Prison Reform Initiative- First Step Alliance

Leaving prison should mean having a fresh start, but for many returning citizens it presents a host of new challenges. Re-entering society can be overwhelming for many reasons, and unfortunately many people end up back in prison. The rate of recidivism in the United States is an astonishing [70% within 5 years](https://backgroundchecks.org/us-prison-population-vs-the-world.html#:~:text=Recidivism%20rates%20in%20the%20United%20States,-One%20basic%20way&text=The%20rate%20of%20recidivism%20in,just%2020%25%20within%205%20years) of release (First Step Alliance, 2021). However, there are few resources available to help formerly incarcerated people find housing, employment and other social services, and many return to criminal activity to get by financially. We can do much better as a society to help this community and reduce a person’s chances of relapsing into criminal behavior. One area that seems to get ignored often when discussing this topic is financial education. Financial education is critically important to help people achieve long-term financial independence. Formerly incarcerated individuals need improved access to resources that can help them manage their money more effectively. Understanding how to budget, improve credit and save for retirement, often leads to financial stability. First Step Alliance is a non-profit organization that provides access to [free financial education and credit counseling services](https://www.firststepalliance.org/fresh-start-programs) for formerly incarcerated people by working with re-entry groups (First Step Alliance, 2021).

Advocates for Change in Juvenile Justice- The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foun­da­tion sup­ports orga­ni­za­tions that explor­es alter­na­tive visions for how our coun­try responds to youth mis­be­hav­ior (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2017). The fol­low­ing are advo­cates for replac­ing a cul­ture of sur­veil­lance, pun­ish­ment and con­fine­ment with more effec­tive respons­es when young peo­ple vio­late the law, even in seri­ous and vio­lent ways. These respons­es keep young peo­ple away from the for­mal juve­nile jus­tice sys­tem and sup­port those youth who do enter the sys­tem with oppor­tu­ni­ties and con­nec­tions relat­ed to their per­son­al growth, pos­i­tive behav­ior change and long-term success.

Rehabilitation Enables Dreams (RED)

Rehabilitation Enables Dreams (RED) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and restorative justice organization based in Atlanta, Georgia. RED’s mission is keeping people out of the criminal justice system permanently through programs that enhance the social, financial, and civic literacy of individuals referred to court (*Rehabilitation enables dreams (red) - stop recidivism* 2021). They offer a 12-month Restorative Justice Curriculum that is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to leave the court system and reenter society as thriving members of the community (*Rehabilitation enables dreams (red) - stop recidivism* 2021). The United States makes up 5% of the world’s population yet holds 25% of the world’s prisoners. In Georgia, the incarceration rate is 31% higher than the national average with 53,000 people behind bars. 40% of Georgians have a criminal record. Georgia also leads the nation with over 200,000 people on probation which is 321% higher than the national average. In Georgia, 2 out of 3 people released from prison are rearrested within three years. The state’s recidivism rate is close to 50 percent (*Rehabilitation enables dreams (red) - stop recidivism* 2021).

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