LOUISIANA RE-ENTRY COURT PROGRAM

What Are Louisiana Re-Entry Courts?

In an effort to combat recidivism, reduce crime, and enhance public safety, Louisiana has implemented Re-Entry Courts. **This multifaceted program combines the supervision of the courts and correctional system, the economic opportunity of Louisiana's business community, and the guidance of mentors and social service organizations to reverse the effects of Louisiana's high incarceration rates.**

The program is open to people serving a term of incarceration not to exceed ten years for a non-violent and non-sex offense, and cannot be sentenced as a multiple offender. Based on various tests and assessments, a determination is made as to whether someone is appropriate for, and has the most probability to benefit from the Re-Entry Court program.

Once chosen to participate, the participant spends at least two years at the Louisiana State Penitentiary (LSP) where he or she receives intensive workforce development training, substance abuse therapy, educational resources, and **vocational and rehabilitative training**.

The Re-Entry program at LSP utilizes outside professional help along with Angola "mentors;" sentenced to life imprisonment who work with Re-Entry participants to assist in their rehabilitation. **Upon successful completion of the program, the participants will be placed on probation under intensive supervision.**

Costs of Incarceration vs. Probation

$19,458 per year

$934 per year

Cost of Re-Entry Court probation per prisoner

Cost of incarceration per prisoner

Why Should I Get Involved?

Louisiana has the highest per capita rate of incarceration in the United States. Consequences of imprisonment extend far beyond social stigma, including, but not limited to, denial of public housing, restriction on employment opportunities, and inability to obtain a license. These collateral consequences seriously impede the successful reentry of offenders back into society.

The goal of Re-Entry Court is to provide workforce and rehabilitative development training so participants can become productive members of society. **Not only has the program already shown a significant decrease in the recidivism rates for participants, but it also has a great potential to *cut costs* within the criminal justice system.**

This successful program only begins to address the collateral consequences of imprisonment. Re-Entry Court judges continue to work tirelessly to establish and fortify the community support essential to successful reentry into society upon release. This requires a "village" of support – from the court, the correctional facilities, social service programs, and the community.
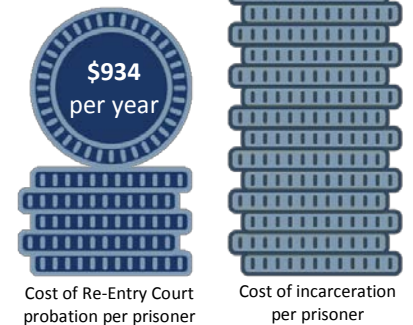
How Can I Help?

Often, minor civil legal issues that impede the success of a reentry participant's transition back into society. The problems may be associated with the participant's incarceration, such as, outstanding fees or fines incurred because the participant was unable to appear in court or because of his classification as "voluntarily unemployed." These civil legal matters, most often simple for even an inexperienced attorney, can be insurmountable for the re-entry court participant to handle alone and result in the participant returning to jail.

Common civil legal issues include:
► Reconciling outstanding court costs, fines and fees
► Obtaining various vital statistics documents (birth certificate, social security card, etc.)
► Resolving driver's license Issues related to non-renewal of auto license (flags, suspensions, etc.)
► Determining outstanding child support payments and arrearages
► Obtaining various employment licenses (provisional licenses, TWIC cards, etc.)
► Settling outstanding attachments/warrants
► Overcoming potential legal barriers to various government assistance programs (public housing, food stamps, federal bonding, etc.)

Our partner organizations for this project are Justice and Accountability Center (or JAC), Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, and Northshore Pro Bono Project.

Justice & Accountability Center of Louisiana

The Northshore Pro Bono Project

SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA LEGAL SERVICES
Free Legal Aid for Low-Income People

Louisiana State Bar Association
Access to Justice