

# Reengineering Reentry

## The Problem:

The number of released prisoners has increased in California more than in any other state in the nation. In 1980, 11,759 prisoners returned to their communities; less than 25 years later that number is 113,000, an increase of more than 1000%. In the Golden State, 65% of parolees end up back in prison within three years; nationally that figure is only 35%.

Many released prisoners are ill-equipped to live successful lives. Most have no vocational skills training, have not completed GEDs, and are ineligible for educational grants or welfare-to-work programs. They are disenfranchised, barred from public housing, and refused jobs because of their records. Facing hopelessness and obstacles, a parolee will violate probation or commit a new crime and land back in prison.

The intent of punishing rather than rehabilitating was to “get tough on crime.” But in reality, aggressive incarceration without effective reentry programs is inhumane for the prisoner, unsafe for our communities, and extremely expensive for all taxpayers.

At \$31,000 per prisoner per year, incarceration alone costs Californians \$900 million annually. The 2004-5 corrections

budget was \$6.25 billion. Yet with all the money we’ve spent, the likelihood of a former prisoner staying out of jail is no better than it was 30 years ago. Consequently, our parole system is known as a “revolving door” back to prison.

## The Solution:

How do we correct a parole system the California Little Hoover Commission called in 2003, “A billion dollar failure?” President Bush had the right idea in his 2004 State of the Union address, stating, “America is the land of second chance, and when the gates of the prisons open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.”

Successful reentry depends on having a system of services—housing, jobs, mentoring, meals, addiction treatment and mental health services—in place and immediately available to prisoners returning home. This can be achieved at a community level through the development and implementation of a data-driven, evidence-based strategic plan. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD), the Nation’s oldest and most respected non-profit criminal justice organization, has committed to work with communities in California to reengineer our systems of reentry and lower parolee failure rates.

## The Evidence-Based Strategic Planning Process First Reengineering Reentry Model Pilot Project: Santa Barbara County

Overview of goals--to develop a data-driven, evidence-based strategic plan for implementation in Santa Barbara County. This six-step plan will be developed over 6-9 months through a series of meetings in Santa Barbara County.

**Kick-off → Community Assessment → Community Planning → Approval of Action Plan → Community Mobilization and Education → Assessing Progress and Refining the Plan**

**Expected results**--Santa Barbara County will produce a solid blueprint to significantly lower the failure rates of returning prisoners, thus ensuring a much higher level of public safety for all of its residents. The Santa Barbara process will serve as a model for other counties as we roll out the project statewide.

**Progress in Santa Barbara**--We have completed the Kick-Off and Community Assessment meetings in Santa Barbara, which were attended by probation, parole, county sheriff departments, ex-prisoners, clergy, counselors, service providers, and local community members. We are now moving forward with the third step, Community Planning. The upcoming meeting is targeted for March. The date will be announced.

## **Prison Industry Authority Introduces Community Reentry Project**

The California Prison Industry Authority, in collaboration with the San Diego community, announced the kickoff of the "Community Reentry Project," a new program designed to enhance the integration of ex-offenders into the local workforce.

PIA's partners in the project include the San Diego County Sheriff's Department, Mental Health Systems Inc., National Steel and Shipbuilding Company, employers, and community and faith-based organizations. The project establishes an employment centered network of services that is facilitated by a team of transition coordinators.

The primary goal of the project is to reduce recidivism by coordinating and enhancing services available in the San Diego community. By assisting ex-offenders to obtain services immediately upon release from custody, they can avoid situations that foster re-offending. The project is built upon the "best practice" of beginning the development of a re-entry pathway for the parolee prior to release.

The project will use a wraparound case management model for client populations who need assistance with improving decision-making skills and are subject to "falling through the cracks" of the service delivery system. The wrap-around approach is client/family-centered, strength based, needs-driven, comprehensive, team-oriented, and requires individualized planning and services.

This reentry model will begin with an assessment for each client that is prepared as early as nine months prior to release. That assessment packet will be given to one of the transitional coordinators, who will then provide seamless wrap-around services, by coordinating with community partners to maximize successful reentry for each client. Clients will have received valuable pre-release services from PIA, and will discharge with assessment information.

MHS, which operates more than 100 mental health and alcohol and drug treatment programs in more than 70 geographical locations in 11 California counties, will provide coordination and provision of services and referrals to community-based organizations and faith-based organizations. MHS will also provide oversight and training of staff.

PIA and the San Diego County Sheriff's Department will provide in-custody training and job-readiness services and ensure program staff access to clients in custody. Parole and probation agencies will coordinate services with program staff to ensure mutual goals are met and program services do not overlap. Community-based organizations will provide alcohol, drug, mental health, housing, education, and other support services to clients.

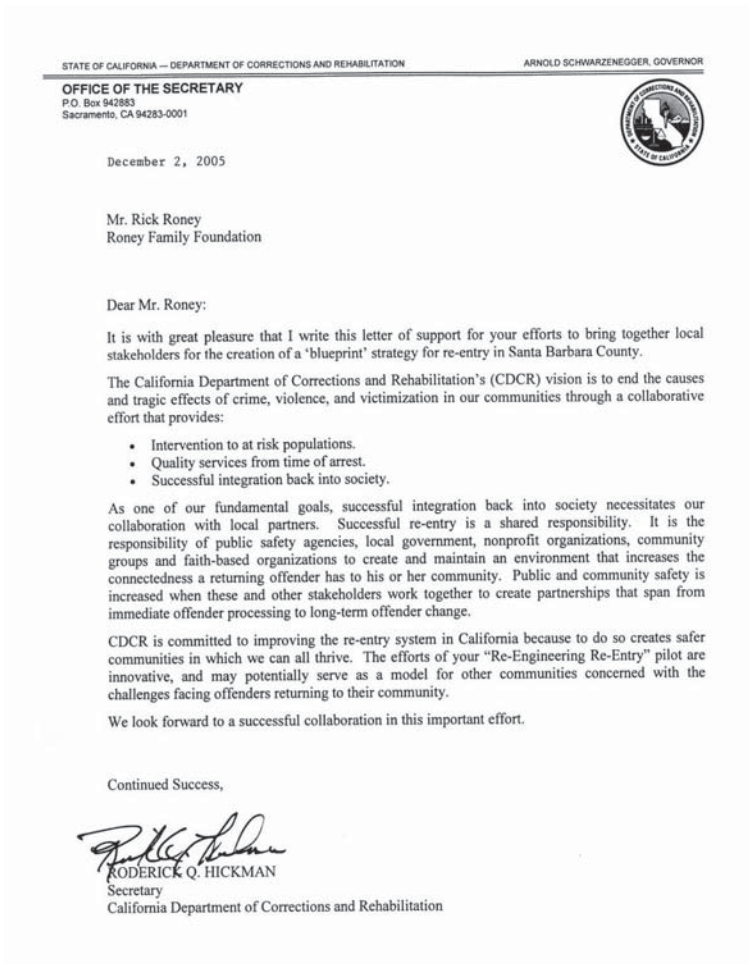
NASSCO, the only major ship construction yard on the West Coast is an example of an employer benefiting from the job training that is provided by PIA. NASSCO employs more than 4,000 staff and has been a major employer of trained ex-offenders for many years.

The next phase of the Community Re-entry Project will be a special conference titled, "San Diego County's Undiscovered Labor Resource," which is specifically designed for San Diego employers and will feature the benefits to employers of hiring ex-offenders. The free conference is scheduled for Oct. 20, in San Diego. The conference is endorsed by local elected officials, businesses and community organizations. For more information visit: <http://www.cce.csus.edu/cts/PIA/index.asp>.

"There is a renewed focus in California on assisting inmates with the reentry process. I am enthused about the rollout of the Community Reentry Project in San Diego because it provides new opportunities for our inmates to succeed on the outside," said Matt Powers, PIA General Manager.

"The Prison Industry Authority plans to replicate this same model in other regions in California. This is really an investment in public safety, because employed parolees mean safer communities." <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov>

*Reengineering Reentry is enthusiastically supported by CDCR Secretary Roderick Hickman....*



## Second Chance Act, S. 1934

### Proposed Bill Would Fund Reentry Programs

Congress is working on legislation to provide up to \$110 million in an effort to reduce the recidivism rate for parolees.

The Second Chance Act of 2005 is designed to enhance safe and successful prison reentry by promoting grants for programs that provide counseling, employment, and housing assistance.

The proposed provisions of this grant program of the Department of Justice would include: establishment of a national reentry resource center, creation of a federal reentry taskforce, and authorization of reentry demonstration and mentoring grants to states.

## *Little Hoover Commission Reports on Parole*

The Little Hoover Commission is a bipartisan, independent state body that promotes efficiency and effectiveness in state programs. Its November 2003 report, "Back to the Community: Safe & Sound Parole Policies Executive Summary," states:

"California's parole system is a billion-dollar failure. As the State built and filled prisons over the last 20 years, the number of felons who serve their time and are given a bus ticket home has swelled to 125,000 per year. But the real problem is that a growing percentage of these 125,000 are unprepared to get a job, steer clear of drugs and alcohol and find a home. Not surprisingly, before long most of those parolees are back on a bus to prison.

To read the full executive summary, go to: [www.lhc.ca.gov/lhcdir/172/execsum172.pdf](http://www.lhc.ca.gov/lhcdir/172/execsum172.pdf)

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This is the first edition of a regular newsletter designed to share information among Californians on improvement of reentry.  
We encourage you to contact us for more information.

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### NCCD Mission Statement

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency, founded in 1907, is a non-profit organization that promotes effective, humane, fair, and economically sound solutions to family, community, and justice problems. NCCD conducts research, promotes reform initiatives, and seeks to work with individuals, public and private organizations, and the media to prevent and reduce crime and delinquency.

### Suggested Reading List:

*But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*, by Jeremy Travis, published by Urban Institute Press, 2005.

*When Prisoners Come Home, Parole and Prisoner Reentry*, by Joan Petersilia, published by Oxford University Press, 2003.

*Life on the Outside, The Prison Odyssey of Elaine Bartlett*, by Jennifer Gonnerman, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.



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