

Last Year 27,000 People Came Home from Prison in New York

What is the NY Reentry Roundtable?

The NY Reentry Roundtable brings together reentry advocates to discuss strategies to successfully transition the formerly incarcerated back into family life and their communities. There are more than 63,000 inmates in New York State prisons. Once released, these individuals return in high concentration to a handful of communities, particularly in the South Bronx, Central Brooklyn, and Harlem neighborhoods.

The Community Service Society (CSS) formed the Roundtable in 2005, inviting direct service providers, the formerly incarcerated, government agency representatives and community activists to come together each month in order to address the obstacles faced by those released from prison.

Sharing Information, Building Alliances

The Reentry Roundtable represents over 50 stakeholder organizations, providing a unique forum for networking, information sharing, and building alliances.

The Roundtable focuses on systemic change at the NY State-level through an advocacy agenda, formulated by the Roundtable, which advocates for critical reform in:

- Education
- Employment
- Healthcare access
- Family connections
- Child support
- Housing
- Voting rights



Roundtable Perspectives

A sampling of NY Reentry Roundtable guest speakers:

Lynn Goodman, Statewide Director of Reentry Services, “Working together with Reentry Advocates”

Eddie Ellis, Executive Director, Center for NuLeader on Urban Solutions, Medgar Evers College, “Misconceptions about the Department of Corrections and its Misleading Terminology”

Hon. Robert Doar, Commissioner, Human Resources Administration, City of New York, Department of Social services, “Perspectives on Reentry : Responding to the needs of New York’s Formerly Incarcerated”

Safiya Bandele, Executive Director of the Center for Women’s Development at Medgar Evers College

The Honorable Peter C. Harvey, Former Attorney General of New Jersey, “The Reentry Experience in the Garden State”

Commissioner Gladys Carrion, Esq., NYS OCFS, “Youth in Juvenile Justice”

“The Roundtable is an invaluable space for the NYS reentry communities to exchange ideas and take action.”

Glenn Martin, VP of Policy and Advocacy, The Fortune Society

“A guiding philosophy of the Roundtable is a profound commitment to uplifting all lives in the community.”

Robin McGinty, Project Path to Recovery

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Setting the Agenda for Change

About Albany Advocacy Day

As an outgrowth of the New York Reentry Roundtable, CSS established “Albany Advocacy Day” in 2007 to enable community-based stakeholders to meet with key legislators in Albany, New York, to advocate on behalf of the formerly incarcerated as well as for those who are incarcerated.

More than 100 participants attended the 2007 and 2008 Albany Advocacy Days. The Roundtable Agenda was presented to key legislators to advocate for critical reentry issues.

Legislation: Important First Steps

Recently passed NYS legislation that formed part of the Albany Advocacy Day Agenda and which helps reintegrate formerly incarcerated individuals into the workforce and the community:

- **Medicaid Suspension Bill:** Reinstates Medicaid benefits to the incarcerated upon their release.
- **The Family Connections Bill:** Eliminated excess fees associated with collect calls from inmates to their families
- **Montgomery Act:** Eliminated the automatic disqualification of individuals with criminal records applying for licenses to barber or practice cosmetology. A meaningful step toward real opportunity to re-enter the labor market.
- **Volker Act:** Helps reduce barriers to successful reentry by supporting efforts of formerly incarcerated to secure a job.



On the Agenda in 2009:

Removing Barriers, Rebuilding Lives

The Albany Advocacy Day Agenda for May 12, 2009 seeks to amend laws that create unnecessary barriers for the formerly incarcerated:

- **Voter Registration & Notification Act**
Extend the right to vote to individuals on parole.
- **Support the Restoration of Rights Act** to create one comprehensive Certificate of Restoration that would overcome automatic bars to voting, employment, licensing, and public housing for those with criminal convictions; seal criminal records under limited circumstances; and strengthen employment discrimination protections.
- **Allow Judicial discretion in defining incarceration as “willful unemployment”** when setting or modifying child support obligations of incarcerated non-custodial parents.
- **SHU Bill Implementation:** This bill banned use of solitary confinement for people with psychiatric disabilities in prison.
- **Merit Time:** Release eligibility to survivors of domestic violence whose convictions were related to their experiences of domestic violence.
- **Home Districts of Prisoners:** Remedy US census policy of counting prisoners where they are incarcerated.
- **Sealing Criminal Records:** Would seal non-violent, non-sexual misdemeanor convictions, after 5 years, with a petition.

“The Roundtable keeps the formerly incarcerated up-to-date on important social and political issues, and provides a supportive network of groups that address our concerns.”

Emmanuel Rivera, Prevention Specialist, Co-Factors,
Center for Community Alternatives