



FEDERAL INTERAGENCY

REENTRY

COUNCIL

Working together for safer, healthier communities

The Federal Interagency Reentry Council

An Overview

December 2011

Why Focus on Reentry?

1 in 100 U.S. adults behind bars

1 in 15 African American men incarcerated

95% will be released to the community

- More than 700,000 annual releases from state and federal prisons
- 9 million cycle through local jails each year

2 in 3 released prisoners will be rearrested within 3 years

- Half will be reincarcerated for new crimes or technical violations
- U.S. spends \$74 billion/year on corrections

Reentry is a Public Safety Issue, but Also:

An employment issue

2 in 3 men were working/financial contributors before incarceration. Incarceration substantially reduces earnings.

A public health issue

Individuals released from prisons and jails represent a sizable share of the US population carrying communicable diseases.

A housing issue

Homelessness is associated with a higher risk for incarceration and incarceration contributes to an increased risk of homelessness.

An education issue

Of the 20 fastest growing occupations, 13 require postsecondary education. Yet only 22% of prisoners have any postsecondary experience, compared to 51% of the general population.

Reentry is a Public Safety Issue, but Also:

A behavioral health issue

2/3 of people in prison meet criteria for substance abuse or dependence and 24% have a mental illness. Few receive needed treatment while incarcerated or after returning to the community.

A family/fatherhood issue

1 in 28 children has a parent behind bars. 1 in 9 African American children has a parent incarcerated.

A community issue

A large number of incarcerated people come from – and return to – a relatively small number of already disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Reentry is a Public Safety Issue, but Also:

A juvenile justice issue

Approximately 100,000 juveniles are released from custody facilities each year. 50% have not completed 8th grade; 66% never return to school. Juvenile recidivism rates are estimated at 50-75%.

A veterans issue

Over 200,000 veterans are incarcerated in the nation's prisons and jails. Among state prisoners, 30% of veterans were first-time offenders, compared to 23% of other state prisoners.

A tribal issue

American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) people are incarcerated at higher rates than the general population. Additionally, Indian Country unemployment rates average 49% with a high of up to 80%, depending on the reservation.

Reentry presents a major opportunity to improve public safety, public health, workforce, education, family, and community outcomes.

Reentry Council Inaugural Meeting - January 5, 2011



Cabinet-level Interagency Reentry Council

- Attorney General hosted first meeting on 01/05/11
- 7 Cabinet members and other Administration leaders in attendance
- Engaged and productive discussion
- Adopted mission statement and goals
- Substantial commitments made as result of the meeting
- Empowered staff – representing 19 federal departments and agencies – to work towards goals
- Bi-annual meetings (second meeting: September 27)

Participating Agencies

DOJ	DOL	ED	HHS	HUD
USDA	VA	DOI	DPC	WHFBN
FTC	OMB	SSA	OPM	USICH
IRS	ONDCP	CSOSA	EEOC	

Reentry Council Mission Statement

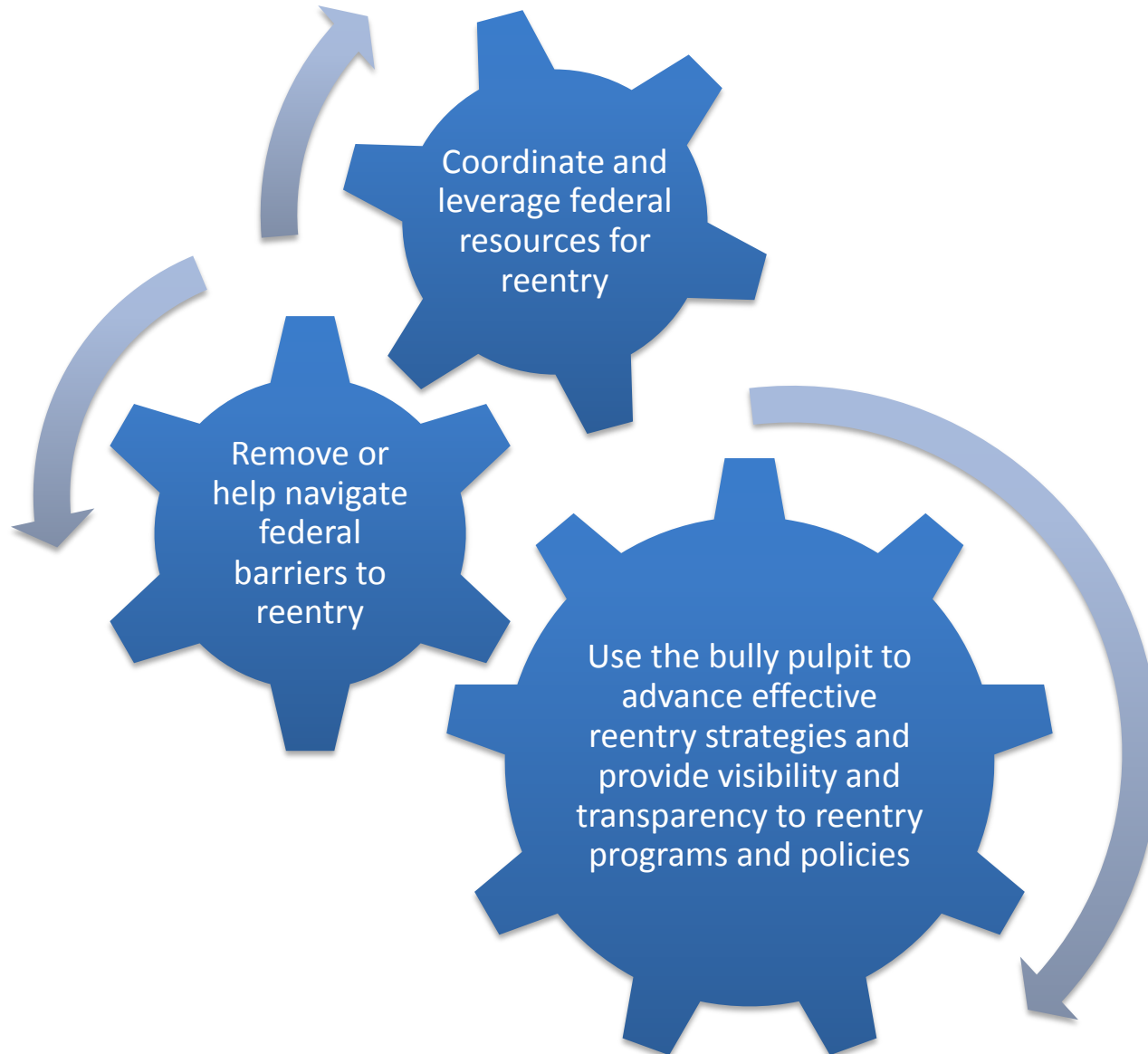
To support the Administration's efforts in advancing public safety and well-being through enhanced communication, coordination, and collaboration across Federal agency initiatives that:

1. Make communities safer by reducing recidivism and victimization;
2. Assist those returning from prison and jail in becoming productive citizens; and
3. Save taxpayer dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration.

Reentry Council Goals

- **To identify research and evidence-based practices**, policies, and programs that advance the Reentry Council's mission around prisoner reentry and community safety.
- **To identify Federal policy opportunities and barriers** to improve outcomes for the reentry population.
- **To promote Federal statutory, policy, and practice changes** that focus on reducing crime and improving the well-being of formerly incarcerated individuals, their families and communities.
- **To identify and support initiatives** in the areas of education, employment, health, housing, faith, drug treatment, and family and community well-being that can contribute to successful outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- **To leverage resources** across agencies that support this population in becoming productive citizens, and reducing recidivism and victimization.
- **To coordinate messaging and communications** about prisoner reentry and the Administration's response to it.

What Can the Reentry Council Do To Make an Impact?



The Reentry Council is working to
Coordinate and Leverage Resources

- ✓ **Inventoried/mapped federal reentry investments**
- ✓ **Collaborative Reentry Solicitations**
- ✓ **Interagency Reentry Researcher Network**
- ✓ **Juvenile Reentry Focus**
- ✓ **Reentry Policy Guidance and Toolkit for US Attorneys**

The Second Chance Act

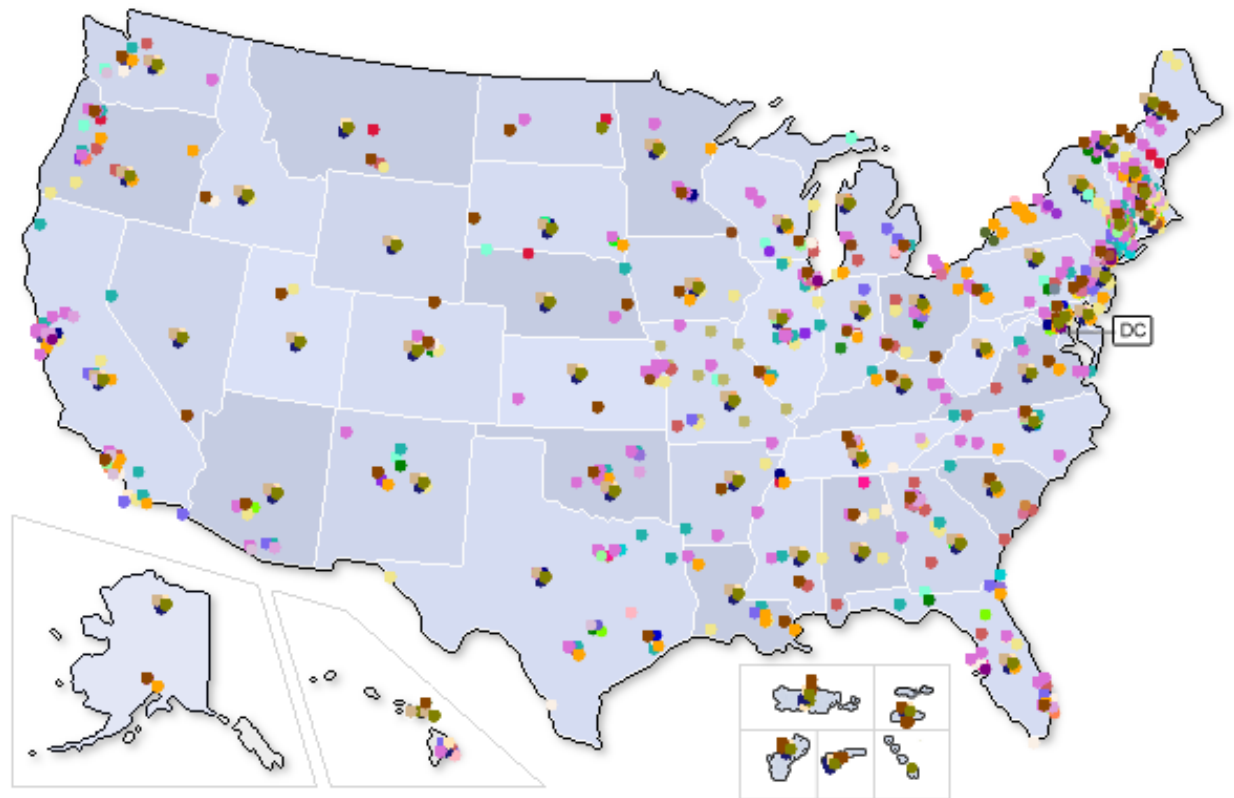
The Second Chance Act was signed into law by President Bush in 2008. The Act was designed to improve outcomes for people returning to communities from prisons and jails. This first-of-its-kind legislation authorizes federal grants to government agencies and nonprofit organizations to provide employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims support, and other services that can help reduce recidivism.

DOJ Second Chance Act Grants:

- \$25M in FY09 + \$100M in FY10 + \$83M in FY11
- \$63M in FY12 (yet to be awarded)
- 3,169 applications and 377 competitive grant awards to date
- National Reentry Resource Center www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org
- Research and evaluation
- What Works Library

The Reentry Council is working to Coordinate and Leverage Resources

National Reentry
Resource
Center
inventoried and
mapped major
federal reentry
resources
going to states
and localities



www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org

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The Reentry Council working to Address Federal Barriers to Reentry



Public Housing



Barriers to
Employment



Veterans

38,000

Collateral
Consequences



Access to Benefits

Using the Bully Pulpit to Advance the Reentry Agenda



The Reentry Council is working to Use the Bully Pulpit to Advance the Reentry Agenda



Reentry Council Website



Public Education Materials

www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/reentry-council

What are Myth Busters?

MYTH BUSTERS are a first product of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council.

They are fact sheets, designed to clarify existing federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated individuals and their families in areas such as public housing, access to benefits, parental rights, employer incentives, and more.

What are Myth Busters?

Each sheet addresses a common 'myth' about reentry, ranging from federal financial aid to employment issues.

It lists facts debunking the myth, answering common misperceptions...

...describes the details of each, including explanations of different state policies...

...and lists important suggestions and recommendations for readers.

At the end of the form, each sheet lists useful online resources.

REENTRY MYTH BUSTER!
A Product of the National Incarcerated Reentry Council

On Child Support

MYTH: Non-custodial parents who are incarcerated cannot have their child support orders reduced.

FACT: Half of all states have formalized processes for reducing child support orders during incarceration. Three-quarters of all states have laws that permit incarcerated parents to obtain a reduced or suspended support order.

Child support is an important responsibility for parents and non-custodial parents (NCP) to support and care for their children. Guidelines that take into account parents' ability to pay. Child support is often associated with incarceration because parents who are incarcerated are unable to pay child support. However, many states have laws that allow incarcerated parents to request a reduction or suspension of their child support orders. In the range of \$45,000 to \$20,000.

Half of all states have the ability to suspend orders during periods of incarceration and 25 States have implemented formalized processes to reduce child support obligations. However, incarcerated parents in most states, incarcerated non-custodial parents have to file a request for a review of their order before any adjustments or modifications can be made.

Examples of state processes for incarcerated parents include:

- Orders set aside on appeal (or imposed, income during incarceration) [17]
- If formal support agency notified that a non-custodial parent is incarcerated, it must review the order to determine whether it is appropriate under the particular circumstances (a modification is warranted) [18]
- Child support modified with respect to order, then modification request, and suspend enforcement. After release, a court hearing renews order. (NA)
- Order is suspended to avoid the parent's responsibility to pay child support for all time, do more months and extra less than \$200/month. [20]

For more information:
Reentry Facts
<http://www.reentryfacts.org>
State Child Support Agency (CSA) and Child Support Enforcement (CSE) and use of the online portal
<http://www.reentryfacts.org/child-support/>
Working with Incarcerated and Released Parents
<http://www.reentryfacts.org/working-with-incarcerated-and-released-parents/>

What is a REENTRY MYTH BUSTER?

This myth buster is one in a series of fact sheets intended to clarify existing federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. Each year, more than 700,000 individuals are released from state and federal prisons, another 500,000 enter the criminal justice system every year. The social and economic challenges they face are immense and long-term. Many families are unable to provide for the needs of their children and families.

Because reentry intersects with health and housing, education and employment, family, faith, and community well-being, many federal agencies are focusing on initiatives for the reentry population. Under the auspices of the cabinet-level Interagency Reentry Council, federal agencies are working together to enhance community safety and well-being, assist those returning from prison and jail in becoming productive citizens, and increase job participation by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration.

For more information about the Reentry Council, go to www.reentryfacts.org/reentry-council/

What topics are covered?

**CHILD
SUPPORT****FED'L
BONDING
PROGRAMS****SOCIAL
SECURITY
BENEFITS****PARENTAL
RIGHTS****TANF
BENEFITS****FED'L
STUDENT
FINANCIAL
AID****SNAP
BENEFITS****HIRING /
CRIMINAL
RECORDS****FED'L
HIRING
POLICIES****MEDICAID
ELIGIBILITY****VOTING
RIGHTS****VETERANS
BENEFITS****PUBLIC
HOUSING****WORK
OPPTY TAX
CREDIT****JUVENILE
RECORDS**

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On Public Housing

myth **fact**

Individuals who have been convicted of a crime are “banned” from public housing.

Public Housing Authorities have great discretion in determining their admissions and occupancy policies for exoffenders. While PHAs can choose to ban ex-offenders from participating in public housing and Section 8 programs, it is not HUD policy to do so. In fact, in many circumstances, formerly incarcerated people should not be denied access.

“As President Obama recently made clear, this is an Administration that believes in the importance of second chances – that people who have paid their debt to society deserve the opportunity to become productive citizens and caring parents, to set the past aside and embrace the future. Part of that support means helping ex-offenders gain access to one of the most fundamental building blocks of a stable life – a place to live.”

Letter from Secretary Shaun Donovan and Assistant Secretary Sandra B. Henriquez to public housing authority directors, June 17, 2011.



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410-0001

THE SECRETARY

June 17, 2011

Dear PHA Executive Director:

Each year, more than half a million people are released from prisons in the United States, and an additional seven million are released from jails. Research shows that ex-offenders who do not find stable housing in the community are more likely to recidivate than those who do, yet people returning to their communities from prison often face significant barriers to obtaining housing. Studies have also found that the majority of people released from prison intend to return to their families, many of whom live in public or other subsidized housing.

The Department is engaged in several initiatives that seek a balance between allowing ex-offenders to reunite with families that live in HUD subsidized housing, and ensuring the safety of all residents of its programs. To that end, we would like to remind you of the discretion given to public housing agencies (PHAs) when considering housing people leaving the criminal justice system. The Department encourages you to allow ex-offenders to rejoin their families in the Public Housing or Housing Choice Voucher programs, when appropriate.

Within HUD statute and regulations, there are only two explicit bans on occupancy based on criminal activity. PHAs must establish a lifetime ban on admission to the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs for:

1. Individuals found to have manufactured or produced methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing (24 CFR 960.204, 24 CFR 982.553); and
2. Sex offenders subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex offender registration program (24 CFR 960.204, 24 CFR 982.553).

Additionally, PHAs must establish standards that prohibit admission if the PHA determines that any household member is currently engaged in illegal use of a drug, or the PHA has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's illegal drug use, alcohol use, or pattern of drug or alcohol abuse may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. PHAs must also prohibit admission of an applicant for 3 years from the date of eviction if a household member has been evicted from federally assisted housing for drug-related criminal activity. In this case, however, PHAs retain discretion to consider the circumstances and may admit households if the PHA determines that the evicted household member who engaged in drug-related criminal activity has successfully completed a supervised drug rehabilitation program, including those supervised by drug courts, or that the circumstances leading to eviction no longer exist (24 CFR 960.204, 24 CFR 966.4, 24 CFR 982.553).

The Reentry Council working to Address Federal Barriers to Reentry



Public Housing



Barriers to Employment



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Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

April 18, 2011

Dear Attorney General :

Each year, more than 700,000 people are released from state and federal prisons. Another nine million cycle through local jails. Failed reentry policies impose high social and economic costs including increased crime, increased victimization, increased family distress, and increased pressure on already-strained state and municipal budgets. Because reentry policies intersect with policies related to health, housing, education, employment, family, faith, and community well-being, many federal agencies dedicate significant resources to addressing these policy challenges.

In January, the Obama Administration convened a Cabinet-level Reentry Council to focus on prisoner reentry policies throughout the federal government. This Reentry Council represents a significant federal commitment to coordinate our efforts and develop effective policies to address reentry challenges. Federal agencies are working together to promote safer and healthier communities, assist individuals being released from prisons and jails become productive citizens, and save taxpayer dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration. Collaboration among our agencies is already well underway and we look forward to working with you and your colleagues in other states to improve public safety.

The Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice has funded a comprehensive National Study on the Collateral Consequences of Criminal Convictions conducted by the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section (available at: <http://isrweb.isr.temple.edu/projects/acproject>). This study has catalogued over 38,000 statutes that impose collateral consequences on people convicted of crimes – an average of almost 700 per state or territory.

Collateral consequence statutes and policies impose additional burdens on people who have served their sentences, including denial of employment and housing opportunities, without increasing public safety in essential ways. Some of those restrictions, such as the prohibition on gun possession, serve meaningful public safety goals.

“Public safety requires us to carefully tailor laws and policies to genuine risks while reducing or eliminating those that impede successful reentry without community benefit. In evaluating the efficacy of your state’s collateral consequences, you have the opportunity to ease the burden on families and communities in your state by ensuring that people who have paid their debt to society are able to live and work productively.”

**Letter from Attorney General Eric
Holder to State Attorneys
General on April 18, 2010.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Holder".

Tackling Employment Barriers

- ✓ Review collateral consequences
- ✓ 5 Employment-related MythBusters
- ✓ EEOC Commission Meeting
- ✓ DOL Reentry Roundtable
- ✓ Training/guidance to grantees, staff, and contractors
- ✓ Analysis of federal hiring
- ✓ Employment barriers “Action Plan”

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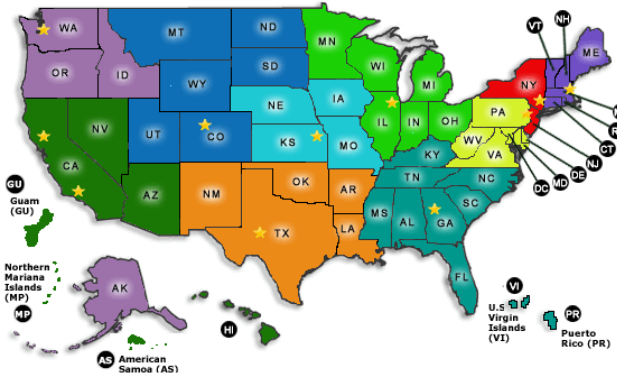


Access to Benefits

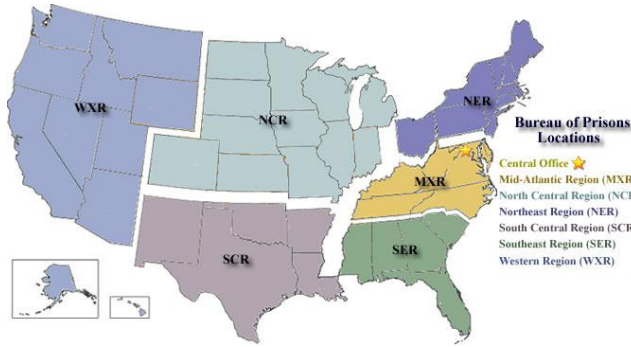
Access to Benefits

- ✓ **Administrative Policy Changes - VA**
- ✓ **10 benefits-related MythBusters**
 - Medicaid suspension vs termination
 - TANF, Social Security, VA, SNAP benefits
 - Student financial aid
- ✓ **Benefits “Action Plan”**
 - Points of Contact Map
 - IDs!!!

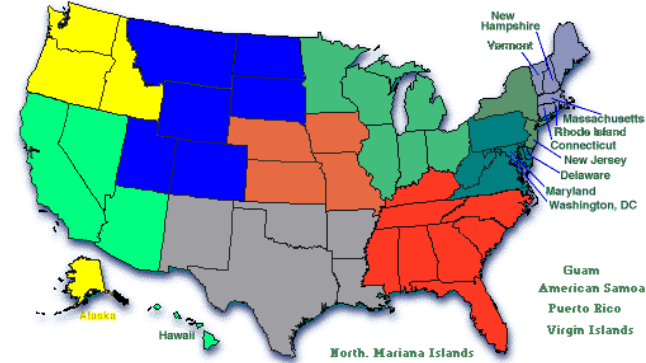
Developing Federal Contacts Network



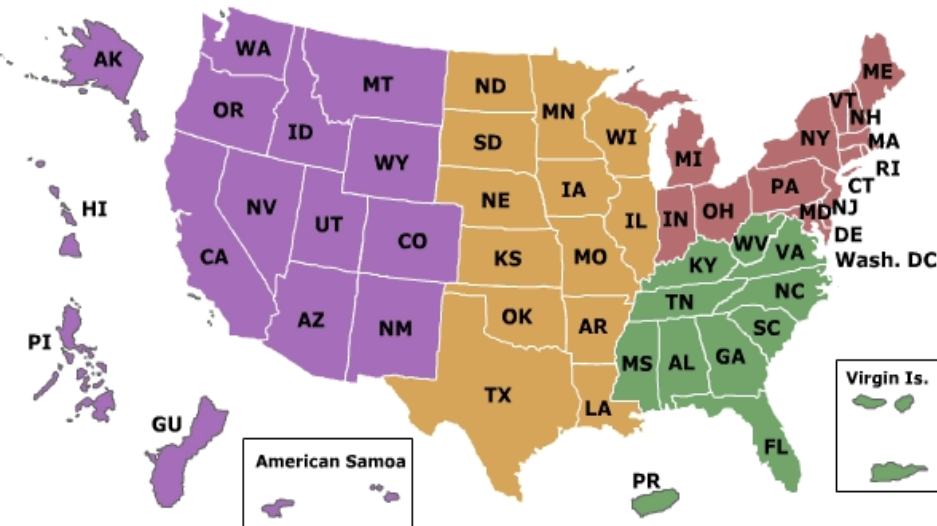
HUD



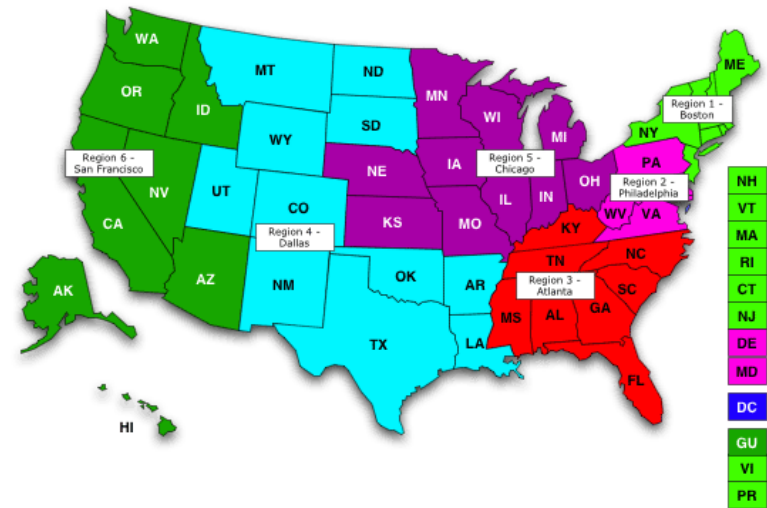
FBOP



Social Security



Veterans Benefits



DOL-ETA

Moment of Opportunity

- Bi-partisan interest/support at federal, state, local levels
- Cross-agency interest/support at federal, state, local levels
- NGOs/faith-based institutions engaged/demand high
- Public support for reentry so that individuals can work, pay taxes, rejoin families and communities
- Optimistic we can make a difference – reduce crime, strengthen families and neighborhoods

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