



RHODE ISLAND'S  
*RHODE TO REENTRY*  
INITIATIVE



There are 4,203 children who have a parent who was released in 2006.

**BRIAN MILLER** While it's a struggle to pay the bills earning \$8.50 an hour, Brian Miller, a father of three, isn't complaining. Living in a Providence apartment with his girlfriend and 2 year old daughter sure beats doing time. Brian puts in 40 hours a week at Riverdale Window & Door, where he's learned many valuable skills on the job. "As soon as I got locked up," he notes, "I said, 'I've got to get a job.'" Fortunately for Brian, there are employers like Riverdale owner Ken Cato, who has given jobs to close to 300 work release inmates and ex-offenders over the years. Today, Brian feels fortunate that he's been able to turn his life around, saying "Perseverance is something we all have to strive for."



## THE RHODE TO REENTRY

### A Road We Must All Travel

While prisoner reentry has occurred for as long as correctional facilities have existed, it is now operating on a larger scale than ever before.

Rhode Island's inmate population has reached a critical point. Simply building more prisons and jails does not get to the crux of the problem. To control skyrocketing corrections costs, policy makers and elected officials must find a way to ensure that the transition people make from prison to community is safe and successful.

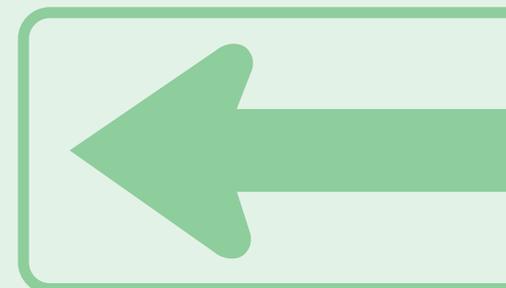
In Rhode Island, with our compact geography, prisoner reentry affects each and every one of us. Our state's high recidivism rate results in thousands of new crimes being committed every year. Whether someone succeeds or fails when s/he leaves prison and return to her/his community impacts fiscal issues, community health, the welfare of our children, family unification, and—most importantly—public safety.

By making reentry YOUR business, you can help be a part of the solution to one of the most pressing concerns plaguing our state today.

Between probation, parole, jail, and prison, the U.S. correctional population exceeds 7 million people. One in every 32 U.S. adult residents is currently under correctional supervision.

By 2011, America's prison population is projected to increase by 192,000 to over 1.7 million inmates. One in every 178 U.S. residents will live in prison.

SOURCE / PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS  
PUBLIC SAFETY PERFORMANCE PROJECT



There were 3,570 Rhode Island residents sentenced to prison in 2006. It costs over \$130 million to incarcerate this population for two-thirds of their sentence length.

**3,654 offenders returned to Rhode Island in 2006.**

**“THE GOAL NOW IS TO SEE IF YOU CAN REHABILITATE LIVES INSTEAD OF JUST LOCKING THEM UP.”**

GOVERNOR DONALD L. CARCIERI

## STRATEGY

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### BEYOND BUILDING PRISONS

#### THE LONG VIEW ON REDUCING CRIME

The Rhode Island Department of Corrections runs safe and orderly prisons. While 30 years ago, Rhode Island's Adult Correctional Institutions were considered among the worst in the country, today we are the envy of other DOC's around the nation. But the millions of dollars spent on operating our prisons is not, by itself, an effective crime-fighting strategy. There are other important ways to keep our communities safe.

### THE RHODE TO REENTRY

#### EASING THE TRANSITION HOME

As citizens of Rhode Island, we all have a responsibility to our neighbors and friends to assure that the transition back to the community is a safe and orderly one. The roadblocks faced by the hundreds of men and women leaving our prisons and returning home each month make success beyond the prison walls a challenge. Released inmates return from the highly structured prison setting to the stresses of life on the street. The impediments ex-offenders face include lack of employment opportunities, difficulties finding stable housing, the lure of readily available street drugs, and ruptured family relationships.

### CLOSING THE REVOLVING DOOR OF RECIDIVISM

In order to truly make a dent in the large numbers of ex-offenders who return to lives of crime, a bold new approach to public safety is needed. In a state like Rhode Island, there is no such thing as "not in my backyard." All but a few dozen of Rhode Island's inmates (those serving sentences of life without parole) will return to the streets. Everyone is affected by crime and in order for Rhode Island's *Rhode to Reentry* initiative to be a success, every community must buy into the prisoner reentry effort.



**DEBRA HARRIS** Debra Harris left prison for what she is confident will be the last time in the summer of 2006. She credits the Spectrum drug treatment program she completed while incarcerated with helping her to change her thinking. “I’m just seeing things differently. It’s not worth going back.” Harris is a consultant with Hasbro Children’s Hospital’s Project Impact, recruiting teens for a study on sex and drugs. She and a childhood friend and fellow ex-offender recently opened a store in her South Providence neighborhood where they sell clothing, jewelry, and hair accessories “to help people living in poverty by having affordable prices.” This is a real turn of events, since, as Harris admits, “I was known as a shoplifter to support my addiction, and now I’m buying the clothes to sell in my store.” If she feels down, Debra attends an NA meeting, and she checks in on a monthly basis with her PO. “I’m doing a lot better staying out of trouble,” she says proudly. “I love my life the way it is now.”

## ACTION

### WHAT IS RHODE ISLAND’S RHODE TO REENTRY INITIATIVE?

The goal of the *Rhode to Reentry* initiative is to reduce crime and increase public safety. Far more than just a Department of Corrections initiative, it is a statewide collaboration to create safer neighborhoods and better citizens by delivering a seamless plan of services, programming, support, and supervision—from the day someone enters prison, through reentry to his/her community, and beyond.

### REDUCING CRIME REDUCES COST

Thirty-four percent of Rhode Island inmates released from sentences each year return on new sentences within 12 months. How can we improve their chances of success and reduce the continually skyrocketing costs of incarceration to our state? Through an increased emphasis on institutional programming, an expansion of mentoring relationships, greater attention to community corrections, and closer relationships with other state and community agencies, the *Rhode to Reentry* initiative will gradually reduce the record-high prison population and lower the cost to run the state’s correctional system. The solution won’t come overnight, but every step counts.

### AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Rhode Island Governor Donald Carcieri was the first governor in the nation to sign an executive order on prisoner reentry. It directs all state agencies to collaborate and prioritize the issue. The resulting three-tiered statewide Reentry Steering Committee has been meeting since 2004 and has had many successes. Its efforts in Rhode Island have attracted the attention of leaders in all branches of state government and have led to funding from federal agencies and foundations. We have assumed a position of national leadership in this arena, but the *Rhode* is long and our diligence must continue.

Sharing relevant data and better coordination of assets is a smarter use of resources. That coordination cannot and does not end at the state level. Our community partners include faith-based and community-based organizations and officials.

Local reentry councils have been established or are being established in Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket, with a long-term goal of having regional councils covering all communities within the state. Bringing together probation and parole staff, medical professionals, RIDOC reentry personnel, local housing specialists, clergy, police officers, and treatment providers, these regional councils review the individual cases of those to be released to the community within six months and strategize on how they can work together to facilitate a seamless transition from prison to community.

**LOUIS MARCHETTI** Prior to his latest bid, which began in 1996, Louis Marchetti was on a destructive path. Eleven years later, he says “I can’t wait to get out and apply what I have learned.” He earned his Associates degree through CCRI, taught area youth about making better choices through the S.C.O.R.E. program, took classes in anger management and cognitive self change, and completed five years of carpentry classes and the pre-requirements for his electrician’s license. “When I came in,” Marchetti shares, “I told myself I wasn’t going to leave empty handed.” He will soon return to his community with a job at a local roofing company and plans to get his electrician’s license so he can pursue a meaningful trade.



## SUCCESS

### SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

Research has proven that an investment in the areas of employment, housing, education, substance abuse, healthcare, and community and family support is critical to successful reentry. Assistance in these areas provides people leaving prison with the tools they need to help themselves. Returning offenders are carefully monitored by the treatment team put into place during their incarceration so they don’t feel lost when things inevitably get tough. Virtually all men and women leaving prison in Rhode Island are released to community supervision. Their probation and parole officers or home confinement counselors, along with employment specialists, mental health professionals, physicians, and others involved in their after-care, can make all the difference in whether they succeed on the outside.

#### THE MOST CRITICAL AREAS FOR FORMER PRISONERS ARE: EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

Sixty percent of all RIDOC inmates have no high school diploma or GED, and testing educational levels tell us that 70% are functionally illiterate. The RIDOC recognizes that returning prisoners need at least a basic education in order to be successful in finding employment. Educational programming is available in all facilities, and all inmates are encouraged to participate. Employment readiness services are also provided.

### HEALTH CARE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance abuse is a factor in approximately 80% of all commitments to the RIDOC. Drug treatment is available throughout the prisons, and discharge planners identify community support systems prior to an offender’s release. This often includes qualifying prisoners for health benefits and identifying ongoing physical or mental health needs. When these needs are taken care of, the *Rhode to Reentry* is much smoother.

### COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Over 4,200 children in Rhode Island have a parent who was released from prison in 2006. Statistics show that children of incarcerated parents are 70% more likely to wind up in prison themselves. Providing family support is a vital aspect of the *Rhode to Reentry* process and begins long before prisoners return to their homes and communities.

### BECOME A PART OF THE SOLUTION!

If you care about safer neighborhoods, then you care about prisoner reentry. Take your place on the *Rhode to Reentry*. Call the office of Prisoner Reentry Services at (401) 462-0933 to learn how you can get involved.

“IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT EX-INMATES MOVE FROM BEING AMERICA'S MOST WANTED TO AMERICA'S LEAST WANTED. THE CHURNING OF REPEAT OFFENDERS THROUGH THE SYSTEM POSES A RISK TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND CONTRIBUTES TO RISING CORRECTIONAL COSTS.”

ASHBEL T. WALL II / DIRECTOR RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

**THE RHODE TO REENTRY Partner Agencies**

Department of Administration  
Department of Children, Youth, and Families  
Department of Corrections  
Department of Education  
Department of Health  
Department of Human Services  
Department of Labor and Training  
Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals  
Department of Motor Vehicles  
Department of the Attorney General

East Bay Community Action Program  
Family Life Center  
Family Resources Community Action  
Family Service of Rhode Island  
Fellowship Health Resources, Inc.  
Gateway Healthcare, Inc.  
Girl Scouts of R.I., Inc.  
Institute for the Study and Practice of Non-violence  
John Hope Settlement House  
Juvenile Probation and Parole  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

Rhode Island College  
Rhode Island Fatherhood Initiative  
The Rhode Island Foundation  
Rhode Island Hospital  
Rhode Island Housing  
Rhode Island Justice Commission  
Rhode Island Parent Information Network  
Rhode Island State Council of Churches  
River of Life-Line Ministries  
Roger Williams Medical Center  
Roger Williams University



**OFFICE OF REENTRY SERVICES**

Rhode Island Department of Corrections

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www.doc.ri.gov

Rhode Island Judiciary  
Rhode Island Office of the Public Defender  
Rhode Island Parole Board  
Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority

**A sampling of THE RHODE TO REENTRY**

**Community Partners**

ACCESS-RI  
AIDS Care Ocean State  
Alliance for Better Long Term Care  
Amos House  
Big Brothers of Rhode Island  
Big Sisters of Rhode Island  
The Blessing Way  
Child & Family Services of Newport County  
Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy  
Central Falls Police Department  
CODAC Behavioral Healthcare  
Community College of Rhode Island  
Comprehensive Community Action Project  
Corporation for Supportive Housing  
Crossroads Rhode Island  
Day One

Minority Addiction Program  
Miriam Hospital  
Neighborworks - Blackstone River Valley  
netWORKri  
Newport Community Mental Health Center  
Newport County Reentry Council  
Newport Police Department  
NRI Community Services, Inc.  
Office of Housing and Community Development  
Pawtucket Citizens Development Corporation  
– Project R.E.N.E.W.  
Pawtucket Police Department  
Phoenix House  
Pond Street Baptist Church  
Project Bridge  
Project Hope  
The Providence Center  
Providence City Council  
The Providence Plan  
Providence Police Department  
Providence Reentry Council  
Providence Weed and Seed  
Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless

Socio-Economic Development Center  
for Southeast Asians  
Spectrum Health Systems  
St. Michael's Catholic Church  
Thundermist Health Center  
Tides Family Services  
Tri-Town Community Action  
Turning Around Ministries (TAM)  
The University of Rhode Island  
Urban League of Rhode Island  
Woodlawn Weed and Seed  
Woonsocket Family Resources  
Woonsocket Police Department

**THE RHODE TO REENTRY National Partners**

Council of State Governments Justice Center  
The Center for Effective Public Policy  
The National Governors' Association – Prisoner  
Reentry Policy Academy  
The National Institute of Corrections  
The National Reentry Media Outreach Campaign  
United States Attorney's Office

**This ever-growing and by no means exhaustive list gives a sense of the scope of Rhode Island's commitment to reentry issues.**