

One-Stop Career Centers

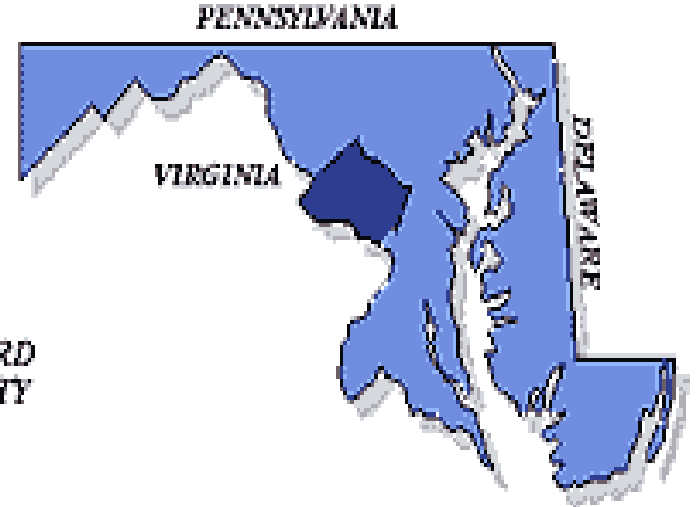
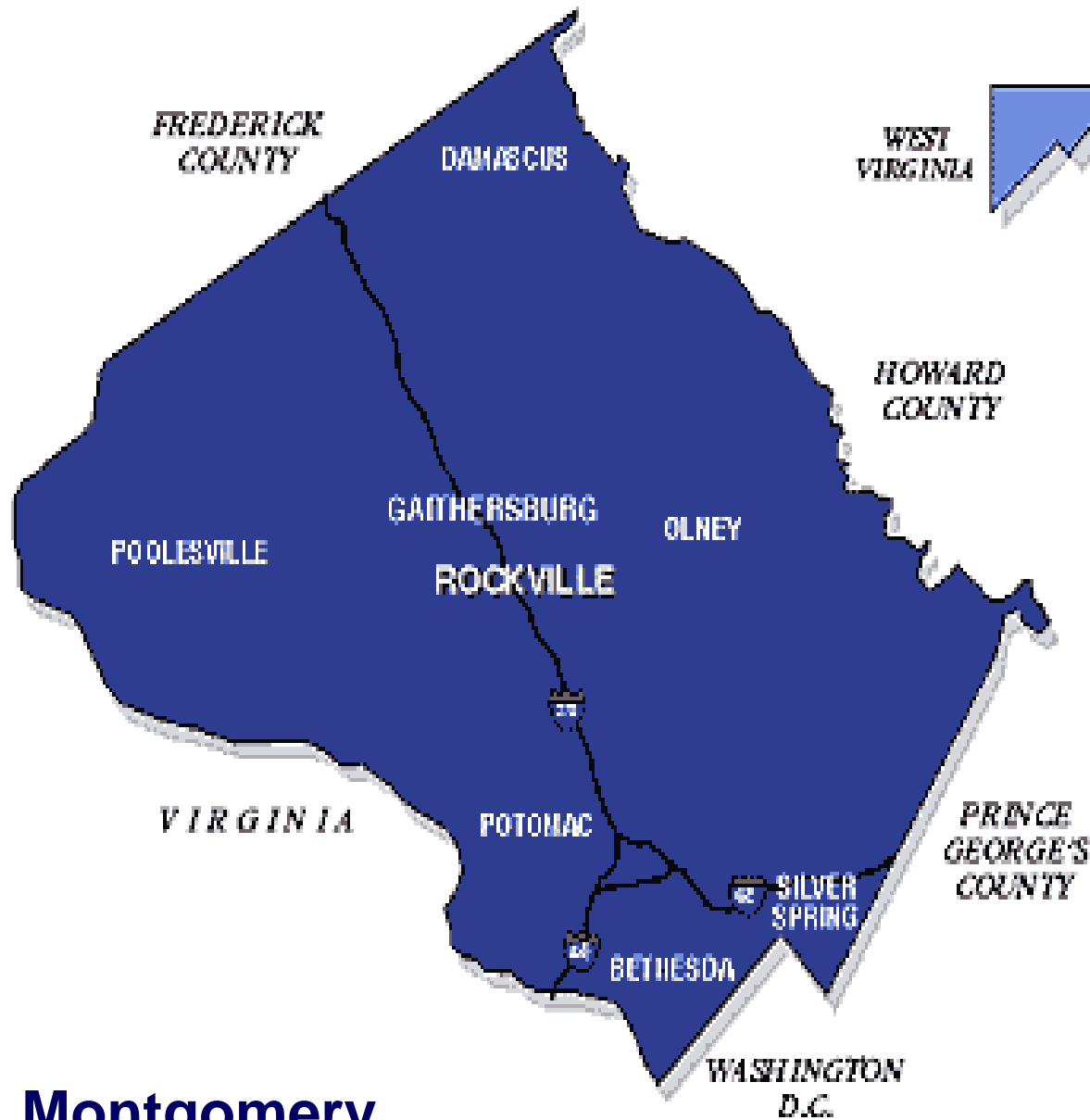
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The Key to Successful Offender Reentry

Presented by Joyce Reimherr,
Reentry Employment Services Coordinator
MontgomeryWorks/Montgomery County Correctional Facility
Workforce Innovations Conference
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Your Workforce Connection



Montgomery County, MD

497 Square Miles
Population: 873,341*
*2000 Census Survey

Offender Population

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Local

- Approximately 9,300 individuals enter Montgomery County's local jail on an annual basis. Average stay is 100 days.

National

- Nationally, 1,440,655 prisoners were under the jurisdiction of state and federal correctional authorities in 2002 (Bureau of Justice statistics)

Nationally, well over 50% of all offenders are reincarcerated, and that is not acceptable from any perspective of public safety and effective community intervention. This dreadful revolving door must be closed.

-Art Wallenstein, Director

**Montgomery County Department of Corrections and
Rehabilitation**

Research on what lowers recidivism

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- Lower recidivism among those employed (Sampson & Laub, 1993).
- Substantial reduction when employed shortly after release (Mallon & Phalan, 2008).
- Most important: finding high quality jobs offering stability, living wages, benefits and a career trajectory within a year (Bucklen, 2006).

One-Stop Centers have what ex-offenders need to succeed!

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- Widespread
 - Universal Access
 - Information and referral to other resources
 - Data tracking actual and potential
 - Best chances for rapid employment
- Opportunities for climbing a career ladder

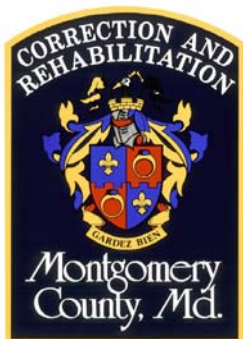


Montgomery County, MD

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REENTRY EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

Made possible through Edward J. Byrne Grants from the Governor's Office of
Crime Control and Prevention
and the vision and commitment of
county leadership to offender reentry



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Correctional Components

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- **Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF)**
 - 1,028 person capacity facility housing inmates in pre-trial status or serving sentences up to 18 months.
 - **ReEntry for All** – A holistic approach providing wrap-around services and discharge planning

Correctional Components

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- **Pre-Release and Reentry Services**
 - 171 Bed Residential Work Release Program
 - 45 Bed Home Confinement
 - Volunteer run *Welcome Home* program provides career support and job search services.

Workforce Components

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One-Stop Career Center in
Montgomery County
Correctional Facility



One-Stop Career Center in
the Community

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Correctional Facility One-Stop

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- All sentenced inmates eligible 90 days from release.
- Access through 1.5 hour orientation on employment, job search and how MontgomeryWorks One-Stop Center can help.
- For those who want more:
 - Six session Job Readiness and Job Search Training
 - Extra One-Stop use supervised by faith community volunteers
- Welcome Home session with community program 30 days from release.

What's worked for us...

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Keys to Effective Job Search: the Sales Model

- Know your product
 - (You!)
- Know your customer and the marketplace
 - (Employer and labor market)
- Have an effective advertising and marketing campaign
 - (Action plan, application, resumes, interview skills, networking)

What's worked for us...

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Holland Code

An interest assessment
available on
www.CareerVoyages.gov



Career Compass

Realistic

Investigative

Artistic

Social

Enterprising

Conventional

(Code is first three interests in
order or priority)

Note: The Career Compass is not
intended to be a full assessment.

Training Considerations

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Inmates can get bored easily...



- Lectures may not work. Move quickly from information sharing to activities
- Engage participant interests
- Involve hands-on activities, when possible
- Clarify One-Stop structure
- Short-time in jail means limited time for training. Have to get a lot done quickly.

What's worked for us...

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Demonstrations

"Why do you want to work for our company?"

A Bad Interview

"I need a job, any job and you've got an opening!"

A Good Interviewee

"I have the skills you require and I'm really excited about your company and its products."

Use of Department of Labor Websites (via controlled internet access)

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- America's Career Information Network
 - www.acinet.org

- Career Voyages
 - www.careervoyages.gov

- O*Net
 - <http://online.onetcenter.org>

- Maryland Workforce Exchange
 - www.mwejobs.com

Faith-Based Volunteers

Motivated by Faith

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■ "I believe this is what God has called me to do. It is something I look forward to and I really enjoy working with folks who need that special caring and assistance to redirect them back into society. I love doing God's work."

Jo Anne Mauck

■ *"Guiding and assisting inmates who need to find work gives them much more than a job. It can help build the qualities needed to lead a more stable, productive and sustaining life."*

Alice Goodman

Faith-based Partnerships

Faith as the Motivation and Means

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Jobs Partnership

Prepare the unemployed to achieve a career and true wellness in their relationship with God through Jesus Christ.



Inmates have choices and more opportunities for assistance.

St. James Aftercare Ministry

Involve several local churches in a mentoring program assisting inmates in growing spiritually and in building more constructive lives post-release.



Both are eligible for training and use of the One-Stop

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CAREERS4 TOMORROW

*Effectively Assisting Offenders
with One-Stop
Employment Services
A Training for Faith Based and
Community Volunteers to Work in a
One-Stop Career Center*

**A Project of
Montgomery County Correctional Facility and
MontgomeryWorks Reentry Employment Program**

Developed with the assistance of the USDOL

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Community Reentry Program

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■ Monthly Visits to the Correctional Facility

- Puts name to the face of helpers who will be there post-release
- Provide tips on job search and career development services.
- Inform about bonding and tax incentives

MontgomeryWorks Community Reentry Program

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- **At the One-Stop Career Center in the community**
 - Orientations weekly
 - Assessment & planning
 - Help preparing job search tools
 - Job search and placement assistance

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Community Reentry Program

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■ Job Development

- Ex-offenders group most discriminated against. May need help to get their foot in the door.
- Sell benefits:
 - Financial incentives
 - Well-screened employees. Vouch for behavior, not person.
 - Support from service providers and supervision agencies
 - Motivated workers; opportunities for skills training.
- Understand employers' main concern – Negligent hiring. Wasted time and money.

WOTC TAX Credit

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- Up to \$2400 for ex-felons within a year of release
- There is only a one-page form the employer needs to complete by the day an offer is made and another one-page form within 21 days of hire. Then claim the credit when filing annual tax return.
- Underutilized. *Let's get our businesses a tax break!*

Federal Bonding Program

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- Bonds are issued to a purchasing organization (state, Workforce Investment Board, etc.)
- Bond coverage is usually \$5,000 (but can go higher).
- Covers theft, forgery, larceny, embezzlement (but not liability).
- Effective the date of hire; generally good for six months.

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Community Reentry Program

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■ What we've learned

- Manage expectations with a Participant Agreement.
- Have them identify skills from O*Net or America's Career Information Network occupation profiles.
- Employers are reluctant to be the first to hire post-release. It's a first job that leads to the good job.
- Some favor work first; then training. Unclear what works best.
- **Collaboration with partners can expand program capacity and effectiveness.**

Marketing to Businesses

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- Identify receptive employers, not just jobs.
- Provide retention support.
- Educate them about incentives and facilitate their use
 - Federal bonding
 - WOTC tax credit
- Learn industries that will hire ex-offenders
- Find businesses on public transit lines.
- Get correctional institutions to help with temporary identification.

How have we done? - 2007

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Total Served - 643

MCCF Reentry Program – 297

MW-Community Reentry Program – 203

Confirmed Employment* - 54%

270 of program participants estimated

Retained at 90 days – 41%

111 of program participants estimated

Based on Stratified Random Sample. Worked at least one day within a quarter

Why Support Offender Reentry?

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- **Because ex-offenders are in our communities**
 - 650,000 released from state and federal prisons each year.
 - 9 million released from the nation's local jails.

- **For financial reasons.**
 - The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics reports more than \$68 billion spent on corrections in 2006.
 - Ex-offender employment can turn a tax burden into a tax payer.

- To reduce crime and victimization
 - Ex-offenders who work are 1/3 less likely to reoffend!

- To stabilize families and create positive role models for children

- To transform lives through the dignity of work

Staff feel they are making an important contribution.

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“All people need a job and we need to provide extra help to ex-offenders. They have less opportunities than the other job seekers and need a lot of support.”

-- Resource Center Staff

“ I feel I’m making a contribution, giving them hope and encouraging them to persist in their job search. Our customer service helps them feel respected.”

--Customer Service Staff

How we did it

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- Grant from state of Maryland – Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention and Control. Multi-year Byrne Grant
- Corrections and One-Stop Collaboration
- Partnerships
 - Veterans
 - Two senior aides
 - Small amount of WIA funding
 - Faith-based volunteers
- In-kind contributions of space for a One-Stop Career Center in the jail.

How we did it

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Committed Leadership

- Workforce Development Director had Corrections background and initiated effort.
- Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation committed to reentry and employment services.
- Correctional facility wardens strong supporters
- **All believed in opening the doors of the public workforce system to ex-offenders.**

Recommendations/Ideas for Community One-Stop Centers

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- If no specific program, provide all staff with basic training on working with ex-offenders
- Appoint one person from Core, ISU, and Businesses services as point people. Get them Offender Workforce Development Specialist training if possible.
- Partner with Corrections & FBO/CBOs
- Visit jails and pre-release centers
- Advocate for One-Stops System funding and technical assistance for offender-specific services through the Second Chance Act!

One-Stop Career Centers

You are key to successful offender reentry!

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If we can help, please contact:
MontgomeryWorks Offender Reentry Employment
Program

www.montgomeryworks.com

301-946-1806

Thank you for your interest