



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).


### PROGRAM INFORMATION

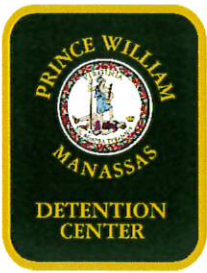
County: Prince William County  
Program Title: Re-Entry Center  
Program Category: Re-Entry Services

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Christopher J. Shorter  
Title: County Executive  
Signature: 



## Executive Summary: Re-Entry Center Program

The Re-Entry Center Program is a vital initiative designed to support returning citizens as they transition back into the community after incarceration. Reentry is often marked by significant struggles, including limited access to housing, employment, transportation, healthcare, and social support. Without a strong foundation, many individuals face overwhelming roadblocks to stability and encounter unseen barriers that hinder their reintegration, such as stigma, lack of identification, and untreated trauma.

The consequences of insufficient support can be severe—not only for the individuals themselves but also for the broader community. When returning citizens are left without adequate resources, the risk of recidivism increases, perpetuating a cycle that weakens families and strains public safety systems.

Our Re-Entry Center addresses these challenges through a comprehensive, person-centered approach. We provide access to a food pantry and clothing closet to meet basic needs, while also offering essential services such as mental health counseling, job readiness training, peer support, and connections to housing and legal assistance. These supports help remove critical barriers, foster self-sufficiency, and restore dignity.

This is all accomplished through a cost-effective and impactful model that leverages resources and fosters collaboration with local community partners, stakeholders, George Mason University, and GEO Group. These partnerships enable us to maximize our reach and effectiveness while ensuring high-quality support for those we serve.

Ultimately, the Re-Entry Center Program plays a pivotal role in strengthening families and building safer, more resilient communities. By investing in second chances and providing the tools for successful reintegration, we create pathways to opportunity and long-term stability for all.

# **The Challenge:**

## **Re-Entering Community After Incarceration – An Uphill Battle**

### **The Struggles of Returning Citizens**

Upon release, many returning citizens have few resources and limited connections in the community. They are often left to navigate systems that are difficult to understand, especially without any guidance or support. As a result, their chances of successfully reintegrating into society are drastically reduced.

The initial period after release is filled with uncertainty. Many individuals do not have stable housing, and without a place to live, they have no foundation upon which to rebuild their lives. For many, this leads to a situation where they may end up staying in temporary shelters or even on the streets, making it nearly impossible to hold down a job, attend necessary appointments, or focus on rehabilitating their lives.

Moreover, many returning citizens also lack proper identification, which is often required to access housing, employment, and even government assistance. The process to obtain identification can be long, confusing, and expensive, adding yet another obstacle to the already challenging path of reintegration. The absence of basic documentation such as a Social Security card or state ID is a significant barrier to accessing critical resources, making the process even more overwhelming for those already struggling.

### **Homelessness: A Dire Consequence of Insufficient Support**

One of the most immediate and devastating consequences of the lack of support for returning citizens is homelessness. Without a stable home, it is impossible for an individual to begin rebuilding their life. A lack of housing creates endless cycle of instability, making it difficult to hold a job, maintain a healthy routine, or even accessing the services and support needed for successful reintegration. Homelessness is not just about a lack of physical shelter; it also leads to feelings of isolation, desperation, and loss of dignity. Many returning citizens find themselves in a constant state of flux, unable to settle down long enough to address the deeper issues they face, such as mental health problems, addiction, or trauma. Homelessness also exacerbates other barriers to successful reintegration, including employment. Without permanent address, it becomes incredibly difficult to apply for jobs, attend interviews, or even find the energy and motivation to pursue work opportunities. Employers may also be hesitant to hire individuals who do not have a stable address or who have criminal records, further diminishing their chances of securing stable employment. This only adds to the sense of hopelessness many returning citizens feel, as they are left without any clear path forward.

## **Unemployment: The Roadblock to Stability**

Alongside homelessness, unemployment is another critical issue that returning citizens face. For many, finding a job is the primary goal after release, as employment is a key factor in achieving financial independence, stability, and sense of purpose. However, securing a job is an uphill battle for several reasons. First, individuals with criminal records are often stigmatized, and many employers are reluctant to hire someone with a criminal background, even if the individual has served their time and is now seeking to make a fresh start.

Additionally, returning citizens may not have the skills or education required for available jobs. Many individuals who have been incarcerated for extended periods of time missed out on opportunities for education or job training, and some may have limited work experience. This lack of qualifications makes it even harder for returning citizens to compete in an increasingly competitive job market, where skills such as technical expertise, communication, and problem-solving are in high demand.

Even when individuals are able to find employment, they often face low-wage, unstable jobs that provide little opportunity for advancement. Many returning citizens struggle to make ends meet, particularly if they are supporting a family or dealing with ongoing issues such as mental health problems or addiction. The lack of a living wage creates further financial instability, which in turn increases stress and anxiety, making it even more difficult to remain employed and focused on long-term goals.

## **Mental Health and Trauma: Unseen Barriers to Success**

In addition to these practical challenges, returning citizens often face significant emotional and psychological barriers that can impede their ability to reintegrate successfully. Many individuals who are incarcerated have experienced trauma—either before, during, or after their time in prison—and may struggle with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). These issues can be exacerbated by the stigma associated with having a criminal record, as well as the overwhelming sense of isolation that often accompanies re-entry. Mental health support is crucial for returning citizens to heal from the trauma they have endured, but mental health services are often difficult to access, especially for individuals without insurance or financial resources. The stigma surrounding mental health also prevents many from seeking the help they need, either because they fear judgment or because they do not believe that they deserve care. As a result, mental health issues often go untreated, further hindering the reintegration process.

## **The Vicious Cycle: The Risk of Recidivism**

The lack of adequate support and resources for returning citizens creates a vicious cycle. Without stable housing, employment, or mental health support, many individuals are unable to successfully reintegrate into society. This leads to frustration, hopelessness, and feelings of failure. For many, the easiest path to survival becomes returning to old patterns

of behavior, including re-offending. The absence of a clear path forward, coupled with the stress and trauma of reintegration makes it incredibly easy for individuals to relapse into criminal behavior.

Recidivism is a major issue in the criminal justice system, and the statistics are sobering. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, nearly **half of all prisoners released from state prisons** are rearrested within three years. Significant portion of these individuals are re-incarcerated due to violations such as failing to report to parole / probation officers, drug use or committing new crimes. These re-offenses are often a direct result of the lack of support and the overwhelming challenges that returning citizens face as they attempt to reintegrate.

The emotional and psychological toll of incarceration, combined with the social and economic barriers to successful reintegration leaves many individuals with few options other than returning to their old lives. This creates a revolving door of incarceration, with individuals cycling in and out of the system, further reinforcing the societal perception that they are “criminals” and “incapable of change.”

## **Our Solution: PWC-Manassas Regional “ADC Re-Entry Center” A Lifeline for Returning Citizens**

The **Prince William Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center Re-Entry Center** was created to provide a holistic and compassionate solution to the difficulties returning citizens face.

Our center is a one-stop hub that offers immediate, practical support while connecting individuals to the long-term resources they need to successfully reintegrate into society. From securing housing and employment to accessing legal aid, mental health services, **clothing assistance**, **food pantries**, and educational opportunities, we provide a wide array of resources that help returning citizens rebuild their lives. What makes our approach unique is that we don’t just provide temporary assistance—we walk alongside our clients, offering personalized, ongoing support tailored to their unique needs. Our goal is not just to help returning citizens survive but to empower them to thrive and contribute to their communities.

### **A Holistic Approach to Re-Entry: Meeting Immediate Needs**

One of the fundamental aspects of our approach is recognizing that successful re-entry starts with addressing the most immediate and basic needs. Returning citizens often face immediate hardships upon release, such as a lack of housing, food, and transportation. These needs must be met before any progress can be made toward rebuilding their lives.

#### **Housing: A Stable Foundation**

Our Re-Entry Resource Center works closely with local shelters, housing authorities, and private partners to provide immediate temporary housing and, when possible, longer-term housing solutions.

In some cases, we help returning citizens find housing options even before they leave the Complex, ensuring that they have a stable home base as they transition back into society. By securing safe housing, we give returning citizens a



foundation to build upon, reducing their vulnerability to homelessness and providing them with the stability they need to focus on other aspects of their reintegration.

## **Food and Basic Necessities: Nourishment and Dignity**

Along with housing, returning citizens often struggle to meet basic daily needs like food, clothing, and hygiene products. Without reliable access to food and essentials, individuals are left in a vulnerable state, making it even more difficult to focus on long-term goals such as finding employment or accessing services.

Our center operates a **food pantry** stocked with nutritious food options, ensuring that returning citizens can meet their dietary needs without having to worry about where their next meal will come from. Whether it's canned goods, fresh produce, or snacks, our food pantry is designed to provide enough sustenance to keep individuals going while they focus on rebuilding their lives. By alleviating food insecurity, we provide returning citizens with the peace of mind needed to pursue employment, education, and mental health services.

In addition, we offer **clothing assistance** through our **clothing Closet** stocked with clean, appropriate clothing. This includes professional attire for job interviews, as well as casual clothing to meet daily needs. Many returning citizens lack access to clean, appropriate clothing upon release, and not having the right clothing can make it even more difficult to attend interviews, secure employment, or simply feel dignified in public. By providing clothing, we help remove one of the most immediate barriers to reintegration, allowing individuals to focus on other aspects of their transition, such as finding stable work or accessing education.

## **Employment Resources: Empowering Financial Independence**

A critical factor in successful re-entry is gaining meaningful employment. Without a job, returning citizens face financial instability, which can lead to stress, frustration, and ultimately, a return to criminal behavior. Securing stable employment provides individuals with financial independence, dignity, and a sense of purpose, all of which are essential for reintegration.

## **Job Training and Skill Development**

At our Re-Entry Resource Center, we believe that access to job training is key to ensuring long-term success. Many returning citizens have gaps in their work history and may have limited education or skills, making it harder for them to compete in the job market. We offer a variety of vocational training programs, including workshops on resume building, interview skills, and job search strategies. Additionally, we partner with local employers who are open to hiring individuals with criminal records, offering our clients job placements that align with their skills and interests.

## **Mental Health and Counseling: Addressing Emotional and Psychological Needs**

Mental health is another critical factor in successful reintegration. Many returning citizens have experienced trauma during incarceration, and may also face mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD). These issues can create significant barriers to reintegration, making it harder for individuals to focus on rebuilding their lives.

## **Counseling and Mental Health Services**

At our Re-Entry Resource Center, we recognize the importance of addressing the emotional and psychological needs of returning citizens. We offer access to counseling services, through our community partners and stakeholders. These services help individuals process the trauma they've experienced, manage their mental health, and build resilience as they navigate the challenges of reintegration.

We also partner with mental health organizations and provide referrals for individuals who need more specialized care, such as substance abuse treatment or long-term therapy. By ensuring that returning citizens have access to mental health resources, we help them develop the emotional strength necessary to overcome obstacles and build a healthy, stable future.

## **Education: Unlocking Opportunities for Growth**

Education is another powerful tool for breaking the cycle of incarceration and enabling long-term success. Many returning citizens have limited educational backgrounds or have missed out on opportunities for formal education while incarcerated. Providing access to education is critical for helping individuals increase their employability and build a better future for themselves and their families.

Our center offers educational support, including information about community colleges or vocational schools. We work with educational partners to help returning citizens complete their educational goals.

We also provide resources for individuals interested in pursuing higher education, including information on scholarships, financial aid, and college application processes. By helping individuals continue their education, we open doors to more job opportunities and personal growth, empowering returning citizens to take control of their futures.

## **A Compassionate and Empowering Approach**

At the heart of our Re-Entry Resource Center is a commitment to compassion, empowerment, and dignity. We believe that every returning citizen deserves the opportunity to rebuild their life and contribute meaningfully to society. Our center is designed to provide not just the resources individuals need but also the emotional and psychological support to help them overcome the challenges they face.

## **Mentorship and Peer Support**

We understand that re-entering society can feel isolating and overwhelming, which is why we offer mentorship programs where returning citizens can connect with individuals who have successfully navigated the re-entry process. These mentors serve as role models, offering guidance, advice, and emotional support as individuals transition back into their communities.

Our mentors, who have lived through similar experiences, help returning citizens understand the challenges they may

face, offering advice on overcoming obstacles such as securing employment, maintaining stable housing, and managing personal relationships. They share practical knowledge, provide encouragement, and help mentees stay focused on their long-term goals.

In addition to mentorship, we also offer **peer support groups**, where individuals can connect with others who understand their experiences. These groups create a safe space for open dialogue, shared struggles, and collective healing. By fostering a sense of community, peer support groups reduce the feelings of isolation that many returning citizens experience and create a supportive network of individuals who can lean on each other throughout their re-entry journey.

Through our partnership with **George Mason University** and **The GEO Group**, we ensure that our mentorship and peer support programs are backed by solid research, academic resources, and best practices, providing returning citizens with a robust support system that is both practical and meaningful.

## Our Impact: Building Stronger, Resilient Communities

We recognize that re-entering society after incarceration is not just an individual journey—it's a shared challenge that affects families, neighborhoods, and society as a whole. Our approach, which integrates practical resources with personalized support, addresses the complex needs of returning citizens, ensuring that they are not left to navigate the re-entry process alone. By offering a comprehensive range of services—including housing assistance, food and clothing, job training, legal aid, mental health support, and mentorship—we reduce recidivism, strengthen families, and ultimately, contribute to the creation of safer, more resilient communities.

### Reducing Recidivism Through Comprehensive Support

One of the most profound impacts of our program is the reduction in **recidivism**—the tendency for formerly incarcerated individuals to be re-arrested, reconvicted, or reincarcerated. Without proper support, the barriers faced by returning citizens can be insurmountable, leading to feelings of hopelessness and frustration.

By offering housing assistance, we ensure that individuals have a stable, safe place to live—a fundamental need that is essential for success. This stability provides the foundation needed to pursue employment, education, and personal growth without the constant stress of homelessness. Additionally, the food pantry and clothing assistance we provide help remove some of the immediate obstacles that can prevent individuals from seeking employment or attending important appointments.

Job training and mentorship are also crucial components in breaking the cycle of recidivism. Our programs help returning citizens gain the skills needed to secure stable employment, while mentorship programs provide them with guidance and encouragement from individuals who have walked the same path. When individuals can support themselves, it significantly reduces the temptation to revert to criminal behavior. These services help them build a sense of purpose and self-worth, which is critical for long-term success.



## Strengthening Families

Our Re-Entry Resource Center not only supports the individual but also extends its reach to their families. Many families face financial instability, emotional stress, and a breakdown of relationships when a loved one returns from incarceration. By providing returning citizens with the resources and support they need to reintegrate, we also help reduce the strain on families, creating a stronger, more supportive environment for everyone involved.

Through our mentorship and peer support programs, returning citizens can connect with individuals who understand the unique challenges they face. This creates a sense of community and shared understanding, not only for the returning citizens but for their families as well. Our comprehensive approach supports **family reunification**, encouraging healthier communication, and helping families rebuild trust and stability.

## Building Safer, More Resilient Communities

When returning citizens are supported in their transition back into society, the entire community benefits. By providing the resources needed for successful reintegration, we reduce the likelihood of reoffending and create positive role models for others in the community. Returning citizens who successfully reintegrate are more likely to become active, productive members of society, contributing to the workforce, paying taxes, and engaging in community-building activities.

In addition, the presence of our center fosters a broader sense of solidarity within the community. We work closely with local organizations, employers, and government agencies, strengthening the safety net for returning citizens and reinforcing a collective commitment to support their successful reintegration. This collaboration creates a more resilient community where individuals, regardless of their past, are given the tools and opportunities to succeed.

## A Unique Collaboration for Success

This project represents a **unique collaboration** between various **Prince William County agencies**, **George Mason University**, and other community partners. These stakeholders bring diverse expertise and resources to the table, ensuring that our approach is comprehensive and well-rounded. From **mental health support** to **job assistance**, to **addiction control**, our partnerships allow us to meet the wide array of needs that returning citizens face.

The collaboration between **George Mason University** and **The GEO Group** plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of our services. Through George Mason's academic resources, research, and community outreach programs, we are able to implement evidence-based solutions that have been proven to help reduce recidivism and support long-term reintegration. The GEO Group, with its experience in correctional management and reentry services, brings operational expertise to ensure that our programs are effectively managed and tailored to the unique needs of returning citizens.

### Staffing and Volunteer Commitment

Our Re-Entry Resource Center is fully staffed by **volunteers** who are deeply committed to the cause. Operating Monday

**George Mason University, The GEO Group,** and various **Prince William County agencies,** we've been able to create an innovative, cost-effective re-entry program that significantly reduces the burden on the Detention Center's resources.

**The Re-Entry Resource Center** operates without incurring additional costs to the Detention Center for staffing or resources. The combination of dedicated volunteers and the contributions of our partners allows us to maintain a fully functional, impactful resource center that directly supports returning citizens without requiring public funding for operations.

This model exemplifies how strategic collaborations can not only make an immediate difference in the lives of those impacted by the criminal justice system but also create a sustainable framework for long-term success. By bringing together stakeholders from across sectors—including **criminal justice, education, local government,** and **social services**—we are building a cohesive system that addresses the multifaceted needs of returning citizens in a comprehensive and supportive way.

### **Creating Safer, Stronger Communities**

Our ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism, foster **family reunification,** and build **safer, more resilient communities.** By providing returning citizens with the resources they need to thrive—such as stable housing, employment, education, and emotional support—we help them reintegrate in a way that minimizes the risk of reoffending. These efforts benefit not just the individuals we serve but also the families they return to and the communities they re-enter.

### **Looking Ahead**

As we continue to grow this project, we are committed to expanding our reach and enhancing the services we offer. With ongoing support from **George Mason University,** Local, State and County Agencies and other community partners, we hope to expand our services, reach more individuals in need, and further strengthen our collaborative network. We aim to continue fostering an environment where returning citizens are not defined by their past but are empowered by the support and opportunities they receive.

## **A Lasting Impact**

Since opening our **Re-Entry Center** doors on **February 1st, 2024,** we have made a significant impact on the lives of returning citizens. To date, we have proudly helped **351 individuals** navigate their reintegration process, providing essential support and resources to ensure their successful transition back into the community.

Ultimately, the impact of our work is not just about providing immediate relief—it's about fostering **long-term change** that uplifts individuals, families, and communities. By addressing the root causes of recidivism and providing returning citizens with a pathway to success, we reduce crime, strengthen families, and build stronger, safer communities. Through our partnership with **George Mason University** and **The GEO Group,** we combine the best of academic research,

community engagement, and practical support to create an environment where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Through these efforts, we are not only changing the lives of returning citizens but also contributing to a more just and equitable society. The **Re-Entry Center** is more than just a place for services; it's a beacon of hope, transformation, and community renewal.





