

Uplift Solutions

Philadelphia Reentry Landscape

Understanding the Resources Available to Returning Citizens

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Introduction

The “war on drugs” and “tough on crime” policies have led to high incarceration rates across the country; and Philadelphia is not exempt. In a 2015 analysis conducted by the New York Times, Philadelphia was found to be ‘missing’ more than 30,000 black men between the ages of 25 and 54, due to incarceration or early death.

When we incarcerate someone, we remove them from their home, their neighborhood, their community and their local economy. The individual can no longer contribute to their family, their community and/or the broader economy. The collateral damage caused by the removal of the individual is immeasurable. Laws such as civil-property forfeiture exacerbates the problem. Once the individual is returned to their home, their community, and their local economy they find it difficult to find a job and when they do their salaries are compressed. Lacking the means to fully reintegrate and become a productive citizen, they are left with few options; often, 67% of the time, recidivating.

To combat these issues, while serving as Governor and Attorney General, Tom Wolf and Josh Shapiro, respectively, created the Pennsylvania Reentry Council (PARC), with a mission to, “make communities safer by reducing recidivism and victimization through the successful reintegration of returning citizens.”

As stated on the Attorney General’s website under Pennsylvania Reentry Program, “Pennsylvania residents who leave jails and prisons having paid their debt to society (returning citizens) often face significant disadvantages that may lead them to be incarcerated again. They leave with limited knowledge of (and little access to) services, and even fewer positive relationships to help them navigate a world that may have completely changed while they were incarcerated. Small wonder, then, that 67 percent of all returning citizens end up incarcerated again within three years’ time.”

Just as the Governor and Attorney General found, we believe addressing these issues require a multi-prong, multi-faceted approach to service delivery that involves a network of interventions and support. Further, we recognize that we must address these issues at both the individual and systems level. Ideally, moving us from an over-built criminal justice system to an appropriately funded restorative justice system.

Uplift Solutions is a Philadelphia-based nonprofit organization with a mission of, “reducing barriers for justice involved individuals and at-risk youth, helping them find pathways to long-term success.” Our work focuses on helping justice involved individuals successfully reintegrate back into society after coming in contact with the criminal justice system; as well as developing and implementing interventions for at-risk youth in an effort to keep them from entering the criminal justice system. We work collectively and collaboratively with public, private, and government institutions to understand and develop interventions in an effort to address these issues.

This report provides the following insights:

- A summary of the Philadelphia benefits landscape for justice impacted individuals,
- A summary of the benefits landscape for justice impacted individuals outside of Philadelphia,
- Ideas and recommendations for the United Way and The Promise to better advocate on a city and statewide level.

Key Findings

In our research, we found a significant correlation between the neighborhoods individuals released from incarceration return to and concentrated poverty. In a report published by Pew in 2019, “The State of Philadelphians Living in Poverty,” found nine (9) zip codes that experienced concentrated poverty measured by more than 45 percent of the residents of the zip code living below the poverty line. In 2018, the year prior, the City of Philadelphia published on its website data on Philadelphia’s returning citizens and the primary zip codes they were returning to after incarceration, which, needless to say, the six zip codes (19134, 19124, 19140, 19132, 19143, and 19133) with the greatest number of Philadelphians returning to them from incarceration were included in the top nine zip codes for concentrated poverty. Additional research found:

- In 2013 the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections 2013 Recidivism report, 62% of releases from a Pennsylvania state prison in 2008 were re-arrested or re-incarcerated within three years of release. In the 2022 report, 64.7% of releases in 2016 were re-arrested or re-incarcerated within three years of release. This static statistic suggests that support services are not adequate and current levels of programming do not mitigate risk factors for reincarceration.
- One study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that of 50,000 people released from federal prisons in 2010, 33% of them found no employment at all over 4-years post-release. In addition, only about 40% of those individuals were employed at any given time and found that many of them held an average of 3.4 jobs throughout the 4-year study period (Wang & Bertram, 2022). Low employment rates or high unemployment duration: If returning citizens struggle to find or maintain employment, it indicates a potential gap in services that equip them with necessary job skills, connect them with employment opportunities, or address barriers to employment, such as discrimination or lack of transportation.
- There is no public data on participation in existing support programs. Low rates of participation could indicate a lack of awareness about available services, difficulty accessing them due to logistical barriers, or a perception that the services are not helpful or relevant to their needs.
- There may be some fragmented service delivery and lack of communication between stakeholders: Ineffective collaboration between government agencies, community

organizations, and service providers can create gaps in service provision and hinder a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of returning citizens. Effective communication between providers is crucial for successful collaboration and service delivery. Improving service delivery requires streamlined processes, enhanced coordination, technology utilization, and continuous evaluation. Inspiring collaboration involves fostering trust, shared goals, open communication, clear roles, knowledge sharing, and incentivizing joint initiatives to close gaps in service provision effectively.

Between March 2024 and May 2024, Uplift surveyed 58 justice impacted Philadelphians on issues related to their ability to access benefits. As a result of the survey, we found justice-impacted individuals cited housing and employment assistance as the most requested and prioritized needs. However, many faced challenges accessing these services. The biggest hurdles were the inability to visit offices to complete paperwork (27.6%) and struggled with the complexity of the forms (25.9%). When individuals were able to overcome the issues related to accessibility and complexity, and apply, they faced additional hurdles that included criminal background checks, which were found to be the leading reason for ineligibility by 28.9% of the respondents. Finding out about services relied heavily on word-of-mouth (55.2%). Finally, accessing available services was hampered by housing instability (31%), unreliable transportation (17.2%), and limited internet access (22.4%). The survey suggests solutions like caseworker explanations (46.6%), online forms (32.8%), reliable internet (27.6%), and a centralized application (13.8%) could significantly improve access to these crucial support systems.

There are significant gaps in accessing support services, with over 60% of respondents reporting no experience with housing, healthcare, education, or legal aid programs. While some positive experiences were reported for those who did access services, a large portion lacked crucial support. Employment services, however, seemed to be more widely accessed, with specific programs like Uplift, Career Link, Enon, and First Step being mentioned as helpful. This suggests a need for increased outreach and improved access points for non-employment-related support services. Findings from the assessment included:

- **Multiple Programs, Multiple Websites:** There isn't a unified system for learning about and applying for benefits. Residents must navigate individual websites and application processes for each program offered by different government departments. This complexity can be overwhelming and make it difficult to identify all relevant benefits.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Many eligible individuals are unaware of the benefits available to them, particularly those who are newly released from incarceration or facing other challenges. Limited outreach efforts and lack of accessible information can contribute to this gap in awareness.
- **Language Barriers:** Spanish-speaking returning citizens in Philadelphia face numerous hurdles accessing reentry services due to language barriers. Lack of interpreters and bilingual staff creates communication gaps, hindering understanding and participation.

Crucial information like program details often remains untranslated, excluding them from essential knowledge. Additionally, cultural misunderstandings due to inadequate training can lead to biased assessments and ineffective interventions, further jeopardizing their successful reintegration.

- **Technological Barriers:** Not everyone has access to reliable internet or digital devices, which can hinder their ability to access online information and applications. This can disproportionately affect low-income communities and individuals with limited resources.
- **Complexity of Applications:** Applying for benefits can involve complex forms, multiple steps, and confusing eligibility criteria. This can be intimidating and discouraging for individuals, especially those with limited literacy or facing other challenges.
- **Stigma:** There can be a stigma associated with receiving public benefits, which may prevent individuals from seeking the assistance they need. This can be due to societal pressures or fear of judgment.
- **Lack of Support:** Navigating the complex benefits system can be challenging, and individuals may not have access to adequate support or guidance. This can leave them feeling overwhelmed and unsure of how to proceed.

Additional issues related to accessibility and navigability included:

- **Transportation Issues:** Limited access to reliable transportation can make it difficult for individuals to reach program locations or attend appointments, particularly in geographically spread-out areas.
- **Childcare Needs:** Lack of affordable childcare options can prevent individuals from attending necessary meetings or training programs related to benefit eligibility.
- **Application processes:** applications are not streamlined and user-friendly. A person may have to fill out multiple applications, one for each service provider. Justice impacted individuals may face potential challenges like limited internet access or transportation barriers.
- **Culturally competent support :** When service providers lack cultural competency, they face numerous challenges that hinder their ability to effectively support returning citizens. Miscommunication, irrelevant services, limited access, and unconscious bias can all create barriers to engagement and successful reintegration. This can ultimately lead to negative perceptions of the system, limited progress, and increased risk of recidivism. By investing in cultural competency training, diversifying staff, and adapting services to diverse needs, service providers can create a more inclusive and effective system that truly supports all returning citizens on their journey to rebuild their lives.

Philadelphia Landscape

Philadelphia has a significant number of nonprofit, for-profit, and government organizations supporting justice-involved / formerly incarcerated individuals. Organizations are providing services related to physical and mental health, benefits navigation, workforce development, housing, financial services, advocacy, and more. Some services are offered exclusively to justice-involved individuals, whereas others are offered to the general public, which include justice-involved individuals. While organizations provide a broad range of services, they have a primary service that they build other services around. For the majority of organizations, they consider the additional services wraparound services.

Advocacy

There are two organizational approaches to advocacy within the Philadelphia region. The first are organizations that position advocacy as the basis of their work. There tends to be fewer of these organizations and they tend to be smaller in size. Additionally, these organizations tend to be focused on specific issues. The second approach is related to direct service organizations engaging in advocacy related to the areas and/or industries they support or operate within. These organizations tend to be larger in size.

Regardless of the approach, foundation and general philanthropic support tends to be less available for advocacy work. Given the smaller pools of money available to support advocacy, organizations formed to advocate typically are smaller or rely on individual donors to support their work.

Advocacy Agencies

[Aging People in Prison](#) – The Aging People in Prison Human Rights Campaign focuses on creating awareness of and advocating for individuals 55-year-old and older currently serving prison sentences.

[Eastern State Penitentiary](#) – Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site (ESPHS) provides comprehensive education about the history of—and modern debates around—the U.S. criminal justice system, engaging leading scholars and first-person storytelling. We increase attention and knowledge of the criminal justice reform movement and its impact on our society. Our work is oriented in building a stronger community understanding and respect for fundamental human dignity and to effect positive change within the country's justice system. In order to fully realize this work, ESPHS strives for local and national reach.

[The Council of Southeast Pennsylvania \(Pro-Act\)](#) – Pennsylvania Recovery Organization - Achieving Community Together (PRO-ACT) is a grassroots advocacy and recovery support initiative of The Council covering Southeastern Pennsylvania. PRO-ACT works to reduce the stigma of addiction, ensure the availability of adequate treatment and recovery support

services, and to influence public opinion and policy regarding the value of recovery. Pro-Act offers substance use support to formerly incarcerated individuals.

[People's Paper Co-Op](#) – The People's Paper Co-op is a women led, women focused, women powered art and advocacy project at the Village of Arts and Humanities in North Philadelphia. The PPC looks to women in reentry as the leading criminal justice experts our society needs to hear from and uses art to amplify their stories, dreams, and visions for a more just and free world. People's Paper Co-op has programs that include women in reentry day, community justice collaboration, media justice fellowship, reentry bill of rights, consulting as a social practice, expungements and pardon clinics, and ban the box advocacy.

[Youth Sentencing Reentry Project](#) – YSRP works to keep children out of adult jails and prisons, and to bring home people who were sentenced as children to life in prison without the possibility of parole ("Juvenile Lifers"). YSRP's programs include Intergenerational Healing Circles, Speakers Bureau, Youth Advocacy Project.

Capacity Building

There are several organizations within the Philadelphia region focused on capacity building for direct service organizations. The type of capacity building varies from organization to organization, whereas the larger organizations provide fiscal sponsorship and macro-organizational support. Other organizations that support capacity building will provide funding or skills-based volunteering.

Organizations providing capacity building tend to be larger in size and well-funded. These organizations also provide technical assistance through workshops and training. They also build and lead coalitions around a broad range of issues. Given the nature of their work, these organizations support organizations supporting justice-involved individuals.

Capacity Building Agencies

[Code for Philly](#) – Code for Philly is a Philadelphia-based all volunteer nonprofit that works to identify technology projects that improve the government, social services, and nonprofit sectors within Philadelphia. Code for Philly works with organizations to identify technology projects that will improve their efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

[FNC](#) – FNC builds strong neighborhoods through intentional partnerships. We support children, youth, families, and individuals who traditionally do not have access to high quality services and programming. FNC focuses on youth development, urban farming, food access, arts and culture, workforce training, and parent education. Through fiscal sponsorships, FNC supports new and established community visionaries who align with our mission. FNC partners for thriving communities.

[Grant BLVD](#) – Grant Blvd is a Philadelphia-based manufacturing startup on a mission to construct stylish, sustainably sourced fashion, while not only reducing recidivism, but in

supporting women who are formerly incarcerated or have experienced homelessness, in leading self-sufficient lives by partnering with local non-profits & government agencies to create fair wage employment opportunities.

[Philadelphia Works](#) – Philadelphia Works (PhilaWorks) is a 501c3 non-profit organization that invests in solutions and services to grow Philadelphia's economy by connecting employers to workforce talent and career seekers to jobs. We influence the public policies that support economic growth and optimize funding and resources to invest in regional solutions to build a skilled and thriving workforce. Philadelphia Works leverages resources and cross-sector relationships to advance a thriving workforce. By partnering with government, public, and private organizations, we implement innovative solutions and pilot programs that strengthen Philadelphia's economy.

[Urban Affairs Coalition](#) – Considered a home for nonprofits, The Urban Affairs Coalition unites government, business, neighborhoods, and individual initiative to improve the quality of life in the region, build wealth in urban communities, and solve emerging issues.

UAC is a fiscal sponsor offering services to established and emerging nonprofits. Managing payroll, negotiating insurance, managing multiple grants, and filing IRS reports. UAC model assumes the financial and legal responsibility for every partner and project under our 501(c)(3) umbrella. Through efficiencies and economies of scale, UAC strengthens nonprofit organizations and community services. By providing stability and continuity, sponsored organizations save time and money to help you further their mission.

Education

There are several organizations providing educational access to formerly incarcerated and otherwise justice-involved individuals. These organizations range in service and size providing navigational services to degree programs. Organizations providing navigation services use case management to engage and assess individuals and connect them to the most appropriate educational opportunities. They further support the individuals through the educational process with ongoing case management.

In the Philadelphia market, there are several institutions of higher education that support the formal education of formerly incarcerated or otherwise justice-involved individuals. They use case management, mentoring, and tutoring to support formal education. These institutions also work with nonprofit organizations to provide additional wraparound services where appropriate.

Education Agencies

[Beyond Literacy](#): provides opportunities for adults and families by harnessing the power of literacy through free, high-quality education. As the leading literacy agency in Philadelphia, BeLit helps learners improve their reading, writing, math, English language, digital literacy, and workplace skills. Our classes move students from learning to earning, helping them succeed as students, community members, and career seekers.

[Community College of Philadelphia](#) – I Am More is a College-wide initiative designed to holistically address the academic, career and social needs of justice-involved students as they pursue a certificate or associate degree at the College. We offer specialized services and ongoing support to stay actively - engaged and remain a contributing member of society. The program offers case management, program support, and social support.

[Free Library of Philadelphia](#) – The mission of the Free Library of Philadelphia is to advance literacy, guide learning, and inspire curiosity. Its vision is to build an enlightened community devoted to lifelong learning. The Free Library is committed to offering high-quality programs and services to the incarcerated, their children, and their families. These include literacy support, family programs, cultural and literary offerings, and re-entry resources and information.

[Graduate Philly](#): Graduate Philadelphia was created to support the 70,000+ adult residents in the City of Philadelphia who had started but never finished a two or four year college degree. Originating as a joint initiative of the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board (PWIB) and the Greater Philadelphia Economy League, in 2006, Graduate Philadelphia became a managed partnership of the PWIB and the United Way of Southeastern PA. This governance arrangement provided the structure for broad community and employer engagement. In 2011, The Graduate! Network incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization with Graduate Philadelphia as its flagship program.

[Inside Out Prison Exchange Program](#) – The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program® facilitates dialogue and education across profound social differences — through courses held inside prison, involving students from a higher education setting and incarcerated students.

[The International Institute for Advanced Instruction \(TIIAI\)](#) - The International Institute for Advanced Instruction (TIIAI) was formed in 2008 as a Non-Profit in the state of Pennsylvania. TIIAI purpose/mission is to provide educational programs, support and guide individuals re-entering society after incarceration towards entrepreneurial endeavors, conduct workshops/seminars, develop and distribute information on holistic for a healthier lifestyle, and to foster a collaborative spirit with other educational entities to service the community...

[The Petey Greene Program](#) – The Petey Greene Program (PGP) is the largest provider of tutoring and college readiness programs for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people in the US. The Petey Greene Program (PGP) supports the academic goals of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people through high-quality volunteer tutoring programs, while educating volunteers on the injustice manifest in our carceral system and encouraging them to engage in justice-oriented activism to reimagine the criminal legal system. The Petey Greene Program services include College Bridge, HBCD+U Forward Initiative, Justice Education Series, and other region programs.

[Temple University](#) – The Inside-Out Center, based at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is the international hub of The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program.

Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance is the direct financial support of justice-involved individuals through stipends, grants, loans, or other financial subsidies. In Philadelphia there are very few organizations that focus specifically on providing financial assistance to justice-involved individuals outside of the government.

In Philadelphia, justice-involved individuals are challenged by their inability to gain access to capital, whether it's to start a business, buy a car, repair their home, make a large purchase, buy clothing and food. Access to capital for justice-involved individuals is not just about large purchases, but everyday living. Due to their inability to gain permanent, livable-wage employment, justice-involved individuals don't have a consistent cash flow to support their everyday living expenses.

Financial Assistance Agencies

[Philly Fountain Fund](#): The Philly Fountain Fund is a nonprofit organization that provides low-interest microloans to formerly incarcerated individuals in Philadelphia who have viable job prospects or entrepreneurial ventures. These loans, ranging from \$250 to \$15,000, aim to alleviate barriers to accessing capital for returning citizens. The Fountain Fund also offers financial education and coaching programs in partnership with Operation Hope to help clients build credit and improve their financial literacy. Additionally, the organization provides emergency assistance grants and connects clients with local resources and services to support their reentry process.

[UESF](#) – ESF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to a holistic, preventive, and cost-efficient approach to assisting vulnerable families impacted by housing crises. We are a one-stop shop that offers immediate resources and empowers families to address the root causes of their utility and housing crisis. Established in 1983, UESF focused exclusively on providing emergency utility assistance for our first 26 years. This financial aid, delivered through utility grants, helped families facing utility shut-offs remain in their homes. The program continues today. Every dollar provided is matched by our utility partners, doubling our impact. In recent years, UESF has come to see utility assistance as part of a larger housing stability issue. We've expanded our programs to address broader housing challenges facing low-income families. This allows us to focus on a more comprehensive goal: housing stabilization.

General Social Services

General Social Services describe organizations that offer a broad range of social services that support justice-involved individuals that don't fall into one of the more specific categories defined in this report. These organizations offer multiple services that fall across multiple categories or offer services that don't fall into one of the other categories. These services

included socialization, mobilization, mentoring, life skills, feeding programs, and more. While there are organizations that generally offer a broad range of services, most organizations offer a broader set of services than their primary offerings as a component of their wraparound services.

General Social Service Agencies

[Ardella's House](#) – Ardella's House is a service and advocacy organization committed to helping women with criminal justice histories realize new possibilities for themselves and their families. Our program services make it possible for women to obtain work, housing, and health care; to rebuild their families; and to participate fully in civic life. Ardella's House helps women assess their strengths and needs while guiding them as they think about their goals and how to reach them. Development of each woman's service plan includes an assessment of immediate needs and her history and goals related to livelihood, housing, health and wellbeing, family reunification, and criminal justice compliance. Additional services include parenting sessions, 1-on-1 mentoring, and health and sexuality.

[Broad Street Ministries](#) – Broad Street Love provides stabilizing services to those experiencing deep poverty. Rooted in dignity and care, we offer an open, safe space for hundreds of guests every weekday. Broad Street Love embraces every guest with empathy and care. Our practice of Radical Hospitality means reaching beyond the traditional norms of social service. Our mission is to create connection and community, restore hope and dignity, and increase security and self-sufficiency. We provide responsive service offerings to bring our guests closer to the stability they need. We offer our guests a daily meal, alongside other essential services: meals, mail, clothing, personal care, concierge and guest relations, spiritual, medical, legal, and other services.

[A Dream Deferred Foundation](#) – A Dream Deferred Foundation was founded in September 2018. Our goal is to reduce recidivism, end mass incarceration and uplift communities plagued by drugs, violence and impoverished conditions; that have led many down the wrong path. Our strategic approach to reentry focuses on providing holistic support that builds self-confidence, self-awareness and independence among other skill sets. We firmly believe exposure to new possibilities and essential resources are keys to reducing recidivism and positively impacting current and future generations.

[Friends Rehabilitation Program](#) - FRP answers the call to social justice and ecological sustainability by supporting the marginalized and vulnerable in the Philadelphia region with housing, life-skill and job readiness resources through social services, partnerships, and programs for training and jobs.

[Goldring Reentry Initiative](#) – The Goldring Reentry Initiative (GRI) works with men and women roughly three months pre and three months post release from the Philadelphia Prison System to help them prepare for life on the outside. The Goldring Reentry Initiative (GRI) is a project at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy & Practice. GRI workers are Master of Social

Work (MSW) students who work with clients during the school year (September through April). The GRI has two goals: (1) to provide education and training for MSW students in criminal justice and reentry, and (2) to reduce recidivism rates for people exiting the Philadelphia Prison System by providing individual support and resources. GRI workers meet with clients one-on-one roughly once every week or two. Together, the GRI worker and client discuss the client's goals, strengths, and needs to best transition out of jail. Specifically, the discharge plan addresses identification, physical and mental health, education, employment, benefits, housing, drug and alcohol issues, family reunification, and community support. Once the discharge plan is finalized and signed by the client, the GRI worker will send it to the Defender Association, who will send it to the District Attorney and the client's judge for approval. The judge will determine if the client is eligible for early release. The GRI does not in any way guarantee early release for clients. Clients who participate in the GRI are expected to continue to meet with the GRI worker for roughly three months after they exit the Philadelphia Prison System. Within the first month out, clients will meet with their GRI worker and PO to discuss goals, plans, and expectations. Clients will continue to meet with their GRI worker for resource referrals and general support. The six-month program ends with a graduation program for all clients, at which time clients receive a certificate.

[Healing Communities PA](#) – Healing Communities PA is a faith-based prison reentry support and justice advocacy organization in Pennsylvania that aims to transform the lives and communities of all those impacted by crime and mass incarceration. We are a framework for a distinct form of ministry for people returning from or at risk of incarceration, their families and the larger community.

[The Institute for Community Justice](#): The ICJ empowers people affected by mass incarceration through various programs and services. They envision a world without mass incarceration and focus on providing support for those currently incarcerated and those re-entering society. Their services include case management, anger management, parenting classes, workforce development, employment assistance, digital literacy training, peer support, and expungement clinics. Additionally, they connect individuals with resources for housing, legal aid, medical care, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment. By offering comprehensive support and referrals, the ICJ helps individuals thrive and build a better future.

[Justice Works Family of Services](#) – JusticeWorks provides innovative programs that identify and build on youths' and families' strengths. We create structure to positively redirect their lives. We help youth become good citizens and assist their families to resolve their problems and to be supportive of their children. JusticeWorks works to decrease the length of stay in out-of-home placements and substantially reduce recidivism, help families address issues in order to keep the child safe in the home setting, and work to strengthen the family's ability to provide appropriate boundaries, direction and support. Other services include adoption preparation, alternative education, behavioral healthcare, family centered community support services,

independent living, mentoring, transportation services, and plan of safe care for infants and their caregivers.

[Mothers in Charge](#) – We're a dedicated violence prevention, intervention and education organization. Mothers in Charge, Inc. is dedicated to creating a safer community through our support services, community outreach and education programs, and advocacy efforts. Mother's in Charge provides grief support, anger management, girls and boys mentoring, school-based grief and loss groups, public information and education, thinking for a change, women working for a change, participatory defense, and re-entry services.

[Mural Arts Philadelphia](#) – Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. Through participatory public art, Mural Arts Philadelphia inspires change in people, place, and practice, creating opportunity for a more just and equitable Philadelphia. Mural Arts supports the criminal / restorative justice systems through its Restorative Justice Program. Restorative justice is an alternative to traditional means of rehabilitation and punishment which brings together returning citizens and community members, focusing on conversation and understanding as the first steps on the path to healing.

[New Leash on Life](#) – Founded in 2010, New Leash on Life USA rescues at-risk dogs and works with justice-involved individuals in both prison and community settings to create fresh starts. Leveraging the powerful bond between humans and dogs, our unique model prepares a vulnerable population of underserved people, many living in poverty, with life skills workshops and career services and gives our rescue dogs a fresh start at life and adoption into forever homes.

[North 10 Community Center](#) - Provides access to their food market, children's clothing, diaper bank, after school programs, and open gym. North10, Philadelphia works to improve life outcomes for community members of the North Philadelphia Hunting Park-East Tioga community so current residents and future generations live happy, healthy, and civically engaged lives. They work with our neighbors to address issues of systemic violence, poverty, and disinvestment that have induced trauma, built barriers, and challenged the health and prosperity of this community. Taking a holistic approach, North10 is striving to make impactful change not only by delivering high-quality programs and services in response to stated community preferences, but also by serving as the community backbone.

[Philadelphia Corporation on Aging](#) – PCA's mission is to improve the quality of life for older Philadelphians and people with disabilities and to assist them in achieving their maximum level of health, independence and productivity. PCA helps seniors with workforce training, home modifications, food insecurity, companionship, healthcare, and more.

[Philadelphia Unemployment Project](#) – The Philadelphia Unemployment Project has organized the poor and unemployed to fight for economic justice, bringing diverse groups together to bring about major changes that benefit millions of unemployed and impoverished people. PUP has helped the unemployed link with coalition partners in the labor, religious, community, civil

rights, and women's movements to increase our power. Our victories prove that, once organized, working people and the unemployed can be a powerful voice in the city, state, and nation. The Philadelphia Unemployment Project offers services related to housing counseling, renter's support with utilities and evictions, utilities assistance, helping home owners save their homes, job search resources, unemployment compensation, SNAP / Food Stamps, Healthcare navigation, childcare navigation, and feeding programs.

[Prison Society](#) – We are an unbiased, expert source of information on Pennsylvania prisons. For more than 230 years the Prison Society has worked to promote the health, safety and dignity of people behind bars. Our start dates back to May 8, 1787, just weeks away from the start of the Constitutional Convention, our nation's founders established the Pennsylvania Prison Society out of the conviction that "The obligations of benevolence are not canceled by the follies or crimes of our fellow creatures." We provide assistance to incarcerated people and their families, work to ensure vital support networks are kept alive while someone is incarcerated, and provide a window into the closed world of prisons, exposing and addressing the most serious issues. Services include support for families, prison monitoring, support for people in prison, education and advocacy, and transportation.

[Safe Haven Reentry Program](#) – The Safe Haven Reentry Program is a faith-based organization that offers literacy/GED classes, a resource center, job readiness and job retention services, housing resources, professional counseling, and financial education classes. The Safe Haven Reentry Program also offers one on one mentoring and access to a computer lab.

[Sisters Returning Home](#) – Sisters Returning Home assists women who are returning home from incarceration successfully re-establish their connection to their community and families.

[U-Belong](#) – U-Belong provides participants with the skills and resources necessary to prevent them from reverting back to the same negative, self-destructive behavior that led to their adjudicated status. To guarantee upon entry into the program each participant has a fair and realistic opportunity for caring for themselves as well as their families. The mission is not to just make them productive members of society but successful individuals positively impacting our communities. Services include pre- and post-assessments, comprehensive development plans, mobile therapy, assistance obtaining legal documents, and certification assistance.

Health and Wellness

Justice-involved individuals are a very vulnerable population related to their physical and mental health. A significant number of Justice-involved individuals suffer from both physical and mental trauma pre-incarceration based on environmental conditions as a child and adult. Those traumas continue into and are in some cases exacerbated by incarceration and are prevalent upon release.

Physical health related conditions include cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes. Justice-involved individuals in Philadelphia are at significantly higher risk based on the communities

they were raised in and incarcerated from due to a lack of access to fresh and healthy food, access to adequate healthcare, and a general disposition not to engage the healthcare system. While there are a number of organizations, health systems, and payers working to address physical health conditions, there seems to be a lack of awareness of these resources and the resources in most cases sit outside of the communities that are most impacted.

Justice-impacted individuals are disproportionately plagued by mental health challenges related to significant Adverse Childhood Experiences, environmental trauma related to a high prevalence of violence and racial discrimination, and incarceration. There are a significant number of justice-involved individuals that are in an un-diagnosed crisis. While there are a number of organizations providing mental health support in the Philadelphia market, there are nearly not enough to support the need. Additionally, there are both free and paid resources available, whereas cost may present and barrier to treatment. Other barriers to treatment include stigma, awareness, and accessibility.

Health and Wellness Agencies

Action Wellness - Action Wellness enhances the lives of individuals living with HIV and other chronic illnesses by providing a range of trauma-informed social services to help our clients achieve physical, emotional, and economic wellness. Specifically for returning citizens, Action Wellness offers the LEAP program. The Linkage and Engagement After Prison (LEAP) Program is a medical case management initiative for people with a diagnosis of Opioid Use Disorder who have been initiated on medication assisted treatment at the Philadelphia Department of Prisons.

The Center for Carceral Communities – The Center for Carceral Communities, an initiative of the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania works collaboratively with neighborhoods in West Philadelphia to help people with a history of incarceration re-engage with the community. We provide free, evidence-based psychosocial services that address the mental health, educational, housing, advocacy and primary care challenges confronting those returning to the community. The Center seeks to reverse the community-to-prison pipeline by helping participants harness their strengths and become leaders in the community.

Philadelphia Fight: Philadelphia FIGHT (Field Initiating Group for HIV Trials) is a comprehensive AIDS service organization in Philadelphia that provides primary care, consumer education, advocacy, and research services. Founded in 1990, Philadelphia FIGHT aims to end the AIDS epidemic within the lifetime of those currently living with HIV. The organization offers state-of-the-art HIV primary care, social services, outreach programs, and access to advanced clinical research. Additionally, Philadelphia FIGHT operates programs such as the AIDS Library, Critical Path AIDS Project, Jonathan Lax Immune Disorders Treatments Center, Project TEACH (Treatment Education Activists Combating HIV), and the Youth Health Empowerment Project (Y-HEP) to support individuals living with HIV/AIDS and those at high risk.

[Fruits of the Family Table](#) – With the use of therapeutic services, education, community events, mentorship and advocacy, we at FOTFT (Fruits of the Family Table) aim to restore the family unit, by addressing the areas of substance use disorders, parenting, senior care and (re)integration.

[Gaudenzia](#) – Gaudenzia is one of the largest non-profit substance use and co-occurring disorders treatment providers in the northeast United States, serving Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and the Washington, D.C. areas. Gaudenzia’s mission is to promote long-term recovery by providing comprehensive treatment and support to people with substance use disorder, co-occurring mental health disorders, and related conditions, regardless of individual circumstances.

[Healing Way](#) in Philadelphia is a multi-service program that provides outpatient treatment for community members dealing with substance use disorders and mental health conditions. Located at 7900 Frankford Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19136, Healing Way offers services such as relapse prevention, recovery skills training, and substance abuse disorder treatment programs. Their focus is on assisting individuals in overcoming substance abuse and addressing mental health issues through comprehensive outpatient treatment programs.

[I’m Free](#) - I’m FREE is a 501c3, non-profit serving incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women from the greater Philadelphia area. We work hard every day to empower women so they can go out and make a positive difference in the world. We have developed gender-responsive services specifically designed for women reentering society from the judicial system – designed to facilitate physical, emotional and spiritual healing in a safe and mutually supportive community. Our gender-responsive, trauma-informed training empowers formerly incarcerated Philadelphia area women to better understand their self-worth and become better parents, employees and citizens. All aspects of a resident’s life, including health, psychological state, social and family situations, vocational background and legal issues.

[Maternity Care Coalition](#) – At Maternity Care Coalition (MCC) we provide services to pregnant people and parenting families with children ages 0-3. We offer support while a person is pregnant, once they become a parent or caregiver, and through a child’s third birthday. We offer services in Pennsylvania and Delaware. Services include home visiting, child care, community and parenting education, community doula and lactation, behavioral health, and community reproductive health.

[Mental Health Partnerships](#) – Mental Health Partnerships was founded, and continues to thrive, on the basic principle that people with mental health conditions can and do recover because they have the resilience to direct their own journeys in overcoming significant adversity. And while recovery—in all its different forms and paths—is possible for all, there’s a greater chance for recovery in the context of an informed, caring community with family, friends and peers involved. Based on this conviction, we’ve spearheaded changes over seven decades that have

helped transform mental health services locally, statewide, and across the country—all to be more responsive to the priorities set by those served.

[Merakey](#) – Merakey is a leading developmental, behavioral health, and education non-profit provider offering a wide range of services for individuals and communities across the country. Merakey's services include addiction recovery, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and autism.

[New Vitae Wellness and Recovery](#) – We work with each of our members to help build confidence and to create trusting relationships. Our integrated approach of residential, behavioral, and mental health treatment provides a haven that promotes personal growth and success. New Vitae Wellness and Recovery offers a progressive residential service that enables individuals to gradually move into more independent housing.

[The Phoenix](#) – At The Phoenix, we're fueling a movement that builds on the power of community and belonging to change how society approaches addiction and recovery. Through hundreds of weekly sober events and activities, we're creating safe spaces for all individuals to connect, build friendships, find support, and have fun.

[Public Health Management Corporation PHMC](#) – Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) is a nonprofit public health institute that builds healthier communities through partnerships with government, foundations, businesses and community-based organizations. It fulfills its mission to improve the health of the community by providing outreach, health promotion, education, research, planning, technical assistance, and direct services. PHMC has served the Greater Philadelphia region since 1972 as a facilitator, developer, intermediary, manager, advocate and innovator in the field of public health. With more than 3,000 employees, 350 programs, a network of subsidiary organizations, 70 locations, sites and close to 350,000 clients served annually, PHMC is one of the largest and most comprehensive public health organizations in the nation.

[Sankofa Healing Studio](#) – Sankofa Healing Studio specializes in therapy informed by healing justice, centering the needs of underserved youth and adults who have experienced trauma and involvement with oppressive systems. Our Healing Paradigm Includes comprehensive treatment approaches are essential to disrupt re-traumatization and break the cycle of intergenerational trauma. We provide culturally affirming and emotionally focused healing environments that embrace a strength-based perspective.

[Stephen Klein Wellness Center](#): The Stephen Klein Wellness Center in Philadelphia is a healthcare facility that offers a range of services to the community. Located at 2108 Cecil B. Moore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19121, the center provides primary medical care, psychiatric services, nurse care management, individual, couples, and group counseling, as well as peer-led programs. The center aims to promote wellness and provide comprehensive healthcare services to individuals in need.

[Transformation Yoga Project](#) – Serving people impacted by trauma, addiction and incarceration through trauma-sensitive, mindfulness-based yoga.

[Tower Health](#): Tower Health in Philadelphia is a regional integrated healthcare system that provides advanced and compassionate healthcare services to communities in Berks County and beyond. Tower Health offers a wide range of healthcare services, including primary care, specialty care, hospital services, and wellness programs. The system includes hospitals such as Reading Hospital, which is recognized for its quality care and advanced medical services. Additionally, Tower Health operates Tower Behavioral Health Hospital in Reading, PA, which provides psychiatric treatment for adults and adolescents dealing with behavioral health disorders and co-occurring addiction. The organization focuses on delivering innovative, accessible healthcare to meet the diverse needs of the community it serves.

Housing

Housing for justice-involved individuals continues to be one of the most pressing issues, particularly when being released from prison. Individuals exiting prison are faced with a myriad of challenges that include finding housing with no job or income. This issue is further exacerbated by imposed restrictions and requirements. While many find themselves in halfway houses post release, they often struggle to find permanent housing based on restrictions that include who they can or cannot live with and where they can or cannot live. This is even more complicated for those with child or sex offenses. In addition to the specific issues related to being justice involved, individuals have to additionally contend with systemic issues that include an inadequate affordable housing stock.

In Philadelphia, there are a number of organizations that provide housing support, with most providing a service and not physical housing.

Housing Agencies

[Philadelphia Housing Authority \(PHA\)](#) – The Philadelphia Housing Authority, also known as PHA, is the largest landlord in Pennsylvania. We develop, acquire, lease, and operate affordable housing for city residents with low incomes. Although we are a public agency, we operate like a private property management company. It is our policy to serve out customers without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, having AIDS, physical handicap, or disability.

PHA introduced a Second Chance Housing Voucher Program for Returning Citizens in 2015 to increase access to affordable housing for this population. The program provides returning citizens with 2 years of subsidized housing. The program currently awards 30 vouchers a year.

Project HOME's supportive, affordable housing offers permanent housing for individuals and families who had been homeless. Most residents come to Project HOME from a safe haven, a shelter, or from the streets.

[Redemption Housing](#) is a spiritual community seeking to address the cycle of recidivism through holistic programming and healthy relationships, bringing God's healing and restoration to those affected by incarceration. We are founded upon the ideal of resident-focused service.

When they are released, returning citizens require support circles to properly break free of crime, addiction, and homelessness. Christian hospitality is therefore a hallmark of our staff as we guide our residents toward recovery. We care for their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs, and we affirm their humanity in a nurturing and hospitable environment.

Supervision to Aid Reentry ([STAR](#)) program completers eligible for housing through [PHA](#) Vouchers that will pay for a rental apartment for up to two years.

[Northwest Counseling Service \(NWCS\)](#) is a nonprofit agency in Philadelphia that has been providing real estate, housing, and budgeting counseling services to residents for over 40 years. Their programs include expert advice and quality services in areas such as pre- and post-purchase housing counseling, pre- and post-rental assistance, and budgeting guidance. NWCS aims to support individuals in navigating housing-related challenges and improving their financial literacy. The organization also offers events and support services to further assist the community.

This organization comes out to each Uplift cohort to provide participants get assistance with their security deposit and move in costs. They also work with a lot of landlords that will rent to returning citizens and to folks who may not have the best credit scores. They also provide financial counseling, credit repair and first-time home buying classes.

[Office of Addiction Services](#) can submit referrals for participants to be placed in recovery houses in Philadelphia, who have Philadelphia County State-funded insurance. The Office of Addiction Services (OAS) in Philadelphia, formerly known as the Coordinating Office for Drug and Alcohol Abuse Programs (CODAAP), is responsible for planning, funding, and monitoring substance abuse prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support services in the city. As the Single County Authority (SCA) for Philadelphia, OAS integrates federal, state, and city funds to support a comprehensive system of services for individuals and families dealing with drug and alcohol issues. OAS coordinates addiction providers' activities for Philadelphia residents, including those who are Medicaid recipients, uninsured, or underinsured. Through a network of treatment providers, OAS facilitates recovery-oriented drug and alcohol treatment for individuals enrolled in Medicaid as well as those who are uninsured or underinsured. The office also oversees compliance, contractual monitoring, and provides support services to protect the rights of individuals receiving addiction treatment services from OAS-contracted provider agencies. Additionally, OAS funds recovery and 'step-down' houses that cater to clients enrolled in drug and alcohol treatment programs

[BCC Housing Referral](#) refers to the Bridge Rental Subsidy Program, which is a tenant-based rental assistance program providing individuals with behavioral health disabilities access to affordable housing. This program allows tenants to pay 30% of their income towards housing

costs. Referrals for this program are made through Community Behavioral Health's Community Support Services Unit and are primarily reserved for individuals transitioning from congregate living situations. The goal is to provide priority access to affordable housing for persons with behavioral health disabilities, with referrals made to the city's Permanent Supportive Housing Clearinghouse, which then connects individuals to the Bridge Rental Subsidy Program. For those on state parole and have three pay stubs, their parole agent can submit a BCC housing referral. This will pay for their housing for 6 months.

[Redemption Housing](#) – Redemption Housing is a transformational reentry organization that offers faith-based programming and community support to Philadelphians coming out of incarceration, guiding them toward healthy and meaningful lives. Redemption Housing offers programs that include Barnabas House – a 12-month program that provides housing for up to six residents in double-occupancy bedrooms, along with life skill coaching and support from a house chaplain; and Next Level Housing - The program is hosted at Jubilee House*, a fully-furnished home in West Philadelphia with the capacity to house a maximum of 3 residents, which create supports that help avoid the stringent housing limitations placed on returning citizens in Philadelphia, which otherwise often leaves people with past convictions unhoused.

Legal Aid

There are several legal aid organizations providing services in and around Philadelphia. These organizations provide a range of services from helping individuals obtain legal documents, providing representation in criminal and civil matters, as well as expungement and pardon support. The biggest challenge that was identified was awareness of the services. When awareness was not an issue, there were some issues with the capacity of the organizations, as well as information on how to obtain their services.

Legal Aid Agencies

[Community Legal Services](#) provides support for landlord/tenant issues. Since its founding in 1966, Community Legal Services (CLS) has provided free civil legal assistance to more than one million low-income Philadelphians. Almost 10,000 clients were represented by CLS in the past year. CLS assists clients when they face the threat of losing their homes, incomes, health care, and even their families. CLS attorneys and other staff provide a full range of legal services, from individual representation to administrative advocacy to class action litigation, as well as community education and social work. CLS is nationally recognized as a model legal services program.

[Defender's Association](#) – The Defender Association of Philadelphia provides high-quality, client-centered legal representation, courtroom advocacy, and a connection to social services. We strive to protect the Constitution, ensure a fair and equitable criminal justice system, and improve outcomes for vulnerable populations. Though we represent 70% of the people arrested in Philadelphia, our service go beyond the courtroom to help our clients get the help they need to improve their lives; which includes adult representation, child and youth

representation, social services, criminal justice policy, community partnerships and engagement, police accountability, case status updates, participatory defense, expungement information, probation termination, and know your justice system.

[Pennsylvania Health Law Project](#) – The mission of the Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP) is protecting and advancing health care rights through free legal services, community education, and systemic advocacy. PHLP provides legal counseling and representation individuals from across the state, helping them get and keep health care coverage and services. Taking what is learned from individual cases, PHLP advocates for large-scale policy changes that help others across the state, and engages in community education that builds capacity among healthcare consumers, providers, and other advocates.

[PLSE](#): PLSE provides free legal advice and representation to low-income Philadelphia residents whose criminal records are holding them back from achieving their social and career potentials. PLSE seeks a more equitable social environment for those with criminal records through individual representation, strategic litigation, community education, research and advocacy. PLSE does this by seeking expungements in criminal court and pardons from the Governor; educating elected and community leaders; empowering and organizing under-resourced communities; and leading legislative, administrative and systemic reform.

[Philadelphia Bar Association: Removing Barriers to Justice](#) : The Philadelphia Bar Association (PBA) plays a significant role in supporting returning citizens' reintegrate into society. They offer various legal assistance programs, including pro bono representation, legal clinics, and a lawyer referral service. Through their advocacy and policy efforts, the PBA pushes for reforms that reduce barriers to employment, housing, and education. Educational resources like the Reentry Resource Guide and workshops further empower returning citizens. The PBA also fosters community engagement through expungement clinics, town halls, and partnerships with social service organizations. By providing legal support, advocating for change, and offering educational resources, the PBA helps returning citizens overcome challenges and build a brighter future.

[Regional Housing Legal Services](#) – Regional Housing Legal Services (RHLS) is a nonprofit law firm with unique expertise in affordable, sustainable housing and its related components — community and economic development, utility matters and preservation of home ownership. RHLS provides innovative project and policy solutions that help create sustainable communities offering decent, safe and affordable housing for lower-income Pennsylvanians

Workforce Development

Workforce Development is the largest service area for justice involved individuals in Philadelphia. There is a range of small to large organizations providing services in this area. Services offered range widely from retail to advanced manufacturing. There is currently a shift

in workforce development as it transitions to focus on more advanced jobs in line with the shifting marketplace.

In addition to technical skills training, most organizations in this category also provide life-skills training, wraparound services, and case management, particularly large organizations. Smaller organizations providing workforce development training fail to offer wraparound services and ongoing case management.

In this area, opportunities and challenges range widely based on how the organization is situated. Larger organizations are able to take advantage of shifts in the market and attract funding to support new programs, while smaller organizations continue to struggle to get access to capital to sustain existing programs.

Workforce Development Agencies

[America Works Pennsylvania](#) – America Works is a 100% Women-Owned Business with a mission to equip each individual who comes to our offices with the right tools so that they are able to provide for themselves and their loved ones. We believe the most effective approach in helping people out of poverty is by assisting them in finding meaningful employment. Our proven methods, services and experienced staff offer the right combination for success.

[Baker Industries](#) – At Baker Industries, we believe workplaces and communities are strengthened when they are diverse and inclusive of individuals who are often sidelined based on their challenges. Our workforce development program is designed to unlock each person's unique potential and provide a sense of purpose to adults with barriers to employment.

[Career Link](#): PA CareerLink is a workforce development program in Pennsylvania that connects job seekers with employers. It provides a range of services including job search assistance, career counseling, training programs, and resources to help individuals find employment opportunities. PA CareerLink centers are located throughout the state, including in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and other regions, offering support to both job seekers and employers. Additionally, PA CareerLink plays a role in Pennsylvania's Unemployment Compensation program by requiring claimants to register with PA CareerLink within 30 days after filing for unemployment benefits.

[Center for Employment Opportunities \(CEO\)](#) – Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) offers individuals just coming home from prison the ongoing support necessary to build career capital and financial stability. We believe that everyone, regardless of their past, deserves the chance to work toward a stronger future for themselves, their families, and their communities. As the largest reentry employment provider in the country, CEO is using our scale, experience, and data – backed by our participants' feedback on what works – to change the way government invests in criminal justice and workforce development.

[Connection Training Services](#) – The CTS Mission is to provide for economic, housing and social needs of the disadvantaged populations of Philadelphia to enable participants to begin the path to self-sufficiency and a better quality of life.

[Defy Ventures](#) – Defy’s entrepreneurial programs enable one of America’s largest forgotten communities to defy the odds. We equip them with new skills, new connections, and a new belief to match their new purpose, and succeed in their new life of economic independence.

[Entrepreneur Works](#) – Entrepreneur Works strengthens Philadelphia communities by investing in local small businesses. We provide essential financial assistance, including grants and loans, to empower underserved entrepreneurs facing barriers to capital. Our mission goes beyond transactions – thriving small businesses catalyze positive change, energizing entire neighborhoods.

[Episcopal Community Services](#) – Our mission is to challenge and reduce intergenerational poverty. We increase the ability of people to improve their lives and achieve economic independence. We call upon every person to participate in sustainable, positive change for our communities.

[First Step Staffing](#) – With a mission to provide a pathway to economic stability through employment and retention services, First Step provides a more meaningful and beneficial staffing solution for its partners. We bring experience in each industry, a pipeline of rapidly deployed trained personnel, and a reputation for best-in-class customer service. First Step comes already geared for success, providing worksite transportation, background checks, payroll, insurance, protective equipment, and workers' compensation. Our Second Step, advanced training in construction, forklift, CDL, and other certifications, ensures a diverse and appropriately skilled workforce.

[Furnishing A Future](#) –Furnishing a Future offers a 5-week training program for returning citizens where they will work in a wood shop to create furniture pieces. Individuals will work with power and hand tools, but no experience is necessary. The program prepares individuals to obtain employment after graduation and helps connect them with employers looking to hire carpenters, furniture craftsmen, construction workers, and more.

[Impact Services](#) – We are a community action organization mobilizing people and resources to create connected, resilient, thriving communities. While we can help anyone looking for employment, we have special programs focused on those who are re-entering the workforce after incarceration. Much of our housing efforts are focused on the goal of ending veteran homelessness, with hundreds of beds for veterans and their families. We work on building a stronger community through a trauma-informed approach that meets people where they are.

[JEVS](#) - JEVS Human Services (JEVS) works with individuals to create sustainable paths to independence and economic security. JEVS priorities include workforce development, career and technical education, community living and home support, and JEVS Care at Home.

[PAR Recycle Works](#) – PAR-Recycle Works is a nonprofit electronics recycler that provides transitional employment to people returning from prison. We deconstruct electronics and destroy data to generate revenue and pay our employees. By providing our employees with skills and opportunities, PAR-Recycle Works helps to build safer communities and contribute to stronger families while saving taxpayer money.

[Pennsylvania Horticultural Society](#) – PHS connects those seeking training and employment opportunities in the horticultural and landscape industries. We provide training, job placement, and ongoing support throughout the year for Philadelphia residents impacted by underemployment. Our green industry workforce development programs offer paid training in basic horticulture and ecology, Landscape maintenance and tree care, equipment operation and safety, light carpentry and masonry, and green storm water infrastructure (GSI).

[OIC America](#) – With a mission, to be an equalizer for poor communities by providing quality education and training through a national network of local affiliates, we believe investing in people is the answer to addressing the national labor shortage. We know we can ensure people of all races and all backgrounds are successful for the good jobs America’s employers need to fill. OIC of America accomplishes its goals through its national network of affiliates and nonprofit partners.

[OIC Philadelphia](#) – At OIC Philadelphia, our mission is dedicated to the elimination of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy through education and job training. We believe in the transformative power of vocational education and the boundless potential of every individual. OIC Philadelphia provides workforce training in culinary arts and hospitality, digital media and audio engineering, financial services, health care, and skilled trades.

[Philabundance Community Kitchen](#) – Philabundance Community Kitchen (PCK) is 16-week culinary vocational training program that has been transforming the lives of its students since 2000. Participating students represent a diverse community of adults 18 and up with low-no-income and excited about culinary-based careers. PCK promotes the self-sufficiency of its students by preparing them for and connecting them to work in the food service industry and allows them to give back by preparing needed meals for those in need. PCK’s curriculum goes beyond a foundation in the culinary arts. Students in the program also learn life skills, helping secure employment and provide tools to build a career and a second chance at life.

[Power Corps PHL](#) – PowerCorpsPHL connects people to careers and advances community. In Philadelphia, PowerCorpsPHL engages un- and under-employed 18- to 30-year-olds in an immersive, paid 4- to 24-month experience that results in connection to living wage jobs in clean energy, green infrastructure, and community-based careers. Outside of Philadelphia, PowerCorpsPHL designs, advises, and supports the adaptation of our model in cities across the country.

[Temple University Workforce Development](#) – Temple University’s Lenfest North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative (LNPWI) seeks to strengthen the earning potential of local communities by

providing job training and career readiness programs that result in outcomes that lead to sustainable employment. Our work focuses on the 8 zip codes surrounding Temple University's Main Campus and Health Science Center: 19121, 19122, 19123, 19125, 19130, 19132, 19133, and 19140.

[ULiftU](#) – UliftU is a 501c3 nonprofit with a mission to empower currently incarcerated and returning citizens to be professional Fitness Coaches. Through our certification program, our graduates are paid a living wage to run classes for underserved groups in an effort to fundamentally change outcomes related to chronic disease in Philadelphia.

[Uplift Solutions](#) – Uplift Solutions, founded in 2009, has a mission of reducing barriers for justice involved individuals and at-risk youth, helping them find pathways to long-term success. Uplift works to address individual and systemic issues related to successful reintegration and self-sufficiency for justice involved individuals. Uplift does this through its workforce training programs that include HVAC, CDL, and Same Day Work and Pay; its pre-release programs that include SCI Chester and SCI Phoenix; its community programs that include record clearing and reentry simulations; and its advocacy programs that include the Transforming Justice Conference.

[Urban League of Philadelphia](#) – Founded in 1917 with a mission, “to help Black-Americans and others in historical underserved and marginalized communities achieve their highest level of social parity, economic self-reliance, power, and civil rights.” Urban League of Philadelphia promotes economic empowerment through youth education and job training, housing and community development, workforce development and reentry, entrepreneurship, health equity, and quality of life. ULP's programs include Youth and Education, Workforce Development, Entrepreneurship Center, Housing and Diversion Services, Health and Wellness, Advocacy and Legislative Affairs, and Reentry Services.

[Why Not Prosper](#) – Our mission is to help women from prison systems discover their own strength by providing them with the support and resources that will empower them to become responsible, economically self-sufficient and contributing members of the community. Why Not Prosper programs help women to find employment, increase job skills, retain employment, secure safe and affordable housing, abstain from alcohol and illegal drugs, reunite with their children, and not return to prison.

Government Agencies

Government plays a significant role in supporting returning and otherwise justice involved citizens directly and indirectly. Government provides funding to organizations providing services within Philadelphia, as well as provide direct service support through offices such as the Office of Reentry Partnerships. In addition, the city had developed several coalitions to provide support to direct service providers that include the Reentry Coalition and Workforce Professional Alliance.

Alongside the city, the state and the federal government provide support to direct service organizations through grants, contracts, and capacity building. The following are government agencies providing support to justice involved individuals.

Government Agencies

[BenePhilly](#) program provides assistance applying for public benefits. The program staff can help individuals with:

- Completing public benefit applications.
- Organizing key documents for applications.
- Tracking your applications' statuses.
- Sharing information about different benefit programs
- Assisting with determinations of eligibility for programs and applications.

Some of the benefits programs they support include:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Property Tax/Rent Rebate (PT/RR)
- Medicaid/Medical Assistance (MA)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Homestead Exemption
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Social Security Disability Income (SSDI).

[Bureau of Community Corrections](#) – The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) enhances public safety through the housing and rehabilitation of incarcerated individuals in facilities throughout the Commonwealth. As the largest agency in Pennsylvania, the DOC oversees the operation of state correctional institutions and community corrections centers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Through educational opportunities and treatment programs, it prepares incarcerated individuals for a successful reentry back into the community.

[Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services \(DBHIDS\) \(Behavioral Health and Justice Related Services Division\)](#) – The City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services is dedicated to educating, strengthening, and serving individuals and communities so that all Philadelphians can thrive.

DBHIDS envisions a Philadelphia where every individual can achieve health, well-being, and self-determination. The Office of the DBHIDS Commissioner sets the vision and direction for the work of DBHIDS. The office is responsible for leadership over the six DBHIDS divisions and for the organization, prioritization, and achievement of the Department's overall goals. Our approach at DBHIDS are encompassed by the principles of TEC — addressing Trauma, achieving Equity, and engaging Community; the Social Determinants of Health; and our strategic framework, PACE. Our efforts include Systems Integration, both within DBHIDS and with

external partners; public education and training; prevention and early detection; innovative treatment services; and more.

[Division of Housing and Community Development](#): City-funded housing counseling agencies can help. Housing counselors can help prepare people to buy a home. They assist tenants fighting eviction. They help homeowners facing foreclosure. And they can help address specific issues facing seniors and people with disabilities.

Trained housing counselors offer free group and individual counseling on:

- Mortgage and tax foreclosure prevention.
- Credit repair and maintenance.
- Budgeting and money management.
- Rights and responsibilities of homeowners.
- Mortgage application and purchase process.
- Tenant/landlord issues.
- Home repair
- Fair housing rights

[Federal Bureau of Prisons](#) – Our agency was established in 1930 to provide more progressive and humane care for federal inmates, to professionalize the prison service, and to ensure consistent and centralized administration of federal prisons.

[First Judicial District](#) – The First Judicial District (FJD) of Pennsylvania is composed of two courts which make up the Philadelphia County Court System: the Court of Common Pleas; and Municipal Court. The operations of the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania are controlled by an Administrative Governing Board which consists of the President and Administrative Judges of the two courts and the State Court Administrator of Pennsylvania.

[Mayor's Office for Community Empowerment and Opportunity \(CEO\)](#) - The Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity (CEO) is the Community Action Agency (CAA) for Philadelphia. As a CAA since 1964, our agency has a unique role in promoting racial equity, greater financial stability, and self-sufficiency for the city's most vulnerable populations. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that all Philadelphians can share in the city's prosperous future, regardless of race or where they were born. The Office Advocates for, invests in, and hold gatherings around programs, policies, and initiatives that advance benefits access, financial empowerment, housing security, and workforce development.

[Mentor \(Court of Common Pleas\)](#) – MENTOR is a court-based program, coordinated by Judge Michael Erdos and Judge Kai Scott, that matches individuals serving county sentences with volunteer mentors. Over the course of the 12-18 month program term, mentors provide emotional support and encouragement to their participants, as well as practical assistance to overcome some of the traditional barriers to successful reentry. MENTOR also empowers its

participants to take advantage of additional resources provided through a network of community-based partner organizations. When a participant successfully completes the MENTOR Program, he or she will receive a substantial reduction in the remaining term of court supervision. This is a carrot, not a stick. In addition, it is expected that participation in MENTOR will result in healthier communities and families, and a decrease in the various human and financial costs associated with crime, prosecution, and incarceration.

[Office of Reentry Partnerships \(ORP\)](#) – The Office of Reentry Partnerships (ORP) elevates and organizes citywide reentry efforts by serving as the City’s hub for referrals, resources, and training. ORP connects individuals with services and support, including:

- Behavioral health services.
- Benefits access.
- City services (water, trash, business permits, etc.)
- Clothing.
- Culinary training.
- Education.
- Employment support and workforce development.
- Expungement and pardon services.
- Fatherhood services.
- Family services.
- Financial counseling.
- Food.
- Forklift training.
- Municipal identification.
- Services and additional support offered by organizations of the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition.
- Vocational training opportunities.

[Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations](#) – The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) is the City’s official civil rights agency. We enforce an important set of laws that prevent discrimination and promote equality. PCHR works to enforce anti-discrimination laws, especially the City’s Fair Practices Ordinance, administer the Fair Chance Hiring law, which prevents discrimination against people with criminal records, investigate complaints of discrimination and violations of civil rights laws, resolve community conflicts through dialogue and other dispute resolution methods, and educate the public on their legal rights and responsibilities.

Outside of Philadelphia County Resources

Philadelphia has the vast majority of organizations providing support and services to currently incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and otherwise justice involved individuals. Given Philadelphia has the vast majority of organizations, the surrounding counties are also supported by these agencies. The agencies that provide support in and around Philadelphia County are typically larger in size, quasi-governmental, governmental, or affiliates of larger organizations. Additionally, financial support was more prevalent for organizations operating in Philadelphia County.

Philadelphia County Comparison to Collar Counties

Philadelphia County and the City of Philadelphia overlap in entirety making its geographic profile markedly different from the collar counties of Montgomery, Delaware, Bucks, and Chester. Philadelphia is thusly one city comprised of multiple neighborhoods all under one jurisdiction, whereas the collar counties have smaller municipalities under separate jurisdictions. These distinctions play out in service delivery and funding as outlined below.

Size and Resources:

- **Philadelphia:** Larger city with more public and private resources, potentially offering a wider range of programs and services.
- **Collar Counties:** Smaller municipalities with likely fewer resources but potentially closer-knit support networks.

Targeted Populations:

- **Philadelphia:** More diverse population with potentially higher numbers of justice-impacted individuals, leading to specialized programs for specific demographics.
- **Collar Counties:** Less diverse population with potentially fewer specialized programs but more individualized support due to smaller community sizes.

Focus of Support:

- **Philadelphia:** More likely to have programs addressing systemic issues like mass incarceration and racial disparities, potentially focusing on advocacy and policy change.
- **Collar Counties:** More likely to focus on direct support like reentry programs, job training, and housing assistance, potentially with a more individual-focused approach.

Government Funding:

- **Philadelphia:** Likely receives more state and federal funding due to its size and population, potentially offering more public programs.

- **Collar Counties:** May rely more on private donations and local initiatives, potentially offering diverse but less consistent support.

Community Engagement:

- **Philadelphia:** Larger community with established organizations and advocacy groups, potentially offering more opportunities for collective action.
- **Collar Counties:** Smaller communities with closer connections, potentially fostering stronger informal support networks but less collective organization.

Recommendations

Recommendations based on the survey results

- Reduce in-person requirements: Since many struggle to visit offices (27.6%), consider offering alternative ways to complete forms, such as online applications, mail-in options, or mobile outreach centers.
- Simplify application process: Address the challenge of complicated forms (25.9%) by offering clear instructions, multi-lingual options, and potential phone or video assistance to complete them.
- Expand outreach beyond word-of-mouth: While word-of-mouth is valuable (55.2%), explore additional outreach strategies. Partner with social service organizations, correctional facilities during release planning, and homeless shelters. Utilize social media and search engine targeted advertising to reach those most in need.
- Address transportation barriers: Considering the reported challenge of unreliable transportation (17.2%), explore partnerships with public transportation authorities to offer service vouchers or discounted fares for those seeking assistance.
- Invest in digital resources: To combat limited internet access (22.4%), consider offering resources at public libraries, community centers, or even mobile hotspots for temporary internet access. This would not only improve access to service information but also facilitate online applications (32.8%).

Recommendations: Implement a multi-pronged approach to bridge the gap in accessing support services by

- Increasing outreach: Conduct targeted outreach campaigns to connect with justice-impacted individuals who haven't accessed services, particularly focusing on housing, healthcare, education, and legal aid (programs with over 60% non-participation). Partner with social service organizations, correctional facilities during release planning, and homeless shelters. Utilize a mix of traditional methods (flyers, community events) and digital strategies (social media, search engine advertising) to reach a wider audience.
- Simplifying access points: Streamline the application process for support services by offering online applications, phone assistance, and mobile outreach centers. Consider offering bundled service packages that address multiple needs (e.g., housing + legal aid) to simplify the process for clients.

Recommendations to improve housing services

- Expand housing counselor availability: Given the high demand (79.3%), prioritize increasing counselor availability to meet with clients.
- Offer diverse counseling services: Tailor services to client needs by providing assistance with credit repair (48.3%), budgeting (29.3%), and fair housing rights (22.4%).

- **Prioritize financial education:** Integrate financial literacy workshops on budgeting and money management (29.3%) to empower clients with long-term financial skills.

By implementing these recommendations alongside the solutions suggested in the survey (caseworker support, online forms, reliable internet access), justice-impacted individuals will have a significantly better chance of finding and utilizing the crucial support systems they need.

How the United Way and The Promise Can Advocate for Justice Impacted Individuals

Policy and Advocacy

- **Work with policymakers:** Lobby for legislation that promotes fair sentencing, reduces recidivism, and expands access to essential services for justice-impacted individuals.
- **Support criminal justice reform initiatives:** Advocate for policies that address racial disparities in the justice system, reduce mass incarceration, and promote alternatives to incarceration.
- **Conduct research and issue reports:** Highlight the challenges faced by justice-impacted communities and propose evidence-based solutions.
- **Organize public awareness campaigns:** Educate the public about the issues facing justice-impacted communities and build support for reform efforts.

Funding and Resource Mobilization

- **Direct funding to organizations:** Provide grants and financial support to organizations serving justice-impacted individuals, such as reentry programs, legal aid services, and mental health providers.
- **Leverage partnerships:** Collaborate with other nonprofits, businesses, and government agencies to pool resources and maximize impact.
- **Create and manage funds:** Establish dedicated funds for specific needs, such as housing assistance or educational scholarships for justice-impacted individuals.
- **Organize fundraising events:** Raise awareness and resources through campaigns, galas, and other events.

Capacity Building and Community Engagement

- **Offer training and technical assistance:** Equip organizations serving justice-impacted communities with the skills and resources they need to be effective.
- **Connect individuals with needed services:** Develop a network of resources and referrals to help justice-impacted individuals access essential services.
- **Empower community members:** Organize workshops and trainings to help individuals advocate for themselves and their communities.

- **Support community-based initiatives:** Partner with local organizations to address specific needs of justice-impacted communities, such as job training programs or mentoring initiatives.

Provide Spanish Language Programming

- Provide funding to support multilingual staff and qualified interpreters in key support services.
- Invest in culturally sensitive translation and adaptation of resources.
- Create a welcoming and inclusive environment free from discrimination.
- Provide supports to simplify language used in documents and providing clear explanations.
- Coordinate different service providers to offer seamless access in multiple languages.

Additionally

- **Amplify the voices of justice-impacted individuals:** Partner with individuals and families to share their stories and experiences, advocating for change based on their lived realities.
- **Promote data-driven solutions:** Utilize data to inform policy and advocacy efforts, highlighting the impact of justice system issues on individuals and communities.
- **Build inclusive coalitions:** Partner with diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, law enforcement, business leaders, and faith-based organizations, to create a collaborative approach to reform.