

Successful Reentry of Justice Involved Citizens



Celebrating Alabama's Progress
Certified Public Manager® Program
CPM Solutions Alabama 2025



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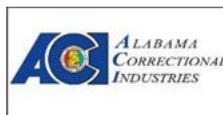
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The research, findings, and recommendations presented in this white paper do not represent the views of any agency or organization, but rather the collective educational research and analysis from a diverse group of participants in the Certified Public Managers Training Program.

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Introduction

Successful reentry is not just about giving people a second chance—it is about creating safer communities, stronger families, and a more prosperous Alabama.

Across the United States, a quiet but powerful movement is transforming the narrative around incarceration. With bipartisan support, landmark legislation like the Second Chance Act and Alabama’s involvement in Reentry 2030 are redefining how we view rehabilitation. In Alabama, the goal is bold: reduce recidivism by 50% by 2030. With nearly 29% of Alabama’s released inmates rearrested within three years, it’s clear that although there has been progress in this area, new approaches are needed to break the cycle and offer real second chances (50 States, 1 goal, 2024). Once entangled in the justice system, Coseen Smith now helps others escape cycles of crime and incarceration and reminds us that there is a human story behind every statistic. His journey from inmate to intervention specialist shows that when people are given the tools, support, and opportunity to change, they often do.

In April 2008, Congress passed the US Second Chance Act, which authorized federal investment in strategies to reduce recidivism and increase public safety. In 2015, the Justice Reinvestment Legislation was enacted to provide a data-driven approach to improve public safety, reduce incarcerations and related justice spending, and decrease crime and recidivism. In October 2023, the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles announced Alabama’s involvement in Reentry 2030, a nationwide initiative aimed at scaling reentry success for people transitioning from incarceration to their communities.

Recidivism is the tendency of a convicted criminal to reoffend. Cam Ward, Director of Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles and Commission Chairman for the Reentry Commission, stated, “Lowering recidivism benefits Alabama’s economy just as much as it impacts public safety. People with good-paying jobs are incentivized to keep those jobs, take care of their families, and stay out of trouble. They do not want to go back to prison. Instead, our data finds that they are using the tools, knowledge, and training provided by Alabama’s reentry programs to benefit businesses’ bottom-line (Commission on Reentry Reports, May 2025).”

Coseen Smith's past includes time in the criminal justice system, but today he stands as a powerful example of transformation and hope. Smith attended the Day Reporting Center in Birmingham, Alabama, where he participated in classes focused on career and vocational training as well as life skills. Community service, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), or Narcotics



Anonymous (NA) is required during phase I of the DRC program. Smith completed phase I in 90 days. Smith moved on to phase II, where he found employment and also volunteered with the Offender Alumni Association. He was eventually hired as a full-time employee with the Offender

Alumni Association, where he works as a violence intervention specialist. He graduated from the DRC program in September of 2023 (Alabama Reflector, 2023). Coseen stated, “I was able to redefine my position in society by becoming a part of the solution, instead of being a part of the problem (Second Chance Month: Becoming the Solution, 2023).”

Project Statement and Tasks

The CPM Solutions Alabama Successful Reentry Team will research and identify best practices in resolving reentry barriers to success. The Team will offer research-based recommendations for overcoming the lack of emergent support services for housing and mental health. This will be accomplished by:

1. Assessing the current challenges facing justice-involved citizens upon release.
2. Researching existing federal and state initiatives to overcome reentry obstacles.
3. Researching best practices from other states in resolving barriers to success.
4. Offering recommendations that Alabama can implement to remove hurdles to success.

The goal is to find the most efficient ways to reduce recidivism in Alabama. We will recommend strategies to achieve this goal using the resources that are already available.

Alabama's Current Efforts for Successful Reentry

State and Federal Initiatives



Alabama's Reentry 2030 initiative aims to reduce recidivism rates by 50% over the next five years.

This is an ambitious yet necessary goal that the state of Alabama has made a priority. This goal reflects a growing recognition that criminal reform must be both holistic and data driven. Alabama has set up a

task force to make sure this goal is achieved by 2030.

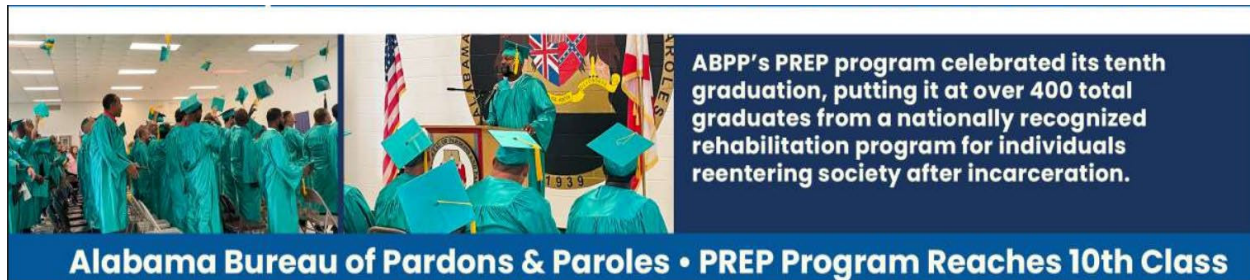
A variety of federal, state, and nonprofit programs strive to provide returning citizens with the tools and resources needed to rebuild stable, productive lives. Among the most significant federal initiatives is the Second Chance Act (SCA), enacted in 2008, which provides grants to support employment assistance, substance use treatment, housing, and other reentry services (National Reentry Resource Center, 2024). To complement this, the Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) program, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, funds job training and placement services. Programs such as the Federal Bonding Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) provide incentives and protections to encourage employers to hire formerly incarcerated individuals and address employment barriers.

PREP CENTER

In Alabama, the Probation and Parole Reentry Education Program (PREP) and Day Reporting Centers (DRCs) represent essential components of the state's broader criminal justice reform strategy. These initiatives function as viable alternatives to traditional incarceration by emphasizing supervision, accountability, and rehabilitation rather than confinement. The PREP Center is a 90-day in-custody program outside of the Alabama Department of Corrections' general prison population. The goal of the PREP Center is to change criminal thinking patterns through treatment, enhance job skills, and provide employment opportunities upon release. This is accomplished through cognitive behavioral curriculum and technical training, including certifications in forklift, tree trimming, fiber optics, and more (Alabama Prep Program, 2024).

The PREP Center rehabilitation services mentioned above allow for incarceration diversion as a

response to a violation. Through these initiatives, PREP helps reduce jail overcrowding and maintains public safety without the need for incarceration.



The PREP Center in Perry County modifies services to each participant's unique needs. According to Cam Ward, Director of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles, the results have been compelling: as of July 2025, none of the 400 PREP graduates had returned to prison, making the recidivism rate zero percent (Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles, 2023). This facility offers job training, mental health and substance treatments, education, life skills training, and helps with family reunification (Gladden, 2024, December 24).

DRC/DRC LITE

Day Reporting Centers provide an intensive, community-based form of supervision primarily for individuals on probation or parole. These centers require participants to report regularly, often daily, and engage in a variety of rehabilitative services. These services include substance abuse counseling, mental health treatment, anger management, educational programs like GED preparation, vocational training, and employment assistance. DRCs also implement structured accountability measures, such as frequent drug testing and progress evaluations, and apply graduated sanctions for non-compliance rather than resorting to immediate incarceration. Together, PREP and DRCs support a more cost-effective and rehabilitative approach to justice, aiming to reduce recidivism, enhance individual outcomes, and facilitate successful reintegration into society.

The Bureau currently operates five full-service DRCs, each offering intensive, evidence-based programming that includes cognitive behavioral therapy, substance abuse treatment,

educational, job training, community service, and supervised reporting. These DRCs are in the larger cities of Alabama: Birmingham, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, and Tuscaloosa.

To reach rural areas, the Bureau operates DRC Lites, which offer scaled-down services focusing on essential programming like cognitive behavioral groups, substance abuse support, educational and job training in field office settings with mental health staff. Current locations include Bay Minette, Fort Payne, Sand Mountain, Jasper, and Opelika.



Health Care

Continuation of medical care is vital to a successful reentry. The Healthy Reentry program is a partnership between YesCare Corp and RxOutreach. They provide a 90-day supply of medication to recently released individuals from the Alabama Department of Corrections. This ensures stability while they secure long-term healthcare coverage and provider relationships (RxOutreach, 2024, 2025). Mental health care is critical for successful reintegration, especially for individuals with co-occurring substance use and psychiatric disorders. The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) has implemented comprehensive initiatives, such as Stepping Up Alabama, which offer intensive case management, crisis intervention, and housing support. Since 2019, the program has screened over 46,000 individuals and identified more than 9,600 with serious needs.

Facilities like the Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility provide forensic psychiatric care, while crisis centers like the Craig Crisis Care Center in Birmingham offer stabilization services as alternatives to incarceration or emergency rooms. ADMH also partners with the

Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) to ensure continuity of care post-release through community mental health centers. To broaden access, Alabama launched Connect Alabama, a mobile app providing statewide behavioral health resources, treatment site locators, crisis hotlines, and access to free naloxone kits. This app is available even without an internet connection. Nonprofit organizations also play a key role in mental health care. Wings Across Alabama provides peer-led support and competency restoration for justice-involved individuals, utilizing lived experience to foster trust and guide reintegration.



CONNECT ALABAMA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES & TREATMENT FINDER

Housing and Food

Stable housing is foundational to reentry success. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) supports transitional and permanent housing solutions, working with reentry service providers to overcome policy barriers for individuals with criminal records. Food security is addressed through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides essential food support. Over half of U.S. states have lifted bans preventing individuals with drug-related felonies from accessing SNAP, recognizing the program's role in reducing food insecurity (CLASP, 2022, 2024). In some cases, individuals with drug convictions must meet treatment requirements to qualify (Propel, Inc., 2025). Recent proposals aim to allow eligible individuals to apply for benefits prior to release. Alabama also benefits from local resources like the Heart of Alabama Food Bank, which connects individuals to nearby pantries. SNAP benefits are accessible via electronic cards and do not require a fixed address.

Employment

Employment remains a cornerstone of successful reentry, contributing not only to financial stability but also to personal dignity and a reduced risk of relapse. Second-chance hiring is becoming more visible through dedicated job platforms that make employment more accessible to individuals with criminal records. The ABPP partners with the Alabama Department of Workforce to help their clients secure jobs. Online platforms like GeoReentry

Connections also list second-chance employers, particularly in sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and manufacturing.

Transportation

Transportation access varies across Alabama, presenting a barrier to consistent employment and medical care. Programs like KidOne provide free medical transportation for children and expectant mothers, while Easterseals Alabama offers job training and limited transportation services through its community sites. On a broader scale, 211 Connects Alabama and United Way's Ride United (in partnership with Lyft) offer free or discounted rides to job interviews, medical appointments, and other essential destinations. The Last Mile Delivery initiative delivers food and supplies to those without reliable transportation via partners like DoorDash.

Triumphs and Testimonies

At 45, Jennifer Johnson turned her life around after decades of addiction and instability, thanks to a year of sobriety and a strong support system. Her struggles began in childhood, surrounded by substance use and lacking supervision, leading to early drug and alcohol abuse. After suffering a life altering injury due to a car accident, and escalating addiction, during which she lost custody of her children, Jennifer hit a turning point following an arrest for drug possession. Sent to the Mobile DRC, she found the structure and accountability she needed, along with mentorship, life skills education, and a renewed sense of purpose. With the help of counselors, friends, and Alcoholics Anonymous, she earned her GED, regained her driver's license, and now supports others on their recovery journey. Jennifer's transformation highlights the power of comprehensive, community-based reentry programs and serves as a compelling call for more compassionate, treatment-focused responses to addiction.

(Jennifer Johnson, When She Started Listening to Her Mentors, She Became a Mentor

<https://paroles.alabama.gov/2023/08/21/when-she-started-listening-to-her-mentors-she-became-a-mentor/>)

Melody Marr, 51, transformed her life through hard work, faith, and the support of the Fort Payne DRC Lite after decades of drug addiction and incarceration. Following a period in

jail and Tutwiler Prison, she began making positive choices and entered the DRC Lite program with nothing but determination. She quickly excelled in its rigorous structure, completing therapy programs and embracing vocational training in heavy-equipment operations. Her dedication led to stable employment, financial independence,



and a rural home of her own. Now sober and grounded, Melody mentors others, shares her story in jails and churches, and credits her success to both divine purpose and the unwavering support of the DRC Lite team. Her journey is a testament to the power of second chances and personal resilience.

(Melody Marr, She Kept Digging, Literally, Until She Conquered Her Substance Use

<https://paroles.alabama.gov/2024/07/15/she-kept-digging-literally-until-she-conquered-her-substance-use/>)

Jennifer Mitchell, 41, broke a decades-long cycle of addiction and incarceration through her commitment to the Baldwin DRC Lite Program in Bay Minette, Alabama. After multiple prison stints starting at age 18, she made a decisive choice to change, began to treat her recovery like a full-time job, and embraced the program's structure. With the support of the DRC staff and her job at Waffle House, she built a stable life, earned loyal customers, and even received an act of kindness where a stranger funded her dental repair because of her sobriety and kindness. Jennifer now lives with purpose, inspiring and mentoring current program participants. Her transformation is a testament to personal determination, the value of compassion, and the effectiveness of structured reentry programs in changing lives.

(Jennifer Mitchell, Kindness was the Key to Her Success After Prison

<https://paroles.alabama.gov/2023/06/13/kindness-was-the-key-to-her-success-after-prison/>

Barriers for Successful Reentry



Reintegrating into society after incarceration presents a wide array of challenges for justice-involved individuals. These challenges span vital areas, including housing, employment, food access, mental health care, and transportation (National Institute of Justice, 2022). Successfully navigating these obstacles is essential for individual well-being and for

reducing recidivism, thereby promoting safer and healthier communities. Reintegration after incarceration requires more than just a second chance. It demands equitable access to opportunity. For justice-involved individuals, success hinges on foundational support, including employment, transportation, housing, and mental health care. Yet systemic barriers, limited resources, and persistent stigma often stand in the way, undermining even the strongest personal commitment to change (Matias, et al, 2025). To promote genuine rehabilitation and long-term desistance from crime, society must ensure that opportunities to succeed are as accessible as the desire to change. With clear goals, appropriate resources, and a coordinated support network, individuals can move beyond mere survival and begin to truly thrive.

Employment

Employment is critical not only for financial stability but also for personal dignity and purpose. Access to meaningful work reduces the likelihood of reoffending and provides a path toward long-term stability (Lappas & Smith, 2022). Vocational training and job placement programs equip individuals with marketable skills and foster self-confidence. These programs help participants develop a renewed sense of purpose, which is instrumental in their rehabilitation journey. To be effective, employment efforts must be supported by inclusive hiring

practices, policies that reduce discrimination against individuals with criminal records, and financial incentives for employers. Without these, the path to reintegration remains obstructed (Price-Tucker, et al, 2019). Stable housing also provides the foundation upon which justice-involved individuals can rebuild their lives. Without a safe place to stay, securing employment, maintaining health, or reconnecting with family becomes exponentially harder.

Transportation

Equally essential is transportation, which enables access to jobs, medical care, and reentry programs. Yet in rural and suburban areas, many parolees face limited or no public transportation options. Organizations like Driving Hope Ministries help bridge this gap, but systemic barriers remain. Barriers such as parole-related travel restrictions continue to limit mobility and reintegration prospects. Policies must evolve to reflect the transportation realities facing rural communities (Driving Hope Ministries, 2021).

Mental Health

Mental health and substance use disorders are major contributors to justice system involvement (Mallik-Kane & Visser, 2008). Untreated justice-involved citizens increase the risk of recidivism. Comprehensive treatment programs that include behavioral therapy, decision-making support, and relapse prevention strategies are vital to rehabilitation. These programs address the root causes of criminal behavior, providing participants with tools to make sustainable changes. A holistic approach integrating mental health care, substance use treatment, and social support is especially effective. When individuals are treated as people rather than just as offenders, they are significantly more likely to successfully reenter society.

Community Programs

Community support plays a transformative role in successful reintegration. Mentorship programs, particularly those led by individuals with lived experience, offer practical guidance, accountability, and a sense of hope (Get Involved by Giving Your Time, 2025). They help returning citizens navigate the daily complexities of life post-incarceration and model what success can look like. Equally important is family support. Programs that offer family counseling, education, and reunification services help mend relationships fractured by

incarceration. A stable and supportive family network can dramatically improve outcomes for returning individuals by reducing isolation and reinforcing positive behavioral changes.

Even the best community programs are limited without the backing of policy reform and systemic alignment (Reentry2030, 2024). Employment, housing, mental health care, transportation, and social support systems must work together to give every individual a fair chance at rebuilding their life. With thoughtful reform, measurable goals like those of Reentry 2030, and sustained public investment, we can move from managing incarceration to empowering transformation.

Other States' Efforts to Support Reentry

The Successful Reentry Team researched best practices from other states in resolving barriers to success. Several states have implemented funding mechanisms that indirectly support justice-involved individuals. These funding initiatives have been used to reduce barriers mentioned above. These efforts highlight both the existing momentum and the untapped potential for expanding reentry-focused funding through public contributions and legislative action.

Colorado

Colorado allows taxpayers to donate a portion of their income tax refund to charitable causes. While none are exclusive to reentry-related causes, some serve individuals returning from incarceration. Examples include domestic violence and victim support causes. Additionally, Senate Bill 64 (2019) established the Community-Based Reentry Cash Fund, and the WAGEES program (Work and Gain Education and Employment Skills) connects justice-involved individuals to job training and education through local service providers (Wagees Colorado, 2025).

Michigan

Michigan introduced Senate Bill 128 (2023), which created a tax credit for donations to shelters and food services (Michigan Legislature, 2023). These services are essential to reentry. The Michigan Justice Fund has also made significant direct investments, including grants for programs supporting juvenile lifers and long-term prisoners (Big Rapids Pioneer, n.d.).

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania permits tax refund donations to various charitable funds through its Personal Income Tax Donation Options (Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, n.d.). Although none are specifically designated for reentry, many recipient organizations provide critical services, such as housing, employment assistance, and counseling to formerly incarcerated individuals.

Tennessee

The Bingham Group, an advertising agency, worked directly with Tennessee to create a marketing campaign for the Office of Re-Entry. They created several videos for TV stations to play across the state. They also created, printed, and shipped multiple versions of wall posters and floor stickers for display in prisons. These decals displayed where justice-involved citizens could find work and receive reentry support services. Their marketing included bus advertisements and multiple graphics used throughout the state (Reentry Campaign, n.d.).

Recommendations

The CPM Solutions Alabama Successful Reentry Team conducted research to identify best practices in resolving reentry barriers to success. Based on our findings, the team provides research-based recommendations to overcome the lack of access to critical support services. At the heart of this process is a plan of action that centers on four critical components: **Goals, Resources, Opportunities, and Will** that we call **G.R.O.W.** Goals provide direction and purpose. Resources offer the tools needed to take action. Opportunities open doors that allow individuals to apply what they've learned. Will represents the personal drive and determination to move forward, despite obstacles. When these elements align, individuals are far more likely to succeed and far less likely to return to the justice system.

Goals-G.R.O.W. Bill

Goals – We recommend a legislative bill be drafted that facilitates the use of donated funds for reentry support programs. (See **Appendix A**) Research has shown that the Day Reporting Centers, Day Reporting Center Lites, the PREP center, and other resources are successful in resolving reentry barriers, but expanding and sustaining these services requires

additional funding. To address the funding gap, the reentry team recommends that the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles (ABPP) draft a legislative bill, to expand the existing tax bill, allowing a tax check-off donation specifically for re-entry and recidivism reduction services to be directed to ABPP. Addressing this gap is crucial for meeting Alabama’s goal of reducing recidivism by half. This will require expanding proven programs, building stronger partnerships between public and private organizations, and addressing the major challenge of limited funding. Increased investment in job training, mental health support, housing initiatives, and rehabilitation programs is essential.

Our team researched over 40 states and found that no state had a dedicated income tax check-off specifically designated for reentry services. However, Colorado, Michigan, and Pennsylvania do permit donations to adjacent programs such as homeless shelters and food banks, which serve a crucial role in the reentry process. The existing framework in the states mentioned above shows promise for expansion in Alabama. Designating checkoffs specifically for reentry services will strengthen the existing successful programs. According to the 2023 Annual Report from the Alabama Department of Revenue, 2,159,603 individual tax returns were filed in 2023. A total of \$205,880.00 was contributed through the 2023 Alabama check-off

2023 CHECK OFF CONTRIBUTIONS			
Organization	Organization Legal Name	Number of Donors	Total Contributions
Senior Services	Alabama Aging Program	769	\$15,037
Arts Development	Alabama Arts Development Fund	578	\$6,889
Wildlife Fund	Alabama Nongame Wildlife Program	710	\$14,156
Child Abuse	Child Abuse Trust Fund	1,182	\$24,110
Veterans Program	Alabama Veterans' Program	1,038	\$24,052
Historic Preservation	Alabama State Historic Preservation Fund	412	\$3,877.00
Veterans Cemetery- Spanish Fort	Alabama State Veterans Cemetery- Spanish Fort	419	\$5,354
Foster Care	Foster Care Trust Fund	720	\$14,859
Mental Health	Mental Health Consumers of Alabama	982	\$20,589
Firefighters Fund	Alabama Firefighters Annuity and Benefit Fund	482	\$5,959
Breast Cancer	Breast and Cervical Cancer Research Program	717	\$14,007
Violence Assistance	Victims of Violence Assistance	541	\$6,587
Military Support	Alabama Military Support Foundation	499	\$8,706
Veterinary Medical	Alabama Veterinary Medical Foundation Spay/ Neuter Program	524	\$8,309
Cancer Research	University of South Alabama Mitchell Cancer Institute Fund	782	\$15,030
Rescue Squad	Alabama Association of Rescue Squads	373	\$4,330
USS Alabama Battleship Commission	USS Alabama Battleship Commission	414	\$4,953
Children First Trust Fund	Children First Trust Fund	611	\$9,076
Totals		11,753	\$205,880

Note: Check off donations yielding less than \$7,500 annually for three consecutive tax years will be repealed. Section 40-18-140, Code of Alabama 1975; Act 2006-503.

donation (Alabama Department of Revenue, 2025). This research shows the potential for expansion of reentry services through tax check-off donations.

Our team has prepared a draft legislative bill listed in **Appendix A** that ABPP can use as a template. Upon drafting the bill, we recommend ABPP collaborate with legal experts, stakeholders, and lawmakers on the specifics of the fund. This includes how funds can be donated, who manages the funds, and what qualifies as an eligible program or service. Next, we suggest that ABPP find a sponsor willing to introduce the bill in the legislature. This can either be a member of the Alabama House of Representatives or the Senate. We suggest that this sponsor has a background or interest in criminal justice reform or social services.

Once introduced, the bill will receive a number and will be assigned to a relevant committee. Committee members will then analyze the bill. Hearings may then be held with testimony from experts and the public. The committee may amend, approve, or reject the bill. If approved by the committee, the bill will proceed to the full chamber for debate and a vote. If passed, it will move to the other chamber for a similar process. Both chambers must pass the bill in identical form. The final bill will then be sent to the governor for signature. The governor then has the option to sign it into law, veto it, or allow it to become law without taking any action. When implemented into law, ABPP should then create procedures to manage and allocate donated funds. Public outreach may follow to solicit donations and support programs. This innovative solution would provide a steady stream of resources without raising taxes, empower citizens to support second-chance initiatives, and ensure broader access to transitional services.

Reentry programs represent a practical, compassionate, and fiscally responsible solution for Alabama's future. Allowing residents to contribute through tax donations creates a direct pathway for community investment in public safety and stability. The draft legislative bill developed by the reentry team has a proposed sunset period if the tax contributions fail to achieve a contribution of \$7,500.00 for a subsequent three-year period. This provides an opportunity to revisit the approach if contributions are deemed insufficient. When there is a strong commitment to transparency, donors and the public can have confidence in the system. Clear reporting on the allocation and use of funds should be provided through an annual public

report. This is a timely opportunity for lawmakers and advocates to champion a strategy that delivers broad benefits for all Alabamians.

We recommend that the establishment of this fund be monitored by the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles (ABPP). It would facilitate the expansion of critical services, including housing, job training, mental health and addiction treatment, transportation solutions, and legal assistance. Investing in proven initiatives like the PREP Center, which has a zero percent recidivism rate, positions Alabama to meet its Reentry 2030 goals. Our team recommends that part of this expansion include a PREP center for women, as the current PREP facility located in Perry County is only for men (Gladden, 2024, December 24). Expanding PREP centers, Day Reporting Centers (DRC), and DRC Lite programs across the state will strengthen public safety and long-term economic growth. More importantly, these initiatives recognize the dignity and potential of every individual, offering not just a second chance but a genuine opportunity for transformation.

Resources-Networking and Communication Checklist

Resources - A key strategy for supporting individuals returning from incarceration is the development of a comprehensive, interconnected network of community agencies and service providers. The CPM Solutions Alabama Successful Reentry Team recommends that the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC), the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles (ABPP), the Alabama Department of Mental Health, transportation services, non-profits, and other services collaborate to create a clear, guided pathway to resources. It would help individuals understand what resources exist, where they are located, and how to use them effectively.

The Reentry Team also recommends that ADOC develop a standardized **Reentry Preparation Checklist** for use by corrections personnel. This tool would support incarcerated individuals in planning for a smooth and successful transition back into the community. Early coordination between corrections staff, parole officers, reentry coordinators, and community partners is essential to reduce redundancy and increase the overall efficiency and efficacy of reentry programs. A draft version of this checklist, developed by our team, is provided in **Appendix B**. This checklist outlines eight critical reentry domains: Identification and Legal

Documents, Housing and Shelter, Employment and Income, Health and Behavioral Health, Transportation, Supervision and Compliance, Basic Needs and Emergency Resources, and Final Reentry Plan.

Without proper identification, individuals face significant barriers to employment, public benefits and other services. We recommend that the process of obtaining a valid state ID or driver's license, social security card, birth certificate, and other legal documents begin with the ADOC. We recommend that the ABPP provide continued support when necessary.

We recommend that the ADOC provide a list of resources for emergency shelter or transitional housing to inmates prior to release. We recommend for the checklist to contain practical, actionable steps, such as obtaining identification, securing housing, enrolling in health insurance, connecting with employment resources, and ensuring access to prescribed medications. It also prioritizes continuity of care and adherence to supervision requirements to ensure success.

We recommend for the process to conclude with the finalization of a personalized reentry plan. The reentry plan should include information regarding post-release scheduled check-ins, guidelines and standards. This reentry plan ensures that the individual understands their post-release responsibilities and knows how to access the necessary resources for long-term success. Networking with different agencies and non-profits prior to implementing this checklist will ensure that no steps are overlooked and that resources are delivered in a timely, coordinated manner. Tools like the Reentry Preparation Checklist can significantly enhance outcomes for returning citizens when paired with strong interagency partnerships.

Opportunities through Marketing

Opportunities – The reentry team recommends ABPP create a marketing campaign that educates the public on how the successful reentry of justice-involved citizens promotes public safety, drives economic growth, fosters family stability, and saves taxpayers money. Our team recommends ABPP utilize an impactful marketing slogan we created: **“New Paths, Stronger Futures.”** It is a slogan that we believe conveys the message of reducing the stigma, raising awareness, building partnerships, and funding programs that support formerly incarcerated people reentering society.

The CPM Solutions Alabama Successful Reentry Team recommends that the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles promote this marketing campaign at public events by distributing pamphlets, signs, and flyers. We recommend that the ABPP partner with an advertising agency to create this marketing campaign. Tennessee is the one state we found that has a dedicated re-entry marketing campaign. Tennessee hired the Bingham Group, an advertising agency, to create its marketing campaign. While they used state funds for marketing, Alabama can view its marketing collateral as an idea to expand in cost-effective ways. Creating videos to be played on platforms like YouTube and promoting them through free channels such as social media and email.

Public safety is enhanced when individuals leaving prison are provided with the necessary tools and support to facilitate a successful reintegration. These tools include housing, job training, mental health care, and other resources. This marketing campaign aims to educate the public that these skills and resources contribute to safer communities for everyone. These reentry programs prepare individuals to rejoin the workforce, enabling them to earn income, support their families, and pay taxes. Reentry services increase the likelihood that families can remain intact, which creates long-term positive impacts on children and communities. Incarceration costs in Alabama continues to rise each year. (Alabama prison costs rising) At \$82.64 per day for each incarcerated individual, we are encouraging Alabama citizens to invest in reentry programs. Any amount given will help with criminal justice costs.

We recommend that the “New Paths, Stronger Futures,” marketing campaign begin immediately to allow the public time to become informed before the G.R.O.W. bill is implemented. The public’s contributions will be directed to locally based programs with proven records of success. One of the most appealing aspects of the proposed tax donation option is that the funds remain within the state of Alabama.

Willingness For Inmate Self-Improvement

Willingness - Alabama’s prison system, like many across the U.S., struggles with high recidivism rates and overcrowding. While rehabilitation is acknowledged as important, critics say the system still leans too heavily on punishment. As a result, many inmates return to prison, reflecting a lack of effective reentry support (Mass Incarceration and Unconstitutional Prisons.

Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice, Issues). However, a shift is happening; a recognition that personal growth, leadership, and inner transformation can be powerful tools for long-term change.

True transformation requires more than time; it needs support, inspiration, and new ways of thinking. Leadership expert John C. Maxwell's principle that "everything rises and falls on leadership" is gaining relevance in prisons, offering a path for inmates to take control of their future. Alongside Maxwell's influence, the story of Damon West, the former inmate sentenced to life who rebuilt his life through faith, education, and mentorship, serves as a powerful testament to the capacity for change. Incarcerated individuals in Alabama are finding the will to change and how leadership development, mentorship, and spiritual renewal can convert prisons from mere holding facilities into centers of true transformation (Maxwell, J.C., 2013).

Conditions in Alabama's prisons are marked by violence, overcrowding, and understaffing, making it hard for inmates to focus on rehabilitation. The state ranks among the highest in the nation for incarceration rates and faces chronic issues such as violence, overcrowding, and severe understaffing (New Reporting on Alabama's Unsafe and Inhumane Prisons, Equal Justice Initiative). These issues often stifle any effort to grow or change.

Inmates often want to change but lack the tools, guidance, and safe environments to do so (Appleseed's latest report shows that 'Safer prisons are within reach'). Maxwell's Values-Based Leadership curriculum, introduced in prisons through his nonprofit EQUIP Leadership, helps inmates develop self-awareness, responsibility, and purpose. His belief that "you cannot give what you do not have" emphasizes that self-leadership is the starting point for real, lasting change. Real transformation demands more than the passive passage of time; it requires active engagement in reshaping thought patterns, behaviors, and personal identity.

Inmates who participate in Maxwell-based programs often show improved behavior, decision-making, and a renewed sense of purpose (Smith, 2020). His idea that "leadership is influence" empowers those who felt they had nothing left to offer. At the same time, stories like Damon West's show what this transformation looks like in real life. He overcame addiction and a life sentence to become a mentor, author, and motivational speaker. This concept holds

particular relevance in prisons, where structured guidance and intentional development can reignite an inmate's sense of self-worth and purpose.

West's journey, grounded in faith and accountability, resonates with many inmates. His message encourages people to transform their environment instead of letting it shape them. Programs rooted in servant leadership and spiritual renewal—like those of West and Maxwell—help inmates move from survival to service, creating more positive prison cultures and offering hope for true rehabilitation. West's transformation aligns with core biblical principles. Romans 12:2 (KJV) urges believers not to conform to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. Faith-based initiatives and programs within correctional facilities have demonstrated numerous positive effects for inmates and the broader goal of rehabilitation and reintegration into society (FACT SHEET: The Effectiveness of Faith-Based Rehabilitation in Reducing Recidivism. America First Policy Institute).

In a prison context, this means letting go of identities rooted in crime, trauma, or failure and embracing a renewed sense of self, often through faith in Christ. West's spiritual message is grounded in redemption, grace, and responsibility. It resonates with many inmates who seek more than rehabilitation but instead seek rebirth. His life exemplifies 2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV): "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." These leadership and faith-based approaches meet a deep human need for identity, purpose, and redemption. Our team recommends that Alabama invest in these programs at all ADOC facilities. These programs are currently available at some facilities but not all facilities throughout the state. It will not just reduce recidivism; it will raise future leaders shaped by adversity and growth. Inmates are not lost causes; they are people capable of change, waiting for someone to believe in them and provide the tools they need to succeed.

Conclusion

Reentry programs offer a smart, compassionate, and cost-effective path forward for Alabama, addressing the urgent need to support individuals transitioning from incarceration back into society. These programs are designed to reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and restore lives. These programs benefit not only justice-involved individuals but also families, neighborhoods, and the broader state economy. By promoting education, job training, housing

stability, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment, reentry programs provide the tools necessary for successful reintegration. These investments are proven to reduce the likelihood of repeat offenses and alleviate the long-term costs associated with incarceration.

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Appendix A- Bill Proposal

A bill to amend Section 40-18-140, Code of Alabama 1975, to provide an income tax refund check-off for a contribution to the Reentry Division of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles. Alabama State Legislature.

This bill proposes an amendment to Section 40-18-140 of the Code of Alabama 1975, introducing an additional income tax refund check-off option for Alabama taxpayers. Beginning in the 2026 tax year, individuals may voluntarily contribute all or a portion of their income tax refund to the Reentry Division of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles. The funds collected will be used exclusively for direct reentry support services, including job training, food and housing assistance, and mental and behavioral health services. Administrative overhead and unrelated expenses are explicitly excluded from the use of these funds. Additionally, the Reentry Division is required to submit an annual audited report detailing fund usage and measurable outcomes. If a check-off option does not maintain an average of at least \$7,500 in annual contributions over a three-year period, it will be removed from the tax form.

HBXXX Introduced

- 1 HBXXX
- 2 Tracking Number
- 3 By Representative
- 4 RFD: Committee
- 5 First Read: DD-Mth-YY

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SYNOPSIS:

Under existing law, various programs and organizations receive funds from income tax check-offs.

This bill would provide an income tax refund check-off for a contribution to the Reentry Division of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to taxation; to amend Section 40-18-140, Code of Alabama 1975, to provide an income tax refund check-off for a contribution to the Reentry Division of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Section 40-18-140, Code of Alabama 1975, is amended to read as follows:

“§40-18-140

(a) (1) Each Alabama resident individual income taxpayer desiring to contribute to any of the programs listed in subsection (b) may designate an amount of his or her refund, rounded off in whole dollars, in an appropriate box on the state income tax return form, to be credited to the program.

(2) All future check-offs, duly enacted by the Legislature subsequent to April 17, 2006, shall be accorded an appropriate box on the state income tax return forms,

30 subject to the terms and conditions prescribed herein, without the requirement that
31 they be added by amendment to this section.

32 (b) Contributions received for the following authorized charitable and
33 nonpolitical income tax check-off recipients, less costs of administration to the
34 Department of Revenue not to exceed five percent, shall be distributed and
35 appropriated as provided herein:

36 (1) Contributions to the Alabama Aging Program shall be deposited with the
37 State Treasurer into the Alabama Senior Services Trust Fund for preserving,
38 protecting, perpetuating, and enhancing the abilities of aging citizens to remain
39 independent, under the auspices of the Department of Senior Services.

40 (2) Contributions to the Arts Development Fund shall be deposited into the
41 General Fund of the State Treasury, to be appropriated to the Council on the Arts and
42 Humanities to fund grants to tax exempt organizations or associations to encourage
43 development of high quality and artistically significant arts activities or cultural
44 facilities in local areas and shall be distributed in accordance with Article 3,
45 commencing with Section 41-9-40, Chapter 9, Title 41.

46 (3) Contributions to Alabama Nongame Wildlife Program shall be deposited in
47 the Alabama Nongame Wildlife Fund in the State Treasury to the credit of the Game
48 and Fish Fund to be used exclusively for purposes of preserving, protecting,
49 perpetuating, and enhancing nongame wildlife in this state. Nothing contained herein
50 shall be construed to give any rights of condemnation to the Department of
51 Conservation and Natural Resources.

52 (4) Contributions to the Children's Trust Fund shall be deposited with the State
53 Treasurer into the State Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board Operations Fund,
54 as provided for under Section 26-16-30.

55 (5) Contributions to the Alabama Veterans' Program shall be deposited in the
56 State Treasury to the credit of the Department of Veterans' Affairs to be used
57 exclusively for purposes of providing nursing home and health care for aged and
58 disabled veterans in this state.

59 (6) Contributions to the Alabama Indian Children’s Scholarship Fund shall be
60 deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution to the Alabama Indian Affairs
61 Commission for educational scholarships.

62 (7) Contributions to the Penny Trust Fund shall be deposited with the State
63 Treasurer for distribution according to Section 41-15A-2.

64 (8) Contributions to the Foster Care Trust Fund, established under Sections 38-
65 10-50 and 38-10-51, shall be deposited with the State Treasurer to be continuously
66 appropriated to the Department of Human Resources to assist all children in temporary
67 or permanent custody in foster care.

68 (9) Contributions designated for mental health on the
69 Alabama state resident individual income tax return shall be deposited with the State
70 Treasurer and shall be distributed equally to the Alliance for the Mentally Ill of
71 Alabama and to the Mental Health Consumers of Alabama.

72 (10) Contributions to the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Research
73 Program shall be deposited with the State Treasurer and distributed to the University
74 of Alabama at Birmingham, which shall implement and administer the program.

75 (11) Contributions to the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Fund shall be
76 deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution by the Department of Economic and
77 Community Affairs for weatherization assistance as provided for under Article 6,
78 commencing with Section 41-23-100, Chapter 23, Title 41.

79 (12) Contributions to the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, Incorporated, shall be
80 deposited with the State Treasurer and distributed to the Alabama 4-H Club
81 Foundation, Incorporated.

82 (13) Contributions to the Alabama Organ Center Donor Awareness Fund shall
83 be deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution to the fund.

84 (14) Contributions to the Alabama National Guard Foundation, Incorporated,
85 shall be deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution to the fund.

86 (15) Contributions to the Cancer Research Institute shall
87 be deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution to

88 the institute.

89 (16) Contributions to the Alabama State Historic Preservation Fund shall be
90 deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution to the fund, as provided for in
91 Section 41-9-255.

92 (17) Contributions to the Archives Services Fund shall be deposited with the
93 State Treasurer for distribution to the fund as provided for in Section 41-6-76.

94 (18) Contributions to the Alabama Firefighters Annuity and Benefit Fund shall
95 be deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution to the fund.

96 (19) Contributions to VOCAL's Victims of Violence Assistance shall be
97 deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution to Victims of Crime and Leniency,
98 Inc. (VOCAL).

99 (20) Contributions, beginning in the 2015 tax year, to the Children First Trust
100 Fund shall be deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution to the trust fund.

101 (21) Contributions, beginning in the 2015 tax year, to the USS Alabama
102 Battleship Commission.

103 (22) Contributions, beginning in the 2018 tax year, to the Alabama State
104 Veterans Cemetery at Spanish Fort Foundation, Incorporated.

105 (23) Contributions, beginning in the 2024 tax year, to
106 the State Parks Division of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
107 shall be deposited with the State Treasurer for distribution to the department.

108 (24) Contributions, beginning in the 2024 tax year, to
109 the Department of Mental Health shall be deposited with the
110 State Treasurer for distribution to the department.

111 (25) Contributions, beginning in the 2024 tax year, to
112 the Alabama Medicaid Agency shall be deposited with the State
113 Treasurer for distribution to the agency.

114 (26) Contributions, beginning in the 2026 tax year, to the Reentry Division of
115 the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles shall be deposited with the State
116 Treasurer and allocated solely to the Reentry Division. These funds shall be used

117 exclusively for direct reentry support services, including job training, food assistance,
118 housing assistance, and mental and behavioral health services. No portion of the funds
119 may be used for administrative overhead, staff salaries not directly tied to the delivery
120 of these services, or unrelated departmental expenditures. The Reentry Division shall
121 submit an annual, publicly available report audited by the Alabama Department of
122 Examiners of Public Accounts, detailing the amount of funds received, itemized
123 expenditures, and measurable outcomes associated with each category of assistance.

124 (c) In the event that three years after adoption, a check-off authorized under
1251 subsection (b) or subdivision (2) of subsection (a) fails to achieve average annual
26 gross contributions of seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500) for a subsequent
127 three-year period, its name will be dropped from the state income tax return forms for
128 the succeeding tax year and its original authorization shall be effectively repealed.

129 Section 2. This act shall become effective on the first day of the third month
130 following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

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Appendix B: Reentry Preparation Checklist

Offender Name: _____

Release Date: _____

I. Identification & Legal Documents

- ☐ Valid State ID or Driver's License secured, or application initiated
- ☐ Social Security Card and Birth Certificate (in possession or application complete)
- ☐ Release papers and any probation/parole documents prepared

II. Housing & Shelter

- ☐ Confirm verified housing arrangement for day of release
- ☐ If housing is not secured, refer to emergency shelter or transitional housing

III. Employment & Income

- ☐ Resume or job readiness materials available
- ☐ Referral to workforce agency or employment support
- ☐ Eligibility for income supports (SSI, SSDI, veterans' benefits, etc.) confirmed

IV. Health & Behavioral Health

- ☐ Continuity of care plan in place (medical, mental health, substance use)
- ☐ Medicaid or other insurance enrollment initiated
- ☐ 30-day supply of prescribed medication available

V. Transportation

- ☐ Transportation plan confirmed for day of release
- ☐ Bus pass or transport assistance arranged if needed

VI. Supervision & Compliance

- ☐ Written schedule of parole/probation reporting requirements
- ☐ Offender understands conditions and consequences of non-compliance

VII. Basic Needs & Emergency Resources

- ☐ Access to clothing, hygiene items, and food plan (SNAP or pantry)
- ☐ Emergency contacts and community resource list provided

VIII. Final Reentry Plan

- ☐ Offender has reviewed and received written reentry plan

Corrections Personnel Signature: _____

Date: _____