Since the median length of a prison term is five years, individuals have, at the minimum, a large gap in their work histories and, at worst, no extensive formal work experience.<sup>16</sup> Even with experience or education, these individuals return to communities characterized by limited economic and work opportunities. A 2002 study found that one-third of released individuals return to Essex or Camden Counties, with a high percentage returning to (mostly minority communities in) Newark and Camden city.<sup>17</sup> “The residents of Essex and Camden counties, and particularly those of the cities of Newark and Camden, face many economic and social disadvantages compared to many other parts of the state. The statewide median household income is \$55,146. For the cities of Newark and Camden, however, it is \$26,913 and \$23,421, respectively.”<sup>18</sup> According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, New Jersey had an unemployment rate of 9.1 percent in December 2010.<sup>19</sup> The rate in Newark in November 2010, the most recent data available, was reported at 14.5 percent.<sup>20</sup>

Further, once released, these individuals also face legal barriers such as barriers to enrolling in education to make themselves more competitive in the workplace,<sup>21</sup> barriers to working in many professions,<sup>22</sup> and difficulties in obtaining public benefits,<sup>23</sup> including housing.<sup>24</sup> Importantly, due to certain state policies and laws, they also face disincentives to seek, accept, and retain employment because of their time in prison. DHS officials estimate that more than half of individuals in state prison have child-support obligations that accrue to an average of \$7,000 per court order while in prison.<sup>25</sup> An analysis of a sample of New Jersey prisons found that about 58 percent of inmates self-identified as having children,<sup>26</sup> and 33,232 individuals who currently have child-support orders were or are currently in jail or prison.<sup>27</sup> According to the Department of Human

Services, Office of Child Support, 30 to 40 percent of individuals have more than one order.<sup>28</sup> For most, especially those without prospects for high-wage employment, this is a daunting amount of debt.

That debt can be a disincentive to work in the formal economy because up to 65 percent of an individual's wages can be garnished to pay this debt.<sup>29</sup> And this debt can create practical barriers such as driver's license revocations<sup>30</sup> for failure to pay.<sup>31</sup> The state issued about 22,000 warrants in 2009, out of a statewide total of 152,870 noncustodial parents who failed to appear in court or failed to pay child support.<sup>32</sup> Of that same number, as of September 23, 2010, 24,403 noncomplying parents had their licenses revoked, a number that directly correlates to the number of warrants issued.<sup>33</sup>

Such barriers notwithstanding, a review of current procedures and relationships among state agencies charged with improving the life prospects of formerly incarcerated individuals suggests the need for change. What emerges is a complex but disconnected reentry system with no centralized definitions and mission, a lack of accountability for outcomes and a lack of coordination, with potential duplication of services and no continuity between services provided in prison, during supervised release, and in the community.

Significant sums are expended by the Department of Corrections to prepare prisoners to succeed upon release. For example, the Department of Corrections spends \$31 million on community assessment centers<sup>34</sup> and other assessments of individuals in the criminal-justice system. The agency's largest reentry line items are the \$33.5 million it spends on Residential Community Release Programs, which offer inmates "the chance to reintegrate into the community through a structured, supervised residential program,"<sup>35</sup> and about \$20 million on in-prison educational programs.<sup>36</sup> The Department of

Corrections also tracks participation in (but not outcomes of) substance-abuse programs and its Successful Transition and Reentry Series, in which inmates meet twice a week for thirteen weeks to discuss barriers to reentry.<sup>37</sup>

These programs are promising. Yet it is not at all clear that these relatively elaborate efforts are linked to extensive, and expensive, post-release services. To some extent, those who provide such services must rely on ex-offenders themselves for information necessary for the continuity of care; upon release, individuals are provided information about their progress in programs in a folder, including a hard-copy report and an electronic diskette.<sup>38</sup> This is not the same, of course, as clear and ongoing links, including electronic data sharing, between the Department of Corrections and post-release agencies.

The Department of Corrections provides parole access to prerelease plans, and parole uses that information to develop its own reentry plans. However, parole reports gaps in the sharing and retrieval of certain electronic information.<sup>39</sup> This is a significant matter because of the centrality of parole in the oversight of ex-offenders. Some 58 percent of the 10,937 individuals released from state prison in 2010, or 6,421, were transferred to the New Jersey State Parole Board for parole supervision.<sup>40</sup> The official goals of such supervision are worth emphasizing: supervision is designed to ensure recently released individuals' "successful reentry into society as productive, law-abiding citizens," and, with that goal in mind, parole officers are charged with designing a needs-based plan and accordingly refer parolees,<sup>41</sup> often to programs within its Division of Community Programs (DCP). Moreover, under the legislation passed in 2010, even more inmates will be released to parole in the future.<sup>42</sup>

With its central role in overseeing the transition of many inmates back into the community, more than 40 percent of parole's nearly \$100 million budget—or \$42,986,633—is classified as reentry spending.<sup>43</sup> This spending is for such contracted programs as the Stages to Enhance Parole Success (STEPS) (\$18 million), a comprehensive community-based residential programs offering life-skills development, substance-abuse counseling, job-readiness skills, employment counseling, housing-placement assistance, and transitional support services,<sup>44</sup> and Community Resource Centers (CRC) (\$11 million),<sup>45</sup> which provide similar services but do not include a residential component. Seamless coordination with the Department of Corrections is key to the successful assistance of former inmates.

Crucially, however, there is no established, routinized procedure such that the results of DOC's assessments, certifications, and vital background information are distributed to service providers and state agencies—those who will actually interact directly with inmates, subsequent to release. These include agencies other than parole, of course—including LWD, the Department of Law and Public Safety, and DHS.

LWD's employment-services programs known as "one-stop" centers (which are funded, in part, with federal appropriations authorized through the Workforce Investment Act) are meant to be a primary resource for the state's job seekers. In Program Year 2009, New Jersey's one-stops served 3,921 self-declared ex-offenders, for an estimated reentry spending of \$980,250.<sup>46</sup> LWD reports that between FY2007 and FY2009, 14,112 individuals self-identified as ex-offenders were served.<sup>47</sup> Parole notes that it does not have, but would benefit from, access to labor unemployment insurance data and a stronger relationship to one-stops and, ultimately, LWD.<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, there is no established link in terms of sharing results of individuals' use of services between parole and the Department of Law and Public Safety, which spends \$21,764,733 on mental-health-related and other reentry-oriented programs.<sup>49</sup> Further, while the Department of Law and Public Safety, Office of the Attorney General, currently houses a state director of community justice, whose portfolio includes reentry programs, the effort is not well funded or staffed, and other agencies report that they do not understand the office's work in the context of their own mission and day-to-day duties.<sup>50</sup>

Promising links exist among DHS, DOC, and parole. For example, the Office of Child Support, in partnership with DOC, helps operate the Responsible Parenting Program (RPP), which helps inmates begin the process of applying for a suspension of child-support commitments (where appropriate) and provides programming to support the practice of developing parenting skills to increase greater family reunification. The Mutual Agreement Program (MAP) began as a collaboration among DHS, parole, and DOC and provides residential substance-abuse treatment programs for parolees. Program for Returning Offenders with Mental Illness Safely and Efficiently (PROMISE) is a collaborative program with parole to assist parolees with mental-health matters. DHS's Division of Addiction Services (DAS) supports the drug courts by developing a provider network of drug-treatment professionals and services and providing oversight of that network. And community mental-health services and supportive housing services are available to formerly incarcerated individuals.

Yet as improvements may be needed in linkages among DOC, parole, LWD, and DHS in efforts to improve the prospects of formerly incarcerated individuals, an even more serious problem overhangs the state's reentry efforts: the lack of a clear definition

of success in this area and methods to hold accountable those overseeing and delivering services to recently released inmates. LWD's one-stop centers, for instance, notwithstanding their central role in helping ex-offenders obtain employment, currently do not have a distinct numerical statewide goal in this area toward which to strive, nor do they track the trajectory of ex-offenders as a distinct group on an ongoing basis.<sup>51</sup> This is an especially notable vacuum in light of the fact that those thousands of ex-offenders released after having completed their full sentences ("maxed-out") and thus not under the supervision of parole, might only avail themselves of these services among the many offered by the state. Crucially, even parole, the primary reentry agency, understands its goal for ex-offenders to be their completion of specific steps (job search, enrollment in substance-abuse programs), rather than attaining clear outcomes of long-term success.<sup>52</sup> For instance, parole does not track initial employment and retention, nor do parole officers have incentives to improve such results.<sup>53</sup>

Notwithstanding the above-identified problems that characterize the state's current efforts directed at ex-offenders, there does appear to be a foundation of success on which to build. Recently released inmates are seeking out services—and some are finding employment as a result. Of those ex-offenders served by one-stops, the entered employment rate was 39 percent (although just 22 percent of the total individuals served retained employment for one day in the second or third quarter after placement).<sup>54</sup> Similarly, over the course of 2.5 years starting in the spring of 2007, the state operated Another Chance, a program designed to utilize educational programming during incarceration and the existing one-stop system to serve the needs of individuals involved in the criminal-justice system.<sup>55</sup> This program similarly saw a second- or third-quarter job-retention rate of 23 percent for the 695 individuals served in the program.<sup>56</sup> Most

notably, the Newark Prisoner Reentry Initiative (NPRI), an effort orchestrated by city government in Newark through a combination of federal and philanthropic funds, has, in the past two years, served 1,300 individuals, 70 percent of whom maintained employment for the second and third quarters following exit and fewer than 10 percent of whom have, to date, returned to prison. This initiative is described more fully below.

It is the central view of this paper that these rates can be markedly improved through management strategies, risk-based and criminogenic needs-based programs, and performance-based contracts. The proposals that follow are consistent with, but expand on, recommendations made in a series of previous reports for state government on this matter.

## **II. Previous Proposals for Reentry Reform in New Jersey**

Research has previously been done, and proposals have been made in an attempt to identify a model to better manage and orient reentry spending to reduce recidivism in New Jersey. In each of these reports—the Homeland Security Task Force,<sup>57</sup> the GEAR Commission,<sup>58</sup> and the New Jersey Reentry Roundtable<sup>59</sup>—the basic elements identified as lacking were significant and similar to those being emphasized in this paper.

Recommendations made in those reports include: adopting demonstrably effective programs; increased effectiveness of agencies and programs through, among other things, cross-agency collaboration; defining reentry to include spending and programs targeted to individuals inside prison; and improving access to employment services for inmates as well as formerly incarcerated individuals. The recommended structure below builds on this precedent and proposes a performance-management structure to hold the state accountable for reducing recidivism through its reentry spending. The structure also

proposes to orient these programs toward rapid attachment of individuals to work—because of the importance of work as a goal and means of integration into the socioeconomic mainstream and because employment is a readily measured goal for which agencies can then be held accountable.

### **III. Toward a New Model of Reentry Management Accountable for Reducing Recidivism and Increasing Employment**

Under the management structure proposed in this paper, one of the many state agencies that currently have a hand in reentry would become the central, or lead, agency. The parole board would manage a network of service providers for recently released inmates; those providers would deliver, at the request of parole officials, a full range of services: assessment, case management, preparation for employment (job readiness), job placement, and job-retention services. These service providers would regularly and routinely input data about participants (the formerly incarcerated individuals themselves) into a universal data system coordinated by the New Jersey Office of Information Technology (OIT). The data would be tracked regularly by parole, evaluated for outcomes, and provide the basis for regular reports to the Office of the Governor. Parole would be charged with directing resources to the best-performing service providers, and the Office of the Governor would coordinate a common vision among the state's administrative agencies, ensuring that state spending and programs would be designed to meet the specific outcomes of recidivism reduction and increased workforce participation. This model, moreover, already exists in one New Jersey community that is home to many returning from state prisons—and has proved effective.

This report proposes that, to address the challenges discussed above, reentry planning, spending, and oversight need to be managed centrally, while building on the foundation of the good current procedures, programs, and services. This report draws inspiration from an initiative mounted over the past two years in Newark. That city, like the state in general, had had the same kind of splintered system comprising dozens of unaccountable reentry programs funded through many streams, including state, county, municipal, and private funding.<sup>60</sup> The city created an Office of Reentry, housed within Mayor Cory A. Booker's Department of Economic and Housing Development. The office, with funding from the United States Department of Labor and private donations, launched a program—the Newark Prisoner Reentry Initiative (NPRI)—that changed the way a core set of service providers in Newark operated, with promising results. The NPRI, which has served more than 1,300 individuals (many of whom, in a city/state coordinated effort, have been referred by parole) and has achieved results notably better than the state's norm. The one-year recidivism rate<sup>61</sup> for program participants is, to date, lower than 10 percent; and their six-month job-retention rate stands at 70 percent.<sup>62</sup> Such outcomes suggest that the NPRI can offer a model for change in the state-level reentry management structure.

The NPRI emphasizes rapid attachment to work and supports job placement and retention through intensive case management and mentoring.<sup>63</sup> The staff believes that success derives from regularly gathering data about the effectiveness of service providers and establishing a management structure that allows it to take action in response to what it learns from such data.<sup>64</sup> The city's Office of Reentry—among other things—directly manages the oversight and sets expectations for the service providers. In order to manage in such a way as to improve results, the office established a clear definition for successful

reentry: gaining and retaining employment and avoiding rearrest and re-incarceration. With these clear “metrics” (as opposed to participation in programs or provision of services such as housing or drug treatment), the office was then able to use “strategic contracting”—withholding a portion of the overall contract amount until key benchmarks for job placement, retention, wages, and recidivism were met and steering additional clients toward those agencies, among a group of six, that showed the best results. The office also provided ongoing advice and support for agencies seeking to improve their performance. It is important to note that these agencies do not rely exclusively on public funds; in the Newark model, public dollars have been complemented by funds provided by private philanthropy. This approach allows individual agencies to be able, potentially, to report better results with fewer public funds—an arrangement that could, over time, help reduce public expenditures.

All agencies must routinely report the status, in a comprehensive database, of those whom they are serving. That information, compiled and reviewed by the Office of Reentry, the lead in managing reentry data, regularly reviews (on a monthly basis, and more frequently, when benchmarks are not being met) performance with service providers. The Office of Reentry takes action based on that information, signaling to those providing services for ex-offenders whether they are doing a good job.

The NPRI was funded primarily through a one-time federal grant, as well as private philanthropic investments—and, in effect, created a largely parallel, complementary reentry system to that operated by the state. Although the City of Newark has been successful in obtaining funding to continue some of its programming, the long-term sustainability of a program that relies solely on grants is questionable. Because it combines public and private funds (as noted above), it does appear to provide a

promising model for how the state can manage and control its ongoing, regularly budgeted reentry spending. The goal of adopting a Newark-style approach is not to increase state reentry spending but to improve the effectiveness of the hundreds of millions of dollars that the state regularly spends each year. What follows are more details on the Newark model.

### *Work First*

The NPRI has found that reentering individuals need—and regularly express (including directly to Mayor Booker) a desire for—employment upon release. But as discussed in Section I above, they face barriers to finding and maintaining employment. Despite these barriers, focusing on results and holding agencies accountable to assist formerly incarcerated individuals rapidly obtain—and keep—work has been successful in reducing recidivism. In the view of this paper, that should be the focus of reentry programs. A paycheck provides individuals with a way to pay for necessities, as well as key intangibles: dignity and hope. Moreover, a focus on the specific, tangible goal of seeking work helps organize the range of services to which ex-offenders may be exposed—and is likely to benefit even those who do not immediately find a job. Preliminary results with the NPRI, as well as studies by MDRC and Public/Private Ventures<sup>65</sup> regarding a similar approach, provide empirical support for this model. Finding individuals unsubsidized permanent employment may be more challenging in difficult economic climates, but this model uses the means of unsubsidized employment, where possible, as a springboard for addressing a variety of other reentry issues such as housing, legal assistance, substance abuse, health care, and mental-health care, rather than seeking to resolve these issues prior to an individual seeking employment. Central to this approach is individually

focused “case management”<sup>66</sup> designed to ensure that the particular situation of each participant is considered by the agency responsible, such that progress is made in overcoming employment barriers, obtaining permanent employment, and successfully reentering community life. When combined with a strategy to address and remove disincentives to rejoining the socioeconomic mainstream (such as child-support debt), case management focused on employment helps individuals reunite with and support their families.

### *The New Management Structure*

An opportunity exists for the Office of the Governor to manage the state’s current reentry spending to achieve measurably improved outcomes without additional costs by vigilantly focusing on the policy goal of reducing recidivism and rapidly attaching individuals to work. The state reentry system for individuals returning to their communities from state prison should be managed through a lead state agency, with the Office of the Governor providing policy direction and oversight. This report envisions parole, with reporting responsibilities directly to the Office of the Governor, at the center of a social-services network such that officers in each major region of the state will be aware of employment placement and other social services available in those regions; have access and use regularly updated information as to which of such providers perform best; and have the flexibility to direct clients and, over time, to direct state social-services funds to those agencies and service providers that do the best job, as defined by the above description of successfully reentry. Parole’s oversight, authority, and responsibility for statewide reentry would expand to reentry spending and programs for all individuals released from state prison—not only for those released to its supervision.

*Office of the Governor: High-Level Policy Leadership*

Recidivism has serious policy implications for the budget, crime, criminal justice, and economic development. The Office of the Governor would be the ideal provider of overall policy direction at the state level—not least because the many agencies with a role in providing reentry services are scattered across a multiplicity of state departments and work in parallel, rather than answering to any one office or official. To remedy this situation, a designee in the Office of the Governor would coordinate reentry spending among administrative agencies, oversee reentry-related policy, and oversee the data that parole collects on recidivism and employment outcomes. The Office of the Governor would work with parole to focus administrative agencies on results in reducing recidivism and increasing workforce participation. By placing this role in the Office of the Governor, reentry may be considered not just a criminal-justice matter but one linked to the range of matters that the governor considers: economic development, workforce training, and the health of families and children. The Office of the Governor, because of its central role in shaping the state budget, would be in a position to knit together what is currently a disjointed, albeit with many solid features, reentry “system.”

With oversight from the Office of the Governor and day-to-day management by parole, all administrative agencies would be expected to coordinate their activities toward the shared goals for reducing recidivism and increasing workforce participation. For example, agencies such as DOC and LWD currently work together to provide preparation and placement into the labor market, but there is no linkage strategy driving that collaboration, no required tracking of outcomes, and no adjustment of services based on assessment of the programs in place. The proposed change in the management structure

outlined in this document would address this lapse and ensure that programs in prison are in line and in step toward future success and progress in programming available through the state's LWD's one-stops and that individuals are tracked and supported such that their services after incarceration build on previous services. The programs' ultimate goals for individuals would be holding a job and avoiding a return to prison.<sup>67</sup>

### *Parole as Lead Reentry Agency*

With the Office of the Governor overseeing the management of reentry funds and tracking achievement toward a policy goal, parole can, by executive order, be designated the lead state reentry agency empowered to monitor and coordinate service providers and track outcome data.

It is no way a comment on the quality and professionalism of other state agencies to say that the responsibility to ensure increased job placement and improved retention, as well as lowered recidivism, should lie with parole, an operating agency whose sole role is helping individuals make a successful transition to society. Parole has the capacity and experience<sup>68</sup> to manage the reentry system, experienced staff and organizational structure suited for such a task, an existing data-management system that with support can be scaled up, and an infrastructure throughout the state. It has responsibility for the transition of 58 percent of state inmates being released, a number that is likely to rise because of a new law designed to reduce the number of state prisoners released without supervision.<sup>69</sup> Parolees are, after a risk-assessment evaluation of "criminal history, educational or vocational needs, any mental health issues, and other factors that must be considered when planning the individual offender's successful reentry," overseen through a case plan that "outlines specific short-term and long-term goals essential to reentry."<sup>70</sup>

For the 58 percent (and rising) state prisoners who enter supervision, these case plans, which parole already creates, manages, and supervises (and which include goals on addressing substance abuse, education, anger management, job readiness, and more),<sup>71</sup> can benefit through focus on preventing recidivism through rapid attachment to work.

Parole would also have an expanded network of oversight to include all recently released state prisoners. Parole may choose to have parole officers manage individual cases (using parole officers), or it may choose to “outsource” non-law-enforcement case management, whether to vendors or other state agencies, as it does through its Division of Community Programs. In either approach, parole would be the central responsible agency and would oversee the activity of other agencies, or related vendors, to ensure that individuals rapidly attach to work, stay employed, or participate in a set of services or efforts that center on the goal of near-term employment.

The effects of existing parole programs through the Division of Community Programs—including residential programs such as STEPS; substance-abuse residential programs such as MAP and the Reentry Substance Abuse Program (RESAP); and mental-health programs such as PROMISE—would be gauged by measuring their success on the key elements of a reentry scorecard: the extent to which they help individuals toward maintenance of employment and avoiding future involvement in the criminal-justice system.

The same would be true for other agencies. For example, current Department of Corrections programs, which serve many individuals who do not go through parole, include transitional programs such as Residential Community Release Programs. These programs would be expected to achieve a strong (and improving) rate of individuals’ success in job placement, retention, and avoidance of recidivism (even if a person moved

from DOC to parole custody). Parole, working with the Office of the Governor, would also analyze and assess in-prison DOC programs such as vocational and educational programs to ensure that those are in sync with an overall state reentry strategy and geared toward—and accountable for—success in reintegrating individuals into the workforce after prison.

### *Centralized Budget*

Because reentry is not overseen by one agency with one budget, reentry spending needs to be developed collaboratively among state agencies. As noted previously, the state spends over \$220 million on reentry through various agencies, but the state lacks a unified and cohesive mechanism to plan and manage those funds. An activity code should be added to the Office of Management and Budget accounting system to establish a reentry budget line so that the Office of the Governor is able to track money spent on reentry and develop a funding strategy accordingly. Regular analysis of data must be performed to determine the outcomes of those investments. The spending and the pursuit of outside grants (such as U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Labor philanthropic funds) should have a centralized purpose that complements the overall strategic plan as set by the Office of the Governor. As noted above, this strategy should be run by of the Office of the Governor and executed by parole with authority and support to oversee the entire state approach.

### *Working with Local Consortia*

Services for ex-offenders, even if organized from the state level, will inevitably, and appropriately, be delivered at the very local level—by local offices of state agencies or

nonprofit or for-profit social-services organizations. It is important, therefore, for parole, as the lead agency in a reformed, coordinated reentry system, to be aware of who such service providers are and to be able to identify better (or worse) performers. With that in mind, this paper suggests that parole, working in tandem with the appointed reentry coordinator in the Office of the Governor, would help organize and then meet regularly with regional consortia of service providers and key local officials—particularly mayors (80 percent of formerly incarcerated individuals in New Jersey return to urban areas).<sup>72</sup> This is not meant as a suggestion to increase bureaucratic burdens but, rather, as an additional means of gauging and improving program performance. (Parole already relies on a local consortium of leaders and program providers for much of its programming and services.)

A local, engaged consortia would help the state collect, assess, and use data regarding what happens to individuals once they are released from prison and are back in their communities. Currently, parole officers do not have access to a “data feedback loop” on parolees when referred to local providers. This report proposes that parole officers take on more responsibility and accountability in assisting and tracking people on their caseloads as they flow back into local New Jersey communities. As such, information gathering at the local level becomes imperative. Ideally, as people move from being incarcerated, through parole, or just straight back to communities, an electronic shared file that is updated appropriately would follow them and be available to any and all relevant agencies. Such a system would reflect the fact that that local consortia members need to manage their approach based on what other parts of the system model have done. From a management perspective at “reentry central” (parole), it would help parole officers better target services and monitor compliance.

*Data Management and Evaluation*

The state will accomplish this coordination and accountability toward the goal of reducing recidivism and job retention through a shared data-management system, organized in constant coordination with the Office of Information Technology (for which initial work was done and a template system created called “Data Warehouse”).<sup>73</sup>

Agencies involved in providing reentry services would work with parole toward shared benchmarks through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). Parole’s existing data infrastructure, the Parole Board Information System, a case-management tool currently unavailable to other agencies and service providers, would be expanded to other administrative agencies. MOUs would require agencies and their subcontractors to use parole’s data system to regularly and systematically input and track client progress. MOUs would define benchmarks for uniform data collection and input and would have requirements to review and analyze data to ensure that service providers are meeting rigorous job placement, retention, and recidivism requirements. The MOUs would require parole and other agencies to make vendor contracts tailored and performance-based and would include consequences for a failure to meet benchmarks. Further, all state agencies would be required to cooperate in the reentry system as a condition of funding; they also would be expected to deploy other agency resources toward these goals.

Parole, as lead agency, would collect, evaluate, and analyze data to ensure that benchmarks are being met, possibly with another state agency as an intermediary for subcontracted programs. Parole would, through this data, develop an expertise as to which programs are best at providing reentry services and would hold service providers accountable. Parole officers in various regions of the state would know the best-

performing programs and direct individuals to those programs. Parole would provide technical assistance to service providers that are not performing and, if necessary, terminate nonperforming agencies or vendors. Over time, clients and resources would be directed only to high-performing agencies, programs, and service providers. Parole would regularly report back to the Office of the Governor about progress toward the state reentry goals. (This paper proposes that a quarterly scorecard be prepared for the governor, covering key indicators of recidivism, job placement, and job retention, among others.) Implicit in this proposal is a change in the culture and expectations of parole itself.

The data system's tracking would ensure that individuals are receiving the best services and becoming employed, and it would also analyze programs at the system level. Parole would evaluate data, identify gaps in programs and data, and strategize toward policy solutions to reduce recidivism and increase employment. For example, as discussed in Section I, parole would identify child support as a factor impeding work through data from service providers and would be charged with filling that service need. This would allow parole to remove programmatic duplication and help coordinate agency programs efficiently. Parole would use the assessment of performance measures and consult with the expert agency to consider what supportive services make sense for organizations to provide, determine if the agency supports the state's reentry mission, and accordingly create contracts with incentives. Parole would likely continue mental-health programs with DHS. While not a job-placement program, such services are necessary, in some cases, to ensure job placement long-term, arguably leading to more self-sufficiency. Through performance assessment from good data, parole also may develop expertise, with the support of DOC, to track programs or resources based on a person's

criminogenic needs.

*Employment Resources: Leveraging One-Stops*

Parole's coordination with LWD and its one-stop centers is critical in the proposed system focused on rapid attachment to, and retention of, employment as a means to avoiding recidivism. All reentry programs in the state, under the guidance of parole, should be focused on employment and coordinated with the state's one-stop delivery system. In fact, the federal authorizing legislation of one-stops envisions such coordination,<sup>74</sup> and parole has expressed interest in contracting with one-stops to provide employment-related services.<sup>75</sup>

Another important step is coordination of parole and one-stop data so that individuals can be tracked.<sup>76</sup> Further, the one-stop system and its resources—as opposed to new spending—should be used to better serve formerly incarcerated individuals; the statistics presented in Section I—a 22 percent retention rate for self-identified former offenders and a 23 percent retention rate for participants in the state's Another Chance program—can be improved. Parole would be asked to spearhead and drive these improvements. It may develop and apply an increased understanding of the employment prerequisites of reentry clients (e.g., access to benefits, which would ideally be coordinated and begun while the client was incarcerated through DOC, so that upon release, he would be ready to apply for them),<sup>77</sup> encourage specialization by service providers,<sup>78</sup> and provide input and oversee contracts for services provided to them. This would ensure a realignment of one-stop resources used to serve reentry clients—including, over time, being directed to higher-performing service providers.

Accountability for performance, in other words, is central to the reformed system that this paper envisions.

#### **IV. Policy Innovation**

The aforementioned structure will increase prospects for innovation, competition, and results in reentry service delivery through its data- and outcome-driven management and funding structure. The system also will provide the state with the data it needs to develop new approaches keyed to programs for individuals avoiding recidivism and maintaining employment, including approaches that may be developed and executed in administrative agencies under the Office of the Governor. This report proposes one specific innovation to provide individuals with the incentive to stay in their jobs: addressing the accrual of child-support arrearages during incarceration and upon release.

As discussed above, child-support arrearages often total thousands of dollars.<sup>79</sup> According to DHS, the average court order (per child, in other words) is about \$7,000. Moreover, 30 to 40 percent of parents with one such court order have multiple orders.<sup>80</sup> Because of the potential for wages to be garnished (up to 65 percent of total wages)<sup>81</sup> by state authorities to fulfill the terms of such orders, as well as the potential to lead to arrest warrants, driver's license revocation, and other sanctions, child support arrears pose a barrier to successful reentry for a significant number of individuals returning from incarceration.<sup>82</sup> This debt is a barrier to maintaining employment, avoiding recidivism, and maintaining familial relationships, when recently released individuals are unable to financially support their families and consequently distance themselves.<sup>83</sup> The estimated number of children with parents behind bars is 51,000<sup>84</sup> to 66,000.<sup>85</sup> Simply, if New Jersey's

reentry model changes its focus to employment, the state must develop a new arrears-collection structure that provides an incentive—and not erect an inadvertent, but nonetheless significant, disincentive for formal, legal employment.

It is worth noting that foregone revenue is likely to be inconsequential. The futility of collecting thousands of dollars from recently released individuals is reflected in the low rates of collection in the state. There is currently \$2.4 billion in child-support arrearages in the state, and about \$1.1 billion is collected annually.<sup>86</sup> The state collected \$2.45 million—a small sum—from noncustodial parents who were or had been in prison or jail in FY2009. A portion of child-support debt is owed to the state to repay Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) payments that the state made to the custodial parent, and the state's collection rate on those payments is similarly low, about 27 percent.<sup>87</sup> The state cannot reduce child support owed to the custodial parent; but reducing the amount owed to the state, which it is not collecting, anyway, could create an incentive—and remove a disincentive—for individuals to retain employment. Of the 33,232 current or former jail or prison inmates with child-support orders, 27,069 owe about 50 percent to the state and some to foster care. The disincentives to employment are significant; the average amount of wage garnishment for noncustodial parents statewide with TANF debt is \$4,837.<sup>88</sup> That type of garnishment is a deterrent to prospective workers getting jobs in the legitimate labor market and maintaining relationships with their children and families.

This paper recommends two strategies to ensure that arrears do not accrue to the point that they become a disincentive to legitimate work.

One recommendation is to suspend automatically the accrual of child-support arrears for indigent inmates upon entry into prison. For example, in North Carolina, all

indigent inmates' child-support orders are suspended automatically while they are incarcerated.<sup>89</sup> That approach automatically assesses a person at incarceration as to whether he is indigent; then it appropriately determines if his child-support obligations should be suspended during incarceration. This no-cost policy has potentially high impact.<sup>90</sup> Individuals leaving prison will not be automatically saddled with insurmountable debt that, for the state and the custodial parent, is unlikely collectible.

Another proposal is to create a system in which child-support arrearages owed to the state would be forgiven or suspended upon exiting prison (if a person is unable to pay, based on a review of assets), according to a graduated schedule—if, and only if, an individual meets certain job-retention benchmarks. And the state should develop a set of incentives that encourage work—or, at the minimum, some type of participation—in an arrearage reduction or forgiveness. In other words, the arrearage reduction would be contingent on getting and holding a job (or, at the minimum, participating in a community-service program or job-training or preparation program, possibly even while in prison). Such forgiveness also could be contingent on other pro-social behaviors, such as obtaining education and positive engagement with children, subject to the custodial parent's or guardian's consent and parole's recommendation. Under current law, the Department of Human Services, as owner of child-support debt owed to the state, has authority to forgive this debt.<sup>91</sup> This change—which could be overseen by parole as the lead reentry agency and would be the first of its kind in the nation—holds significant potential to help individuals return to their families, their communities, and the overall socioeconomic mainstream.

In reforming the child-support-arrearage collection system as it affects formerly incarcerated individuals, the Office of the Governor and parole could build on the RPP,

which created linkages between DHS and DOC to “provide for greater family reunification through parenting skills, enhanced employment assistance and improved child support compliance for those inmates under the jurisdiction of the NJDOC who have outstanding child support issues.”<sup>92</sup> Parole should work with state agencies to develop a system of specific staged incentives through which individuals would earn forgiveness of child-support debt owed to the state (which often goes unpaid) for meeting employment-retention benchmarks or for participating in programs centered on employment. Contingent child-support-arrearage forgiveness is one example of an innovation that will meet the state’s reentry goals of reducing recidivism and encouraging workforce attachment; and it would place New Jersey at the forefront of addressing this policy concern. Parole would be able to track the reentry success of this program and respond accordingly.

To ensure successful employment retention, many formerly incarcerated individuals will need coordinated access to well-operated social services, including an ability to address child-support arrearages. As such, the Office of Child Support should be embedded in the overall systematic approach to prisoner reentry goals, and data should be shared among DHS, parole, DOC, and LWD to facilitate addressing arrearages. Further, arrearage amounts owed to the state, rather than to a custodial parent, should be tracked.

## **V. Conclusion**

These policy measures are neither a cure-all nor a quick and easy means to reduce budget expenditures and increase effectiveness of programs. Reducing corrections spending, for example, would require closing prison facilities.<sup>93</sup> The aforementioned reentry policy

structure would be a starting point and would focus the state, as it considers new policy solutions, on vigilantly tracking its progress toward reducing recidivism and reincorporating formerly incarcerated individuals into their families and society.

## **Appendix: Offender Process Flow**

Individuals sentenced to state prison will experience a dramatically different, coordinated system focused on planning for their success upon release from prison and into the workforce. The system will begin in prison and will continue seamlessly when they return to their communities.

Upon entry into state prison, individuals will undergo risks and needs assessments and receive individualized reentry plans. These plans will include the input of the individuals, DOC, and parole. The plans, which will focus on the ultimate goal of long-term employment upon release, will tailor in-prison services to achieve that reentry goal. Among the assessments will be a child-support program under which all inmates will be screened for child-support obligations and will be able to access assistance in court processes to suspend the accrual of child support during incarceration.

Individuals will find that the results of their assessments, the status of their child-support cases, and their progress in each prison program—including programs run in partnership with outside agencies and service providers—are tracked in a data system. They will find that the data-tracking system allows DOC staff and parole officers to ensure that individuals are not receiving duplicative or unnecessary services. They will also find that they have access to programs by other agencies while in prison, including labor's one-stop programs so that they can fulfill preliminary training requirements and be work-ready upon release.

Individuals will find that their reentry plans are dynamic documents that change as they make progress and adjust needs as release nears. As individuals prepare for release, they will work with parole and DOC to transform their reentry plan into a

discharge plan. The inmate will interact primarily with parole representatives to analyze progress and future needs and identify and understand local resources. An electronic version of the release plan and a profile of the offender's achievements, risks, needs, debts (not just the child-support arrearages discussed in previous sections but also fines, fees, and restitution obligations), and other relevant information will follow the individual from DOC to parole and to the individual's parole officer. Individuals who will not be released to supervision or are being released to a DOC-run community-based program will experience the same process. They will be assigned a parole officer who will not supervise the individual but will work with local service providers and DOC to implement release plans.

As individuals enter their communities, they will experience a continuity of service delivery as parole officers take over primary responsibility for continuing to implement their reentry plan. Individuals will not have to provide paperwork, undergo additional assessments, or explain their progress in job training, substance-abuse treatment, and other areas, but rather will find that their case files have made their way to their community supervisor. This information will be available to all state agencies and providers that provide reentry services to the individual.

In their communities, individuals will receive services from various state agencies and local service providers based on referrals received from parole officers. The individual will find that his progress and plan are constantly updated and that he can approach his parole officer with evolving needs, concerns, and information. Individuals will find that the various aspects of their reentry are seamlessly coordinated.

For example, the individual will most likely continue to interact with the one-stop to receive ongoing training that builds on in-prison progress and prepares the individual

for job searches and interviews. He will eventually be referred to a local agency for job-placement and retention services. Individuals will also seamlessly continue in any substance-abuse treatment programs, through data and program coordination with DOC and human services. Individuals will find that they have the necessary identification and documentation to receive public benefits such as general assistance, TANF, food stamps, SSI, or housing assistance as soon as possible upon release. They will find that agencies are held accountable for ensuring that they are connected to these services; if they have concerns, they are able to communicate with their parole officer about the issues. As individuals enter job-placement and training services, they will find that they are constantly held accountable for progress, bettering their skills and staying employed. Individuals will find that their parole officer has up-to-date information on their job placement and retention progress through the coordinated database and can follow up as required.

As a result of the new reentry system, the individual in corrections and moving from corrections to the community will have a better experience connecting to essential services and in eventually retaining employment. Shared data systems, seamless referrals, and accountability ensure goal-oriented service delivery and will eliminate lost time and duplicated efforts.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews with Leonard Ward, director of community programs, New Jersey State Parole Board (October 25, 2010, and November 22, 2010); John Clancy, chairman/CEO, Community Education Centers (December 20, 2010, citing increased use of community assessment centers as a reason for decreased prison population); and Douglas Gerardi, director, New Jersey Department of Corrections, Office of Policy and Planning (January 26, 2011, citing use of diversionary programs such as drug courts as well as Residential Community Release Programs as a reason for decreased prison population).

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, June 2010, NCJ 230113, Table 2: “Prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities, by jurisdiction, December 31, 2000, 2007 and 2008, and June 30, 2008 and 2009.”

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Gary Lanigan, commissioner, New Jersey Department of Corrections (October 28, 2010, providing current census numbers and yearly outflow number); see also NJDOC, <http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pages/FAQ.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Gerardi interview (see n. 1 above).

<sup>6</sup> “Fiscal 2011, Budget in Brief,” Office of Management and Budget (March 16, 2010), p. 11 (total state budget) and p. 106 (total “Public Safety and Criminal Justice” budget), <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/omb/publications/11bib/BIB.pdf>. The total amount, \$2,054,323,000, includes law enforcement; special law enforcement activities; military services; judicial services; detention and rehabilitation; parole; juvenile services; and central planning, direction, and management.

<sup>7</sup> See State of New Jersey Budget, Department of Treasury, Office of Management and Budget, *FY 2010–2011 State Budget, Appropriations Handbook*, p. B-42 (corrections).

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<sup>8</sup> State budget, New Jersey Department of Treasury, Office of Management and Budget (New Jersey Board of Parole budget is \$99,665,000).

<sup>9</sup> Michael Ostermann, research scientist, Office of Policy and Planning, New Jersey State Parole Board (February 15, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> This reentry spending amount was derived from an attorney general internal memorandum, “Funding Provided for Crime Prevention and Reentry Services,” December 2010. The attorney general’s office surveyed DOC, parole, Human Services, and Law and Public Safety on self-defined reentry spending. This budget is not limited to spending on state prisoners and includes state, federal, and other sources of funding, including American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, which will most likely be unavailable in the future. Other explanations on the funding are noted in the text under each agency.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.; see also interview with Nancy Style, deputy director, and Holly Palmer, budget analyst, New Jersey Department of Treasury, Office of Management and Budget (December 13, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> New Jersey Department of Corrections, [http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/SubSites/OTS/faq\\_ots.html](http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/SubSites/OTS/faq_ots.html); see also Jeremy Travis, Sinead Keegan, and Eric Kadora, “A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in New Jersey,” Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center (November 2003, finding that in 2002, one-third of state prisoners had at least one chronic, communicable, or mental-health issue).

<sup>14</sup> The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, “Behind Bars II: Substance Abuse and America’s Prison Population,” February 2010. The NJ DOC states: “More than 60 percent of New Jersey inmates were identified as

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having moderate to severe drug and alcohol addictions,”

[http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/SubSites/OTS/faq\\_ots.html](http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/SubSites/OTS/faq_ots.html). Some interviews, such as with Dave Kerr and Jim McGreevey at Integrity House (December 13, 2010), revealed estimates that were dramatically higher.

<sup>15</sup> New Jersey Department of Corrections, Office of Transitional Services, “Frequently Asked Questions,” [http://njdoc.gov/SubSites/OTS/OTS\\_faq.html](http://njdoc.gov/SubSites/OTS/OTS_faq.html).

<sup>16</sup> New Jersey DOC, Office of Policy and Planning, “Offender Characteristics Report,” January 1, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Travis et al., “A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in New Jersey.”

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Unemployment Area Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.nj.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Unemployment Area Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/lau/data.htm>

<sup>21</sup> *Legal Barriers to Prisoner Reentry in New Jersey: Education*, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (June 2006). Public colleges have discretion in admitting individuals with criminal backgrounds, and access to state and federal financial aid may be limited.

<sup>22</sup> *Legal Barriers to Prisoner Reentry in New Jersey: Employment*, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (June 2006). Listed dozens of state statutory bars preventing individuals with criminal records from working in certain occupations. Also discusses legal barriers to licensing in certain professions and difficulties in expungement.

<sup>23</sup> *Legal Barriers to Prisoner Reentry in New Jersey: Public Assistance*, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (June 2006). Discusses statutory bans on public benefits for

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drug offenders and barriers to obtaining supplementary social security income for others involved in the criminal-justice system.

<sup>24</sup> *Legal Barriers to Prisoner Reentry in New Jersey: Housing*, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (June 2006). Statutes restrict access to both public and private housing, especially for those with drug convictions.

<sup>25</sup> Responsible Parenting Program (RPP) statistics provided by the New Jersey Office of Child Support Services. RPP is a joint effort between DOC and DHS that helps ex-offenders address the economic challenges of coming out of prison in New Jersey. This program places DHS social workers at DOC's Central Reception and Assignment Facility and two other prisons (Southwoods and Northern) who attempt to interview all new inmates about their child-support obligations. For those who need it, they begin a process of a court appeal that the obligations be frozen during incarceration.

<sup>26</sup> "Prevalence of Parenthood NJ Male Correctional Population: A Snapshot," memorandum provided by New Jersey Department of Corrections, Division of Programs and Community Services, Office of Drug Programs (data from February–March 2005).

<sup>27</sup> Interview and follow-up with Joe Travea, New Jersey Office of Child Support Services. New Jersey's total child-support caseload is 357,000, according to Travea, January 14 and 19, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> 15 U.S.C.A. §1673 (Federal Consumer Credit Protection Act); N.J.S.A. §2A:17-56.9.

<sup>30</sup> Research shows that it can be more difficult to hold down a job without a driver's license. See Margy Waller, "High Cost or High Opportunity Cost? Transportation and Family Economic Success," Brookings Institution Policy Brief, Center on Children and Families, no. 35, December 2005,

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[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2005/12poverty\\_waller/pb35.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2005/12poverty_waller/pb35.pdf); and

Sandra Gustitus, Melody Simmons, and Margy Waller, “Access to Driving and License Suspension Policies for the Twenty-First Century Economy,” *The Mobility Agenda* (June 2008).

<sup>31</sup> N.J.S.A. §2A:17-56.8.

<sup>32</sup> Travea interview (see n. 27 above).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> “Assessment and Treatment Centers are part of the Residential Community Release Program operated by the DOC. Assessment and Treatment Centers provide eligible inmates with a comprehensive battery of assessments of their needs and risks, an orientation to a treatment regimen, and a referral to a work release house, Substance Abuse Disorder Treatment Program, or a Mutual Agreement Program.” Attorney general internal memorandum, “Funding Provided for Crime Prevention and Reentry Services,” p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. (citing an adult basic skills budget of \$12,284,924 and a State Facility Education Act budget, for school-age population without a high school diploma or its equivalent, of \$7,149,104).

<sup>37</sup> Attorney general internal memorandum, “Funding Provided for Crime Prevention and Reentry Services.”

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Gary Lanigan, commissioner, and Darcella Sessomes, director of Transitional Services, New Jersey Department of Corrections (October 28, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> Ward interview (see n. 1 above).

<sup>40</sup> Figures received from Leonard Ward, parole, via Michael Ostermann, Office of Policy

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and Planning, New Jersey State Parole Board (October 25, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> “The Community Programs Division is dedicated to developing, coordinating and managing the provision of quality treatment and services to individuals under parole supervision. This is done through community-based programs, community partnerships, grant initiatives and special projects designed to support the re-entry and effective supervision of offenders, to promote pro-social behavior and to improve the quality of lives in our communities. This Division administers contracts for the operation of Community Resource Centers, the Reentry Substance Abuse Program (RESAP) and Stages to Enhance Parolee Success (STEPS) residential programs, the Mutual Agreement Program (in partnership with the Department of Human Services, Division of Addiction Services), and other specialized programs. Responsibilities include contract administration, grant management, offender referral and placement, program monitoring, quality assurance, development of applicable policies and procedures, and maintenance of essential records and data. The State Parole Board and its District Parole Offices work in partnership with community-based programs to develop and maintain a continuum of treatment, support services and supervision that encourage and aid offenders in completing their supervision in the community.” New Jersey State Parole Board Division of Community Programs, [http://www.state.nj.us/parole/comm\\_progs.html](http://www.state.nj.us/parole/comm_progs.html).

<sup>42</sup> P.L.2009, c.330 (providing for early release, under parole supervision, of some inmates). As a result of this law, parole expects an additional 1,200–1,500 individuals to be released under its supervision per year. Figures received from Leonard Ward, parole, via Michael Ostermann, Office of Policy and Planning, New Jersey State Parole Board (February 25, 2011).

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<sup>43</sup> Attorney general internal memorandum, “Funding Provided for Crime Prevention and Reentry Services,” p. 10.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.; see also interview with Jim Plousis, chairman, State of New Jersey Parole Board, and Dave Thomas, executive director (November 1, 2010).

<sup>46</sup> “Ex-Offender Statewide Outcomes,” LWD report provided to governor’s office (December 17, 2010). This document had figures for numbers of individuals served, entered employment rates, and retention rates. This paper reflects the cumulative number of people in each category during a three-year period. It calculates a retention rate by dividing the total number served by the total number working in the second and third quarters following exit. The \$980,250 figure is a very conservative estimate based on an estimated cost of serving people at \$250 per person on average; the overall costs would likely be much higher. These individuals self-identified as ex-offenders.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ward interview (see n. 1 above).

<sup>49</sup> Attorney general internal memorandum, “Funding Provided for Crime Prevention and Reentry Services.”

<sup>50</sup> Based on interviews in the fall and winter of 2010–11, conducted by the Manhattan Institute. The AG’s office had an expansive approach that included prevention, educations, diversion programs, and **crime-prevention** programs such as Fugitive Safe Surrender, while other agencies had more narrow focuses such as substance abuse or mental-health treatment.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Richard Constable, deputy commissioner, and Gary Altman, director, One-Stop Coordinator and Support, LWD (December 14, 2010).

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<sup>52</sup> Ward interview, October 25, 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> “Ex-Offender Statewide Outcomes,” LWD report.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Governor Christie transition report, Corrections and Homeland Security, “Final Report of the Corrections and Homeland Security Committee,” (January 5, 2010).

<sup>58</sup> Sentencing/Corrections Task Force report, New Jersey Commission on Government Efficiency and Reform (GEAR) (October 2007).

<sup>59</sup> “Coming Home for Good: Meeting the Challenge of Prisoner Reentry in New Jersey,” final report of the New Jersey Reentry Roundtable (December 2003).

<sup>60</sup> When the Manhattan Institute began working in Newark, there was a patchwork of 100 organizations providing reentry services in the city—none of which were guided by a common set of outcomes.

<sup>61</sup> Defined as one year from release, no reincarceration, rearrest, or reconviction.

<sup>62</sup> Defined as working in the second and third quarter after program completion.

<sup>63</sup> An independent study by MDRC, as well as welfare-to-work principles, also provides empirical support for a rapid-attachment-to-work model.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Stefan Pryor, deputy mayor, and Arcelio Aponte, director of operations and management, City of Newark, Department of Economic and Housing Development (November 23, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> Cindy Redcross, Dan Bloom, Hilda Azurdia, Janine **Zweig, and Nancy Pindus**, “Implementation, Two-Year Impacts, and Costs of the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) Prisoner Reentry Program” (August 2009); and Chelsea Farley and

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Wendy S. McClanahan, “Ready4Work In Brief: Update on Outcomes; Reentry May Be Critical for States, Cities,” Public/Private Ventures (May 2007).

<sup>66</sup> Case management is a critical strategy to achieve the following goals: (1) identify participants’ needs for successful reentry/reintegration during intake/assessment; (2) establish individualized case plans reflective of the identified needs, and deliver appropriate services; (3) provide consistent follow-up to the direct/indirect service provided to participants based on their case plans, reassess participants needs, and make changes to the case plan on an as-needed basis; (4) monitor participants’ progress, retention, and replacement in a job if necessary; and (5) maintain individual case-file documentation through an approved case-management system.

<sup>67</sup> The agencies would build on models such as the Workforce Literacy Program, a labor-funded program that “utilizes technology-based computer labs at eight correctional facilities and addresses the workplace literacy skills essential to New Jersey’s labor market. Skills acquired by inmates are geared towards preparing them for reentry as well as offering marketable skills once released.” Attorney general internal memorandum, “Funding Provided for Crime Prevention and Reentry Services.”

<sup>68</sup> The Division of Community Programs currently performs a similar role.

<sup>69</sup> P.L.2009, c.330.

<sup>70</sup> New Jersey State Parole Board Supervision,  
<http://www.state.nj.us/parole/supervision.html>.

<sup>71</sup> This is known as the Case Plan Agreement (CPA).

<sup>72</sup> According to DOC offender statistics,  
[http://njdoc.gov/pdf/offender\\_statistics/2010/HIGHLIGHTS\\_2010.pdf](http://njdoc.gov/pdf/offender_statistics/2010/HIGHLIGHTS_2010.pdf).

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<sup>73</sup> Interviews with Wanda Moore, director, Office of Community Justice, Office of Attorney General, and Joe Fanaroff, deputy attorney general, Office of the Attorney General (October 26, 2010); Charlie Venti, executive director, Nicholson Foundation (November 11, 2010); and Adel Ebeid, chief technical officer, New Jersey Office of Information Technology (December 15, 2010).

<sup>74</sup> Workforce Investment Act of 1988, Public Law 105-220, Section 112(b)(8)(A)-(B).

<sup>75</sup> Ward interview (see n. 1 above); and Constable and Altman interview (see n. 51 above).

<sup>76</sup> See Section III above; currently, these systems are not coordinated.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Jeanette Page-Hawkins, director, Division of Family Development, New Jersey Department of Human Services (December 20, 2010).

<sup>78</sup> One-stop services are provided by the one-stop operator and by contracted service providers. See Workforce Investment Act of 1988, Public Law 105-220, Section 116(d)(2)(B)-(D).

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Alisha Griffin, assistant director, New Jersey Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support (December 20, 2010).

<sup>80</sup> Travea (see n. 27 above). In New Jersey, incarceration may be considered voluntary unemployment, which would make the individual ineligible for child-support relief; however, judges have discretion to consider incarceration a “substantial change” in financial situations that would qualify the individual for relief. Note also that there is a statutory bar on reducing child-support arrearages that have already accrued before a modification is requested.

<sup>81</sup> N.J.S.A. §2A:17-56.8.

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<sup>82</sup> See Section II above. While precise numbers are not available, an internal DOC two-month review of newly incarcerated male adults in 2005 concluded that 58.16 percent had children (both minor and not), and the figure rises to 70 percent for offenders who are thirty years and older. “Prevalence of Parenthood” (see n. 26 above). According to corrections data, more than half of all inmates are over thirty years old. See

[http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/offender\\_statistics/2010/By\\_Age\\_2010.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/offender_statistics/2010/By_Age_2010.pdf).

Further, 33,232 current or former inmates in jail or prison have child-support orders.

<sup>83</sup> Vicki Turetsky, “Staying in Jobs and Out of the Underground: Child Support Policies That Encourage Legitimate Work,” CLASP Policy Brief no. 2 (March 2007); idem, “Realistic Child Support Policies That Support Successful Reentry,” Center for Law and Social Policy (January 2007); Elaine Sorensen, Liliana Sousa, and Simon Schaner, “Assessing Child Support Arrears in Nine Large States and the Nation,” Urban Institute (July 11, 2007); and Jessica Pearson and Lanae Davis, “An Evaluation of the Colorado Arrears Forgiveness Demonstration Project,” Center on Policy Research (May 2002).

<sup>84</sup> Judy Peet, “In This Prison, Little Room, Little Money, Lots of Women,” *Star-Ledger*, May 24, 2004,

<http://www.nj.com/specialprojects/index.ssf?/specialprojects/womenprison/womenprison02.html>.

<sup>85</sup> New Jersey Parole Board figures.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Alisha Griffin, assistant director, New Jersey Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support (December 20, 2010).

<sup>87</sup> Travea (see n. 27 above). In FY2009, the state was owed \$81,563,636 in TANF and collected \$21,102,005.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. A total of 4,837 individuals have garnishment due to TANF debt statewide.

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<sup>89</sup> See Justice Center, Council of State Governments, Reentry Policy Council,

<http://reentrypolicy.org/Report/PartII/ChapterII->

[B/PolicyStatement13/Recommendation13-C.](#)

<sup>90</sup> In North Carolina, the automatic suspension of child support upon incarceration was done through an act by the legislature (General Statute 50-13.10(d)).

<sup>91</sup> Ann Cammett, “Making Work Pay: Promoting Employment and Better Child Support Outcomes for Low-Income and Incarcerated Parents,” New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (February 2005), citing Daniel L. Hatcher and Hannah Lieberman, “Breaking the Cycle of Defeat for ‘Deadbroke’ Noncustodial Parents Through Advocacy on Child Support Issues,” *Journal of Poverty Law and Policy* (May–June 2003): 10 n. 32 (federal law permits forgiving arrears owed to the state under some circumstances). The authority for debt-compromise programs comes from Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. Social Security Act § 466(a)(9) (Child-support payments are made a judgment “with full force, effect and attributes of a State judgment”). Therefore, the state can settle assigned arrearages in the same manner that it may settle any other debt owed to the state. See PIQ-00-03, State IV-D Program Flexibility with Respect to Low Income Obligers, September 14, 2000 (“Compromising arrearages, on the other hand, involves the satisfaction of arrearages by specific agreement of both of the relevant parties in accordance with State law or on the same grounds as exist for any other judgment in the State”).

<sup>92</sup> See [http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pages/about\\_us/structure/community.html](http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pages/about_us/structure/community.html).

<sup>93</sup> Style and Palmer interview (see n. 12 above); and interview with Todd Clear, dean and professor, Rutgers School of Criminal Justice—Center for Law and Justice (November 23, 2010).

