

# IACP/COPS National Policy Summit Final Report

## OFFENDER RE-ENTRY

Exploring the Leadership Opportunity for Law Enforcement  
Executives and Their Agencies



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# **OFFENDER RE-ENTRY: EXPLORING THE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVES AND THEIR AGENCIES**

## **FINAL REPORT OF THE IACP/COPS 2006 SUMMIT**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Offender re-entry has never posed more serious challenges. Every year roughly 650,000 individuals are released from federal and state prisons to re-enter their communities. Of these 650,000 individuals, nearly two thirds will be rearrested for a felony or serious misdemeanor within three years of their release. Communities are clearly struggling to accomplish the difficult work of assisting former offenders in their transition from prison to productive life while protecting the public from those who will re-offend.

Arguably, the seriousness of this struggle is primarily the result of four factors. First, more offenders are re-entering communities than ever before. While roughly 650,000 offenders will return to their communities from prisons this year, that number was nearer 250,000 only twenty years ago. This does not even include offenders released from jails, a number that, in fact, far exceeds the number of those released from prisons. Second, communities are bearing greater corrections costs than ever before. Over the last twenty years, corrections-spending has increased from \$9 billion to \$60 billion. Third, offenders are less equipped than ever before to re-enter their communities successfully. Although corrections expenditures have increased dramatically, critical social services for prisoners have, in real terms, decreased. The need for substance abuse treatment and educational programming in prison has never been greater, but the percentage of prisoners receiving these services has actually declined. Fourth, a majority of offenders return to a small minority of communities that are typically characterized by social and economic disadvantage. As a result, these communities are stretched thin in their efforts to assist returning offenders while working to prevent recidivism.

Given these challenges, reoffending and relapse are, perhaps, to be expected. However, many of the service providers supporting returning offenders refuse to accept the expected. In the last decade, corrections officers, law enforcement leaders, public safety officials, health and human services providers, faith-based organization leaders, welfare officials, employment services providers, and housing and transportation experts have joined together through offender re-entry efforts in order to stop the cycle of wasted lives, disrupted communities, and victimization. These providers work on behalf of offenders by connecting them to critical social services. More importantly, they work on behalf of entire communities by enhancing public safety and reducing recidivism.

In this last objective, no community organization has more at stake than law enforcement agencies. Regrettably, however, law enforcement agencies' involvement in offender re-entry efforts has remained largely theoretical. Some notable agencies have designed and led offender re-entry efforts, but research by the IACP, BJA and the Urban Institute reveals that a majority of law enforcement agencies do not even participate in offender

re-entry efforts. Those who do are rarely involved in the planning or design of such efforts. Offender re-entry poses too costly a problem and too important an opportunity for law enforcement agencies to stand by in this manner. The moment has come for law enforcement executives and their agencies to take their place in offender re-entry efforts.

Summit participants were very sensitive to, and aware of, the fact that support for offender re-entry programs poses a distinct and significant set of challenges to law enforcement. Given the historically high rates of recidivism among returning offenders, it is appropriate that police take 'zero tolerance' positions on re-offending, arresting those who offend, and alerting all returning offenders that adherence to the law is the foundation to their success. The summit's focus was squarely on the latter group—returning offenders who wish to return to productive lives in their communities. Participants felt strongly that proactive support to this group is also an appropriate action by the police- and one that can potentially reduce the levels of crime, victimization and re-offending nationwide.

Summit participants also made it clear that supporting returning offenders is a systemic community level issue vs. one that police can or should take on by themselves. Thus, the recommendations emerging from the summit call for action by all members of the community through a team concept, with law enforcement officials taking a leadership role in support of their many community partners. And that leadership role for law enforcement can encompass both support to returning offenders making positive progress and aggressive enforcement actions where re-offending occurs.

To help craft an appropriate law enforcement agenda for offender re-entry initiatives, the IACP and COPS organized the 2006 national policy summit, *Offender Re-Entry: Exploring the Leadership Opportunity for Law Enforcement Executives and Their Agencies*, to consider the role law enforcement executives and their agencies should assume in offender re-entry efforts. Bringing together over one hundred law enforcement executives, corrections officers, criminal justice experts, social services directors, drug enforcement officers, leaders of faith-based and community-based initiatives, youth advocacy leaders, and public affairs directors, the summit asked these experts to develop recommendations that would guide law enforcement executives and their agencies in their work to transition offenders from prison to productive life while protecting the public from those who will re-offend.

Summit participants rose to the challenge, drafting 50 recommendations in the following nine issue areas:

- Asserting Leadership
- Identifying Funding
- Collaborating with Community Stakeholders
- Designing Offender Re-Entry Efforts
- Training Agencies & Community Partners
- Educating the Public
- Cultivating Public Support

- Evaluating the Effectiveness of Offender Re-Entry Efforts
- Promoting Promising Practices

These 50 recommendations—drafted in focus groups and affirmed by all summit participants—are the basis of a national policy that, when fully implemented, will ensure law enforcement’s leadership and full engagement within offender re-entry efforts, thus enhancing public safety while reducing recidivism and victimization. The vast majority of these recommendations are directed to law enforcement agencies and their community partners—those agencies, organizations, and individuals with whom law enforcement agencies will collaborate in this vital offender re-entry work. These community partners might include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Prison staff/service providers
- Jail administrators
- Corrections officers
- Probation officers (federal, state, local)
- Parole officers (federal, state, local)
- Courts (judges, attorneys)
- Attorneys (US/district/state/county/city)
- Public defenders
- Drug courts
- Substance abuse services
- Mental health services
- Healthcare providers
- Faith-based organizations
- Food services
- Housing authorities
- Transportation services
- Education systems
- Life skills providers
- Workforce development services
- Business associations
- Employers
- Community leaders
- Victims associations
- Successfully reintegrated offenders
- Neighborhood representatives

The remainder of this report presents the comprehensive list of summit participant recommendations to address all aspects of Offender Re-Entry. The report provides detailed narrative further clarifying the intent of each of the 50 recommendations presented here.

## SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

This 2006 IACP/COPS national policy summit report recommends unhesitatingly that every law enforcement executive in the nation strategically engage their agency in offender re-entry efforts. No community organization has a greater stake in the successful transition of returning offenders than law enforcement. Law enforcement leadership and engagement in offender re-entry efforts is critically important to enhancing public safety and reducing recidivism and victimization.

The form that that engagement will take may vary from agency to agency. A small but significant number of law enforcement executives are already engaged in offender re-entry work. An even more significant number will become engaged in the coming months and years. Some of these law enforcement executives will identify existing offender re-entry efforts which may be significantly strengthened and enhanced by law enforcement participation. Others will need to initiate offender re-entry efforts by identifying and partnering with community stakeholders. As law enforcement executives pursue various avenues of engagement, they will confront common challenges. Summit participants address these challenges systematically through their recommendations. These recommendations are organized into the following nine issue areas:

- Asserting Leadership
- Identifying Funding Offender Re-Entry Efforts
- Collaborating with Community Stakeholders
- Designing Offender Re-Entry Efforts
- Training Agencies & Community Partners
- Educating the Public
- Securing Public Support
- Evaluating the Effectiveness of Offender Re-Entry Efforts
- Promoting Promising practices

The recommendations specific to each issue area follow.

### **I. Asserting Leadership**

Law enforcement executives will most effectively demonstrate their support for offender re-entry efforts by strategically engaging themselves and their agencies in those efforts. Still, law enforcement executives must continually shore up that engagement through their words and actions. Articulating support for law enforcement involvement in offender re-entry efforts will be critical at every stage of involvement—from design to evaluation—and at every level of law enforcement—from national organizations to front line officers.

**1. The IACP and other professional law enforcement organizations should articulate their support for offender re-entry efforts to their members.**

The distribution of this summit report, advocating the broad and prompt engagement of law enforcement executives and agencies in offender re-entry efforts, is a clear statement of the IACP's support for law enforcement engagement in offender re-entry efforts. Still, summit participants recommend that the IACP take additional steps to ensure that that support is fully heard and understood. Summit participants recommend that the IACP dedicate a portion of its website to a statement of support for law enforcement engagement in offender re-entry efforts and accompanying information regarding those efforts. Summit participants also recommend that the IACP promote law enforcement involvement in offender re-entry efforts in *Police Chief Magazine*. Finally, summit participants recommend that the IACP sponsor a panel presentation on offender re-entry efforts at its annual conference.

Summit participants recognize that, in addition to articulating its support of law enforcement engagement in offender re-entry efforts on its own, the IACP is ideally positioned to take the lead in producing a joint statement of support on behalf of national law enforcement organizations including, but not limited to, the National Sheriff's Association (NSA), the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), the Police Foundation, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement (NOBLE), the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), the Community Oriented Policing Services of the U.S. Department of Justice (COPS), and other Department of Justice (DOJ) and Office of Justice Programs (OJP) agencies as appropriate. Such a statement of support for law enforcement engagement in offender re-entry efforts to these organizations' collective membership would carry considerable weight.

## **2. Law enforcement executives should articulate their support for offender re-entry efforts to their agencies.**

Law enforcement executives, too, must shore up their support for agency involvement in offender re-entry efforts through clear and continual articulations of that support. Law enforcement executives should articulate their support of agency engagement in offender re-entry efforts through standard agency forums including newsletters, websites, community meetings, recruiting events, etc.

## **3. Law enforcement executives should involve members at all levels of their agencies in offender re-entry efforts.**

Law enforcement executives should also demonstrate their support for agency involvement in offender re-entry efforts by involving members at all levels of their agencies in these efforts. Law enforcement executives themselves should be involved in offender re-entry efforts. By serving on offender re-entry community committees and as spokespersons for their agencies' efforts, law enforcement executives will most effectively lead all agency members to an understanding of and commitment to the importance of offender re-entry efforts. Law enforcement executives should also ensure the involvement of management, command, midlevel management, and patrol officers in offender re-entry efforts.



## II. Funding Offender Re-Entry Efforts

Law enforcement executives and their agencies know that they are being asked to do more with fewer resources than ever before. As a result, law enforcement executives who are already stretching scarce resources thin may wonder how to fund offender re-entry efforts. Summit participants recommend that they and their agencies approach funding challenges strategically, creatively, and seek the full support of the federal government as appropriate.

### **4. The federal government should fully fund the Second Chance Act and other existing offender-reentry legislation.**

While law enforcement agencies engage in offender re-entry efforts on the ground, support from the federal government can and should serve a significant role in their success. In his State of the Union address in January 2004, President George W. Bush stressed the critical importance of offender re-entry efforts in reducing recidivism, increasing public safety, and helping communities help returning offenders build better lives. The Second Chance Act of 2005 supports the efforts of law enforcement agencies and their community partners through two significant means.

First, the Second Chance Act of 2005 directly funds offender re-entry efforts through demonstration grants and mentoring grants to nonprofit organizations. Through its reauthorization of the Re-Entry Demonstration Project, the Second Chance Act of 2005 actually increases the amount of money available for funding demonstration offender re-entry efforts. The act also establishes a new grant program to provide funding for nonprofit organizations to provide mentoring and other transitional services to returning offenders. Summit participants recommend full funding of these measures.

Second, in addition to providing direct funding, the Second Chance Act of 2005 supports the discovery and distribution of promising practices within offender re-entry. To this end, the Second Chance Act of 2005 authorizes the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics to conduct research on offender re-entry. It also authorizes the creation of a federal interagency taskforce to identify offender re-entry efforts, enhance collaboration within and between these efforts, coordinate funding among these efforts, and conduct research on the results of these efforts. Finally, it authorizes the creation of a national Reentry Center to collect data, determine promising practices, provide technical assistance, and disseminate information to agencies involved in offender re-entry efforts. Recognizing the critical importance of evaluation to identifying and perpetuating promising practices in offender re-entry, summit participants recommend the full funding of these measures.

**5. The IACP should maintain a list of funding sources for offender re-entry for its members.**

Of course, the federal funding offered under the Second Chance Act of 2005 must be supplemented by additional funding in order for every law enforcement agency to engage effectively in offender re-entry efforts. Multiple funding sources at the federal and regional level already exist for offender re-entry efforts. Summit participants recommend that the IACP maintain a list of such funding sources on its website so that law enforcement agencies that qualify for existing funds may identify, apply for, and receive those funds.

**6. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should seek funding sources for offender re-entry within their communities.**

Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should also seek funding within their communities. Communities are themselves so deeply affected by offender re-entry, and a significant number of community stakeholders are so deeply involved in offender re-entry efforts, that the community itself is usually a fertile field for fundraising. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners who share fundraising efforts may enhance community support for their engagement. Those who succeed in sharing fundraising efforts may also better succeed in sharing funding as well as other available community resources including personnel and infrastructure. Sharing resources not only has the power to enhance community support, but also the efficiency and effectiveness of the offender re-entry efforts.

**7. Acknowledging the limited funding available, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should develop sustainable offender re-entry efforts, pooling existing resources across partner agencies.**

Inevitably, a scarcity of funds will limit the scope of offender re-entry efforts. Summit participants recommend that law enforcement executives and their agencies acknowledge funding limitations while designing their offender re-entry efforts in order to ensure that those efforts are sustainable. Initiating offender re-entry efforts only to curtail or eliminate them later due to a lack of funding doesn't serve the law enforcement agency or returning offenders. The Urban Institute's *Prisoner Reentry and Community Policing: Strategies for Enhancing Public Safety* notes that scarce resources can actually push law enforcement agencies towards designing more clearly focused and realistic offender re-entry efforts that preclude the discouragement attending overly ambitious or ill-defined efforts.

**III. Collaborating with Community Stakeholders**

Although every community stakeholder has a different role in relationship to the returning offender, the effectiveness of each in performing their role is increased as all work together. Working as a whole, law enforcement officers and their community

partners can extend a safety net of social services to the offender while enhancing public safety through coordinated surveillance. To this end, summit participants focused on strategies for forging and sustaining productive relationships between law enforcement and other community agencies. Their recommendations follow.

**8. Law enforcement agencies should forge collaborative relationships with a wide array of existing and new community stakeholders to promote offender re-entry efforts.**

The range of partners with whom law enforcement executives and their agencies may collaborate in offender re-entry efforts is extensive. When designing offender re-entry efforts, law enforcement executives should consider a broad array of possible partners, then ultimately select partners on the basis of community needs, community strengths, and the needs of returning offenders. A partial list of possible community partners might include the following:

- Prison staff/service providers
- Jail administrators
- Corrections officers
- Probation officers (federal, state, local)
- Parole officers (federal, state, local)
- Courts (judges, attorneys)
- Attorneys (US/district/state/county/city)
- Public defenders
- Drug courts
- Substance abuse services
- Mental health services
- Healthcare providers
- Faith-based organizations
- Food services
- Housing authorities
- Transportation services
- Education systems
- Life skills providers
- Workforce development services
- Business associations
- Employers
- Community leaders
- Victims associations
- Successfully reintegrated offenders
- Neighborhood representatives

While the list of potential partners is long, law enforcement executives should benefit from the knowledge that at least one particular partnership is established with regularity. Law enforcement agencies currently engaged in offender re-entry efforts regularly

partner with corrections departments. Research conducted by the IACP and BJA reveals that state departments of corrections actually are the lead agencies in 48% of the offender re-entry efforts in which law enforcement agencies participate. Additionally, the IACP/BJA research reveals that the presence of a police/corrections partnership is a common characteristic of offender re-entry efforts highly regarded by the National Governors Association's Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy.

**9. Law enforcement executives should identify existing offender re-entry efforts through which their agencies may productively collaborate with community stakeholders.**

Just as law enforcement executives should rely on existing partnerships, they should educate themselves regarding existing offender re-entry efforts. Community organizations that work with returning offenders have been developing offender re-entry efforts over the last decade. Law enforcement executives may find that their engagement in existing offender re-entry efforts will greatly benefit their own agencies, their community partners, and their communities. While engaging in existing offender re-entry efforts might free law enforcement executives from the imperative of designing an offender re-entry effort from the ground up, this engagement will still demand their active leadership. Law enforcement executives must ensure that their agency members may work within existing offender re-entry efforts in ways that complement and reinforce agency roles and rules.

**10. In the absence of existing offender re-entry efforts, law enforcement executives should initiate offender re-entry efforts through which their agencies may productively collaborate with community stakeholders.**

Law enforcement executives who do not find existing offender re-entry efforts that allow for the participation of their agency should initiate such efforts. As they do this, law enforcement executives should actively seek to collaborate with community stakeholders. Summit participants repeatedly emphasized the fact that offender re-entry efforts are necessarily collaborative. In fact, whether law enforcement executives lead their agencies into existing offender re-entry efforts or initiate new offender re-entry efforts, the earliest leadership challenges they confront may be those that arise as they work to establish relationships of trust and respect between their agencies and their community partners.

Recommendations 12 – 16 address the specific measures that law enforcement executives, their agencies, and their community partners should take in order to establish a firm collaborative foundation.

**11. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should establish collaborative relationships of trust and respect by educating each other regarding their distinctive missions and their resulting perspectives on offender re-entry.**

Law enforcement agencies and their community partners will necessarily approach offender re-entry efforts from different perspectives resulting from their distinctive missions. Offender re-entry efforts are often described as existing along a spectrum from enforcement to service delivery. Law enforcement agencies necessarily make their most important contributions in enforcement while many of their community partners make their most important contributions in the delivery of services. Regrettably, research by the IACP and BJA suggests that these differences present a challenge to over one third of law enforcement agencies currently participating in offender re-entry efforts. Thirty-five percent of these respondents reported that blurred agency missions and/or roles present an obstacle to collaboration.

While the roles that law enforcement agencies and their community partners assume will be different, these differences need not result in conflict. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should educate each other regarding their distinctive missions as well as the way in which these missions may merge productively together. It is critically important for all partners in an offender re-entry effort to recognize that work along the entire spectrum—from enforcement to service delivery—is performed most successfully when performed in partnership. For instance, a faith-based organization seeking to help returning offenders secure housing and find employment will succeed more readily to the extent that the surrounding community understands that the police are aware of the returning offenders' presence and will be providing enhanced surveillance.

As law enforcement agencies and their community partners educate each other regarding their differences, they will be able to bridge them. In *Prisoner Reentry and Community Policing: Strategies for Enhancing Public Safety*, the Urban Institute suggests that one technique for bridging differing agency missions is for law enforcement agencies and their community partners to adopt a shared mission that reinforces their individual obligations. Adopting a shared mission such as “enhancing public safety by increasing the prospects that released prisoners will lead lawful lives” will allow law enforcement agencies and their community partners to work towards a common goal through different but complementary means.

## **12. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should establish their individual roles and responsibilities in offender re-entry efforts.**

Law enforcement agencies and their community partners will also bridge differences by clearly defining their individual roles and responsibilities within the offender re-entry partnership. As each partner understands their own roles and responsibilities as well as the roles and responsibilities of the other partners, the partnership itself may flourish. Of course, the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement executives and officers will vary from agency to agency and from community to community. In *Prisoner Reentry and Community Policing: Strategies for Enhancing Public Safety*, the Urban Institute identifies several specific roles that law enforcement agencies currently engaged in offender re-entry efforts occupy. These include increasing surveillance, encouraging compliance, engaging the community, exchanging information and intelligence, connecting to social services, and assisting victims of crime. Law enforcement

executives, their agencies, and their community partners should work together to decide where their energy and resources are best expended.

**13. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should establish collaborative relationships of trust and respect by holding regularly scheduled meetings to discuss problems, refine offender re-entry efforts, and evaluate and improve the quality of their collaboration.**

Having established an understanding of their differing roles and responsibilities, law enforcement agencies and their community partners will still confront challenges to collaboration. Research by the IACP and BJA reveals that the most common obstacles that law enforcement agencies encounter in working with other agencies in offender re-entry efforts are difficulties in communicating and in information sharing. Forty-one percent of agencies that are involved in offender re-entry efforts and experience challenges to collaboration struggle with these specific challenges. Acknowledging that communication challenges are omnipresent, summit participants suggest that law enforcement agencies and their community partners establish patterns of effective communication as they begin their collaboration. Holding regular meetings for the purpose of allowing law enforcement agencies and community partners to discuss their problems, their challenges, and their strategies for improving not only their offender re-entry efforts but also the quality of their collaboration will go a long way toward addressing this common obstacle.

**14. Law enforcement agencies and their re-entry community partners should educate each other regarding the legal and professional standards that govern information sharing and data exchange and establish confidentiality guidelines in accordance with these legal and professional standards.**

One of the first issues over which law enforcement agencies and their community partners should communicate is information sharing. Information sharing between agencies will be critical to an effective offender re-entry effort. For instance, research by the IACP and BJA revealed that 86% of law enforcement agencies currently engaged in offender re-entry efforts receive notification from corrections departments regarding the release of offenders into their jurisdiction. The same research revealed that 55% of law enforcement agencies currently engaged in offender re-entry efforts share other relevant information regarding offenders with their community partners.

While sharing information is critical, it is also complicated. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners are rightly sensitive regarding what information is shared, with whom, and how. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners will succeed in sharing information effectively and appropriately to the extent that they educate each other regarding the legal and professional standards that must guide this practice. As law enforcement agencies and their community partners develop confidentiality guidelines, they will ensure not only that their practices occur within the law, but that information sharing that might have been prohibited only by agency culture or informal norms may be productively pursued.

Many law enforcement agencies currently involved in offender re-entry efforts have found information sharing so critical to their success that they have formalized their practices in a memorandum of understanding (MOU). MOUs ensure that the critical communication that occurs regarding information sharing is never lost. Detailing what information may be shared, with whom, and how in a single, shared document provides an invaluable guide for all participants in offender re-entry efforts.

**15. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should overcome technological and procedural obstacles to information sharing and data exchange.**

One result of communicating about information sharing practices and formalizing those practices in an MOU is the opportunity for agencies to determine what information is not being shared as a result of technological and procedural obstacles. Overcoming such obstacles can be as critical to a successful offender re-entry effort as abiding by confidentiality guidelines. Agencies should work together to ensure that information may be transmitted from various systems of varying levels of technological sophistication. Agencies should also work together to ensure that staff members in participating agencies who control the flow of information are aware of the significance of information sharing to offender re-entry efforts and are familiar with the terms of the MOU or other guidelines governing information sharing.

**IV. Designing Offender Re-Entry Efforts**

Whether law enforcement executives initiate offender re-entry efforts or engage in existing efforts and whether their agencies serve as lead agencies or as collaborative partners, all will confront the challenge of ensuring that they draw on the specific strengths of their agencies and communities to meet their specific needs. Successful offender re-entry efforts should be designed with the specific agency, community, and offender in mind. Law enforcement executives should understand the composition of their communities, their available resources, and the circumstances and challenges that confront returning offenders. With this information in hand, law enforcement executives will be better able to define their specific objectives, direct limited resources towards the most critical needs, and identify and tailor model offender re-entry efforts to their own circumstances. To these ends, summit participants offer the following recommendations.

**16. The IACP should maintain a list of existing offender re-entry efforts, toolkits developed from those efforts, and links to reports and research on offender re-entry efforts.**

While every law enforcement agency, the community it protects, and the returning offenders it seeks to integrate are unique, law enforcement agencies and their community partners will benefit from identifying the promising practices already emerging from existing offender re-entry efforts. Summit participants recommend that the IACP make two categories of critical information readily available on its website.

First, the IACP should maintain a list of existing offender re-entry efforts as well as toolkits developed from these efforts. Ready access to such information will ensure that law enforcement executives and their agencies will not confront design decisions unaided. Already, the IACP has such information to hand. For instance, the IACP may provide its members with access to the COPS/Urban Institute publication *Prisoner Reentry and Community Policing: Strategies for Enhancing Public Safety*. This publication offers not only contact information and detailed descriptions of promising practices emerging out of 15 existing offender re-entry efforts, but also a categorization of an additional 30 existing offender re-entry efforts according to the most common promising practices.

Second, the IACP should maintain links to up-to-date research and reports on offender re-entry efforts. Already, the IACP's own research with the BJA offers law enforcement executives an informative glance at the current state of offender re-entry practice. "Law Enforcement's Role in Offender Reentry: The Emerging Profile and State of Practice" not only identifies the most commonly pursued offender re-entry practices, the most commonly confronted challenges by law enforcement agencies working with community partners, and the most commonly utilized resources for sustaining such efforts, but it also provides a review of action and research. It investigates the work of the Office of Justice Program's Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services' Value Based Initiative, the Council of State Governments Re-Entry Policy Council, the National Governors Association's Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy, and the Urban Institute's Reentry Roundtable. The IACP should expand this review of research by maintaining links to all relevant offender re-entry research on its website. Ensuring law enforcement executives' ready access to research on offender re-entry efforts will offer executives the opportunity to implement not only promising practices, but also best practices as they emerge.

While staying abreast of work within other agencies and relevant research on existing offender re-entry efforts, law enforcement executives will best promote offender re-entry by becoming intimately familiar with the strengths, challenges, and needs of their own communities. Recommendations 18 – 20 address the particular strategies law enforcement executives might embrace to advance that familiarity.

**17. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should develop a community offender profile that identifies the types of offenders returning to their communities, the restrictions and conditions of the offenders' release, and the challenges confronting offenders during re-entry.**

In order to reintegrate returning offenders into the community and protect the community from those who will re-offend, law enforcement agencies and their community partners must know their offenders. Summit participants recommend the development of a community offender profile that captures at least three categories of information: the crimes returning offenders have committed, the challenges returning offenders will confront upon return, and the conditions restricting these offenders' release.



Categorizing offenders according to the type and frequency of the crimes they committed prior to their incarceration will allow law enforcement agencies and their community partners to identify and target their most problematic offender populations while protecting those portions of their communities most likely to be victimized. Such categories of offenders might include violent offenders, sex offenders, gang related offenders, weapons offenders, property offenders, repeat offenders, chronic offenders, and other categories of offenders.

Categorizing returning offenders according to crimes committed may alert law enforcement agencies and their community partners to many of the challenges that those offenders will confront. Still, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should seek an even deeper understanding of returning offenders' circumstances. A second system of categorization according to relevant demographics will be of real assistance to those designing offender re-entry efforts. Offenders' challenges may be understood according to various criteria including race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic status, education, mental health status, substance abuse status, etc. Categorizing offenders according to such demographics will heighten awareness of the particular barriers to reintegration that individual offenders confront. It will also allow offender re-entry efforts to connect individual offenders to critical social services with greater efficiency and efficacy.

The basic understanding of returning offenders developed through such systems of categorization should be supplemented by an awareness of the restrictions and conditions of each returning offenders' release. At a most fundamental level, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should know the release dates and times of individual offenders. This information will allow law enforcement agencies and their community partners to connect the returning offender to critical social services in a timely manner, plan for increased surveillance, and, as needed, notify the public. It is important that law enforcement agencies and their community partners know the release dates and times not only of individuals who will be on probation or parole, but also of the individual offenders who return to their communities with no restrictions or conditions. Many offenders released into communities without the requirement to maintain contact with a parole or probation officer may be in the greatest need of assistance in connecting with critical social services. Law enforcement agencies and community partners currently involved in offender re-entry efforts already recognize the critical importance of such basic information. Research by the IACP and BJA reveals that 86% of law enforcement agencies currently involved in offender re-entry receive notification prior to the release of an offender to their jurisdiction.

**18. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should develop a community place profile that identifies where crimes occur and what characteristics of their communities may contribute to recidivism.**

In addition to knowing their offenders, law enforcement agencies and their community partners must understand where and how crimes occur in their communities. Every crime occurs in a certain place and under certain circumstances. Understanding the nature of

these places and circumstances will enable law enforcement agencies and their community partners to design offender re-entry efforts that draw on existing strengths while mitigating against the specific challenges their communities confront.

Effective policing has long relied on a place-based approach to crime. Law enforcement participation in offender re-entry efforts should be no different. In fact, the COPS/Urban Institute publication, *Prisoner Reentry and Community Policing: Strategies for Enhancing Public Safety*, argues that offender re-entry efforts should, much like, community-oriented policing and problem-oriented policing projects, adopt a place-based approach. Summit participants recommend that law enforcement agencies and their community partners develop a community place profile to map criminal activity in relationship to law enforcement presence, the availability of social services, and other relevant factors. As law enforcement agencies and their community partners come to understand the places of their community, they will better know how to direct their resources—from redrawing a beat to establishing an offender re-entry center in a particularly stressed neighborhood.

**19. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should identify community resources available for offender re-entry efforts.**

There is no better way for law enforcement agencies and their community partners to respond to an intimate knowledge of their particular returning offenders and the places to which they will return than an equally thorough knowledge of the resources that the community possesses to facilitate return. A community's resources are vastly greater than its sources of financial funding. These resources include its members, such as elected leaders, social service providers, volunteers, family members and friends of victims and offenders; its structures, including community centers, civic and faith-based organizations, schools, businesses, and churches; and its assets, such as financial funds, in-kind funds, and volunteer hours. As law enforcement agencies and their community partners think broadly about their community resources, they will discover unexpected wealth and, as a result, be positioned to design offender re-entry efforts particularly positioned to draw on their communities' strengths.

**20. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should define reasonable and realistic objectives for their offender re-entry efforts, and establish an organizational structure and operating guidelines that will enable them to achieve their objectives.**

With the needs, challenges, and resources of their particular communities in mind, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should embrace realistic goals. Too often, communities respond to the critical need for offender re-entry efforts by attempting to accomplish everything immediately. As a result, they do little well and occasionally fail at all they attempt as a result of exhausting their energy or resources. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should define reasonable and realistic objectives recognizing that success on a limited scale encourages community support while failure on a grand scale erodes it. Reasonable and realistic objectives are

best pursued within a suitable organizational structure complete with operating guidelines. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners will invest an enormous amount of effort into coming to know their communities' strengths and challenges and designing offender re-entry efforts to draw on the former in order to address the latter. They should ensure that this knowledge and the strategic use of it are not lost as those who participated in the initial design of offender re-entry efforts move on. Codifying this knowledge and know-how in suitable organizational structures and operating guidelines will ensure that the efforts to tailor offender re-entry efforts to the specific community won't be lost even after those who design the efforts are no longer involved.

**21. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should solicit the input of community members throughout the design and implementation of offender re-entry efforts.**

As the summit recommendations in this segment suggest, the work of designing effective offender re-entry efforts depends on the willingness of law enforcement agencies and their community partners to educate themselves and each other regarding the needs, challenges, and resources of their communities and then to respond realistically and strategically to the understanding they gain. The success of law enforcement agencies and their community partners will be greatly enhanced by soliciting the input of community members throughout this design process. Community members—whether elected leaders, social service providers, volunteers in faith-based initiatives, victims, returning offenders, or simply a neighbor of one of these—are frequently underutilized experts on their communities. Consciously creating forums through which to solicit input and consult with community members will enhance the effectiveness of offender re-entry efforts, not only by ensuring a sound design, but by ensuring on-going support.

**V. Training Agencies & Community Partners**

Having dedicated substantial time and energy to designing offender re-entry efforts that are agency, community, and offender specific, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should reinforce those efforts through tailored training. While such training should thoroughly familiarize each individual with their responsibilities within their own agency and the broader partnership, it should not stop here. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should utilize training to convey the critical importance of offender re-entry work, to build support for offender re-entry partnerships, and to reinforce the specific roles and responsibilities that each agency assumes within these partnerships.

**22. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should develop and deliver training tailored to their specific offender re-entry efforts.**

Just as offender re-entry efforts should be tailored to the needs, challenges, and resources of a particular community, offender re-entry training, too, must be tailored to these

specifics. To this end, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should use their training to familiarize each individual with the community offender profile, the community place profile, and the community resources that have shaped the overall offender re-entry effort. As they do so, law enforcement agencies and their community partners will build support within their own organizations for the objectives they have identified and for the organizational structure and operating guidelines they have designed to achieve these objectives.

**23. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should offer cross-training so that individuals from different agencies understand their complementary responsibilities.**

While training must be designed to instruct individuals in their specific responsibilities, it should also familiarize individuals with the complementary responsibilities of those working in other agencies and organizations. To the extent that law enforcement agencies and their community partners can promote understanding of how every individual effort contributes to the success of the whole, they will cultivate support for the offender re-entry work as well as the partnerships on which it depends.

The experience of law enforcement agencies already engaged in offender re-entry efforts suggests the critical need for such cross-training. As noted in the discussion on collaboration between community stakeholders, research conducted by the IACP and BJA revealed that roughly 30% of the law enforcement agencies engaged in offender re-entry work confront challenges in working with other agencies. Of these, 35% felt that blurred agency missions and/or roles contributed to their difficulties.

Such results are not surprising. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners occupy distinct roles in regard to returning offenders. Law enforcement agencies must honor their obligation to prevent crime and enhance public safety while social service providers must seek to reintegrate returning offenders through facilitating offenders' access to housing, employment and education. These distinct obligations necessarily result in differing roles and even attitudes towards returning offenders. As law enforcement personnel and social service providers attempt to work together, these differences can cause friction.

Effective cross-training can prevent such friction. Ideally, cross-training will address not only potential or actual incidents of friction, but the root causes of this friction. In fact, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should be prepared to overcome histories of mistrust and misperception. In its work on police-corrections partnerships, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) recommends that partnering agencies dedicate time to discussing sources of friction in order to overcome mistrust and misperception. Cross-training can provide an ideal forum for such discussion. Allowing law enforcement personnel and their community counterparts to confront and bridge differences in productive ways prior to engaging in shared offender re-entry efforts can go a long way toward ensuring the success of those efforts.

#### **24. Law enforcement executives should ensure that all training for offender re-entry efforts reinforces agency policies.**

While cross-training offers law enforcement agencies and their community partners an early opportunity to break down the mistrust and misperception that may exist between them, all training must reinforce their individual policies and procedures. Offender re-entry partnerships succeed as a result of agencies' commitments to performing their specific responsibilities in accordance with established policies. Offender re-entry efforts should never ask law enforcement officers to violate policy or ask partnering organizations to set aside their own aims or obligations. Instead, offender re-entry efforts should succeed as a result of each individual's commitment to upholding the standards of their respective agencies within the collaborative relationship.

Law enforcement executives bear the responsibility for ensuring that offender re-entry training reinforces these ideals, thus averting potential problems. Research by the NIJ investigates the problems that may arise in police-corrections partnerships as individuals allow the partnership to blur their agency-specific responsibilities. For instance, the NIJ warns against partnerships in which correctional agencies devalue the provision of critical social services—services for which they are solely responsible—as a result of law enforcement's emphasis on crime deterrence. Similarly, the NIJ warns against partnerships in which police officers shirk the legal standards governing searches by relying on corrections officers' rights to search offenders' residences during joint curfew checks. Law enforcement executives and their community partners may prevent such problems by ensuring that offender re-entry training reinforces each agency's legal and procedural standards.

### **VI. Educating the Public**

Law enforcement agencies and their community partners bear the responsibility not only for training their personnel, but for educating the public. These responsibilities share two notable similarities. First, partnering agencies must familiarize the public, much like their personnel, with the strengths, challenges, and resources of their particular communities. For instance, the public must understand the challenges that their own communities confront regarding returning offenders in order to feel a commitment to making offender re-entry efforts succeed. Second, the public, much like participating personnel, may have an imperfect understanding of the roles partnering agencies will assume in offender re-entry efforts. For instance, like participating personnel, the public may require assurances that law enforcement and their community partners will persist in fulfilling their individual obligations, but will do so even more effectively as a result of collaboration.

Summit participants, recognizing the importance of educating the public, recommend that law enforcement agencies and their community partners be supported in this effort by national law enforcement organizations. Recommendations directed both towards national organizations and individual law enforcement agencies follow.

**25. The IACP and COPS should develop a public relations campaign to promote offender re-entry efforts on a national level.**

While law enforcement agencies and their community partners must educate their own citizens regarding the offender re-entry challenges that their particular communities confront, these efforts will be enhanced to the extent that national law enforcement organizations educate the general public regarding the scope of the problem and the critical importance of law enforcement participation in the solution. To this end, summit participants recommend that the IACP and COPS develop a public relations campaign to promote offender re-entry efforts nationwide.

First, this public relations campaign should communicate the widespread, costly, and growing challenge of offender re-entry. The general public needs to understand that every community feels the effects of returning offenders. While particular neighborhoods are harder hit than others, the challenges of offender re-entry are widespread. Certainly, every community shares in the costs. Over the last twenty years, corrections costs have risen from \$9 to \$60 billion. Every community is affected, as well, by the fact that the number of returning offenders is rising dramatically. Federal and state prisons will release roughly 650,000 offenders this year while jails will release even greater numbers. Because every community confronts challenges as a result of returning offenders, every community must work towards a solution.

In addition to educating the public regarding the scope of the offender re-entry challenges, the IACP and COPS should use their public relations campaign to communicate the critical importance of law enforcement involvement in the solution. Law enforcement's obligation to protect the public makes their involvement in offender re-entry efforts not only natural but necessary. Of the roughly 650,000 offenders returning from state and federal prisons this year, two-thirds are likely to be rearrested within the next three years. Law enforcement's responsibility for ensuring public safety dictates their increased involvement with a population so likely to commit crime. This public relations campaign should reverse the current reality in which, regrettably, research by the IACP and BJA reveals that law enforcement agency involvement in offender re-entry efforts is more theoretical than actual and that law enforcement agencies are only infrequently involved in the design of offender re-entry efforts. The IACP/COPS public relations campaign should raise awareness regarding the need for police participation in offender re-entry efforts—from its earliest planning to its complete implementation.

Finally, this public relations campaign should address the public's often conflicted attitudes regarding returning offenders and, by extension, offender re-entry efforts. Offender re-entry efforts rely on the collaboration of agencies that approach returning offenders from remarkably distinct perspectives. While law enforcement agencies rightly focus on returning offenders' likelihood to re-offend, their community partners focus instead on returning offenders' hopes and desires to reintegrate into their communities. The IACP and COPS public relations campaign should focus on the fact that these

differing perspectives can work together for the public good. Effective offender re-entry efforts aid and encourage returning offenders—both through enhanced surveillance and the provision of services—to lead lawful lives. The IACP and COPS public relations campaign should emphasize the fact that law enforcement participation in offender re-entry efforts ensures that these vital collaborative efforts are not soft on crime but designed to reduce crime and thus enhance public safety.

**26. The IACP and COPS should enlist an appropriate spokesperson to promote offender re-entry efforts on a national level.**

Summit participants recommend that the IACP and COPS enlist a spokesperson to promote this public relations message who would speak with authority not only to the scope of the problem, the importance of offender re-entry efforts as a solution, and the importance of law enforcement participation in these efforts, but also to the anxieties that the public feels regarding returning offenders. Anxieties about returning offenders—both among the law enforcement personnel charged with protecting the public from re-offense and among the public obligated to reintegrate these offenders—run high. As a result, law enforcement participation in offender re-entry efforts is misunderstood and mistrusted.

As a result, the IACP and COPS should enlist a spokesperson who can make the clear and compelling argument that collaborative efforts to reintegrate offenders into communities—whether this be the result of law enforcement agencies who primarily encourage compliance and enhance surveillance or the work of their community partners who primarily facilitate employment or secure counseling—are pursued with the goal of enhancing public safety and reducing crime. This spokesperson should convincingly communicate the fact that offender re-entry efforts are not soft on crime but are, in fact, crime reduction efforts.

**27. The IACP should engage the National Center for Victims of Crimes and other victims' associations to promote offender re-entry efforts on a national level.**

No spokesperson or spokespersons speak with more authority regarding the critical importance of offender re-entry efforts as crime reduction efforts than victims. Victims' experiences allow them to speak authoritatively to the need for law enforcement officers who will promote compliance among returning offenders and enhance surveillance of these individuals. Victims' experiences also allow them to speak authoritatively to the importance and rightness of facilitating returning offenders' access to critical services such as education, employment, housing, medical care, mental health services, and counseling. Victims' support of these latter measures sends the message that offenders will inevitably return to our communities and that law enforcement agencies and their community partners who collaborate to ease the reintegration of these offenders are, in fact, acting for our enhanced safety. In short, victims' support of offender re-entry efforts offers the most convincing proof that these efforts are not soft on crime, but crime reduction efforts.

**28. Law enforcement executives and their community partners should survey public opinion in order to determine how to respond to community concerns regarding offender re-entry efforts.**

While summit participants recommend the design of a national public relations campaign as described, they recommend that, on the agency level, law enforcement executives and their community partners survey public opinion in order to understand and respond to their communities' specific concerns. Law enforcement executives and their community partners may choose, as a result of public opinion, to respond to concerns about specific types of offenders, specific crime sites in the neighborhood, or specific service offerings that seem insufficient. Whatever the concerns of particular communities may be, summit participants expressed the conviction that, in order to educate the public regarding offender re-entry efforts, law enforcement executives and their community partners must first educate themselves regarding these concerns.

**29. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should create a variety of ways in which to allow the public to comment on offender re-entry efforts.**

To the end of educating themselves regarding the concerns of their communities and then to act on these concerns during the design and implementation of offender re-entry efforts, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should make it easy for the public to express their insights. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should solicit community input through town hall meetings, neighborhood gatherings, and other public forums during the design of offender re-entry efforts, during the implementation of these efforts, and during critical phases of evaluation and review.

**30. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should use a wide variety of forums to educate the public regarding offender re-entry efforts.**

In turn, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should rely on similar forums to educate the public regarding their progress in designing and implementing offender re-entry efforts. Agency events, agency newsletters, local media outlets, town hall meetings, and neighborhood gatherings may provide appropriate forums in which to demonstrate their progress in designing offender re-entry efforts as well as the results of implementation and, later, evaluation of these efforts.

**31. Law enforcement executives and their community partners should identify appropriate community spokespersons to promote offender re-entry efforts.**

As law enforcement executives and their community partners design and implement offender re-entry efforts that respond to the particular challenges and concerns of their communities, they should enlist appropriate community spokespersons to promote these efforts. These spokespersons, like those enlisted by the IACP and COPS on a national level, should speak authoritatively to the scope of offender re-entry challenges, to the need for law enforcement participation in the solution to these challenges, and to the fact



that law enforcement and community collaboration on behalf of reintegrating returning offenders is designed to enhance public safety and reduce crime.

Of course, law enforcement executives and their community partners may choose to enlist multiple spokespersons in order to speak authoritatively to all dimensions of offender re-entry and to all segments of the community. Spokespersons might include elected officials, law enforcement leaders, leaders of community organizations, leaders of faith-based initiatives, victims, victims' advocates, reintegrated offenders, youth advocates, volunteers, and prominent community members.

**32. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should ensure that their offender re-entry efforts are fair and transparent and that all community stakeholders, including former prisoners, perceive them to be so.**

While the ongoing process of soliciting input from community members and, in turn, educating their community members regarding offender re-entry efforts should result in efforts that are fair and transparent, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should hold fairness and transparency—as well as the perception of fairness and transparency on the part of community members—as distinct goals to be achieved in their work on offender re-entry. The public should feel that their concerns have been heard and addressed through the design and implementation of offender re-entry efforts. The public should also feel that, through those efforts, law enforcement agencies and their community partners uphold their respective legal and professional standards, treat all community members with fairness and respect, and seek to make their policies and procedures readily understandable. As a result, public support of offender re-entry efforts will grow.

**VII. Securing Public Support**

Law enforcement agencies and their community partners require public support in order for their offender re-entry efforts to succeed. As noted, they will garner this support as they work to educate themselves regarding the particular concerns of their communities, as they design offender re-entry efforts in response to these concerns, as they persist in soliciting input from the public and educating the public regarding their offender re-entry efforts through the implementation of these efforts, and as they ensure that their offender re-entry efforts are fair and transparent. However, summit participants—fully aware of the public's conflicted attitudes regarding returning offenders and, by extension, offender re-entry efforts—offer here a handful of recommendations regarding additional actions that law enforcement agencies and their community partners may take to shore up public support.

**33. Law enforcement executives should emphasize the fact that offender re-entry efforts are designed to reduce crime and enhance public safety.**

Arguably, the fact that offender re-entry efforts are designed to reduce crime and enhance public safety should be self-evidently true. Summit participants recognize, however, that offender re-entry efforts are collaborative efforts that involve service provision as well as enforcement and that this breadth of activity allows for law enforcement agencies and their community partners to talk about these efforts in various and seemingly conflicting ways. While law enforcement agencies and their community partners regularly emphasize the goals of reducing crime and enhancing public safety when discussing enforcement, they may emphasize other goals when discussing service delivery. In these discussions, emphases on restoring offenders' dignity and hope, strengthening families and communities, and simply doing the right thing may draw attention away from crime reduction and public safety.

Law enforcement executives should not allow their attention to drift from crime reduction and enhanced public safety. While this emphasis need not minimize the importance of other objectives, it should clarify that crime reduction and enhanced public safety are law enforcement agencies' primary goals. These are the goals that communities expect—and deserve—to have law enforcement agencies strive to deliver. As a result, law enforcement executives who maintain this clear-eyed focus will strengthen public support for law enforcement participation in offender re-entry efforts.

**34. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should discuss the costs of offender re-entry efforts within the context of the much greater costs of recidivism.**

While law enforcement agencies and their community partners should engage in cost and benefit analyses during the development of offender re-entry efforts to ensure that their efforts are sustainable, summit participants recommend that when discussing these analyses with the public, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should frame offender re-entry costs within the much greater costs of recidivism. For instance, when calculating the costs of the enhanced surveillance of returning offenders, law enforcement agencies should itemize the costs that the community would incur if, in the absence of such surveillance, the returning offender re-offends. While law enforcement agencies should familiarize the public with the staggering \$60 billion in annual corrections costs that all communities incur, they should note that these costs do not include costs to victims, costs of prosecution, or the costs to communities in lost income or increased social services when an incarcerated offender leaves behind dependents. Alerting the public to these often unconsidered costs may secure public support for offender re-entry efforts as these efforts suddenly seem affordable.

**35. Law enforcement executives should invite law enforcement executives from agencies that have developed successful offender re-entry efforts to share their experiences with the agency and community.**

Law enforcement executives should secure public support by hosting law enforcement executives from agencies that have developed successful offender re-entry efforts to share those success stories. Highlighting other agencies' successes may be a critical tool for securing public support at critical stages of offender re-entry development including design and implementation of such efforts. Law enforcement executives may productively rely on others' successes in order to build support for undertaking offender re-entry effort design, for implementing a particular tool or technique that has succeeded elsewhere, for securing funding, or for withstanding the political fallout following an incident in which a returning offender re-offends and erodes public support for offender re-entry efforts.

**36. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should highlight the successes of their own offender re-entry efforts.**

Just as law enforcement executives may secure support by publicizing the successes of other agencies, they should secure support by publicizing their own successes. Law enforcement executives will do this most effectively to the extent that they and their community partners recognize that success comes in various forms. Certainly, law enforcement agencies should identify and share successes such as reductions in overall crime, reductions in specific crimes, and reductions of crime at specific sites. However, law enforcement agencies should also work with their community partners to highlight successes such as increases in the number of returning offenders who complete GEDs or other educational programs, increases in the number of returning offenders who hold steady employment, and increases in the number of returning offenders who complete substance abuse treatment programs.

Law enforcement agencies may discover that publicizing their successes is necessary not only to secure public support, but to promote an accurate understanding of their offender re-entry efforts. The tendency of the media to highlight negative events is such that if law enforcement executives remain silent about their successes, the public may come to the conclusion that offender re-entry efforts are, in fact, failing. Isolated incidents—thoroughly investigated in the evening news—in which returning offenders re-offend should not be the only exposure that the public has to offender re-entry results.

**37. Law enforcement executives and their community partners should have a detailed plan for handling critical incidents that might erode public support for offender re-entry efforts.**

Summit participants recommend that law enforcement executives and their community partners work with the IACP and COPS' model response to develop a tailored plan for handling such critical incidents in their own communities. This plan should be in place long before an incident that might erode public support for offender re-entry efforts occurs. In addition to drawing on the work of the IACP and COPS in their model response, law enforcement executives may draw, as well, on their own work of systematically identifying and addressing the specific challenges their own communities confront. In the aftermath of critical incidents, law enforcement executives and their

community partners should be prepared to discuss the preventative measures their offender re-entry efforts already employ as well as ways in which these preventative measures might be enhanced.

### **VIII. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Offender Re-Entry Efforts**

While the IACP, COPS, and summit participants unhesitatingly recommend that every agency immediately engage in offender re-entry efforts, they recognize that agencies are now relying on promising offender re-entry practices. Only the on-going evaluation of existing and emerging efforts will reveal promising practices. Of course, the IACP, COPS, and summit participants are keenly interested in identifying promising practices. They, like the law enforcement agencies and community partners who design offender re-entry efforts and work hard for their success, are committed to ensuring that such investments are well rewarded. To this end, summit participants recommend that law enforcement agencies and their community partners pursue evaluation of offender re-entry efforts. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should not delay evaluation of offender re-entry efforts to some distant end point, but evaluate all along the way. Recognizing the critical importance of evaluation to the emergence of best offender re-entry practices, summit participants recommend that federal law enforcement organizations support law enforcement agencies and their community partners in the work of evaluating offender re-entry efforts.

**38. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should establish measures of effectiveness as well as a timeline for evaluation during the initial design of their offender re-entry efforts.**

Evaluating the effectiveness of offender re-entry efforts is of such important that law enforcement agencies and their community partners should plan for it early, even while designing their offender re-entry efforts. During this early planning, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should determine what evaluation measures will be of greatest use and what data they must collect. All data required for evaluation should be covered in interagency data sharing agreements. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should also establish a timeline for evaluation during their design of offender re-entry efforts. Adhering to this timeline once offender re-entry efforts are implemented in their communities will keep law enforcement agencies and their community partners focused on their own success.

**39. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should establish ultimate measures of effectiveness including crime reduction measures such as recidivism, reconviction, rearrest, reincarceration, victimization, etc.**

Offender re-entry efforts are designed to reduce crime and enhance public safety. As a result, ultimate measures of the effectiveness of offender re-entry efforts should include crime reduction measures such as recidivism, reconviction, rearrest, reincarceration, and

victimization. As law enforcement agencies and their community partners select the particular measures by which to determine the success of their offender re-entry efforts, they should define these measures carefully. Recidivism, in particular, requires careful definition. In their 2002 study of returning offenders, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) evaluated multiple measures of recidivism. The BJS defined recidivism in terms of rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration. They also differentiated between the seriousness of returning offenders' offenses—from felonies and serious misdemeanors to technical violations of the conditions of their release—as well as tracking the time that passed between release and rearrest. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should define recidivism and other such measures carefully in order to understand their own effectiveness in addressing the particular challenges that their communities confront as well as to share their evaluation results productively with the public and other interested agencies and organizations.

**40. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should establish intermediate measures of effectiveness including social measures such as continuous employment, educational achievements, residential stability, child support payments, etc.**

While measures of crime reduction will be critically important to determining the ultimate effectiveness of offender re-entry efforts, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should engage in intermediate evaluations that yield measures of effectiveness long before ultimate measures are obtainable. Such intermediate measures of effectiveness should include those that determine the extent to which returning offenders are being reintegrated into the community. Measuring returning offenders' continuous employment, educational achievements, residential stability, child support payments, and the like is useful in determining the effectiveness of offender re-entry efforts at urging returning offenders towards law-abiding lives. Intermediate measures also allow law enforcement agencies and their community partners to determine which dimensions of their efforts are most effective. Finally, such measures are of real interest to any community concerned with its overall health.

**41. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should establish measures of effectiveness relating to program operation including participation, collaboration, and internal organizational change.**

Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should also establish internal measures of effectiveness relating to program operation. Determining the effectiveness of the interagency collaborations on which offender re-entry efforts depend is a critical measure of offender re-entry progress and sustainability. Measures of agency participation, data and information sharing, and comprehension of individual and interagency roles and responsibilities will be important to partnering agencies as they seek to enhance their collaboration.

**42. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should utilize their evaluation results to refine their offender re-entry efforts.**

Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should utilize the results of all evaluation measures—ultimate, intermediate, and internal—to refine their offender re-entry efforts. Responding to internal and intermediate results will allow partnering agencies to fine tune their efforts long before ultimate measures become available. Whether this fine-tuning involves the reallocation of resources, the enhanced emphasis upon a particular tool or technique, or the expansion of a specific interagency collaboration, law enforcement agencies and their community partners will enhance their overall success by responding to the results of ongoing evaluation.

**43. The Department of Justice (DOJ) should help define measures of effectiveness, conduct independent evaluations of offender re-entry efforts and disseminate the results of these evaluations to law enforcement agencies.**

Summit participants recommend that the Department of Justice (DOJ) conduct its own analysis of offender re-entry efforts in order to share the lessons learned from long-standing and successful efforts with those agencies that are now designing and implementing efforts of their own. In issuing this recommendation, summit participants only echo the provisions of the Second Chance Act. This act not only establishes a Reentry Center within the DOJ to collect data in offender reentry from demonstration grantees and other agencies and organizations, but also charges the Reentry Center with determining promising practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating knowledge to states and partnering agencies. Summit participants recommend that the DOJ support individual agencies in the evaluation of their offender re-entry efforts in order to move all agencies from promising practices to best practices in offender re-entry.

**44. The IACP should make the results of evaluations of offender re-entry efforts available to its members.**

While individual law enforcement agencies and the DOJ should evaluate the effectiveness of offender re-entry efforts, summit participants recommend that the IACP serve as a clearinghouse for the results of these evaluations. Collecting these results and allowing individual law enforcement agencies to access these results will enable agencies to analyze their own evaluation results within the context of others' results and more move quickly toward identifying and implementing best offender re-entry practices.

**45. Law enforcement agencies and their community partners should share the results of their evaluations with their communities.**

Of course, the public should also be kept apprised of the results of evaluations of offender re-entry efforts. The public is necessarily a partner to offender re-entry efforts. As a result, law enforcement agencies and their community partners should consider releasing evaluation results to be an essential step in sustaining fair and transparent offender re-entry efforts and in securing public support for these efforts. Of course, law enforcement

agencies and their community partners should plan for the release of evaluation results to the public. Partnering agencies must abide by all existing confidentiality and data sharing agreements when determining what data may be released. Partnering agencies should also be prepared to supplement each release of evaluation results with a detailed plan for acting on those results in ways that will garner public support.

## **IX. Promoting Promising Practices**

As the results of evaluations of offender re-entry efforts become available, law enforcement agencies and their community partners, in partnership with federal law enforcement agencies, will identify promising practices. With these promising practices will come the possibility that through their efforts law enforcement agencies and their community partners can reduce crime, enhance public safety, restore dignity to returning offenders, and strengthen their communities. In this concluding section, summit participants offer recommendations for promoting promising practices once those practices emerge.

### **46. The IACP and the DOJ should develop a model offender re-entry program.**

While summit participants have charged the IACP with maintaining a list of existing offender re-entry efforts and resulting toolkits, up-to-date research on offender re-entry, and evaluation results, and have charged the DOJ with conducting research and distributing evaluation results, summit participants recommend that, once best offender re-entry practices emerge, the IACP and DOJ move far beyond these duties to develop a model offender re-entry program. This model program should incorporate promising practices at every step of offender re-entry implementation from securing funding to establishing collaborative relationships to implementing particular tools and techniques. This model offender re-entry program should be adaptable so that agencies may select among promising practices in addressing the particular challenges of their communities that are the result of population, demographics, or offender types.

### **47. The IACP, the DOJ, and the John Jay School of Criminal Justice should develop training materials for law enforcement agencies and their community partners seeking to establish model offender re-entry programs.**

Just as the IACP and DOJ should develop a model offender re-entry program once promising practices emerge, summit participants recommend that they, in collaboration with the John Jay School of Criminal Justice, design training materials so that law enforcement agencies and their community partners may implement the model program. These training materials, like the model program, should be tailored to agencies and communities that differ in population, demographics, or offender types.

**48. Police academies and in-service training should require offender re-entry training.**

Once the model offender re-entry program and training materials are available, offender re-entry training for law enforcement personnel should become standard. Law enforcement personnel should receive offender re-entry training in police academies and again in agency in-service training. Law enforcement executives should make offender re-entry training an agency priority.

**49. The Council of State Governments' Re-Entry Policy Council should continue its work with IACP and other law enforcement associations to assist state government leaders, including corrections directors and parole boards, to develop comprehensive prisoner re-entry approaches that facilitate information- and resource-sharing with local law enforcement.**

Offender re-entry programs should be a priority for legislators and other policymakers at the state level. Leadership and support by state officials can be critical to the success of reentry programs. The Council of State Governments' Re-Entry Policy Council should continue its work engaging and building consensus among legislators, state corrections directors, law enforcement representatives, and other key elected and appointed officials to ensure that training, assessment tools, and other re-entry resources reflect the needs of policing professionals across the nation.

**50. CALEA should consider recognition of offender re-entry efforts as part of its accreditation process.**

As a result of the availability of a model offender re-entry program and related training materials, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) should establish offender re-entry efforts as part of its accreditation standards. CALEA's action in this regard would not only recommend, as the IACP, COPS, and summit participants unhesitatingly do now, that law enforcement agencies engage in offender re-entry efforts, but would make law enforcement engagement in offender re-entry an imperative.

**SUMMIT ACTION AGENDA**

Upon the publication and dissemination of this report, summit participants recommend that five essential steps serve as an action agenda to enable and encourage the full engagement of law enforcement agencies and their community partners in offender re-entry efforts.

1. The IACP, in collaboration with the NSA, PERF, NOBLE, NAPO, COPS and other DOJ and OJP agencies as appropriate, should produce a joint statement of support for law enforcement agency engagement in offender re-entry efforts.



2. The Federal Government should fully fund the Second Chance Act.
3. The IACP should establish an offender re-entry resources link on its website including the joint statement of support, funding sources, a list of existing offender re-entry efforts and resulting toolkits, up-to-date research, and evaluation results.
4. Law enforcement executives and their community partners should engage their agencies in collaborative offender re-entry efforts.
5. The DOJ and individual law enforcement agencies should undertake evaluation of existing offender re-entry efforts.

## **SUMMIT PLANNING & PROCEEDINGS**

Since 1994, the IACP has hosted annual national policy summits focusing on critical issues confronting law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. Each summit brings together law enforcement executives, community leaders, policy experts, scholars, and other stakeholders to share information, deliberate and discuss, and draft recommendations that form the basis of a national law enforcement policy on a select issue. In past years, this summit series has offered recommendations on the following issues:

- 1994 Violence in the United States
- 1995 Murder in America
- 1996 Youth Violence
- 1997 Family Violence: Breaking the Cycle for Children Who Witness
- 1998 Hate Crime in America
- 1999 What do Victims Want?: Effective Strategies to Achieve Justice for Victims of Crime
- 2000 Improving Safety in Indian Country
- 2001 Building Partnerships that Protect Our Children
- 2002 Criminal Intelligence Sharing: Overcoming Barriers to Enhance Domestic Security
- 2003 DNA Evidence: Enhancing Law Enforcement's Impact From Crime Scene to Courtroom and Beyond
- 2004 Building Private Security/Public Policing Partnerships to Prevent and Respond to Terrorism and Public Disorder
- 2005 National Leadership Summit

Each summit has resulted in a set of policy recommendations. Published in a summit report, these recommendations have been widely distributed to participants, law enforcement, the public, and the media. The response has been very positive. In many instances, summit recommendations have served as a guide for program improvement in communities throughout the United States.

The decision to focus the 2006 IACP/COPS national policy summit on offender re-entry was the result of a growing awareness within the IACP and COPS of the need for a national policy to guide law enforcement's engagement in offender re-entry efforts. The IACP and COPS understand the critical role that law enforcement executives and their agencies can assume in offender re-entry efforts. Since 2003, COPS has invested over \$3.5 million in offender re-entry efforts. Specifically, COPS, through its Value-Based Reentry Initiative (VBRI), has funded five model programs that may be replicated by law enforcement agencies and their community partners across the country. COPS has also supported the partnership of the Council of State Governments (CSG) and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) on the Re-Entry Policy Council (RPC) to promote law enforcement involvement in offender re-entry efforts. Finally, COPS has partnered with the Urban Institute (UI), the Council of State and Local Governments (CSG), and the IACP to fund a reentry guide, a reentry toolkit, and the 2006 IACP/COPS national policy summit.

These efforts reflect the shared concern on the part of the IACP and COPS that law enforcement executives and agencies are not as centrally or strategically engaged in offender re-entry efforts as they ought to be. No community stakeholder has a more compelling interest in preventing recidivism than law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement agencies' primary responsibility is to protect their communities. Returning offenders—arrested at 30 to 45 times the rate of the general public—can hinder law enforcement's efforts to fulfill this responsibility. Engaging returning offenders through re-entry efforts increases the chances that offenders will themselves engage as produce and law-abiding member of the community, thereby reducing recidivism. Regrettably, research performed in partnership between the IACP and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) reveals that a majority of law enforcement agencies do not participate in offender re-entry efforts.

These summit recommendations establish the imperative for law enforcement executives and their agencies to become involved in offender re-entry efforts and guide that involvement—from offering suggestions on collaborating with community stakeholders to managing political challenges to measuring the effectiveness of specific efforts. The value of these recommendations—like the value of earlier summit recommendations—is the result, in large part, of the well-tested, deliberative process in which experts from various disciplines engage during the IACP/COPS national policy summit.

At the 2006 summit, participants were prepared for the process through introductory remarks from the president of the IACP, the deputy director of the COPS Office, and the director of the Department of Justice Task Force for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. Summit participants then heard a keynote address, delivered by a past commissioner from the U.S. Parole Commission, and a panel presentation, featuring law enforcement executives, a corrections officer, and the leader of a faith-based initiative, on the challenges confronting law enforcement agencies and the community partners who engage in offender re-entry efforts.

With this preparatory information and a wealth of individual expertise, summit participants separated into focus groups to tackle the particular challenges confronting law enforcement executives and their agencies as they engage in offender re-entry efforts. These focus groups worked throughout the day—sharing ideas, deliberating, and synthesizing their differing viewpoints—then met again the following morning in order to frame specific recommendations. Each focus group then presented its recommendations in a concluding plenary session, thus offering all participants an opportunity to comment on, critique, and refine the emerging national policy. Several weeks following the summit, each participant had a final opportunity to review the recommendations in writing. As a result, these summit recommendations are the result of a genuine and energetic collaboration of experts that should facilitate the strategic engagement and leadership of law enforcement in offender re-entry efforts, ultimately reducing recidivism and victimization while enhancing public safety.

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