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Pennsylvania DOC Launches Interactive Map to Connect Individuals to Reentry Services

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By Mai P. Tran, Program Associate

http://www.cor.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx#.VGy-jvTF_Yk People returning home from prison in Pennsylvania have a new resource to help them find the reentry services they need throughout the state's 67 counties. The Interactive Reentry Services Map—launched in September 2014 by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PDOC)—allows users to search for service providers, resources, and other assistance in their communities with the click of a mouse.



Ultimately, PDOC officials hope that the greater access to services will help to reduce recidivism and enhance public safety.

"There is no silver bullet to tackling and reducing recidivism," said Kristofer B. Bucklen, director of the PDOC Bureau of Planning, Research, and Statistics and the project's production and development manager. "But we believe that if people find it easier to get plugged into services, their service needs will be addressed, and it will help reduce recidivism."

Information Accessible in the Map

- Community corrections centers
- County courthouses
- Probation offices
- Employment services
- Victim assistance
- Transportation assistance
- Mental health services
- Medical assistance
- Family services
- Legal services
- Identification documents
- Social Security assistance
- Elder services
- Substance abuse services
- Housing assistance
- Food/clothing assistance
- Veterans services

<http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Screenshot-2014-11-19-10.55.20.png>) To create the map, PDOC transferred information available from reentry service directories that were created several years ago. They also contacted agencies and service providers across the state for updated information. "We had static PDF documents and we weren't happy with it," said Joseph Tomkiel, who is responsible for building many of the map's functions and features.

Although restrictions on Internet usage prevent individuals from accessing a live version of the map while they are incarcerated, instruction on how to use the map is provided at both PDOC's transitional housing units and community correction centers before their release. PDOC also provides a static version of the map on a flash drive along with

information about the programs and treatment services that people participated in during incarceration. Records of program participation can be helpful to community service providers working with these individuals. For instance, if an individual has completed advanced coursework in mathematics while incarcerated, a record of this could indicate to job placement service providers that he or she can be placed in jobs that require math skills.

Visit the *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*

(<http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org>)

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Over the next year, PDOC plans to roll out a number of enhancements and additions to the map. A feedback form that is currently on the site allows service providers to submit requests to add their services to the map. New service categories will be added to the map, such as an education category that will help to answer users' questions such as "Where can I get a student loan?" or "Where are the community colleges in my area?" Information about public transportation will be added to help users identify ways to get to service locations. And while the map is currently accessible on smartphones and other devices, PDOC is creating a standalone smartphone app.

To learn more about the map, click [here](#).

(<http://www.pa.gov/Pages/NewsDetails.aspx?agency=Corrections&item=16055#.VDbeLueATUI>) To view the map, click [here](#). (<http://reentrymap.cor.state.pa.us/>)

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