

REENTRY COURTS:
MANAGING THE TRANSITION FROM
PRISON TO COMMUNITY

A CALL FOR CONCEPT PAPERS

OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

SEPTEMBER 1999

Summary: The Office of Justice Programs is issuing a call for concept papers from jurisdictions that are interested in establishing “reentry courts.” A reentry court is a court that manages the return to the community of individuals being released from prison, using the authority of the court to apply graduated sanctions and positive reinforcement and to marshal resources to support the prisoner’s reintegration, much as drug courts do, to promote positive behavior by the returning prisoner. The expectation is that the focus on reentry issues in the courts will help reduce the recidivism rate of returning prisoners and will encourage a broad-based coalition to support the successful reintegration of those offenders.

I. Background: The Dilemma of Managing Prisoner Reentry.

Our rate of imprisonment continues to grow. There are now 1.8 million individuals in our country’s prisons and jails, about one in 150 Americans. One consequence of this level of imprisonment is that a growing number of Americans are returning to their neighborhoods after serving a prison term. Each year, nearly 500,000 individuals leave state prison and return to communities across the country. For some offenders, the process of reintegration will follow a smooth path--their families accept them back, jobs await them, supportive networks stand ready to keep them on the right side of the law and to encourage restoration of their status as residents of their communities. For others, perhaps for most, the process of reintegration will follow a rocky path--their families may not be willing to accept them back, finding jobs will be difficult, and individuals in their old peer groups will be ready to support the resumption of criminal habits, as well as drug or alcohol abuse. Such circumstances often contribute to an offender’s return to criminal behavior and subsequent recidivism.

The increase in movement from the prison door to the community doorstep comes at a time when our traditional mechanisms for managing reentry have been challenged. Our conceptual goals for successful reentry are as follows: Offenders nearing release eligibility would be screened to determine their readiness and, if ready, would begin a process of preparation. Parole officers working inside prisons would work with prisoners to match them with employers on the outside, contact family members on their behalf, line up mental health and

other services, and begin to reconnect the inmates with the world that they would soon join. The decision to release the inmate, a decision made by the parole board, would reflect a combination of the inmate's readiness and the board's belief that the reentry plan was well suited to reduce reoffending. Once the inmate is released, the parole officer would oversee the parolee's linkages to work, family, and support services. Adopting a case management model, parole officers would work with parolees to assist them in their successful reintegration. Those released prisoners who do not live up to the terms of their release would be sent back to prison.

Although some parole authorities have been successful in accomplishing these goals, this ideal model of prisoner reintegration has been largely unrealized. Several states have abolished the parole board as the entity making release decisions; many inmates serve fixed terms and must be released on predetermined dates. As parole officers struggle to manage heavy caseloads, few are able to spend time working inside prisons, so linkages between the world inside and the world outside have been reduced. And parole itself is being reassessed. Many states have "abolished" parole altogether, which sometimes means that parole has simply resurfaced under a different name (e.g., supervised release). In many states, the growth of the parole caseload has increased significantly, and per-case resources allocated to parole supervision have decreased significantly, resulting in a parole system in which supervision is substantially reduced.

The current state of affairs has resulted in two consequences that should be of concern. First, the public safety risks posed by parolees are substantial. According to a recent Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) 1998 report, between 1990 and 1997, there was a 39% increase in the number of offenders returned to prison for parole violations, as compared to a 4% increase in new court commitments. In addition, a recent BJS probation and parole survey indicates that in 1998, 13% of the some 424,000 parolees who were discharged from supervision were returned to custody for committing a new offense.

Our challenge is to improve the way we manage the reentry of prisoners back into their communities without posing significant public safety risks--and to build the public's confidence in our overall system of justice. The public calls for less parole and more prison at a time when the former can scarcely be cut back any more, and the latter has already quadrupled over the past 25 years, placing significant burdens on state budgets. Unfortunately, the public has not been eager to reverse the investments--investing more in parole and less in prison. Consequently, the most serious offenders--who often require the most supervision once they return to communities--are the offenders who are frequently released with little or no supervision. The BJS reports that about 22% of offenders in 1997 were released unconditionally.

The second consequence is that we are sending more people back to prison because they have violated their terms of parole. With parole violators representing about 35% of all admissions to state prisons in 1997 (as compared to 18% in 1980), it is clear that the persistent challenges in managing prisoner reentry are contributing to the growth in our prison population.¹ Many jurisdictions have not yet implemented mechanisms to effectively sanction parolees for violating the terms of their reentry agreement without reinstating the remaining portion of their original sentence, arguably not a cost-effective way to ensure public safety or to promote justice.

The overall conclusion we must face is that we need to rethink the processes of reentry--to develop new concepts that will frame differently the mix of governmental, private, community, and individual responsibilities for the reintegration of prisoners into society. One such concept has attracted significant attention--the concept of the reentry court.

¹ Blumstein, Alfred, and Allen Beck, "Population Growth in U.S. Prison, 1980-1996," in *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, volume 26, ed. Michael Tonry and Joan Petersilia, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 1999.

II. The Idea of the Reentry Court.

In our current allocation of responsibilities for prisoner reentry, courts traditionally play a marginal role. Usually a court's responsibility ends when a defendant is found or pleads guilty and is sentenced by the judge. Appellate courts may hear issues on appeal, but the trial judge's responsibility ends when the trial ends. Judges typically have no role in the broad array of activities that carry out the terms of the sentence, prepare the offender for release, and transition the offender back to his status as member of the community.

Courts need not be so constrained. Interestingly, in our jurisprudential history, courts have played a more active role in overseeing the terms of the sentences they impose. Under the Model Penal Code, judges were considered responsible for the entire sentence and could "re-sentence" an offender to a shorter term of imprisonment if he performed well in prison. More recently, we have seen the strong growth of a new form of jurisprudence in which the judge is actively involved in overseeing the transition of the offender from a dysfunctional member of society to a productive member of society.

The most mature example of this new form of court is the drug court--a court where the judge manages a caseload of drug-involved offenders, requiring them to make regular appearances in court, requiring them to participate in some form of drug treatment, subjecting them to regular urine testing to determine drug use, and administering a predetermined set of graduated, parsimonious sanctions for violations of the contract with the drug court. The first dirty urine may yield a reprimand, the second a day in the jury box, the third a weekend in jail. Drug courts report very low recidivism rates;² drug court proponents assert that their success can be attributed to the mix of coercion and treatment--and to the personal interest in the offender's

² While recidivism statistics vary by the characteristics of the specific drug court and its target population, studies do point to recidivism levels among drug court participants that are significantly lower than standard dockets (and have been reported to be as low as 4% for program graduates). See "Looking at a Decade of Drug Courts," an update to the *Summary Assessment of the Drug Court Experience* by the Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project.

success of the judge in particular as well as others involved. Those drug offenders who do not survive the regimen of testing, treatment, and sanctions are sent back to a normal calendar for further action; those who are successful participate in upbeat graduation ceremonies presided over by the judge, and which include the defense, prosecution, arresting officer, and family of the graduate. Based on the drug court model, this promising approach to adjudication--some call them "problem-solving courts"--has been extended to domestic violence courts, community courts, family treatment courts for dependency proceedings, gun courts, and DWI courts.

A key component in drug courts is that they represent the exercise of a precious resource, judicial authority, toward a beneficial end, and that offenders respond positively to the fact that a judge is taking an interest in their success. The frequent appearances before the court with the offer of assistance, coupled with the knowledge of predictable and parsimonious consequences for failure, assist the offender in taking the steps necessary to get his life back on track.

The reentry court proposed here involves an application of these principles to a very different group of offenders at a very different stage in the process--to prisoners leaving state prison on their way back to communities. This focus recognizes that these are exactly the offenders who need to be held strictly accountable and most in need of assistance as they return to communities. Importantly, the concept of the reentry court does not envision any change in the timing of decisions regarding a prisoner's release. The concept does, however, acknowledge that most prisoners eventually return to the community, focus on the work of prisons in preparing offenders for release, and presume that a reentry court will actively involve the state corrections agency and others, as outlined below. Clearly, there are several approaches other than a court model that can provide a vehicle to serve the reentry management role. For example, the Office of Justice Programs is also currently testing the use of law enforcement, corrections, and community partnerships to manage reentry. Such partnerships are central to the reentry court, as well. There are other strategies being considered and tested in the field from which we will learn (see appendix). The focus of this effort, however, is on testing the reentry court concept.

We recognize several inherent challenges present by a court reentry model that each jurisdiction will need to consider. In most jurisdictions, the authority for reentry issues is not within the judicial branch, but rather in the executive branch. Those jurisdictions interested in testing the reentry court concept would need to explore their options for testing this model, including developing new approaches for addressing reentry issues within existing authorities (e.g., utilizing split sentence mechanisms for longer term sentences) or new laws that provide this judicial authority, as appropriate. We also recognize the resource challenges that courts already face, including limited staffing and resources. Communities interested in piloting a reentry court will need to consider creative ways to draw upon existing resources and perhaps find additional funding sources. In addition, a critical challenge will be identifying a range of essential reentry support services for offenders and mechanisms for ensuring easy access to them. These are areas that we recognize pose great challenges. We invite your best ideas for addressing these challenges, and will work with those jurisdictions whose concept papers are selected to think creatively about such issues.

The core elements of a reentry court are the following:

* **Assessment and Planning.** It is envisioned that correctional administrators, ideally with a reentry judge, would meet with inmates prior to release to explain the reentry process. The state corrections agency, and, where available, the parole agency, working in consultation with the reentry court, would identify those inmates to be released under the auspices of the reentry court to assess the inmates' needs upon release and begin building linkages to a constellation of social services, family counseling, health and mental health services, housing, job training, and work opportunities that would support successful reintegration.

* **Active Oversight.** The reentry court would see prisoners released into the community with a high degree of frequency--probably once a month--beginning right after release and continuing until the end of parole (or other form of supervision). It is critical that the judge see offenders who are making progress as well as those who have failed to perform. The judge would also actively engage the parole officer or other supervising authority and the community

policing officer responsible for the parolee's neighborhood in assessing progress. In the drug court experience, acknowledgment of the successful achievement of milestones by participants provides encouragement to others who observe them.

* **Management of Supportive Services.** The reentry court must have at its disposal a broad array of supportive resources, including substance abuse treatment services, job training programs, private employers, faith institutions, family members, housing services, and community organizations. These support systems would be marshaled by the court, drawing upon existing community resources where possible. At the core, the court would again actively engage the parole officer or other supervising authority, as well as the community policing officer responsible for the parolee's neighborhood. In the drug court experience, judges and others have become very effective service brokers and advocates on behalf of participants. An important lesson from the drug court experience is that this brokerage function requires the development of a case management function accountable to the court. To be successful, a reentry court would have to develop a similar case management capacity.

* **Accountability to Community.** A jurisdiction might consider creating a citizen advisory board to work with the reentry court to develop both community service and support opportunities, as well as accountability mechanisms for successful reentry of released inmates. Accountability mechanisms might include ongoing restitution orders and participation in victim impact panels. It may also be appropriate to involve the crime victims and victims' organizations as part of the reentry process. The advisory board should broadly represent the community. Other mechanisms for drawing upon diverse community perspectives should also be considered.

* **Graduated and Parsimonious Sanctions.** The reentry court would establish and articulate a predetermined range of sanctions for violations of the conditions of release. These would not automatically require return to prison; in fact, this would be reserved for new crimes

or egregious violations. As with drug courts, it would be important for the reentry court to arrange for an array of relatively low-level sanctions that could be swiftly, predictably, and universally applied. Jurisdictions interested in piloting a reentry court must clearly outline how graduated sanctions would be imposed, and the array of sanctions that would be used.

* Rewards for Success. The reentry court also would need to incorporate positive judicial reinforcement--rewarding success, perhaps by negotiating early release from parole after established goals are achieved, or by conducting graduation ceremonies akin to those seen in drug courts. The successful completion of parole should be seen as an important life event for an offender, and the court can help acknowledge that accomplishment. Courts provide powerful public forums for encouraging positive behavior and for acknowledging the individual effort in achieving reentry goals. Jurisdictions are required to outline milestones in the reentry process that would trigger recognition and an appropriate reward.

With these building blocks in mind, a reentry court can take many forms. In one possible formulation, a reentry court could be case-defined: A sentencing judge could retain jurisdiction over that portion of the sentence served while on parole, handling in essence a reentry docket on his or her calendar. If a jurisdiction allows for split sentences (the first portion served in jail or prison, the remainder on probation or parole), this approach is quite natural--the same judge would see the offender again at the back end of the sentence. (Some drug courts currently utilize split sentences with jail terms followed by probation terms.) Alternatively, a reentry court could be established as a stand-alone court. The court would maintain an exclusive docket of reentry cases and develop a specialty in the dynamics of successful reentry. Under this formulation, the reentry "judge" might be a retired judge, a magistrate, an administrative judge, or another judicial officer. In either model, it is expected that the judge would actively engage correctional administrators overseeing the period of imprisonment preceding release. The formulations that are possible will depend on the statutory framework in each jurisdiction; caseload considerations; administrative flexibility; levels of collaboration among the judiciary, corrections departments, parole and community policing agencies, and the business community; as well as other factors.

III. The Call for Concept Papers.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) is interested in working with a small number of jurisdictions that are willing to test the concept of a reentry court. Jurisdictions selected to participate will be invited to participate in three technical assistance cluster meetings (travel and expenses will be provided) over a 15-month period to discuss issues, approaches, progress, and challenges. We anticipate holding the first meeting in February 2000. While there is no programmatic funding available for this initiative, in addition to the cluster meetings, we will offer technical assistance to the selected sites, as appropriate. OJP expects to document this initiative and to publish a report with findings and recommendations at the end of the 15-month period.

Eligible applicants are state and local courts, as well as states, municipalities, public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribes (including ANCSA Corporations)³ that have an agreement with the courts to take the lead in conducting such a project. Interested jurisdictions must submit a concept paper (up to 20 pages) that addresses the following:

1. A description of the reentry process in the jurisdiction, with a focus on the relationships among correctional, community policing, and parole agencies; the judiciary; the business community; and any other involved public or private entities. A caseflow analysis should be provided, documenting the numbers and types of offenders released to the jurisdiction, and to which communities, if possible.

2. A statement of the goals of the pilot program and expected indicators of success. Also, if possible, please outline the program stages or success milestones that offenders participating in the program would be expected to achieve and over what period of time. In addition, please address each of the six core program elements cited above.

³ The term "tribes" is defined by the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act (Public Law 93-638, as amended; 25 U.S.C. 450b(e) (1998)), which includes Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporations.

3. A description of the proposed reentry court, including statement of the statutory scheme or other mechanism under which the court would operate, where in the court structure the reentry court will be located, the caseload the court would handle, the staffing envisioned, the community supervision available to monitor offenders, judge(s) to be assigned (if known), and the support services available to incapacitated and released offenders.

4. A description of program elements or other areas in which technical assistance would be needed. As noted above, selected sites will participate in three technical assistance cluster meetings. Outline areas where it is anticipated that additional technical assistance would be needed.

5. A description of the history of similar collaborations in this jurisdiction, such as drug courts or other innovations, that demonstrate a capacity to manage this cross-agency initiative.

6. Statement of support from (a) the judiciary, (b) the corrections and parole agencies, (c) the prosecution and institutional defender, (d) the police, (e) the business community, and (f) other community service providers or leaders, as appropriate.

7. A proposed timeline for planning and implementing a pilot reentry court.

Sites will be selected based upon the following criteria: A clear articulation of the above issues; key partnerships in place and supporting letters; and plan to serve state prison releasees.

Concept papers must be submitted to Office of the Assistant Attorney General, Attn: Reentry Working Group, Office of Justice Programs, 810 7th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20531. All submissions must be postmarked no later than December 10, 1999. Questions should be directed to the Department of Justice **Response Center at 1-800/421-6770** or in the Washington, DC area at 202/307-1480.

Appendix

SUMMARY OF DOJ OFFENDER REENTRY EFFORTS

September 1999

Reentry Working Group: The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has recently established a Reentry Working Group. It is chaired by Assistant Attorney General Laurie Robinson and includes representatives from OJP bureaus and program offices involved in reentry issues--including National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), the Corrections Program Office (CPO), Drug Courts Program Office (DCPO), and the Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EOWS)--as well as the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), Bureau of Prisons (BOP), and Community Oriented Policing Services Office (COPS).

The Working Group is developing strategies for improving the way communities manage and support offenders after release from prison. Our approach involves addressing public safety issues, as well as providing a continuum of reentry programs that begin during incarceration and continue throughout the critical months following release. The group meets to discuss OJP's ongoing reentry efforts, which involve a broad range of reentry management models, and ways of coordinating our efforts across OJP bureaus and program offices, as well as with BOP and COPS.

The Office of Justice Programs' reentry efforts include:

Reentry Court Initiative: The reentry court concept draws on the drug court model--using judicial authority to apply graduated sanctions and positive reinforcement and to marshal resources to support the prisoner's reintegration. The goal is to establish a seamless system of offender accountability and support services through the reentry process. Central to all our efforts is developing strategies to do a better job in tracking and supervising offenders upon release using a case management approach, preparing

communities to address public safety concerns, and providing the services that will help offenders reconnect with their families and the community, including employment, counseling, education, health, mental health, and other essential services that support successful reintegration. The enclosed “Call for Concept Papers” describes the reentry court concept and core elements.

Reentry Partnerships Project: The NIJ, CPO, EOWS, and COPS are working collaboratively on a project designed to strengthen the working relationships among corrections, law enforcement, and the community to prepare for and manage the reentry process. In May 1999, state correctional administrators from several sites met with DOJ representatives to discuss reentry challenges and approaches to drawing law enforcement and the community into the process. Site representatives discussed the profiles of returning offenders in their communities, existing reentry efforts, and approaches to building the necessary collaborations to support reentry. Preliminary concept papers have been received from a number of jurisdictions interested in exploring this approach to reentry management. In October 1999, teams from each site will participate in a meeting at OJP to discuss reentry challenges and their proposals. For additional information, contact Cheryl Crawford at NIJ, 202/514-6210, or Phil Merkle at CPO, 202/305-2550.

Intensive Aftercare Program: The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP) Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) is designed to assess, test, and disseminate information on intensive aftercare program. The goal of the IAP model is to reduce recidivism among high risk juvenile offenders who have been confined in secure residential facilities. Demonstration sites include Norfolk, Virginia; Denver, Arapahoe, and Jefferson Counties, Colorado; and Clark County, Nevada. For additional information, please contact Thomas Murphy, OJJDP, 202/353-8734.

Youthful Offender Demonstration Projects: The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the Department of Labor’s (DOL) Employment and Training Administration have developed a comprehensive strategy to deliver

educational, training, and employment opportunities for at-risk youth. As a result of this collaboration, DOL has recently funded Youthful Offender Demonstration Projects. This initiative involves three distinct approaches designed to provide meaningful educational and vocational programming to at-risk and adjudicated delinquent youth: 1) Model Community Projects, located in large, urban communities of high poverty, and where comprehensive community-wide approaches addressing the needs of youth have already been established: Services include a combination of gang prevention and suppression and alternative sentencing targeting youth offenders, gang members, and youth at risk of becoming involved in gangs; 2) Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiative, located in medium-sized cities with high poverty and high crime: Services include providing school-to-work educational and training within juvenile correctional facilities and aftercare and job placement services as youth return to the community; and 3) Smaller Community-wide Projects. These projects will work with local youth service providers to develop linkages that will strengthen the coordination of prevention and recovery services for youth offenders.

OJJDP is funding an independent evaluator to design and conduct a process evaluation and feasibility study of two of the Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiative Programs. For further information on Department of Labor (DOL) grants, please contact Beverly Bachemin, DOL, Education and Training for Youth Offenders Initiative Programs, 202/219-5472. For additional information on the OJJDP process evaluation and feasibility study, please contact Dean Hoffman, OJJDP, 202/353-9256.

Targeted Juvenile Reintegration: The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is collaborating with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America to implement a pilot project called “Targeted Reintegration.” This project is designed to provide Boys and Girls Club services to youth in residential placement using trained Boys and Girls Club staff. The goal of the project is to encourage youth, upon reentry into the community, to become involved in Boys and Girls Club sponsored activities. The initiative is currently being piloted in three sites--St. Paul, Minnesota; Jacksonville, Florida and Clark County, Nevada. Services to youth in residential care provided by

Boys and Girls Club staff include recreation, life skills, job readiness training, tutoring, and other services. Club staff build relationships with the youth and encourage them to attend the club upon their release. The staff also work closely with institutional staff and probation officers to stay informed and share information about the youth's progress. For additional information, contact James Burch, at OJJDP, 202/307-5914.

Las Vegas Weed and Seed Reentry Project: The Executive Office of Weed and Seed is working with state and local officials in Nevada to develop a reentry demonstration project in Las Vegas. The goal of this Weed and Seed project is to put in place a continuum of services beginning in the institution and which follow the inmate to their home communities. The reentry program will use carefully designed interventions for released offenders that take advantage of all available resources. The goal is to enhance public safety by reducing criminal victimization by this high risk group, as well as to improve the quality of life of their home communities. A working group which includes Nevada Director of Corrections, Director of Parole Supervision, Clark County Social Services Director, a representative from the Nevada Assembly, residents representing community-based organizations in the Weed and Seed area, and the Las Vegas Weed and Seed coordinator is collaborating with EOWS staff to design the reentry demonstration. For additional information, please contact Nancy Ware, EOWS, at 202/616-1152.

BJA FY '99 Open Solicitation Program: Through its FY '99 Open Solicitation Program, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) will give state, local, and tribal governments the opportunity to compete for funds to support projects that address innovations in offender reentry. Priority will be given to proposals that address issues of defendant/offender post-incarceration re-entry to communities. This may include the use of technology, non-traditional resources, and other approaches to monitor and correct the behavior of individuals under the supervision of the criminal justice system. It is anticipated that the submission deadline for the FY '99 Open Solicitation Program will be sometime in late November or early December 1999. To obtain a copy of the solicitation, please contact the BJA Clearinghouse at 1-800-688-4252 or visit the BJA website at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA.

American Probation and Parole Association Project: BJA is also working with the American Probation and Parole Association on a project to increase the understanding of effective offender supervision practices for probation and parole professionals, particularly in rural areas. The APPA is concentrating on programming strategies, cognitive behavioral programming for offenders, promising practices in community justice, as well as issues specific to the sites receiving the training. For additional information, please contact Richard Sutton, BJA, 202/616-3214.

Incarcerated Fathers Initiative: The Bureau of Justice Assistance is also involved in a project with the Vera Institute of Justice called the Incarcerated Fathers Initiative. The project addresses issues relating to fathers in prison and programs to strengthen their relationships with their children and families. The Vera Institute of Justice, located in New York City, is gathering information and will report findings on programs operating within correctional and penal institutions that have been specifically designed for inmates who are fathers. The project will address the implications of father-oriented programming operating in community-based settings, with particular attention paid to those interventions serving men recently released from prison or jail. The project is designed to provide guidance in the development of program models and interventions for incarcerated fathers in diverse jurisdictions and institutional settings. The study will also look at the relationships between incarcerated fathers and their children, spouses, partners, and communities, as well as criminal recidivism. The project also involves conducting a comprehensive assessment of a select number of prison and community-based programs targeting offenders who are fathers. The 12-month study will conclude with a discussion of the implications for planning prison and community-based interventions for fathers who are incarcerated or in post-release supervision status. For additional information, please contact Tahitia Barringer, BJA, 202/616-3294.

Redhook Community Justice Center: With funding support from BJA, the Justice Center, located in Brooklyn, New York, allows defendants to move expeditiously through the criminal justice system, while enabling them to access a wide range of services to assist in preventing further criminal action. In addition to adjudicating cases,

defendants, victims, and community members will be able to access a range of services offered at the Redhook Community Justice Center. Some services that will be offered include job training, medical care, legal services, family violence counseling, drug treatment, mediation, and victim services. The Justice Center also works with the AmeriCorp Project to assist in community development. For additional information, please contact Jeanne Santos, BJA, at 202/514-5440.

Guidelines for Victim-Offender Mediation and Dialogue: Over the last three years, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) has funded the Center for Restorative Justice and Mediation at the University of Minnesota to conduct a project entitled, "Guidelines for Victim-Offender Mediation and Dialogue." Through this project, training and technical assistance and related materials have been developed addressing victim-sensitive victim-offender mediation and dialogue. Victim-offender mediation is being used increasingly across the country, and it often maintains a strongly dominant offender orientation in the same way as our traditional justice system. Focusing primarily on the offender, however, can be unhelpful or even harmful to the victim. This project is designed to help practitioners balance the focus in a way that protects and nurtures the victims of crime who wish to meet face-to-face with their offender. The project has produced a training manual, national survey findings from 116 programs, a national program directory, several monographs and a videotape, and has provided training seminars for victim service providers and technical assistance for two state department of corrections' victim-offender mediation programs. For additional information, please contact Susan Laurence, OVC, 202/616-3573.

Community Impact Panels: The Office for Victims of Crime is cosponsoring with the Bureau of Justice Assistance a grant to the Fund for the City of New York to enable the Midtown Manhattan Community Court to conduct Community Impact Panels. The panels bring offenders convicted of "quality of life crimes" together with community residents who describe the impact of the crimes on their lives. This offers

residents/victims a chance to participate in the justice system in a meaningful way and also helps offenders better understand the consequences of their actions. For additional information, please contact Susan Laurence, OVC, 202/616-3573.

Restitution: Promising Practices Initiative: The Office for Victims of Crime is also sponsoring a project entitled, "Restitution: Promising Practices Initiative." The project, which is conducted by the American Probation and Parole Association, is examining existing obstacles to the effective management of restitution and identifying and describing a variety of promising approaches used in the criminal and juvenile justice systems to establish and enforce orders of restitution and to ensure that victims receive the payment. For additional information, please contact Susan Laurence, OVC, 202/616-3573.

Identifying Federal Programs to Support Returning Offenders: OJP is developing a list of federal resources that can help support state and local reentry programs. Plans include meeting with representatives from DOL, HUD, HHS, DOT, Agriculture, Education, and other federal agencies to draw them into our discussions as we move forward. For additional information, please contact Judy McBride, OJP, 202/307-5933.

The National Institute of Corrections' reentry efforts include:

Transition from Prison to the Community Program: The National Institute of Corrections' Transition from Prison to the Community Program will assist two states in developing a coordinated three-prong approach to effectively transition offenders from prison to the community. The recipient of an NIC cooperative agreement will work with prison officials, parole decision-makers, and field supervisors to coordinate their independent activities toward developing a smooth and effective process to improve offenders' post-prison adjustment in the community and enhance public safety. The participating states will develop and implement a coordinated strategy that involves prison programming, release decision making, and community supervision. For

additional information, please contact Kermit Humphries, NIC Community Correction Division, 800/995-6423, x 136.