

Community Forum Resources

Detroit Enhanced Reentry Project

Overview

AIR hosted two *Detroit Enhanced Reentry Project Community Forums* focused on reentry for emerging adults sentenced to life without parole (EA-LWOP). Attendees included EA-LWOP individuals, community members, and justice system professionals. Below, we present summaries of the discussions on the needs of EA-LWOP, the desired resources and support systems, and community engagement.

We are grateful to the attendees who shared their thoughts and perspectives with us.

Needs and Resources

The table below organizes the core needs identified during the *Detroit Enhanced Reentry Project Community Forums* into five thematic categories: **Economic Empowerment & Skills Development, Wellness & Recovery, Basic Needs & Accessibility, Community & Belonging,** and **Reentry Navigation & Individualized Support.**

Each category outlines specific needs expressed by justice-impacted individuals and aligns them with existing resources and support systems available across Detroit and Michigan. This table serves as a tool for aligning community efforts and fostering cross-sector collaboration.

Table 1: Consolidated Needs and Resources

Category	Needs	Resources/Support Systems
Economic Empowerment & Skills Development	Job support, financial literacy, technology training, GED/postsecondary access, life skills, fair chance employment, peer-to-peer mentorship during employment	Vocational training, employment services, job placement, literacy supports, unions/trade pipelines
Wellness & Recovery	Mental health services, substance abuse support, therapy, emotional intelligence, behavioral health care, small group mentorship	Mental health centers, therapy/wellness centers, counseling post-release, peer support groups
Basic Needs & Accessibility	Safe/affordable housing, transportation, ID access, clothing, shelter	Emergency housing, fair chance housing, transportation training, barrier navigation

Community & Belonging	Family reintegration, mentorship, spiritual needs, community outreach	Faith-based orgs, community orgs, family support groups, spiritual programs, credible messengers
Reentry Navigation & Individualized Support	Culture/mindset shift, preparation pre-release, gender awareness, tailored reentry	Case worker training, mentorship programs, Reentry resources, social worker support, person-centered planning

Community Engagement Strategy

The table in this section presents organizations that engage in varied types of reentry work and support. We categorized organizations into six groups—**Peer-Led & Lived Experience Organizations, Employment & Economic Empowerment Organizations, State & Systems-Level Reentry Programs, Policy & Advocacy Organizations, Faith-Based & Spiritual Organizations,** and **Community Violence & Trauma Recovery Organizations**—and outlines suggested engagement strategies for each.

These strategies emphasize trauma-informed practices, inclusion of lived experience, and community-driven approaches. The table also includes **Cross-Cutting Engagement Strategies** that apply broadly across sectors, such as hosting resource fairs, promoting barrier-free access, and using technology for outreach. This section is designed to inspire collaborative action and amplify the voices of those most impacted by the justice system.

Table 2: Community Engagement Strategies

Category	Organizations	Engagement Strategies
Peer-Led & Lived Experience Organizations	- RAKS - Nation Outside - A Brighter Way - Fighting the Good Fight - Citizens for Prison Reform - Michigan CURE	- Support peer-led mentorship (e.g., <i>Trauma Informed Peer-Led Reentry</i>) - Include alumni in planning and storytelling - Host listening sessions with credible messengers - Train mentors with lived experience
Employment & Economic Empowerment Organizations	- Goodwill Industries – Flip the Script - Michigan Works! - Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) - 70x7 Life Recovery - Reentry Essentials, Inc.	- Build vocational pipelines - Partner for job fairs and employer engagement - Provide financial literacy and job readiness workshops - Offer direct financial assistance (e.g., RCS program)
State & Systems-Level Reentry Programs	- Offender Success Reentry Services (OSRS)	- Coordinate pre-release planning - Streamline service navigation

	- Calvin University/MDOC Resource Map - Michigan Department of Corrections	- Use resource maps to connect individuals to services - Train case workers in trauma-informed care
Policy & Advocacy Organizations	- Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration - Safe and Just Michigan - American Friends Service Committee - Michigan State Appellate Defender Office (SADO)	- Host policy education sessions - Advocate for fair chance housing/employment - Elevate success stories to influence legislation - Engage in restorative justice campaigns
Faith-Based & Spiritual Organizations	- Prison Fellowship - Hope Prison Ministry – Detroit - 70x7 Life Recovery (faith-based component) - Calvin College	- Reconnect families before release - Provide family therapy and spiritual support - Host community healing circles - Engage in restorative responses to justice-impacted individuals
Community Violence & Trauma Recovery Organizations	- FORCE Detroit	- Implement trauma-informed community violence intervention (CVI) strategies - Engage residents in safety planning - Support mental health and recovery services
Cross-Cutting Engagement Strategies		
• Reconnect families before release and provide therapy and realistic expectation training • Host resource fairs, town halls, and listening sessions • Build mentorship programs using alumni and credible messengers • Promote barrierless access to housing, employment, and education • Use technology and social media to amplify outreach and engagement • Support trauma-informed care and emotional intelligence training		

Curated List of Reentry Support Organizations

We also provide a **curated list of organizations** actively supporting reentry efforts in Detroit and Michigan. Each entry includes a brief description and a hyperlink to the organization's website, offering direct access to services, programs, and advocacy efforts. The list spans a wide range of support—from employment and vocational training to trauma recovery, spiritual care, and policy reform. It includes well-known entities such as Nation Outside, Michigan Works!, Prison Fellowship, and Safe and Just Michigan, among others.

We want to continue to grow this list of resources.

If you have a new resource to add, please contact Joe Williams at jwilliams@air.org.

- **Goodwill Industries – Flip the Script**: Provides comprehensive educational, life skills, and workforce development services to individuals who are unemployed, underemployed, or justice-involved, with a particular focus on young men and women aged 16-39.
- **RAKS**: Provides services for justice impacted people with a deep understanding of how these components affect the misfortunate and poverty-stricken members of our society.
- **Nation Outside**: Focuses on centering the voices of formerly incarcerated individuals to provide reentry services, policy advocacy, and programs like the [Trauma-Informed Peer Led Re-entry \(TIPLR\) program](#).
- **Michigan Works!**: A statewide program that supports returning citizens through job training, networking, and connecting them with employers who are open to hiring individuals with a criminal record.
- **Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration**: A non-partisan collaboration that works to end mass incarceration and includes organizations like Nation Outside in its steering team.
- **Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)**: Has a presence in Detroit and provides direct financial assistance and other supports to individuals returning from incarceration, including the Returning Citizens Stimulus (RCS) program.
- **Offender Success Reentry Services (OSRS)**: OSRS promotes success by partnering with contracted and non-contracted local, state, and federal agencies to provide evidence-based programming and services. Calvin University/MDOC Resource Map [Returning Citizen Services \(arcgis.com\)](#)
- **Michigan State Appellate Defender Office and Criminal Defense Resource Center (SADDO)** - Aims to connect people with criminal records to resources for community integration. SADO Community Partners include:

- [Hope Prison Ministry - Detroit](#)
 - [NorthWest Initiative A.R.R.O.:](#) Advocacy, Reentry, Resources, and Outreach (A.R.R.O.) aims to connect individuals who have a criminal record to quality resources in order to ensure successful community integration.
 - [American Friends Service Committee](#)
 - [Michigan Criminal Justice Program](#)
 - [Calvin College](#)
- [Prison Fellowship](#): Prison Fellowship believes that a restorative approach to prisoners, former prisoners, and all those affected by crime and incarceration can make communities safer and healthier.
- [Safe and Just Michigan](#): Safe and Just Michigan works to advance policies that end Michigan's over-use of incarceration and promote community safety and healing.
 - [Michigan CURE](#): A grassroots justice reform organization, working to educate and inspire individuals to advocate for themselves and for improvements in the state's justice systems.
 - [70X7 Life Recovery](#): 70x7 exists to catalyze the Church, Commerce, and Communities to turn the cycle of incarceration and its consequences into a cycle of Restoration and Hope.
 - [Center for Employment Opportunities](#): CEO believes that everyone, regardless of their past, deserves the chance to work toward a stronger future for themselves, their families, and their communities.
 - [Michigan Department of Corrections](#): The Michigan Department of Corrections creates a safer Michigan by holding offenders accountable while promoting their success.
 - [Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration](#): The Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration is a broad-based, statewide, non-partisan collaboration representing non-profit, faith-based, advocacy, grassroots, and service organizations united to end mass incarceration in Michigan. The Collaborative seeks to create and restore healthy communities.
 - [Citizens for Prison Reform](#) - CPR is a grassroots, family-led initiative that engages, educates and empowers families and those affected by crime and punishment to advance their constitutional, civil and human rights.
 - [Citizens for Prison Reform](#) - A family-led initiative that educates and empowers those affected by crime and punishment.
 - [FORCE Detroit](#) - A community violence intervention (CVI) organization that addresses the root causes of gun violence through evidence-informed practices that engage residents in safety solutions and support trauma recovery.
 - [Reentry Essentials, Inc.](#) - Develops educational materials and provides resources for career, life skills, and reentry readiness.

- **A Brighter Way**: A Washtenaw County-based nonprofit providing assistance to individuals transitioning back into the community
- **Fighting the Good Fight**: *website not found*