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Strategies for Successful Family and Community Reengagement with Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

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Strategies for Successful Family and Community Reengagement with Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

Almost 95% of individuals from state and federal institutions will eventually be released back into the community,¹ which means more than 650,000 people are leaving the prison system each year.² Therefore, approximately, 1 in 35 adults or 7 million adults were under some type of correctional supervision by the end of 2013.³

Missouri has the 10th highest incarceration rate in the country,⁴ which results in a high number of individuals coming out of the corrections system and returning to the community. As of June 30, 2014, 31,908 individuals were incarcerated in Missouri prisons. Of this number, 9% were from St. Louis County, and 11% were from St. Louis City. Nearly 20% of individuals released from prison return to St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County, with 66% of those individuals being released on parole. Currently, there are about 65,000 individuals in Missouri who are under some type of correctional supervision.⁵

Reentering to society and to the greater community once leaving prison can be very different for each individual. Research shows that the majority of individuals expect to return to their families,⁶ but this may not always be possible due to personal or financial reasons. In addition, when individuals return to their homes and communities where they lived prior to their incarceration, the risk of recidivating increases if they encounter people and places that influenced their criminal behavior.⁷

This paper will examine approaches and proven practices that can accelerate the successful reunification of persons leaving prison with a positive support system, whether that system is a family (defined as individuals with whom the returning person will be living) or community organizations that will provide guidance and support, especially to those who otherwise have none.

Supervised Individuals

Individuals under correctional supervision are required to meet regularly with their supervising officer to develop plans to reach their identified goals. This includes participating in programs aimed to meet needs and issues that often cause criminal behavior, including substance abuse, mental health, education, employment, cognitive, and life skills. A key piece of successful supervision completion is the encouragement of a family

¹ Timothy Hughes and Doris James Wilson, "Reentry Trends in the United States," *U.S. Department of Justice* (2002). Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/reentry.pdf>

² U.S. Department of Justice, "Prisoners and Prisoner Reentry," *Office of Justice Programs* (2015). Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov/archive/fbci/progmenu_reentry.html

³ Lauren Glaze and Danielle Kaebler, "Correctional Population in the United States," *U.S. Department of Justice* (2014): 1-14. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus13.pdf>

⁴ Missouri Department of Corrections, "A Profile of the Institutional and Supervised Offender Population on June 30, 2014," (2015). Retrieved from <http://doc.mo.gov/Documents/publications/Offender%20Profile%20FY14.pdf>

⁵ Missouri Department of Corrections, "A Profile of the Institutional and Supervised Offender Population on June 30, 2014."

⁶ Michael Benson, Leanne Fital Alarid, Velmer Burton, and Francis Cullen, "Reintegration or Stigmatization? Offenders' Expectations of Community Re-Entry," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 39, no. 4 (2011): 339-355. doi: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2011.05.004

⁷ David Harding, Jeffrey Morenoff, and Claire Herbert, "Home is Hard to Find: Neighborhoods, Institutions, and the Residential Trajectories of Returning Prisoners," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 647, no. 1 (2013): 214-236. doi: 10.1177/0002716213477070

member or other person of support. It is recommended that such person should communicate with the supervising officer if the parolee/probationer is having difficulty meeting the terms of his/her supervision.⁸ Many of these aspects can be met through re-entry programs run by outside non-profits and governmental agencies. In order for individuals to get the best services through these programs, the Urban Institute's Justice Policy Center recommends specific program components to serve the ex-offender population.⁹

- Focus on motivation, envisioning new roles and self-concepts, and nurturing the commitment to change
- Provide for a gradual transition from the institution structure of prison to an open schedule
- Offer support and immediate access to income in the days following release
- Look for compatibilities between individuals' temperaments and available jobs
- Provide non-punitive, problem-solving assistance
- Develop resources or provide access to concrete supports like transportation, interview, and work clothes, child care, housing and food
- Create a well-developed network of potential employers
- Cultivate employer satisfaction through frequent contact and willingness to mediate conflict
- Coordinate employment and criminal justice commitments to provide as little disruptions to job responsibilities as possible
- Focus on job retention

Client Barriers

Family is a vital component in becoming successfully integrated back into the community once exiting the prison system.¹⁰ Family support is a significant factor that can determine whether a person will recidivate after their release.¹¹ Rejection of or by the family can be one of the greatest challenges faced by those recently released. During the initial adjustment period it can be tedious to determine personal boundaries and ground rules for both parties. Sometimes, family support is not always possible for individuals when they are returning home. Therefore, criminal justice involved adults need to rely on the community for support, which may be through their church, neighborhood organizations or regional social service agencies. However, before they can become involved with these programs, there may be significant barriers to their participation, which can hinder their ability to be successful.

- **Anger/Trust.**

Individuals may hold preconceived ideas of social service agencies, schools and the legal system, which can contribute to their inability to work cooperatively. They may have a mistrust toward these systems because of their past experiences and many times feel stereotyped or degraded because of their past criminal history. Also, criminal justice involved adults likely had to develop “survival tactics” while incarcerated in order to adapt to a controlled and traumatic environment, causing changes in their thinking, attitude and behavior. These experiences further add to their personal issues they may already be facing (i.e. potentially substance abuse, mental illness, etc.), and these on-going feelings of anger and distrust further reduce their ability to work through these conflicts.¹²

⁸ Missouri Department of Corrections, “Probation and Parole Frequently Asked Question,” (2015). Retrieved from <http://doc.mo.gov/Documents/FFPP.pdf>

⁹ Emily Boer Drake and Steven LaFrance, "Findings on Best Practices of Community Re-Entry Programs for Previously Incarcerated Persons," *Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation* (2007): 1-28. Retrieved from <http://www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/docs/Ex-Offender%20Best%20Practices.pdf>

¹⁰ Lorig Charkoudian, Bonita Cosgrove, Dennis Ferrell, and Shawn Flower, "The Role of Family and Pro-Social Relationships in Reducing Recidivism," *Corrections Today* 74, no. 4 (2012): 94.

¹¹ Christy Visher and Jeremy Travis, "Life on the Outside: Returning Home After Incarceration," *The Prison Journal* 91, no. 3 (2011): 1025-1195.

¹² Office of Head Start, “Fathers for Life,” *Missouri Department of Corrections* (2005). Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/father-engagement/father-male-involvement/tasection1.pdf>

- **Behavioral Health.**

Incarcerated individuals experience higher rates of behavioral health disorders, such as substance abuse and mental health, than the general population. In 2014, 72% of Missouri prisoners released on parole were considered to have a moderate to significant substance abuse issue, and 11% were assessed to have a severe/chronic substance abuse issue. The largest increase in the female prison population occurred among female drug offenders. Over 40% of men and women leaving prison in Missouri were assessed to need mental health treatment.¹³

Once leaving the criminal justice system, past issues with behavioral health can continue to make relationships difficult because individuals may have burned bridges prior to incarceration.¹⁴ Therefore, ex-offenders are less likely to reconnect with family or other support systems.¹⁵ Additionally, behavioral health issues can make it difficult to receive support, which can make it a struggle to accept and transition with needed services.¹⁶ Individuals who do not have adequate support may be more likely to start using again. According to La Vigne, Davies, Palmer, and Halberstadt, individuals returning home are 129 times more likely to die of a drug overdose compared to the general population.¹⁷

- **Sex Offenders.**

Missouri Revised Statute 566.147 restricts certain sexual offenders from residing within 1,000 feet of a school, a child-care facility, or a park.¹⁸ These restrictions can create exclusion zones that make it difficult, if not impossible, for sex offenders to find housing.¹⁹ This can lead to an increase in homelessness, going underground, or reporting false addresses, making it difficult for supervising officers and other lawmakers to ensure individuals charged with sex offenses are following their imposed stipulations. Finding employment can also be challenging because many transitional, entry level or cash flow jobs which will give formerly incarcerated persons a "second chance" also hire youth workers or have job requirements that will not meet the requirements of supervision of sex offenders, and cannot be approved by probation or parole officers. Additionally, many persons whose crimes are internet related are extremely limited in the nature of jobs that they can accept. Even the ability to complete online applications or communicate with potential employers via email is limited. Also, many retail, food or hospitality establishments, which cater to families with children or youth are not going to meet the necessarily stringent requirements. Difficulty finding employment contributes to a lack of structure and financial stability and has an adverse effect on the entire community reintegration process. It can be extremely detrimental to behavioral health.

- **Legal/Custody Issues.**

Individuals leaving prison often experience restrictions on family relationships and living arrangements as a result of child custody, fostering and adoption measures.²⁰ Furthermore, those who do return home may have strained relationships with the custodial parents due to their absence and lack of sufficient financial and

¹³ Missouri Department of Corrections, "A Profile of the Institutional and Supervised Offender Population on June 30, 2014."

¹⁴ Jamie Dougherty, "Survey Reveals Barriers to Successful Ex-Offender Re-Entry," *Judicial Process Commission* (2011). Retrieved from <http://rocjpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Survey-Reveals-Barriers-to-Successful-Ex-Offender-Re-Entry.pdf>

¹⁵ Dougherty, *Survey Reveals Barriers to Successful Ex-Offender Re-Entry*.

¹⁶ Nancy La Vigne, Elizabeth Davies, Tobi Palmer, and Robin Halberstadt, "Release Planning For Successful Reentry: A Guide for Corrections, Service Providers, and Community Groups," *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center* (2008). Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/research/publication/release-planning-successful-reentry/view/full_report

¹⁷ La Vigne et al., "Release Planning For Successful Reentry: A Guide for Corrections, Service Providers, and Community Groups."

¹⁸ Missouri Department of Corrections, "Rules and Regulations Governing the Conditions of Probation, Parole, and Conditional Release for Sex Offenders," *Board of Probation and Parole*. Retrieved from <http://doc.mo.gov/Documents/prob/OrangeBook.pdf>

¹⁹ National Institute of Justice, "Sex Offender Residency Restrictions: How Mapping Can Inform Policy," *Office of Justice Programs* (2008). Retrieved from <http://www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/community/sex-offenders/pages/residency-mapping.aspx>

²⁰ Sarah Berson, "Beyond the Sentence – Understanding Collateral Consequences," *National Institute of Justice Journal* 272, (2013): 25-28. Retrieved from <https://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/241927.pdf>

emotional contributions while they were in prison.²¹ Many times parents in prison are unable to make child support payments.

Once they leave prison, custodial parents are responsible for making payments on debts that accrued interest during their sentence.²² This is especially challenging, because those with a criminal history are often underemployed or unemployed and are unable to make payments.²³ Persons who have been incarcerated are shown to earn 40% less annually in wages than people of similar circumstances having served no time in prison.²⁴ Therefore, the noncustodial parent can be put in a vulnerable position to imply additional legal actions because of these financial burdens.²⁵

Reengagement Approaches

Mediation

Criminal justice involved individuals often lack the ability to resolve conflicts that result in healthy outcomes. This deficiency affects how the individual reacts in personal and social relationships, and can hinder him/her from maintaining employment, engaging in positive supportive relationships and successfully completing treatment programs.

Pre-release community mediation programs, such as Community Mediation Maryland, operate in 17 out of 25 Maryland state correctional facilities and 9 detention centers. This program provides facilitation services to inmates between six and twelve months prior to release. Trained staff meet with incarcerated individuals to determine which relationships will be the most important when reentering society. Justice involved adults can request meetings to address challenges that may exist between parties as well as actively plan for future post-release.²⁶ Conflict mediation training teaches the recently released individual to understand how to communicate effectively in a confrontation and how to actively listen to the others involved.²⁷

The mediation process has four main characteristics: “(1) the autonomy of the parties and their right to self-determination, (2) the parties’ informed consent, (3) fairness, and (4) impartiality.” The goal of mediation is for the parties to “resolve disputes and reach agreements by themselves and/or with the assistance of a third party.”²⁸ Research shows that the relationship between the inmate and the outside participant is the primary topic of conversation, which can open the door for more in-depth conversations on employment (second) and housing as positive communication methods are established. The interpersonal skills acquired in mediation can help post-release individuals cope with potential temptation and conflict leading to reengagement in criminal activity, substance abuse, etc.²⁹

²¹ Office of Head Start, “Fathers for Life.”

²² Steve Christian, “Children of Incarcerated Parents,” *National Conference of State Legislatures* (2009). Retrieved from www.ncsl.org/documents/cyf/childrenofincarceratedparents.pdf

²³ Office of Head Start, “Fathers for Life.”

²⁴ Erin Kincaid and Alison Laurence, “Ex-Offender Employment Opportunities,” *National Conference of State Legislatures* (2011): 1-5. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cj/pew/exoffenderreport.pdf>

²⁵ Office of Head Start, “Fathers for Life.”

²⁶ Lorig Charkoudian and Shawn Flower, “Prisoner Re-entry Mediation: Unlocking the Potential of Relationships in Tough Economic Times,” *Dispute Resolution Magazine* (2010): 14-16, 26. Retrieved from <http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/services/community/doc/1681.pdf>

²⁷ Charkoudian et al., “The Role of Family and Pro-Social Relationships in Reducing Recidivism,” 94.

²⁸ Gabriel Hallevyal, “Therapeutic Victim-Offender Mediation within the Criminal Justice Process -- Sharpening the Evaluation of Personal Potential for Rehabilitation while Righting Wrongs Under the ADR Philosophy,” *Harvard Negotiation Law Review* 16, no. 65 (2011): 1-19. Retrieved from http://www.hnlr.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/THERAPEUTIC_VICTIM-OFFENDER_MEDIATION_WITHIN_THE_CRIMINAL_JUSTICE_PROCESS_-_SHA.doc

²⁹ Charkoudian and Flower, “Prisoner Re-entry Mediation: Unlocking the Potential of Relationships in Tough Economic Times,” 14-16, 26.

Mediation can be very helpful to an individual once they come home and will be valuable both in the home and in their job.³⁰ A 2010 study found that mediation participants also had higher hopes for the future, were more prepared to come home, and family members had a clearer idea of what to expect.³¹

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an alternative way of bringing justice to the victim while also being a teaching moment for the offender. This type of mediation allows the victim/survivor to be more involved in the process and may allow the offender to understand how the crime impacted the individual(s) affected. This form of mediation does not take the place of the formal criminal justice process, but instead can be incorporated into community integration.

Restorative justice methods can provide an indicator of the person's rehabilitation potential. Through this process, there can be an open and honest line of communication. This type of mediation may not be suitable for everyone, but can provide a powerful complement to the formal supervision process.³²

Supportive Partner Meeting

These meetings are offered with Probation and Parole and various community treatment programs. A person identified by the formerly incarcerated individual attends meetings between the participant and their supervising officer or counselor to better understand what is being asked of the participant, and learn of any accomplishments or areas still showing need. Attendance at these meetings can strengthen the communication and bond between participant and supporting member.

Reunification with Child(ren)

Individuals released from prison may not always have the option of directly reuniting with their child(ren). However, there are ways to help preserve their parental rights during and after incarceration.³³ It is important to demonstrate the following types of actions to show commitment. In Missouri, there is no statute that explicitly defines and protects parental rights as a fundamental right.³⁴ A parent can do the following to show their commitment to their child(ren):³⁵

- Write letters to their child(ren) a couple times a month
- If the child(ren) is in the care of the Children's Division, they can write a letter to the child's case manager and inquire about the child(ren)'s health and well-being
- Have the child(ren) visit the incarcerated individual as often as possible or permitted
- Visit the child(ren) during temporary release periods
- Send gifts or write cards for special days in the child(ren)'s life (birthdays, graduation, etc.)
- Participate in correctional run programs that could prepare them to better care and provide to their child once being released (Parenting classes, etc.)
- Contribute financially to the child support
- Cooperate with the Children's Division Care to create a written permanency plan

³⁰ Charkoudian et al., "The Role of Family and Pro-Social Relationships in Reducing Recidivism," 94.

³¹ Charkoudian and Flower, "Prisoner Re-entry Mediation: Unlocking the Potential of Relationships in Tough Economic Times," 14-16, 26.

³² Halleval, "Therapeutic Victim-Offender Mediation within the Criminal Justice Process -- Sharpening the Evaluation of Personal Potential for Rehabilitation while Righting Wrongs Under the ADR Philosophy", 1-19.

³³ Missouri Department of Social Services, "Children's Division E-Forms: Notice to Incarcerated Parents," (2010). Retrieved from <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/info/forms/>

³⁴ Parental Rights, "Parental Rights in Missouri," (2015). Retrieved from http://www.parentalrights.org/index.asp?SEC=63346BC4-18BE-4F07-85E3-7CE39EEDE2D2&Type=B_BASIC

³⁵ Missouri Department of Social Services, "Children's Division E-Forms: Notice to Incarcerated Parents."

After returning home, it can be challenging for individuals to reestablish their roles within the home. There can be a power struggle between the custodial parent and the parent returning home. In their absence, roles may have changed and often the custodial parent has become more independent and/or taken on employment. Additionally, other family members can impede the relationship between children and their released parent because they may be concerned about a potential negative influence.³⁶

To succeed in parent/child reunification, Krupat, Gaynes, and Lincroft offer these suggestions.³⁷

- “The Parole Board should implement and consider Family Impact Statements (FISs) and the effect each release option will have on children and families.”
- They should consider the former inmates role as a caregiver, their involvement with the child since release, the parent’s financial, emotional and physical support to the child, their involvement with the family court, and both the short and long term impact of the release on the children.
- Incentivize completion of parenting and other relationship building classes by reducing sentence time.
- Corrections staff should work with prisoners before release to develop Transition Accountability Plans (TAPs) to help inmates regain custody of their children and identify the specific steps and goals that need to be taken.
- Curfew and travel restrictions may also affect family interaction. It is recommended that Probation and Parole officers be aware of the individual family situation for each client, to understand and best accommodate the collateral effects of sanctions and supervision on the family (i.e. how appointments conflict with child care responsibilities, etc.)

When There is a Lack of Family Support

It is the hope that individuals can work through these challenges with appropriate supportive structures to ultimately be successful and self-sufficient members in society. When the family cannot be involved or may not be a positive influence, organizational and community support is critical in reducing recidivism. Recently released adults may need to rely on their neighbors, congregation or local community organizations as a support system. For example, in Madison, Wisconsin, there is a program called Circle of Support run by Madison Area Urban Ministry. The program recruits four to six community members to meet weekly with an individual who is newly released from prison. Through this core team, the individual experiences a respectful, positive, and supportive environment.³⁸ This program is similar to several mentoring programs in the St. Louis area that offer both individual and group mentoring. In a May 2010 Urban Institute Research Brief, mentoring and post release counseling were deemed helpful “to help men address the negative family and neighborhood influences in their lives that might also help many achieve successful integration.” The study found that “exiting prisoners need to have access to programs and services immediately upon release and continuing for several months to ensure that these individuals can translate their desire for successful reintegration into prosocial activities and behaviors.”³⁹ One in five offenders serve their full sentence behind bars, receiving no supervision in the community once released. Thus, supportive community structures are imperative during their transition to St. Louis.⁴⁰

³⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Incarceration and the Family: Issues, Effects and Approaches to Successful Reentry*. Nova Publisher, 2009. eBook Collection

³⁷ Tanya Krupat, Elizabeth Gaynes, and Yali Lincroft, "A Call to Action: Safeguarding New York’s Children of Incarcerated Parents," *The Osborne Association* (2011): 1-88. Retrieved from <http://www.osborneny.org/NYCIP/ACalltoActionNYCIP.Osborne2011.pdf>

³⁸ Madison Area Urban Ministry, "Circle of Support," (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.emum.org/wedo.html>

³⁹ Christy Visser, Jennifer Yahner, and Nancy La Vigne, "Life after Prison: Tracking Experiences of Male Prisoners Returning to Chicago, Cleveland, and Houston," *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center* (2010). Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/research/publication/life-after-prison-tracking-experiences-male-prisoners-returning-chicago-cleveland-and-houston/view/full_report

⁴⁰ The PEW Charitable Trusts. "Max Out: The Rise in Prison Inmates Released Without Supervision," (2014). Retrieved from http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/Assets/2014/06/04/MaxOut_Report.pdf

Transitioning from incarceration to the community is a challenging and delicate process, coupled with a high risk of recidivism. Strong family and community support combined with evidence-based reengagement approaches are vital for successful reintegration in supporting justice-involved adults achieve dignity and self-sufficiency. Reengagement approaches such as mediation and restorative justice are relatively new services but initial research and evaluation efforts show promise. Multiple studies currently underway should soon show long term results on individual and community impact.⁴¹ Research shows that if all justice-involved adults receive necessary resources and support, “we could expect recidivism reductions on the order of 15% to 20%; greater reductions may be possible with targeted, community based strategies.” These reengagement strategies would also be cost-effective (paying for the services by reducing corrections costs) and would ultimately reduce the number of new crimes.⁴²

PROVIDER RESOURCES FOR RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND MEDIATION

Association of Missouri Mediators, (816) 736-8402, <http://momediators.org>

Association of Missouri Mediators provides information about resolution of conflict as a public service and support consumer education on the use and benefit of mediation. Family mediators are available through this organization. The services do have a fee for clients.

International Institute of Restorative Practices, (610) 807-9221, <http://www.iirp.edu/>

The International Institute of Restorative Practices provides a graduate school and is a stand-alone graduate school in Bethlehem, PA. This graduate program is accredited and part of a movement to educate and train scholars, professionals, and practitioners in restorative justice practices.

Mediators Beyond Borders, <http://mediatorsbeyondborders.org>

Mediators Beyond Borders (MBB) builds local skills for peace and promotes mediation worldwide. MBB provides capacity-building opportunities through volunteer members who build mediation and organizational skills for preventing, resolving and healing from conflict. Communities of particular interest to MBB’s work have included those impacted by traumas such as war, civil discourse, or natural disasters.

Missouri Restorative Justice Coalition, <http://associations.missouristate.edu>

The Missouri Restorative Justice Coalition (MORJC) is a group of stakeholders interested in promoting restorative justice in Missouri. MORJC provides trainings in restorative justice practices, provides education around juvenile courts utilizing restorative justice principles, and has supported several school districts in Missouri that have incorporated restorative justice practices into their discipline procedures.

National Association of Community and Restorative Justice, <http://www.nacrj.org>

The mission of the National Association of Community and Restorative Justice is to provide a professional association for educators and practitioners and others interested in restorative and community justice. The primary means to fulfill this mission are the bi-annual National Conference on Restorative Justice and a membership accessible website.

Prison Fellowship International, <https://pfi.org>

Prison Fellowship International (PFI) works internationally as a faith-based organization that works to promote and restore justice and dignity to those who have been incarcerated. Services have included medical services, access to water, and sanitation.

⁴¹ Charkoudian and Flower, “Prisoner Re-entry Mediation: Unlocking the Potential of Relationships in Tough Economic Times,” 14-16, 26.

⁴² Christy Visher and Jeremy Travis, “Life on the Outside: Returning Home After Incarceration,” *The Prison Journal* 91, no. 3 (2011): 1025-1195.

St. Louis Area Restorative Justice Collaboration, www. <http://www.stlarjc.org>

Promoting the principles of restorative justice through public and professional education, networking and development of programs that engage victim, offender and community as a viable option to repair harm.

MEDIATION RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

Community Mediation of Services of St. Louis, (314) 533-3550, <http://mediationstl.org>

Community Mediation Services of St. Louis has been working provide quality mediation services for families experiencing conflict, including families facing reentry. Community Mediation Services brings families together to talk and resolve differences. Services through Community Mediation Services are free to clients. This process includes arranging a convenient time, a safe location, and providing professionally trained mediators to listen to the parties and facilitate a conversation process that helps parties identify needs and find solutions.

Center for Women in Transition, (314) 771-5207, www.cwitstl.org

The Center assists women in the criminal justice system in making a successful transition to their families and communities through practicing and promoting restorative justice. Offers transitional housing, case management, and mentoring, Restorative Justice Circles and conflict mediation to selected women being released from jail/prison.

Collaborative Family Law Association, <http://stlouiscollaborativelaw.com>

Collaborative Family Law Association offers a network of legal, mental health, and financial professionals who are committed to providing a respectful, supportive, and non-adversarial process to divorcing couples in the St. Louis area that will enable them to construct their own solutions for their family's center. Collaborative Practice helps divorcing and separating couples work together, rather than in opposition, so they can focus on reaching solutions that work for both parties and their children, in a non-hostile and respectful manner.

Crime Victims Advocacy Center, (314) 652-3623, <http://www.supportvictims.org>

Crime Victims Advocacy Center (CVAC) provides services necessary to help victims of crime throughout the metropolitan St. Louis area (and other areas as requested) reconstruct their lives following the trauma of victimization. Services include, but are not limited to: crisis intervention, counseling, advocacy, criminal justice guidance, and help for domestic violence victims filing for and obtaining orders of protection.

M.A.R.C.H. Mediation, (800) 595-9750 or (816) 792-9989, <http://www.marchmediation.org>

If divorcing parents or parents who were never married or are separated are in need of mediation services to assist in child support orders, disputes regarding custody or other parent-related matters, the couple is eligible for four hours of free mediation through M.A.R.C.H. Mediation.

St. Louis City Family Court Neighborhood Accountability Boards, (314) 552-2446,
<http://www.stlcitycircuitcourt.com>

A Neighborhood Accountability Board consists of four to seven members of the community who informally address juvenile delinquency matters. NAB offers offenders the opportunity to repair the harm caused by their offense and make a positive contribution to their own community.

*Visit www.mediate.com for a list of attorneys available for mediation services in the area. Please note, those listed on this website do charge for their services.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Connections to Success, (636) 940-3623 or (314) 584-6702, www.connectionstosuccess.org

Connections to Success provides a comprehensive network of services and support, to help people living in poverty to become economically self-sufficient. The organization offers a holistic family of programs that assist participants with professional attire, job readiness skills, personal and professional development, peer-to-peer mentoring and support, health and wellness initiatives, transportation assistance, goal setting, skills training, and mentoring.

Criminal Justice Ministry, (314) 652-8062, <http://cjmstlouis.org>

Criminal Justice Ministry improves the safety and well-being of individuals affected by crime and the criminal justice system, their families and their communities in the Greater St. Louis area through person-to-person assistance rooted in Jesus Christ's message of love, reconciliation and hope.

Family Resource Center, (314) 534-9350, www.frcmo.org

Family Resource Center aims to prevent and treat all forms of child abuse and neglect and to strengthen families through family-centered therapeutic, educational, and support services.

Fathers' Support Center, (314) 333-4170, www.fatherssupportcenter.org

Committed to creating positive outcomes for children and families by helping fathers become responsible parents. Also offers legal clinic to ensure that low to moderate income, non-custodial parents have access to quality legal services.

Let's Start, Inc., (314) 241-2324, <http://letsstart.org/>

Let's Start aims to break the cycle of incarceration in families by working with formerly incarcerated women and their children to support recovery and reentry, mitigate the impact of parental imprisonment, educate the public and inform policy. Offers child/family therapy for families facing reentry, as well as provides support groups for women in reentry. The agency also provides monthly transportation to WERDCC for children and family members to visit the incarcerated individual.

North County Community Development Corporation, (314) 477-1246, www.northcountycdc.org

NCCD Corporation is committed to helping at-risk individuals and families become self-sufficient and independent by providing essential supportive and educational services necessary to become productive citizens of St. Louis County.

Project ReConnect, (314) 771-5207

Supporting men and women who have "maxed out" a Missouri prison sentence (sentence has been fully completed and serving no supervision time) within the last year in their transition to St. Louis City.

St. Patrick Center, (314) 802-0700, www.stpatrickcenter.org

St. Patrick Center provides housing, employment and mental health opportunities for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Missouri Career Center, www.jobs.mo.gov

A partner in the American Job Center Network, which has locations throughout the St. Louis Metro Area and all regions of Missouri. Assist with job matching, resume preparation, education and training programs, workshops and service referrals, including some targeted toward persons with barriers to employment, including those which affect persons with criminal records and gaps in employment history. To find the closest location and a calendar of job fairs and events, log on to the website. Check with the desired location for monthly workshop schedules.