



National Reentry Workforce Collaborative Inaugural Conference: **Building Connections for Change**

Bethesda, Maryland

October 18-21, 2022

Tuesday, October 18

3:00 – 6:30pm **Registration Open**

6:30 - 7:30pm **Welcome Reception**

Wednesday, October 19

7:30am - 5:00pm **Registration Open**

8:00 - 9:15am **Breakfast**

9:30 - 10:00am **NRWC Welcome & Opening Presentation**

10:00 - 10:30am **Keynote: Building Connection for Change**
Ken Oliver - *Executive Director, Checkr.org*

When we think about why we are here over these three days and the pathways we have committed to pave, Ken will remind us of the power in the timeless African proverb that says “If you want to go fast go alone, but if you want to go far, go together”. In the criminal justice reform and reentry community we always want to move fast and we often tend to move alone in our respective organizations. Part of that culture is driven by stakeholders without, and part of it is a culture we succumb to and choose from within. During this convening of national stakeholders and experts Ken will open up the conversation and challenge us to explore the power that exists when we choose to collaborate as catalysts to compel system change together. He will provide context for us to think in new ways about what is possible, about the outcomes and impact we can have as practitioners if we make the conscious choice to reimagine and reconstruct the reentry system together. During the keynote presentation we will hear about Ken’s own odyssey in the criminal justice and reentry system and the effect of an amazing collaboration of people that contributed to his remarkable trajectory since his release. We will also here about Ken and Checkr’s commitment to redefining the narrative and the way we hold and lift up justice-impacted communities and why he thinks NRWC’s work is vital for us to emerge from our silos to collectively join forces to build and hold the infrastructure needed to drive decarceration, recidivism, and the opportunities needed for those we serve to thrive.

11:00am - 12:00pm **Concurrent Sessions:**

A Road to a Better Future: Demand Driven Approaches for Second Chance Talent Pipelines

David Gianfrancesco - *Vice President of Strategy and Innovation, Safer Foundation*

Anthony Lowery - *Associate Vice President of Reentry Housing Services, Safer Foundation*

This session focuses on Demand Driven approaches for second chance labor market fulfillment, policy advocacy and education required for second chance hiring. We will center the needs of equity for returning citizens. The session will offer case studies of Safer Foundation’s demand driven approach to workforce development and its Safer Demand Skills Collaborative model. We will offer strategies needed to pave the way

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to opportunity for people with arrest and conviction records. It will also bring focus on the ways Safer Foundation addresses the need for holistic wrap around services that people with arrest and conviction records need to become stable enough to focus on training and employment.

11:00am - 12:00pm **Concurrent Sessions, continued:**

Parents on a Mission

Richard Ramos - *Founder, Parents on a Mission*

Children of incarcerated parents face profound threats to their emotional well-being. This is a unique and growing dilemma. However, these issues can be mitigated if the parent-child relationship can be strengthened during incarceration. Parents on a Mission is a parent leadership program that provides the principles and practices for building healthy parent-child relationships. Thousands of parents have gone through the POM curricula in several states with transformational impacts on their reentry experience. Participants will learn how POM is currently being used in Colorado, California, and Guatemala, and be provided an overview of the successes thus far. If incarcerated parents aren't equipped to reconnect upon reentry, the children remain the forgotten victims. POM is putting an end to the intergenerational cycle of system involvement by providing the tools to connect, heal, and transform relationships in communities.

Windows of Opportunity: Expanding spaces for youth voice, leadership, and councils in reentry programs

Heidi Comenetz - *Technical Officer, FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning*

David Williams – *Workforce Development Specialist, FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning*

In this interactive session, we will discuss the history and philosophy behind youth engagement and authentic youth-adult partnerships. We will uncover the unique benefits and challenges of creating and managing a leadership council with young adults who have been impacted by the justice system. In this session, you will also gain insights from a young adult on how to expand opportunities for young people by promoting positive youth development.

12:00 - 1:30 pm

Changing the Game on the Inside

Judge Stephanie Sawyer - *Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas*

Dorenda Hamarlund - *Workforce Specialist, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*

Cindy Villarreal - *Workforce Development Representative, Kansas Department of Corrections*

Lunch will be served at the start of this session.

This session features three initiatives that are designed to take a more rehabilitative/restorative approach toward preparing individuals who are incarcerated or impacted by the justice system to successfully reenter their community and the labor force. These initiatives challenge the status quo and provide alternatives to the traditional approaches that are penal in nature:

Resource-Based Sentencing and Supervision is a form of restorative justice that holds both judges and defendants accountable by requiring the judge to only order approved programs/opportunities that target the defendant's needs. Defendants are also held accountable to provide proof of program/ opportunity efficacy and completion by way of regular status hearings. All programs are fully vetted and re-vetted regularly for efficiency. How prison/jails can provide job readiness skills during an individual's incarceration and a "warm hand-off" to the workforce development system upon reentry to improve recidivism

rates? Pennsylvania Department of Corrections staff will discuss the Career Pathways approach implemented and Pathway to Success, a curriculum developed to help inmates/reentrants become “job ready” prior and after release. Strategies for connecting with employers, community partners, and other State agencies for continued success will also be shared.

Through an array of comprehensive strategies, Kansas Department of Corrections builds on the skills and employment history of incarcerated residents, to help them prepare for sustained livable wage employment after return to the community. Adult and higher education programs, including market relevant CTE; job readiness cognitive programs; private industry; work release; Career Navigators; Job Specialists; Career Centers, and ongoing plans for Career Campuses; all provide robust resources for job readiness. Ongoing independent evaluations reflect a powerful impact on reducing risk, increasing success, and contributing to the Kansas workforce.

1:45 - 2:45 pm

Building Momentum: Using the Science of Implementation to Measure and Scale Reentry Impact

Johanna Leal - *Director of Innovation and Implementation Capacity, Alliance for Community and Justice Innovation*

Reentry programs promise great results, but only to the degree that they are designed well and implemented as intended. There are a variety of science-based strategies and tools that can help reentry programs implement best practices, measure their own emerging practices, and intentionally align strategies and activities to build capacity and prepare for growth and sustainability. The purpose of this session is to demystify the science of implementation by reviewing the drivers of successful implementation and describing strategies that can improve implementation outcomes for reentry programs. This session will provide participants with a framework for learning and applying the best practices from the implementation research to their own programs.

This session will also introduce the NRWC Reentry Certification program designed to help practitioners and programs move beyond best guesses and good intentions to anchor their services to high impact strategies that are strength based and tailored to meet individual needs. By providing a best-practice model that helps practitioners and organizations balance innovation with science, the NRWC credentialing program allows for deeper understanding of which services are providing the highest impact and return on investment.

3:00 - 4:00 pm

Concurrent Sessions:

Creative and Effective Strategies In Direct Service Delivery

Dennis Richie - *Senior Director of Reentry and Young Adult Services, Goodwill Industries of Kentucky*

Philip Cooper - *ARC INspire Coordinator, Land of Sky Regional Council*

Marissa Guiseppa - *Director, Training & Employment, PathStone*

Community and faith-based organizations work tirelessly to serve people who are impacted by the justice system. As the organization implement programs, they learn what is most effective. In this session, we will learn from three community-based organizations, as they share forward-thinking strategies and approaches they believe are effective.

Butcher, Baker, Construction Maker: Sector Strategies for Reentry Employment

Patricia Gill - *Director of Workforce Development, National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation*

Damion Rodriguez - *Job Developer and Jobs Coordinator, PVJOBS*

Amy Landesman - *President, Amy Landesman Consulting*

Ron Boxx - *Director Reintegration Services, Center for Community Alternatives*

Balancing varied participant interests and employer needs can be, understandably, overwhelming. Utilizing a sector-based approach is an effective strategy to streamline and strengthen reentry employment efforts. You can match participant interests with related sectors and the labor market to identify needed training and meet employer needs. A sector-focused approach also allows you to work with associations and a broader network of employers – increasing your employment opportunities and building your reputation. Come learn more about local, regional, and national sector approaches.... from a national expert in sector approaches, PVJobs (LA), Center for Community Alternatives (Syracuse area, NY), and the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (7-state reentry initiative, 50 state workforce initiatives).

From Hospitality-to- Hardware-to-Health Care: this interactive session will allow you to share successes and lessons learned... And leave with some strategies and applications for your own work! (Fair warning: a couple of these presenters are pretty engaging and very enthusiastic... so you may come away inspired and you might even smile!)

3:00 - 4:00 pm

Concurrent Sessions, continued:

Federal Policies and Programs: REO, WIOA & "Community Repair"

Clarence Okoh - *Senior Policy Counsel, Center for Law & Social Policy (CLASP)*

This session will cover federal policies and programs that are designed to incentivize and/or support reentry workforce. The session will cover the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act and the Reentry Employment Opportunity program. The panel will take a critical look at each resource and educate the audience on its nuances. The panel will discuss recommendations that can improve their effectiveness, if properly applied. The panel will also discuss how federal funding investments such as REO can function as part of "community repair" paradigm—an investment-based, anti-carceral framework for reentry system legal and policy design.

4:15 - 5:15 pm

The Power of Partnerships - Doing Business with State Government

Ruth Coffman - *Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Corrections*

Kelly Evans - *Deputy Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*

Nicole Sullivan - *Deputy Secretary for Analysis, Programming, and Policy, North Carolina Department of Public Safety*

The best outcomes for people succeeding out of the criminal justice system come from meaningful, transparent, truly collaborative partnerships--with families, community organizations, service/treatment providers, employers, landlords, mentors, volunteers, faith community, and so on. This panel discussion will bring together representatives from state agencies to discuss ways by which communities are and can work with state agencies. Our panelists will discuss the paths agencies take regarding partnerships, collaborations, and contracting as well as the nuances that come with working with state government.

Thursday, October 207:30am – 5:00pm **Registration Open**7:30 – 8:45 am **Breakfast**9:00 - 10:00 am **The Business Case for Fair Chance Housing**Jeffrey Korzenik - Author, *Untapped Talent*

Economist and author Jeffrey Korzenik will discuss the economic trends that led to the current need for talent in the job market and how businesses can benefit from hiring people who have been impacted by the justice system. While conducting research for his book, *Untapped Talent*, Jeffrey traveled the country visiting and interviewing businesses and organizations that are engaged in fair chance hiring. As he continues to advance his work, Jeffrey states, “the key to successful fair chance hiring is a productive relationship between employers and reentry nonprofits.

10:00-10:30 am **Break - Meet Jeff Korzenik**10:30 - 11:45 am **Fair Chance Hiring Models**Ken Oliver - *Executive Director, Checkr.org*Golie-Lorenzo Green - *Senior Manager – Talent Programs | Organizational & Talent Development, Waste Management*Amy Weber - *Social Impact Program Manager, MOD Pizza*Drew Patterson - *Owner, Basic Industries*

Over the years many companies have created policies that excluded people with a criminal record from accessing job opportunities within their corporation. However, in the current economy where the demand for workers exceeds the supply, many companies are exploring second (fair) chance hiring opportunities. Fair chance hiring is an approach where companies change policies and make accommodations to hire individuals with a criminal record. Companies that succeed in fair chance hiring have established good systems of support to help individuals with criminal records navigate some of the collateral consequences. Many of these companies have done this through partnerships with community-based organizations.

In this session we will hear the stories of four companies that practice fair chance hiring. Each company is from a different industry, different in size, and are at a different phase of their journey. We will learn what motivates them to take this approach, and the unique benefits and challenges of fair chance hiring. The session will challenge other companies to consider the business case and moral reason for fair chance hiring and provide insight to community-based organizations that want to support companies in implementing this approach.

11:45 am - 1:15 pm **Featured State - Colorado**Cory Miskell - *Director, Colorado State, Latino Coalition for Community Leadership*Hassan Latif - *Founder, Second Chance Center*Ruth Coffman - *Deputy Executive Director, Colorado Department of Corrections***Lunch will be served at the start of this session.**

Colorado provides one great example of progress in the field of reentry. It is well known that across the country, communities of color and rural communities are often under-resourced and under-served. Colorado's community reinvestment approach has proven effective at driving resources into communities and organizations traditionally overlooked by government agencies. This approach leverages the strength of community-based organizations, government entities and intermediaries in creating an ecosystem of

positive change that puts the focus on the needs of community members as well as stewardship of public resources.

The bi-partisan legislation authorizing Colorado's community reinvestment initiatives provides an example of the positive impact such communities can have when they are equitably funded and supported as part of the overall continuum of community health and safety. Impacted community members, community and faith-based organizations, government agencies, policy makers, legislators, policy advocates, businesses and educators will find the multifaceted approach both engaging and innovative.

1:30 - 2:30 pm

Concurrent Sessions:

Economic Mobility for People Impacted by the Justice System

Lucretia Murphy - *Associate VP, JFF*

Chioke Mose-Telesford - *Director of Improving Practices & Outcomes, CSW*

Moving beyond a conviction can be challenging when policies and practices reinforce punishment instead of opportunity. People with records face discrimination in housing, health care, education and employment. Without these opportunities, individuals and their families face a struggle to survive for a lifetime. We can do better. In this session, we'll discuss strategies and practices that promote economic mobility for people with records so they can thrive instead of survive. We'll engage in dialogue around key questions:

1. What does it mean to change move beyond recidivism to reentry to economic mobility as the goal for people with records? What does it take to make sure that people can thrive and not just survive after a conviction?
2. What are the levers or strategies for change that promote economic mobility?
3. Are there strategies that need to be customized to ensure success?
 - a. For particular populations (e.g. youth vs. adults or women vs. men?)
 - b. For particular sectors (e.g. technology, health care)?
 - c. For particular regions (e.g. rural vs. urban)?
4. What questions remain in order to move your work forward on this issue?

1:30 - 2:30 pm

Concurrent Sessions, continued:

Entrepreneurship: Smart Tech Businesses Founded by Returning Citizens

Harley Blakeman - *Founder and CEO, Honest Jobs*

Andre Peart - *Founder and CEO, ConConnect*

Owning a business is one of the goals of many Americans. However, very few people step out of their comfort zone to undertake the difficult journey of starting their own business. This journey is even more difficult for people who have been impacted by the justice system. These individuals face many barriers to access capital, licensing, and other resources that are needed to start and thrive in business. Despite the difficulty, some have taken the "path less traveled" and have launched their own business. In this session we will hear the stories of two justice-impacted entrepreneurs who are developing successful businesses in the tech world.

2:45 - 3:45 pm

**Collaborative Workgroups
Employer Engagement**

The Employer Engagement Workgroup is a peer-learning group focused on exploring practices and approaches that build long-term relationships with employers; and resources that upskill, reskill, and support program participants to find and retain viable employment in in-demand industries. In the first phase of the Employer Engagement Workgroup, we developed the first iteration of an employer engagement toolkit. For the next phase, we will do two things:

First, we will look at “practice in action” by examining real life case studies of organizations that are doing great work in key areas of employer engagement. The areas we will examine are:

1. Using LMI to inform program design
2. Researching and finding new employers
3. Placement of first hire
4. Employee retention
5. Leveraging high turnover industries to upskill and reskill participants
6. Using a business advisory council to develop an active network of employers

Second, we will focus our attention on talent development. The goal of the group will be to answer the question, how do we develop and support a talent pipeline within a reentry workforce ecosystem from pre- and post-release to placement and retention in employment that leads to economic mobility? Similar to the first workgroup, we will develop a resource or suite of resources that captures the lessons learned

Collateral Consequences

The Collateral Consequences Workgroup is a peer-learning group focused on practices and policies that can help program participants find the information, resources, and tools they need to remove barriers to accessing training, education, employment, licensing, and other rights, benefits, and opportunities.

This workgroup will be focused on conducting a survey (environmental scan / landscape analysis) of the existing solutions to the most pressing collateral consequences that affect people with criminal records. The solutions that are identified will be uploaded to the NRWC Solutions Center and made available to practitioners in the field.

Program Improvement

The program improvement workgroup is a peer-learning group focused on exploring information, strategies, and approaches that can develop practitioners’ foundational knowledge of reentry workforce, and the skills they need to implement evidence-informed practices to strengthen program delivery. This peer-learning group will also explore ways to build program and organizational capacity to strengthen measurable outcomes and increase our collective impact.

This workgroup will conduct a scan of the reentry workforce field to determine the standard practices, languages, and outcome measures in the field. This workgroup will seek to establish common definitions to catalyze a process of establishing a baseline from which professionals in the field may operate.

2:45 - 3:45 pm

Networking Break: Building Connections for Change

For those who are not interested in involvement with the NRWC working groups at this time, you are invited to grab a cup of coffee and join fellow attendees to discuss what you’ve learned at the conference so far and collaborate on ways you can work together to influence positive change in the field of reentry workforce.

4:00 - 5:00 pm

From Incarceration to Transformation

Jeffrey Abramowitz, J.D. - *Executive Director of Justice Partnerships, JEVS Human Services*

Genevieve Rimer - *Director of Inclusive Hiring - Field Building, Center for Employment Opportunities*

Leo Alirez - *Executive Director, Life-Line*

This session will feature three reentry workforce professionals who have been impacted by the justice system. The panelists are experts in their field who have “walked the

journey" and are now committed to working with others who are impacted by the justice system, to change the trajectory of their lives. They will share their stories, the lessons they learn along the way, and the things they are doing in their work to help people across the country to transform their lives.

Friday, October 21

7:30 – 8:45 am

Breakfast

9:00 - 10:15 am

Inclusion & Equity for People Impacted by the Justice System

Margaret diZerega - *Initiative Director for Unlocking Potential, Vera Institute*

Nancy Eiden - *Founder, First Step Alliance*

Gabriel Torres - *Regional VP - Sales and Marketing, Comcast Freedom Region*

Cory Miskell - *Director, Colorado State, Latino Coalition for Community Leadership*

Access to resources and services such as housing, internet access, financial services, and education can be limited or outright denied to people who have been impacted by the justice system. This panel discussion will feature four organizations - the Vera Institute of Justice, First Step Alliance, the Latino Coalition for Community Leadership, and Comcast - that are working to address these issues within their communities.

10:30 - 11:45 am

Funders Panel: Trends in Grantmaking & Philanthropy

Jennifer Kemp - *Director, Division of Youth Services, U.S. Department of Labor's Employment & Training Administration*

Dylan Hayre - *Director of Criminal Justice, Arnold Ventures*

Andre Bethea - *Senior Policy Advisor for Corrections and Reentry, U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance*

Funding from philanthropic, government, corporate funders, and individual donors are critical to the success of reentry-workforce programs. The United States spends about \$85 billion in public dollars annually on prisons and jails. While there has been increased interest in supporting reentry services, funding for these services remains inadequate. In this session, we will discuss the trends in grant-making and philanthropy and identify the things reentry workforce organizations should consider as they plan, implement, and develop fundraising approaches to support their work.

11:45 am - 12:15 pm **Closing Message**