

PRISONERS RE-ENTERING THE COMMUNITY

Characteristics of Re-entering Prison Population

- Since 1998 about 600,000 people have been released from prison every year —about 1,600 a day.
- A 1989 study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that almost two-thirds of all re-entering prisoners are likely to be rearrested within three years.
- About one-third of all prisoners released are drug offenders and one-fourth are violent offenders.
- In 1998, 88% of re-entering prisoners were men and 12% were women.
- In 1998, 55% of all re-entering prisoners were white, 44% were African American, and 21% were Hispanics (any race).
- The median educational level of released prisoners is 11th grade.
- About three-quarters of re-entering prisoners have a history of substance abuse, and approximately 16% suffer from mental illness.

Preparation of Re-entering Prison Population

- Studies show in-prison programs help reduce recidivism among re-entering prisoners, but there is a shortage of vocational, educational, and substance abuse programs in prisons.
- In 1996, 6% of state prison budgets were allocated to support rehabilitative prison programs —vocational, educational, treatment —and 94% was spent on staffing, building prisons, maintaining and housing prisoners.
- In 1997, 27% of re-entering prisoners had participated in vocational programs and 35% had participated in educational programs.
- Of the re-entering prisoners with substance abuse problems, only 18% received treatment while incarcerated.
- More than 100,000 prisoners are being released each year without any form of community correctional supervision, although studies show that community supervision combined with some form of rehabilitative program following a prisoner's release helps reduce recidivism.

Sources: Urban Institute - Justice Policy Center and Bureau of Justice Statistics