

REENTRY PLANNING

WHAT IS “REENTRY PLANNING”?

Reentry planning provides incarcerated individuals with a network of support systems to help them transition back into their communities upon their release from jail or prison. These include programs that help people obtain civil identification documents, jobs, homes, healthcare, and education as they reintegrate into society. Hawai'i law requires the Department of Public Safety to develop comprehensive reentry plans for people leaving correctional facilities.

WHY IS REENTRY PLANNING IMPORTANT?

Successful reentry services reduce the likelihood that an individual who is released from jail or prison will return. 95% of people incarcerated in state prisons will be released at some point—and without adequate support, we are setting them up for failure.

People with arrest and conviction records face discrimination and other barriers when seeking housing, employment, and educational opportunities in the outside world. Systemic racism compounds these barriers for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color who are exiting prison or jail and need to find a job or a place to live. Some people reentering communities may also struggle with a physical or cognitive disability, or have a history of substance abuse. These realities can make it difficult for returning members of society to find stability and success on their own after release.

Comprehensive reentry programs are proven to be effective. Formerly incarcerated individuals regularly identify employment as one of the most important factors in not committing new crimes. And reentry services that help people obtain post-secondary education have been proven to reduce recidivism rates. Offering people effective reentry plans thus benefits both the individual and their community.

PROBLEM & SOLUTION:

Hawai'i Department of Public Safety does not provide sufficient reentry services

The Hawai'i Department of Public Safety (PSD) is not complying with its legal obligation to provide comprehensive reentry programs—for example, PSD has failed to issue critical identification documents to people exiting correctional facilities. In addition, Governor Ige has failed to appoint an Oversight Coordinator or release the funds necessary to run the Hawai'i Correctional System Oversight Commission, which is tasked with overseeing the State's reentry program.

While we must ultimately expand and increase funding for community-based reentry programs, at a minimum, the Hawai'i Legislature should immediately block any attempt to cut funding for reentry. Lawmakers must also push Governor Ige to take action so that the Oversight Commission can operate effectively and ensure PSD is complying with its reentry obligations.

ACLU
Hawai'i

