

Day Two
Focus on Reentry

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SUMMARY

Reentry programs confront the reality that defendants sentenced to prison will eventually return to the community. Current data show that half of those released from prison will return to prison within three years. Some of the challenges many returning inmates face are substance abuse, finding full-time work, health problems, and broken homes. This panel focused on reentry programs that prepare inmates to overcome these barriers in their return as law-abiding members of the community.

To be successful, reentry programs must be intensive, and resources must be spent on those inmates who can best benefit. Successful programs must also establish ties with the community and continue beyond the end of incarceration through after-care programs. Such programs seem to have reduced recidivism and gained public support.

Panelists gave examples of several reentry programs operated through various federal agencies. The Department of Labor's Ready for Work Program is an employment-based, mentor-focused reentry program that has cut recidivism rates by 50 percent. The President's Reentry Initiative works with faith-based and community organizations to help inmates find job placements. This program has a 64-percent job placement rate and has reduced recidivism rates to 66 percent below the national average. Faith-based and community organizations often have high success rates because inmates are more familiar with the organizations that have ties to their own community, and these organizations often are more accessible, staying open longer hours and on weekends, and providing services that government agencies do not provide.

One of the BOP's most well-known reentry programs is its network of halfway houses called Residential Reentry Centers. These centers are operated by private contractors and have a 90-percent completion rate. Half of their residents have received residential drug treatment and are now receiving the after-care portion. These facilities are more costly to operate than minimum- or low-security facilities. Moreover, BOP studies indicate that an inmate can receive the full benefit of a Residential Reentry Center after only six months.

In addition to Residential Reentry Centers, the BOP also provides a number of programs to inmates in prison. These include vocational training, UNICOR, education, RDAP, and federal prison industries. All these programs are developed through an Inmate Skills Development Initiative, which is a multi-tiered process. This process begins with a needs assessment that determines what skills an inmate will need to acquire in order to return to society. Once these needs are identified, a skill development plan is established to place people in the programs they need.

FOCUS ON REENTRY

MS. FRIEDRICH: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to our next panel which is going to focus on reentry. As we've heard this morning, reentry is a broad concept encompassing a number of different areas including employment, education, housing, family and victims, just to name a few, and these of course present significant challenges for the communities as well as the offenders who are trying to reintegrate into the communities.

We have a panel of experts here who are going to provide an overview on reentry and also focus especially on programs within the Bureau of Prisons as well as faith-based programs. I am going to start by introducing the panelists and then have each speak for 15 minutes or so, and we're going to try to leave time for questions at the end, although we're running a little bit late, so that may be difficult.

To my left is Ms. Amy Solomon. She's a senior research associate at the Urban Institute. Her primary areas of concentration include prisoner reentry and problem-solving approaches to community safety. Ms. Solomon manages the reentry roundtable series and research partnerships with state councils and governor associations. She previously worked at the National Institute of Justice and managed a community service program for ex-offenders.

Scott Shortenhaus is a deputy director at the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the U.S. Department of Labor. In this role, he's responsible for helping manage several prisoner reentry initiatives, including the Ready 4 Work Program, the President's Prisoner Reentry Initiative, and the Beneficiary Choice Contract and Reentry Initiative. Mr. Shortenhaus previously worked as a policy advisor on Capitol Hill and for Governor Scott McKellen.

Jerry Vroegh is the administrator of the Community Corrections and Detention Services Branch at the Federal Bureau of Prisons where he's responsible for policy development of the Bureau's community-based reentry programs. Prior to assuming his current position, Mr. Vroegh served as executive assistant to Bureau director Harley Lappin, where he coordinated the Bureau's Community Based Substance Abuse Treatment Program and managed the Bureau's Community Corrections Office in Boston.

Ms. Donalee Breazzano has served as the administrator of the Inmate Skills Development Branch of the Federal Bureau of Prisons where she coordinates efforts to implement inmate skills development initiatives across the Bureau of Prisons. Prior to joining the Bureau over 20 years ago, Ms. Breazzano worked with high-risk, abused, and neglected youth in a variety of settings and she developed alternatives to incarceration for several national nonprofit organizations.

With that, I will turn it over to Ms. Solomon.

MS. SOLOMON: This is for the reentry diehards right after having a lunch presentation. I think I may be able to skip through some of what I've got because I think it was covered so well during the lunch presentation, but quickly we'll go through some overview material and hear about some other aspects and programs.

So let me just start with what I'm going to cover, very briefly go through the scope of the problem, and then I want to tell you some reasons why I'm optimistic that we can do things better than

we have in the past and are well on our way. I'm just going to end with a few thoughts about what to make about all the momentum on reentry and then maybe with some resources.

This chart shows the number of admissions going to state and federal prisons over the last 30 years, and as you can see, in 1977, about 150,000 people were admitted to prison, and about 150,000 people were released from prison, and over the last 30 years that number has quadrupled, so now in 2006, we had over 700,000 people who were admitted to and released from prisons in this country.

Obviously, this growth has happened incrementally, and that's why I think that some of the conversation about reentry and this explosion of people getting out of prison is overdramatic, because this really has been a gradual trend. But it is astounding that it wasn't until 1999 or so, where we are very far along on this curve, when we started acknowledging the fact that for all these people we're putting in, they're all going to come back, on average about two and a half years later, and we need to think about how we address—or what's going on while they're in prison and what's going on when they get out.

So this 700,000 number is only people coming out of the state and federal prisons. Once you take into account the local jail systems, which we really hadn't done until recently, that adds another 12 million people who are coming in and out of jail facilities each year, so we have many, many opportunities to take advantage of the opportunity of preparing people for release so that they are better able to be successful when they get out.

The cost of all this incarceration and reentry is high. We know from the Bureau of Justice Statistics that two-thirds of people who are released from prison are rearrested for a felony or a serious misdemeanor within three years of release and half are re-incarcerated, either for a new crime or for a technical violation. The fiscal impact is great. I know we've talked about this over the last couple of days, but \$60 billion is spent on corrections alone by states and counties, and that's compared to nine billion dollars in 1982, so these numbers are just enormous and continue to rise, and there are enormous social implications to incarceration increase as well.

We heard in this panel about the individual challenges. Substance abuse is high. About three-quarters face severe substance abuse issues and would benefit from treatment. Unemployment is high, wages are low. We know from our studies at the Urban Institute that about a third of people getting out are able to find work in the first few months out, and only a quarter are able to find full time work, so there's major unemployment and underemployment issues with this population.

The health of prisoners is worse than the general population. We know that in terms of infectious diseases, HIV, hepatitis C, TB—the rate of infection is five times as great for the prison population as for the general population, and housing is unstable as well. And so, we know that there's a high prevalence of these problems among the inmate population. There are some in-prison interventions, but as we just heard, there's more in the federal system actually than in the states, and there's more in the states than in the local systems, so there's so much more that we could do to get more good evidence-based interventions in these facilities. And we also know from the evidence that the aftercare is key, and there's even less of that now than there is in the facilities.

Reentry impacts families and communities as well. Just looking at children for a moment, there are a million-and-a-half kids who have a parent who is incarcerated in state or federal prison. That's two percent of all minor kids in the U.S., and when you look at African-American kids, it's seven percent of

all of those children. And when you widen the net to go beyond prisons and look at people who are in jails, on probation and parole, seven million children have a parent who is caught up in the system on any given day. That's ten percent of all minor children under 18. We don't even have numbers for the percentage of African American kids who have a parent in the system, but it's much higher than that, and I think what these numbers say to me is that this is no longer a fringe issue. This is a mainstream issue in a lot of the most hard-hit communities around the country.

And that goes to the third bullet, that returning prisoners are concentrated in relatively few already disadvantaged communities. We have mapped where prisoners are going in many, many states and cities at the Urban Institute, and again and again, we find that a disproportionate share is going to a relatively small number of neighborhoods. In Chicago, for example, about five percent of the neighborhoods are home to about 36 percent of the prisoners, so it's looking at and thinking about the neighborhood impacts of reentry and how we can work with neighborhood institutions to do more.

So this the big question. Given that they all come back, given that the business-as-usual approach is not getting us the results we want, how can we increase the odds that when people are incarcerated and released that they're going to be less likely to reoffend, more likely to work, to stay sober, to support their families and be productive members of society?

We don't know all of the answers yet. I think you've gotten that message at this conference, but I think there are a lot of reasons to be optimistic. The first reason I want to talk about is that our knowledge base is growing. There are two, the evidence-based practice knowledge base and what works. The body of research tells us that reentry programs need to take place mostly in the community, so everything that happens in a prison has got to be backed up with community-based aftercare, or it's not going to be effective.

Reentry programs need to be intensive. They should take up a good portion of a person's time and last at least for six months. They should be focused on high-risk individuals. We should not be spending our resources on the lower-risk people. We should be focused on high-risk people who have been assessed as high risk by some validated instrument, and we should use cognitive behavioral treatment techniques, try and match the therapies with the learning styles of the individuals, provide as much employment and vocational training opportunities as we can, and this is really hard for us in the criminal justice system, but we need to provide more positive reinforcers than we do negative because we've been shown through the research that they work better.

I think Steve Aos was here yesterday and spoke about the Washington State report so I'm not going to go through this, but I will say that this is one of the best user-friendly reports that I have seen and does such a good job talking about what works and what doesn't, and how states can change their portfolios of what they're doing to actually make a dent in their prison construction, forecast their crime rates, and their criminal justice costs.

So I think that there's a lot of good news here, but I can't move through this piece without saying that there are a lot of cautions. There is no magic bullet out there. I think that we know that or we would be doing something differently, but for all we know about what works, I think that we have a lot left to learn. The reductions that we're seeing, even in programs that work and are cost-effective, still aren't as big as we'd like to see, and they don't last for as long as we'd like for them to last. Even the best programs right now are reducing recidivism by about ten, 15, 20 percent.

Only a tiny fraction of the reentry programs have been evaluated. I mean, miniscule, less than one percent, and even those evaluations, the best of them are mostly looking at programs and not strategies, not larger scale collaborative comprehensive strategies, and I think that Pam Lattimore spoke yesterday about this reentry evaluation and initiative, and I think that that evaluation should shed some light on not just if a substance abuse program can work, but what it means when people are working together across disciplines to try and make the change here.

My second reason for optimism is that surprisingly the voting public is very supportive of reentry planning. The National Council on Crime and Delinquency commissioned the Zogby polling group a couple of years ago to poll 1,000 voters, and what they found was that about 80 percent said that they were concerned about returning prisoners. The vast majority, 87 percent, said that they thought it was part of the job of prisons to attempt to rehabilitate prisoners. Only a small share thought that criminality was inherent, but rather only 20 percent said that “once a criminal, always a criminal.” All of the rest of these people thought that prisons should be providing services. You see on this chart here, 70 percent thought that prisons should be providing—or states should be providing services for prisoners while they’re inside and after release, and it was only 11 percent who said that the only role of the state should be to provide punishment and to not follow up with service provision.

When asked when services should begin, 44 percent thought they should begin right at sentencing, right at the front end. About 27 percent said that it should begin about a year before people are released, and only one percent here said that services and reentry planning should never start. You can see here that lack of skills, the prison experience itself, and obstacles, barriers to reentry were noted as major reasons why people were not successful and re-arrest rates were so high.

So reason for optimism number three is that, surprisingly, ex-offenders are very, very positive about their prospects when they get out. We have interviewed hundreds and hundreds of prisoners in several states before they get out, and then three times once they’re in the community, and we hear over and over again that they have high expectations about what’s going to happen when they get out. They expect and receive support from their families. They say that they’re going to be successful at giving up their friends and hang outs that lead to trouble. They report high spirituality. They say they’re in good health. They think they’re going to be able to avoid drugs, to get a job. They respect their p.o. Overwhelming numbers. They’re very positive about what they can accomplish.

And our take on this is that it’s a double-edged sword. Prisoners need to come out with more of a reality check. They need to be prepared to handle the barriers and disappointments they’re going to face. But we also think that there’s something to build on here, that it’s important that we take advantage and give prisoners the skills and the services they need at a time when they are most likely to take advantage of them.

National momentum, we just heard at this last panel—I’m not going to go through it, but there is so much momentum around reentry. It is broad based. It’s bipartisan. It’s happening at the federal level, the state, the city, the county, and the neighborhood level. It’s happening with criminal justice people, housing, workforce development. It’s happening in the research community and with the policymakers and practitioners. There is a lot of reentry activity underway, and that is very encouraging.

So in terms of what we make of all this, I think that it’s clear that the reentry issue is large-scale and it’s complex. Our knowledge base is growing about what to do about it, but we have a long ways to

go. There's a lot of bipartisan support and business-as-usual around this issue. It is changing. At the same time, it's sobering to see how hard it is to change business-as-usual around how we incarcerate people and how we release them.

Some of the states that are most advanced in this are saying to us, "We're about halfway there," and they've been at it for years. This is really hard. It's hard to take up the scale from a program to a way of doing business, and to have a really big impact in a short amount of time, and that gets the last bullet here, which is that I'm very optimistic that we can make these big changes, but it's going to take a sustained effort, and we're going to have to stick with it for a few years to get the results that we're hoping for.

My last comment, which I added about midnight last night, is that I think that we've been so successful in getting reentry on the table and part of a bipartisan conversation because it has not been linked at all to sentencing. The starting point has been: they all come back. They're all coming out. We are not going to talk about sentencing. We're not going to talk about prisons. We're not going to talk about punishment. Let's just take as a starting point the fact that a lot of people are coming out and if we don't do better with them, we're going to continue to face the same results that we've got today, and it's allowed people to think clearly about this issue without getting into all of the, you know, sentencing, "tough on crime, soft on crime" debates.

I will say that—and we heard this on the last panel—I think that we're entering a different moment. I think the pressure on state budgets, the new awareness about how costly it is to incarcerate people, and how the projection for more prisons continue to rise even as crime is down; I think it's opened up in a lot of states a new dialogue and a new hope that we could actually simultaneously hold people accountable in the community, at least for a part of their sentence, that we could protect the public, rehabilitate offenders, repair harm to victims and communities and save money. I think that's a new conversation for our field and certainly for the reentry people, and I think that that's exciting.

So if anyone wants—I have some copies of the slides with references and where some resources are on this topic. Thanks.

COMMISSIONER FRIEDRICH: Thank you, Ms. Solomon. Our next speaker will be Mr. Shortenhaus.

MR. SHORTENHAUS: Well, thank you and good afternoon. It is a real pleasure to be with you all to speak on this topic of prisoner reentry. My presentation today is going to be about prisoner reentry through faith-based and community organizations and a couple of programs at Labor that we've been operating for the last six years where we really dug into prisoner reentry.

Okay, so I'm right away starting to skip over the background on the statistics on unemployment, since Amy set us up really well, and talk a little bit about what we are focusing on at Labor. Prisoner reentry at Labor, especially within the last seven years, really started with a conversation that my boss at the time, Brent Orrell, had with some inner city pastors in Chicago, and he was talking to them about their deepest felt need. He asked, "What is it? What do you feel that you are most ill-equipped to handle over the next several years?"

And they said exactly what Amy was talking about, and that is that these men and women are coming back to our ZIP codes, in downtown Chicago, especially on the south side, on the west side, and we're ill-equipped to handle them. We're ill-equipped to handle many of the needs that they have, whether it's job training or housing or mentoring or substance abuse, and from that grew out the Ready 4 Work Program and from that grew the President's Reentry Initiative.

All of our reentry programs at Labor are employment driven. We believe that the best social service at Labor is a job, and our grantees focus on job training, job placement, and job retention. Mentoring is also a focus, and I'm going to talk a little bit about mentoring later but we really see mentoring as a key component of prisoner reentry with faith-based and community organizations, and also they're results-focused. [Inaudible.] As you'll see from some of the data that I give you today, we are intent on collecting quite a bit of data from these organizations as well.

So why faith-based and community organizations? Why? Why reentry through these entities? Amy mentioned a couple of important things that are part of the reason why we're really going to them. These are connections to communities, and this is the aftercare that many people are looking for. These organizations have an established, entrusted presence: in the communities with many connections to employers and other service providers.

Labor also administers the one-stop career centers and we oversee them, and oftentimes you'll see a one-stop on one side of the block and a faith-based or community organization on the other side, and many ex-offenders will be drawn to the latter for services. We're curious as to that. We haven't done any formal studies, but we ask why, and many of them will say, "Well, I grew up near that. I mean, my aunt goes there, my grandmother goes there. I'm very well connected to that church or that synagogue. They know me there and I know them there." Many pastors are engaging their congregations in prisoner reentry, and they have many people in their congregations who have been affected by the criminal justice system, and they know people who are there, and they're motivated to engage in this issue.

A compassionate vision in human capital to provide holistic services. Many of these men and women are motivated by different factors. Maybe it's their faith in others, and the amount of volunteer mentors that these organizations can marshal is quite, quite interesting. They're flexible. Many of them are open when most government agencies maybe wouldn't be (for instance, on evenings or weekends), and they're able to provide a variety of social services to get a bigger and stronger social safety net.

So in the interest of time I'm just going to mention the highlights of the Ready 4 Work Program. Ready 4 Work was our first foray into reentry through faith-based and community organizations, and it was a three-year project from 2003 to 2006. We funded 11 faith-based and community organizations across the country to do employment-based, mentor-focused reentry, and here's what we saw as far as the results.

Almost 5,000 participants were served in the program, 64 percent were mentored, and I'll talk a little bit about that in a minute, 86 percent received job training. Of those who were enrolled, 57 percent were placed into employment and 63 percent retained their jobs for at least three consecutive months. We at Labor were looking at that as pretty significant with this population as far as employment and retention.

The average cost is \$4,500 per participant, and our recidivism rates were 2.5 percent at six months, and this means return to state or federal institution, and at one year at 6.9 percent. What we're seeing on recidivism is this: we're cutting the BJS averages by about 40 to 50 percent with the BJS benchmarks, and I just followed an evaluator, so I want to say it's important to know that we have not done an impact evaluation on this. So clearly, it very well could be that these men and women were motivated by the fact that they chose to go to an organization in the first place.

But when you look at the six-month release mark, the Department of Justice benchmark is five percent, so we're exactly 50 percent, and I think if you look at the one-year point, it's about 14 percent, so we're about between 35 and 40 percent lower than BJS benchmarks at the time—or at six months and one year.

So these are the things that we're learning, and I'm just going to talk about a couple points on the things that we're learning through Ready 4 Work and PRI. The first is the effect of mentoring. We established Ready 4 Work, the mentoring program. Within it is a caring relationship with a volunteer from the community who assists the offenders with their reintegration back into society. And what we saw as far as results go: is that mentored participants remained in the program longer, about three months longer. Non-mentored participants were in for seven months; mentored participants were in for about a little over ten months.

Mentored participants were twice as likely to obtain a job, and the last bullet, they increased the odds of retaining employment by more than 50 percent. So what we've seen is that when we slice and dice the data—and we haven't done it on recidivism yet. We're looking forward to doing that shortly. But we're seeing that mentored participants do well in terms of program participation and do better in terms of entering and retaining employment.

The next thing I really want to talk about is the employment portion of reentry in terms of faith-based community organizations. Being from the Department of Labor, people come up to us all the time and say, "Why can't you make these businesses hire these men and women with criminal records?" When we started the Ready 4 Work Program, we had two employer-focused groups where we brought men and women together from small, medium, and large businesses and said, "What will it take to hire these men and women? Is it the Federal Bonding Program or is it the Work Opportunity Tax Credit?"

And the large majority of them said, "It would be neither of those, but instead it is a caring, mediating presence in the lives of these men and women, someone who can vouch for them as they return from prison into society. It's somebody who I can call when they don't show up to work on time. It's somebody who we've got a track record with and a history with." And that's kind of how we developed Ready 4 Work and the President's reentry initiative and the mentoring component.

Employers said, "We're looking for basic skills, a good work ethic, people who can work well on a team, answer to a boss, and work with their coworkers. We'll teach them the hard skills. We'll teach them how to weld, or we'll teach them how to build a house, or we'll teach them manufacturing, or whatever." And so, these are some of the things that we are learning, we're putting into place, and seeing through our different prisoner reentry programs.

So the last program I'm going to talk about is the President's Reentry Initiative. From Ready 4 Work grew the President's Reentry Initiative, which is a larger scale reentry program through faith-based

and community organizations. To date, we've invested about \$115 million. Probably by the end of the administration, that will grow up to about \$150 million. There are three generations of PRI and it gets very convoluted, so I'm just going to talk about our first generation, which has been in existence now for about two years and three months. I'll talk about the results we're seeing there.

By the end of December, we'll probably have awarded about 60 to 70 awards, but I'm specifically going to talk about the 30 awards to 20 states. I'm going to talk a little bit about Second Chance, and just a quick note on that, as I know there might be congressional staff here, or folks who are interested in Congress. In the Second Chance Act, in Section 212, this program, the President's Reentry Initiative, was authorized, and we're looking to get it funded now through appropriations, so it's something that does have a direct link to the Second Chance Act.

So in April of 2005, we ran a solicitation for faith-based and community organizations across the country. We said that it's a four-year program, with an average annual award of about \$660,000 per year to organizations, and for 30 awards we had 550 applicants of organizations that said they would like to provide these services. We chose 30 of them, and here's a map of where they're located across the country.

As I said, they're in the middle of their third year of funding. I just want to talk a little bit about the data that we see from the President's Reentry Initiative. This actually is a little outdated. I just checked their data as of last Friday. They've served about 14,500 participants in the program. What we're seeing is that about 88 percent were unemployed at program entry; 50 percent have less than a high school degree. About 9,400 participants at present have been placed into jobs, which is about 64 percent of the men and women who are enrolled in our program, and the nine-month retention rate is about 60 percent, so of those who have been placed into jobs, 60 percent have kept those jobs for at least nine months.

The one-year recidivism rate is about 66 percent below the U.S. national average, and we measure recidivism in this program as rearrest at one year post-release. The BJS average is 44 percent, and what we're seeing with the PRI is that it's about 15 percent. Actually, it's recently changed to 16 percent, but it's still hovering at about a third of the national average.

Actually, my time's running short and so I'm not going to go through all of the data of the participants who are in the President's Reentry Initiative. We have it broken down by gender, race, age, educational background, criminal status, job placements, *etcetera*, but I'm just going to close by mentioning a couple things.

There are other administration programs that utilize faith-based and community organizations to provide services to either men and women returning or their children. One is Access to Recovery. Another is Mentoring Children of Prisoners, and those all can be found on the different websites within the Department of Justice, Department of Labor, and Department of Health and Human Services.

At Labor we've created two documents. We created two documents for faith-based and community organizations involved in reentry, so for those of you in your particular jurisdictions who might be working with these organizations, one is a prisoner reentry tool kit on how to create or enhance your reentry organization. It's a 101 or a 201 on case management and working with employers and mentoring and job placement and retention.

And the second one is a mentoring manual on how to mentor adult ex-offenders, which is a little bit different. Usually when you hear mentoring, you hear it with juveniles. Here we're talking a lot more about mentoring adult ex-offenders in a lot of programs, so my contact information is there, and I look forward to the Q and A. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER FRIEDRICH: Thank you. Our next speaker is Mr. Vroegh.

MR. VROEGH: Thanks. Good afternoon, and I have a big surprise for you this afternoon, and that's a short presentation, okay? So yes, I knew I'd get some applause for that.

I am Jerry Vroegh. I'm from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and I want to tell you a little bit about what we're doing in our halfway houses, our residential reentry centers as we started calling them about a year and a half ago. A lot of this information is statistical. I'll also tell you a little bit about the programs that our halfway houses operate.

There is a picture of our halfway house population last month. We had about 9,560 offenders in our halfway houses, and this is a breakdown that shows you that about 84 percent of them were in residential placement at the halfway house and about 16 percent on home confinement.

The Bureau of Prisons itself does not deliver halfway house services. All of the services are delivered through contracts of various types. They range from ten-year performance-based contracts to five-year compliance-type contracts to intergovernmental agreements, so sort of a hodgepodge of some 260 contracts scattered all across the country. They range in size from anywhere from 350 here in the District of Columbia to five beds in Butte, Montana. So our goal, of course, is to try and get services for inmates as close as possible to where they will eventually be released.

In terms of program participation, that pie shows you—the turquoise piece shows you the number of inmates who are actually Bureau of Prisons's inmates. The blue piece represents offenders who are under USPO supervision, and then there's also a tiny slice there which represents the programs that we have, community-based, that are for our pregnant females and just a sprinkling of direct court commitments.

One thing I did want to point out and sort of follow up on is what Amy said about how programs that begin in the institutions need to continue when inmates go out to the community. Of the turquoise piece, those are Bureau of Prisons inmates in halfway houses. About half of them have gone through residential drug treatment in our institutions and in the community and are now participating in community-based treatment services, so that's always a statistic that kind of surprises me—that fully half of our inmates in our halfway houses have gone through residential drug treatment and are receiving community-based treatment services as well.

Those who have co-occurring disorders such as mental illness or need sex offender treatment also receive those services through this transition to drug abuse treatment programs.

This is some information that looked at calendar year '06. This is the last period of time that we have information for, and this looks at outcomes. We looked at all of the inmates who entered our halfway houses during calendar year '06, so we had to wait until July of '07 to look at the outcomes of those who had come but didn't get there until December, so that's why I don't have the '07 figures yet.

But 24,891 BOP inmates entered RRC programming, and here again we're looking just at BOP inmates and not offenders under USPO supervision.

Of that number, 22,401 succeeded, if we define success simply as not escaping or not being sent back to prison, so that represents about 90 percent. So about 90 percent of the inmates who were transferred from BOP institutions to halfway houses successfully completed those programs.

About 1,941 inmates failed, 27 of them for programming violations. That was almost all about accountability and failure to comply with sign in and sign out procedures, things like that; 22 percent failed because of alcohol use, and 19 percent due to drug use. And then escapes, 549, so that constitutes, between the escapes and the failures, about ten percent of the inmates that were transferred from institutions to halfway houses.

There's been a lot of talk about money at this symposium and so I thought I'd give you a little idea of how much money we are spending on halfway houses in the Bureau of Prisons. This is in FY07. We spent almost \$210 million on halfway house services. This is no chump change. This is a significant investment for the Bureau of Prisons and indicative of the support that our director and our executive staff give for these programs. The bars show you the difference between the cost, the per capita cost of what it costs to keep an inmate at a minimum-security facility, a low-security facility, and a halfway house.

And as you can see, halfway houses are more expensive than either minimum or low security facilities, so this should dispel once and for all the myth that it is cheap to keep inmates in community-based programs. It is not. These are expensive services and they should be. We are buying an expensive service. Reentry is not cheap, but this shows you—and I expect our FY08 figures will be even more dramatic where it will show what the costs of our halfway houses, given that these contracts keep coming in at higher and higher per diem rates, will be even more—the difference will be even greater.

In light of everything that's been going on in reentry, we issued a significant change to our statement of work, last year, in August of 2007, so all of our new contracts that we're awarding now have several significant changes in the statement of work. The first of these has to do with referrals. We now tell our contractors that they must take everybody who we refer to them and if they do not take them, they have to provide us with whatever local ordinance or restriction there is that prevents them from taking sex offenders or violent offenders or whatever it is, but they can no longer submit to us simply a list of rejection criteria. If they do have rejection criteria, they have to provide us with the statutory reason or the local ordinance reason why they can't take them.

We require that a needs assessment be done within the first two weeks and that the reentry plan be developed during that time and that the reentry plan serve as the basis for the terminal report. One of the significant changes that we instituted as well in our new statement of work is the need for a social services coordinator. Before we had required all of our contractors to have what we called an employment placement specialist, and recognizing that employment is not only the most important reentry piece for all offenders, we recognized that we needed someone with more of a social work background to look at offenders and develop a holistic overview, a holistic assessment of the inmate and provide the services and recommendations that someone with that type of background could provide.

And finally, we instituted a transitional skills program. This is a nine-week program. It involves an interactive journal. It addresses the barriers that inmates most often face when they are reentering the

community. It's conducted during the first nine weeks that the inmate is at the halfway house. So these are just some of the major changes that we promulgated in our August 2007 statement of work. All of our new contracts contain these requirements.

A lot of talk about Second Chance Act here, so I wanted to mention it just briefly. For us, the biggest change, of course, was that it eliminated the previous restrictions that we had on the length of the prerelease placement and inmates are eligible to be placed in halfway houses during the final 12 months of their sentence.

What we have determined internally is that most inmates, our experience has shown that most inmates' reentry needs can be addressed during a six-month placement so we are doing placements of greater than 180 days only in unusual circumstances, and I probably shouldn't have used the word extraordinary there. Probably a better word would have been unusual circumstances, but placements beyond 180 days need to be made only in unusual circumstances, and they require the approval of the affected regional director. Our previous restrictions, the regulations that had bound us previously to the final ten percent, were eliminated with the enactment of the Second Chance Act.

Home confinement, however, is still limited to the final ten percent of the sentence, not to exceed six months, whichever is less. So what we're finding now is that we've gone full circle from where we were back when I was in community corrections. Most of the inmates who come to us go first into residential placement or the halfway house. Once they have developed a release plan, once they have established a record of good accountability, once they become eligible per the statute, they are then moved over to home confinement to serve the remainder of their sentence.

Where are we going; what are the big issues are for us in community corrections? One of them I think is performance-based contracting. We have nine performance-based contracts out there now for halfway house services. This is something new for us. And we're not going to do anymore of it for a little while, while we assess exactly how this is working. Performance-based contracting, of course, gives the contractors a great deal more leeway to develop their own [inaudible]. We tell them the outcome, and they tell us how they're going to get there.

And so rather than a compliance-type contract where we spell out for the contractors exactly what they will and won't do, this one says, "Hey, this is what we want. These are the outcomes that we want. Now you figure out how to get there." The big carrot for the contractors, of course, is that they lock into a ten-year contract which allows them to do long term planning as well. So hopefully, this will be, at least for our major use contracts, what we'll be seeing more and more of in the future.

Amy mentioned this, and I wanted to pick up on it as well. These services are very expensive, and we need to focus on the offenders who are most likely to benefit from them and on those who need these services most. I think that we have a tendency still in the Bureau of Prisons to put inmates in halfway houses who we feel comfortable with, who we are pretty sure aren't going to embarrass us, and who have a good record of institutional adjustment. That's fine, but probably the inmates that need it most are the ones that we don't feel so comfortable with, who have a tremendous need for reentry services. So I think as these services become more expensive and as we move forward with this, that we're going to see an even bigger emphasis on placing the offenders for the amount of time that is commensurate with their reentry needs.

Our costs are going to continue to increase. I've talked about that a couple of times. It's very much on my mind at this point, and that means that we need to use these beds for the inmates who most need these services. And finally, I think we're going to continue to need to collaborate among the stakeholders here and halfway houses. Whether that's U.S. Probation, or our friends and colleagues at the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, our wardens, our case managers, all of us who have a piece of this—who have a stake in reentry—need to work more closely together, and that is all I have for you this afternoon. I will pass it along then to Donalee. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER FRIEDRICH: Ms. Breazzano.

MS. BREAZZANO: Well, I'm hoping that I can have the minutes that were ceded from Jerry over to me, and while he was short, that was the good news. I'm short in stature, but unfortunately for you all, I'm tall in all the other things, but I will keep to schedule.

My name is Donalee Breazzano. I'm the inmate skills development administrator in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and I want to talk to you a little bit today about our strategy of reentry in the [inaudible] incarceration. I wanted to first point out a few handouts that we have out for you as you leave, on the sign-in tables. One is our Offender Workforce Development Partnership brochure, and I'll talk a little bit more about that. I brought hard copies. [Inaudible.] So in case we don't get through all the details, I wanted you to have a write-up of the strategy that we're proposing in our federal system.

A few key words that I just want everybody to keep in mind and that underscore the initiative of reentry in the federal prison system and that just validate everything that we've heard the last two days, are some "C" words: cultural change, collaboration and communication. And had you all been in one of my training sessions—you all are very lucky—I would have made you move very close together to start working on that collaboration and that communication—but in the interest of time I will let you remain comfortable where you are.

But to underscore, then, what we're doing in the federal system, we're kind of terming our reentry strategy with the words "skills development initiative." And unfortunately, sometimes that kind of sets off a tone of, "Oh, we've got inmate skills programs out there." Well, that's not the case. This is a strategy to unify our programs and our services into a competency-based model.

And the primary goal of the Inmate Skills Development Initiative is basically to enhance efforts to equip our offenders with the skills that they need to succeed upon release into the community. So again, it's a strategy to bring together the resources and identify the skill needs of our population as they are preparing for return. And I have to emphasize this, not just externally but a lot of times internally because as I mentioned, this is a cultural change for our organization and it's very important to note that this is not a program. A program has a start and a stop. This is a strategy, a holistic strategy, where we're trying to refocus our philosophy in our system, to provide a holistic collaborative effort with our internal partners and our external partners to make sure that we're identifying the skill needs of our population, that we have the resources available inside and outside as they transition, and that ultimately that we're focused on their successful return.

It's no different really than what we've been doing all along within our system. I wanted to put up here the mission of our agency, but I think it's very important to note that it is a balance between what we have traditionally been doing over maybe the past 20 years, kind of flipping back that strategy of the

previous 20 years to that when we were focused on a different model of rehabilitation. But we have a component of our mission that is very strongly focused on ensuring that we provide protection to our communities, and that we do provide offenders with a secure environment. The second part of our mission is to make sure that those in our charge return to our communities better off and in a more successful place than when they first came to us. And that's the second part that we're trying to highlight through the reentry strategy that we have.

I want to also focus on, though, some of the reasons why we have a lot of the programs that we do, and I think as Director Lappin mentioned, as some others have mentioned just in highlighting the success of a lot of our programs, UNICOR, and education and things of that nature, they do have an impact on the release readiness of our offender population. But traditionally, and especially over the past several years, a lot of our programs are used as management tools because they have an effect on ensuring that our population comes into compliance with our security and safety needs. They keep inmates from being idle, which is a big concern when you're working in an environment such as ours. So they are noted to reduce rates of misconduct. They also help model so that we can encourage our offenders to participate in other programs, and they yield a safer environment ultimately.

But just to throw out some statistics, and some of them you've already heard, we have had a number of successes and a number of research studies that have indicated that our programs such as the residential drug abuse program, our federal prisons industries, our education programs, and especially our vocational training programs do have a significant impact on recidivism. I think it is noteworthy and I know Doug Burris mentioned the statistics on offenders in vocational training being 38 percent less likely to recidivate, and that's significant when we start talking about one of our partnerships, the Offender Workforce Development Partnership.

So what is the Inmate Skills Development Initiative? Basically it's a multi-tiered process. In summarizing a lot of the feedback that we received, again over the course of the last couple days, it was made clear that assessment has a very critical role in this whole area of reentry. But we want to move away from just risk assessment for our needs because there are a lot of instruments out there, and at this point, when we're dealing with reentry in the federal system, what we're starting to look at now is what are the needs of the offenders. So the assessment that we're talking about in this strategy is a dynamic assessment from the date that they walk in until they transition back out of: "What are their reentry needs," and we've identified nine skill areas which I'll share with you in a moment.

The next tier would be to take that assessment information and make it into an individualized skill development plan for that offender. It's a plan that's going to follow him throughout his incarceration, and then we share that information with those agencies such as the Residential Reentry Center, or some of those faith-based community agencies, or probation and supervision, so that they can provide that continuum of care and continue to identify and address the needs that have already been identified through that process. It's an ongoing process. It's not a stagnant activity where you do an assessment and it ends. You develop a plan, and then you continue to work. That assessment changes through incarceration. That plan changes through incarceration.

The other portion of that, of course, is once we know what their needs are, then we need to start looking at our programs and making sure that they're linked specifically to those individuals targeting those needs. I think it was already identified that if you have a person who is 80 years old, maybe he doesn't have a GED, but he has some other needs that we need to address—housing, transportation,

healthcare and the like. Although we may have some great education programs, we need to prioritize based on that individual and target the programs to link specifically to those needs.

I think one of the focuses throughout this symposium has been on addressing high-risk offenders. It's very easy, especially with the model that we've had in place, to make sure that all of our inmates are involved in programming because it does kind of calm our environment, but we need to make sure that those inmates who actually need the programs get those limited spaces in the institution to participate and get the skills they need out of those programs. So we're taking a real measured look at how we can identify those high-risk offenders and make sure that they're targeted for those programs.

The other tier in the process, of course, is that we need partnerships. Inmates in our care and custody are there for a relatively short period, hopefully, in their lifetime, but a period of time. They come into us from different entities. They leave and go out under different entities. We need to involve all of those entities in this whole process, whether it be sharing and getting information from pretrial, from the presentence investigation report early on, or whether it be at the end when we share with probation and the supervision agencies what's gone on while we've had that offender in our care.

We need to develop partnerships within our own agency with our education, psychology, health service and various other departments to make sure that we're working together in terms of prioritizing the needs of that offender. So that's a very big part of this whole initiative. And of course, we need to ensure that we have the resources. I think that was very strongly highlighted, and it's something that I hope everyone will take away as they're speaking to relevant policy makers.

Resources are limited and they're being shared, not just among offenders but others in the community who have needs, so we need to make sure that we know what they are and that we can target them and utilize them in the most efficient way. As I mentioned, we're addressing basically nine reentry skill areas, and these were identified through extensive focus groups, research, collaboration among all entities out in the community, different agencies, and defendants themselves helping us to identify what they felt their skill needs were. And as you look at the various skill categories and subcategories, you'll see there are no different needs than you or I would have if we were going to be successful and continue to be successful in this life.

I'm not going to go into great detail about them, but I think you can see that they're pretty extensive. So that's the initiative in a holistic broad view, but for us to actually carry out that initiative and apply it on a daily basis within our environment, we needed to develop some kind of a tool to gather that information, to communicate that information, to help us prioritize the needs, and generate that program language. And that's the inmates skills development system. Basically it is an automated web-based application that we've used to integrate our existing offender tracking system which we call Century, and other data systems for psychology, health services. We also use it to incorporate written pieces of communication or oral pieces of communication that we have on a daily or whatever basis, to help us integrate information from that presentence investigation report, with operational data. As an officer observes an inmate, or a program person observes an inmate in his or her care and custody, we can capture that information and structure it in a way that will be best suited to the needs of identifying where we need to address resources for that individual. It's a tool that allows us to conduct that assessment.

It's a questionnaire that addresses all of those skill areas, puts that information together in a way so that we can have an actual plan and then track and monitor that plan throughout the offender's

incarceration, and then help us to highlight the specific needs of that individual, and also as an agency, highlight across the board where all the needs of our offender population are falling. Is it more on the academic literacy area or maybe in a certain geographic location, or at several institutions? Maybe there are more literacy barriers, or maybe there are unemployment or health services or identification barriers that help us to quantify that information.

It also helps us to streamline a lot of our other tasks and free up our case management and other staff to focus more on actual service delivery, rather than the model of incarceration and just maintaining that security.

Just another highlight. The system itself is generated and utilized at the onset of the incarceration period. In working with our partners and probation, pretrial, we're hoping to move that, you know, to a stage even before that point in terms of gathering that information. And then again, that information is shared, either electronically or via hard copy, with agencies at the outset.

We provide some guidance to our staff in how to ask these questions. It's not a questionnaire that you would give to the offender. Somebody had mentioned earlier the need for motivational interviewing and developing that rapport as being one of the biggest factors in the successful reentry preparation for offenders, and that's what we're trying to promote here, too. We try to give our staff guidance on how to solicit the information that gets quantified into this instrument.

Once they get that information for each of the skill areas, it helps drive them to identify which programs the person needs. What skill deficits does he have or strengths that we can build on? Then they begin to look at what programs are available in the institutional setting, and how they can link and make recommendations for that offender to participate in those programs and begin tracking their success.

At a glance, we provide at the end of each tool for the offender, as well as for the staff members, a global big picture so they can see in a glance where the key areas are that we need to focus on for this offender. As you look, we color code it by the skill area and by the type of issue. Here this person is red in cognitive and character, so that's where we would hope that our focus of our programs would be for that individual. We can do that individually or in a population as a whole, so again, we can start to quantify our need for which resources we need to be developing.

There are a lot of report options that can be generated. For example, any of the questions in the assessment tool we can run into reports. One example would be, "How many offenders in my institution have a history of suicide," or, "How many offenders in my institution have had no stable employment prior to incarceration?" So any of the questions that we address, we can roll up and find more quantitative information about the population in general. There are a lot of other report options that we can use in this tool.

Before I get into explaining this program a little bit, I just want to mention that one of the things that we're doing in terms of the program linkage is, instead of looking as we have in the past and measuring the success of our programs by number of completions, we are changing our basis of measurement and successful program completion to demonstration of skills. We're trying to make sure that the person comes out of that program being able to actually utilize what was learned.

So for example, if we have somebody in a financial literacy program, it's not just enough to say he can pass the test. We also now ask whether he can balance his checkbook or use an ATM machine. I need to take that course, too. Can he get that loan? What is it that he actually learned? What's the intent of that program and did he actually come out of it learning those skills? Only then do we give him credit for having obtained that skill. So that's a different shift. Because we're always measured and funded by number of completions we need to educate others to understand why our numbers may drop in terms of successful program completions, because now they're going to be competency based.

One of the programs that we've identified, and I know that several others have been alluded to over the course of this symposium, is the National Federal Workforce Development Partnership, and this was very timely in its implementation. When we first started this with our partners in probation and NIC, we came together because we wanted to look at vocational and career skills, and one of the needs obviously was in employment. So the goal of this partnership was basically to establish collaborative strategies to develop joint programs and programs that supported career development for our offenders.

At the national level, we came together as several partners to address some of the larger barriers and some of the implementation issues and to develop a model that at the local level (our institutions, our local districts) could be used to bring together local community partners, replicate the model of working together, and share information and resources.

I just wanted to show you the website under the NIC where we post the Offender Workforce Development Partnership so you can get information about who the partners are. We've established points of contact for our various agencies. In the Bureau of Prisons, we have a coordinator at each one of our institutions. We provide training to those folks. There's a coordinator within probation that's been identified within Department of Labor for the disability navigators program and a host of others, our veteran partners and many others, so that information is all there for you.

Some of the things that we're working on include the training for partners so that we're all speaking the same language and can identify the various tools. We're looking at not just the offender needs but also the employer needs so that we can make sure that our programs inside the institutions match what jobs might be available and practical for those offenders when they get out. One of the biggest driving forces is getting our clients ready, what that means, and keeping it going.

In the course of developing our initiative, one of the very weak areas that we found, and, of course, since we're geographically located throughout the country, not just concentrated in one state, is the community resources that are available. So we started to pull together and look at developing a directory of direct services for offenders of the various community resources broken down by the various areas of their needs, whether it's transportation, housing, counseling, drug abuse, family, whatever the case might be. We have an internal website that we utilize and that our staff has access to, and some of our other partners, too. We're working on a public web site, so that across the country if we have offenders being released, they or their families or staff can help them go to that web site. For example, if someone is coming from prison in Florida but needs housing in Minnesota, then he could use this site to identify the resources and the contact information. This places the onus back on the offender to start making those connections, working with them and getting involved, so that's one of the initiatives that we're working on there.

There are a lot of things that we're working on regarding this initiative. It is just starting, so we do have an evaluation model that's going to be rolling out as this initiative rolls out and as we implement the tool across the agency. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER FRIEDRICH: I think we have time for one or two questions. Yes.

MR. LINN: Kenny Linn, FedCURE. What is the Bureau doing these days to encourage education past the GED level? It seems that years ago there were community colleges coming into the institutions, teaching courses leading to associate degrees, and so on, and so forth. It seems like I don't see any of that anymore, and I wonder if there's anything system-wide that the Bureau is doing to encourage people to spend their time on education past the GED level.

Along those same lines, I notice you had computer skills on one of your slides and I also wonder, since today anybody that's looking for almost any kind of a job has to be computer literate. Obviously we're not talking about being able to use the Internet, or anything along those lines, but are you doing anything at all to promote computer skills within the inmate population?

WARDEN BEELER: I'll try to answer those, Donalee. Kenny, there are a couple of things that are realized. First of all, there are computer literacy programs in almost every institution. There's virtually no institution that doesn't have a computer literacy program. Now, it's not teaching computer programming. It's not teaching how to access the Internet per se, but it's teaching basic 101 computer skills. That's going to have to evolve over time, and I agree with you that the world is a technological world, and the world is a service world, so we're going to have to evolve with that as time goes on. It depends largely on the security side—I mean, it's incremental just like the gentleman for the Second Chance Act said. There's a huge cry about inmates having access to the Internet. Well, you know, the technology is there right now to be able to do some of that, but you just have to do it differently, and until there are abilities to step that along, it will be a long [inaudible], and it's working.

At my institution for example, I have Blackboard, which is hooked up through a community college through a secure server. Now there's not a server that's going directly from the inmates to the community college. We bought the server, and we have an intermediate step where the inmates put the information into the server. We download it, and then we send it to the community college so there's not a direct link. The one thing I did want to broach, though, is you asked about community colleges and secondary education.

That is largely out of the Bureau's hands, unless somebody has the money to pay for that. Those days are about gone, and have been gone for several years, not that we discourage it. In fact, we try to find ways that inmates can get involved in post-secondary education, but there are no more Pell grants, okay. There's no more ability to pay for that post-secondary education.

Now in some states I happen to be fortunate in that avenue because the state allows community colleges to come into our institutions at a very minimal cost, and when I say minimal cost, I mean that much cost, because if it was that much cost I couldn't afford it, but it's that much cost. So we're able to bring in community colleges, but I have been a warden at six institutions. That doesn't happen in every state. It depends upon the role of the state and the venue and the mission of the state as to who they serve from their mandate in community colleges, partially, okay?

There are lots of restrictions on the expenditure of appropriated funds so you have to be very careful about those kinds of things. And we all agree that post-secondary education for some offenders is a good thing, but again, it's an incremental issue. It happened in this era, and you know, we talk about eras. We talk about situations. All this happened in the era where it was tough on crime. The Pell grants were abolished, totally, and nothing's replaced that. The ability to provide benefits to [inaudible], and one of the things I'm surprised we haven't talked about in the last couple of days, is the ability of the Veterans Administration. They've got reentry coordinators now, but they still have on the books the three strikes provision of the Veterans Administration where if you get three strikes, meaning if you've had three convictions you can't get Veterans benefits. And that's all during this get-tough-on-crime era that happened in the early '80s to the late 1980s.

So are there avenues that we would like to approach? Yes. But some of those avenues are outside of the purview and as Bobby and Mike talked about at lunch, they're going to take time and incrementally, because the public is "get tough on crime" and the public's just now starting to say, "Okay, it's okay to reincrementalize these things back out."

MR. LINN: Thank you, Warden Beeler. Appreciate it.

MS. SOLOMON: I just wanted to add that the Urban Institute and John Jay College held a reentry roundtable on education in corrections in March/April, and we commissioned a number of papers, we're writing a report, and it's all up on our website, so we're trying to have Justice support, education support, and lots of local stakeholders as well, and so we're trying to help put that back on the agenda.

MR. LINN: Thank you, Amy.

COMMISSIONER FRIEDRICH: Thank you. I think we have time for one short question.

QUESTIONER: Given that the costs of keeping one prisoner for a year is about 25,000 and a halfway house is about 23,000, and home confinement is about 3,500, and that the Bureau of Prisons has determined that six months is about how long a person should be in a halfway house, is there any bar in the Second Chance Act to starting the period of time in the halfway house between the six and twelve months and allowing the last six months in home confinement?

MR. VROEGH: I don't know if I totally understood. The Bureau has decided—our experience has been that inmates generally do not need more than six months to address their reentry needs, and so any placement of more than—basically the Second Chance Act, the most important message of the Second Chance Act is you must assess each inmate individually. That's what it tells the Bureau to do. It's that each inmate's needs must be assessed individually. But—within that framework, any place—we have determined that any placement of over six months will only be done in unusual circumstances, but the eligibility for home confinement is still pegged at the ten percent, or six months, whichever is less.

QUESTIONER: And it's your view that that's a requirement of law?

MR. VROEGH: Of the Second Chance Act?

QUESTIONER: Yes.

MR. VROEGH: The home confinement?

QUESTIONER: Yes.

MR. VROEGH: Yes.

QUESTIONER: But you could start the time earlier in a halfway house so that the person could get the full time available in home detention where the person doesn't have other issues, public safety issues, that would prevent him from being in the community on home confinement rather than in community corrections?

MR. VROEGH: I mean, theoretically I guess what you're saying is correct. Could an inmate come out for a certain amount of time and then go on home confinement for six months?

QUESTIONER: Exactly.

MR. VROEGH: That would have to be an offender serving a very long sentence.

QUESTIONER: Anything over 60 months?

MR. VROEGH: Right.

QUESTIONER: So anybody who's serving over 60 months could end up starting at 12 months, finish the period of home confinement and then go to home detention for the last—

MR. VROEGH: I don't know that we are placing any offenders for 12 months at this point.

QUESTIONER: But there's nothing in the statute that would bar that?

MR. VROEGH: That's correct. There's nothing in the statute that would bar that.

COMMISSIONER FRIEDRICH: Thank you all. Please join me in thanking the panelists.