

Example of criminal law: re-entry programs in the usa essay

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



The US has one of the most admirable legal systems, as well as, criminal justice systems in the world. However, the US criminal justice system has a host of challenges even though it is one of the best criminal justice institutions in the world. Crime rate is significantly high in the US. On an annual basis, thousands of people found guilty are sent to correctional facilities. Likewise, numerous ex-convicts are released into the society annually. In the current era, American correctional facilities champion to initiate behavior change so that convicts get out these institutions with better behaviors (Siegel, 2012). Behavior change is key to preventing future crimes, and has become a top priority of correctional facilities in the USA (Siegel, 2012). Despite heightened efforts to enhance the re-entry programs, and assist ex-convicts settle down in their local communities, as well as encourage their acceptance by the locals, the re-entry program is still limping. A significantly high number of ex-convicts have been found to engage in crime. In addition, local communities are having difficulties embracing ex-convicts. In line with this, this paper evaluates the challenges facing American re-entry programs, and suggest solutions to those challenges.

First, re-entry, according to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) (2014), denotes the convicts' transition from jail to community life. Statistics released by NIJ in 2011 indicate that 688, 384 people were set free; in other words, this is an indication of approximately 1885 people released per day in that year. At the turn of 2011, the Bureau of Justice Statistics documented that 4. 8 million ex-convicts had been put under community supervision (NIJ, 2014). There are a host of challenges that the re-entry program is facing.

Thomson (2010), as ex-offenders are set free from the correctional facilities, they are armed with more than their inmate and own instincts, and are thrust instantaneously into an environment that is at once not only foreign, but also intimidating in its difficulties and complexities. Their homes resemble barely what they were at the time of their departure. Communities in which they are released into have undergone tremendous economic, technological, political and social changes. There are informal and formal structures in the society, as well as norms and values and relationships that influence people's relationships. Ex-convicts, who are strangers on the native localities at the time of their re-entry, are expected to fit without information, minimum preparation and support. Failure to succeed on their own, ex-convicts have to accept the cruel reality; a return to prison. A question begs, are US correctional facilities prepared for a successful re-entry exercise? Without correct planning, local communities face severe consequences following their acceptance of an ex-offender who has to, without all odds, adhere to the set structures in the society; this is not always attained. In addition, Thomson (2010) contends that a good number of individuals are set free on an annual basis without any form of oversight following the completion of their sentences. In fact, the majority of them are not put on parole or release conditions. They are left alone to navigate the re-entry and re-integration processes. Poor parole services have been attributed to the lack of resources and will, as well as overload on the part of parole officers in order for them to engage interventions. Under the traditional model, society expects ex-convicts to take charge of their re-integration, a reliance that has been, unfortunately, misplaced. Without solid structural interventions, ex-

convicts encounter tough challenges that weaken their chances of making successful integrations.

Massachusetts, for example, has set up a discretionary parole that is governed by the Parole Board (Bradley & Oliver, 2001). This board assesses inmates for conditional release from correctional facilities, as well as supervises the released persons in the community. After approval from the board, a parolee is put under community supervision under the guidance of a parole officer (Bradley & Oliver, 2001). The board determines the regulations under which a person is granted parole supervision: need, time and conditions. In the larger America, the parole trends have not been satisfactory. In fact, statistics indicates that there has been an increased desire from the public for harsher, as well as longer sentences. With respect to inmates serving tougher sentences, their chances for being granted a parole supervision are slim (Bradley & Oliver, 2001).

If the re-entry programs are to succeed, important structural adjustments have to be made. There is a need to empower local law enforcement agencies with the necessary resources, train and employ more parole officers, as well as boost the will of those parole officers. In addition, barriers that limit ex-convicts' social and economic opportunities must be eliminated in order to boost re-entry programs.

In conclusion, this has shown that the US re-entry programs for ex-convicts are limping, and there is a need to revolutionize them for the better.

Behavior change is key to preventing future crimes, and has become a top priority of correctional facilities in the USA. In order for this endeavor to succeed, correctional facilities must go the extra mile in boosting parole

supervision. There is a need to enhance ex-convicts supervision if the re-entry program has to succeed.

References

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