

# Reentry in Washington, DC

## An Annual Report

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*GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR*

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ORCA 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

# Table of Contents

Letter from the Director .....1

Introduction .....3

ORCA Performance Achievements.....3

Where are we going .....4

Client Metrics. ....5

## Mandate for Reporting

At least once a year, the Office on Returning Citizen Affairs shall prepare and submit an annual report on the operation of the Office with the Mayor and the Council. (March 8, 2007, D.C. Law 16-243, ~ 2, 54 DCR 605). This report will serve to highlight the general welfare, empowerment, and reintegration of returning citizens in the areas of employment, and career development, health care education, housing and social services.

## Mission Statement

*Our mission is to provide zealous advocacy; high-quality products; and, up-to-date, useful information for the empowerment of previously incarcerated persons in order to create a productive and supportive environment where persons may thrive, prosper and contribute to the social, political and economic development of self, family, and community.*

## A Letter from the Director

The Honorable Vincent C. Gray  
Mayor of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

The Honorable Phil Mendelson  
Chairman  
Council of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 402  
Washington, DC 20004

The Honorable Tommy Wells  
Chairperson of the Committee on the Judiciary  
and Public Safety  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 408  
Washington, DC 20004

As the Director of the District of Columbia's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs I am pleased to provide you the 2012 annual report of the activities of the Office on Returning Citizen Affairs (ORCA) and the work ORCA has undertaken to enhance the reentry processes.

What we envision at ORCA is not new. However, it is now being addressed from within a fundamentally different paradigm: one that recognizes correctional systems alone are not sufficient to change offender behavior. Incarceration oftentimes puts a strain on a locale's budget, and the District is no different; the city's annual cost to incarcerate an adult offender is approximately \$40,000. Therefore, investing in the post-release success of the offender has the potential to offer meaningful budgetary incentives. Also, successful reentry is important not only to the futures of offenders and their families, but also to the well-being, safety and quality of life for families and neighborhoods throughout our city.

ORCA is continuing its mission to assist returning citizens prepare for life as law-abiding and productive members of society. In that regard, we are maintaining our three overarching goals which are to:

(1) Reintegrate offenders into society, (2) Reduce recidivism, and (3) Promote and maintain public safety. We hope the accomplishments outlined in this 2012 Annual Report will highlight

our efforts to make a difference in the lives of men and women returning to society after a period(s) of incarceration.

Finally, we must acknowledge the many long hours and dedication of our community, faith-based and municipal partners as we have forged ahead in a collective partnership. This collaborative alliance has positioned ORCA to draw on the dedicated and talented human and social capital from many sources as well as target the impact of incarceration now and on future generations of District of Columbia residents.

Sincerely,

Charles Thornton  
Director, ORCA

## Introduction

This report presents qualitative and quantitative data that accurately details how ORCA performed in supporting its mission, vision and core goals. Furthermore, this report will provide a progress update on the work accomplished in response to three initial operational goals as outlined in the ORCA Strategic Plan, namely:

1. Continue to develop and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders;
2. Continue to place ORCA at the epicenter of community reintegration for returning citizens; and
3. Expand and improve upon the services available to the reentry population.

The following are major activities completed in support of these goals:

- **Goal #1.** In response to this goal, ORCA has implemented the District of Columbia Reentry Initiative. This is a collaborative of 15 signature District municipal and Federal agencies. However, additional municipal, faith and community agencies have agreed to participate in this critical initiative. A Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) has been effectuated and signatures have been affixed to this MOA by the Directors of the corresponding agencies. This initiative is meaningful in that it formalizes relationships, guards against duplication of services and has the potential to positively impact financial costs associated with services provision for the reentry population.
- **Goal #2.** Approval has been granted and construction is scheduled to begin January 23, 2013 with a move in date of March 1, 2013 on 6,000 square feet of office space at 2100 MLK, JR Avenue, SE to house the DC Reentry Resource Center. The center will be modeled after the traditional one-stop centers and offer a full menu of social services, e.g., substance abuse counseling and treatment, housing counseling, and health care offerings. At the core of the center will be a robust referral process that will focus on linkages with our municipal, faith and community partners who have established MOAs with ORCA.
- **Goal #3.** Through a partnership with the Community College of the District of Columbia, Chief Librarian of the District, and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer, ORCA has developed the “*Digital Inclusion Program*” to introduce returning citizens to computer technology. This program has the added benefit of providing a desk-top computer system and one-year of Broadband internet service to all graduating students.

## 2012 Achievements

- ✚ ORCA has been awarded \$75,000.00 from the Justice Grants Administration. This award will fund a workforce development specialist to assist returning citizens in search of employment and educational opportunities post incarceration.
- ✚ ORCA has partnered with Parkinson Construction to provide apprenticeship opportunities and to institute a policy change on its employment application. They have

removed the “Box” and have included ORCA in its vetting processes for qualified employees.

- ✚ ORCA continues to provide HIV Counseling and Testing on-demand in our offices at 2100 MLK, Jr. Ave. SE. We offer this service through collaboration with the DC-based *Community Education Group*.
- ✚ In partnership with the Georgetown Law Community Justice Project, an entity of the *Georgetown University Law Center*, ORCA has created a resource guide entitled “*Welcome Home: Let’s get to work.*” In April 2013, this guide will also be available on the ORCA website.
- ✚ In collaboration with the Department of Public Works, one hundred and eighty (180) men and women have completed training for commercial driver licenses (CDL).
- ✚ In partnership with DGS initiated >120 “short-term” labor/construction opportunities on District school and library build-outs.
- ✚ ORCA has increased its outreach to include BOP institutions which house District residents. These outreach efforts included a cadre of ORCA’s municipal, faith and community partners with a focus on available services, community reintegration and socialization through the faith community.

## Where We Are Going

Our vision is to build safer communities by transforming the lives of prisoners and those returning from incarceration. Our communities will be much safer when losers become winners, takers become givers, and tax liabilities become tax payers and law abiding citizens.

The strategy for moving forward and future growth consists of:

- ✚ Acquisition of funding to expand our programmatic offerings. In this regard, we will continue to respond to local and federal RFA funding opportunities.
- ✚ Design new or improved programs based on *Best Practices Models* currently being implemented at the national level. For example, we anticipate partnering with the Community College of the District of Columbia to offer accredited classes at the Shadd Transitional Academy.
- ✚ Evaluate the ORCA system through a partnership with the Practicum and Culminating Experience Program at *George Washington University*.

**ORCA Client Services – January 2012 – December 2012**

<b>Category (Tracking all clients with limited staff is not possible.)</b>	
Unique Individuals Served:	5248
# new registrations	2247
# job preparation packages (e.g., applications, resume update, etc)	2389
# job placements (for those we could track)	119
# consumers assisted with setting-up email accounts	1248
# consumers assisted with online job applications (for those we could track)	1570
# voter registrations	1375
# HIV Rapid-Sure Tests (as of December 31, 2012)	802
# received CDL training	180
# received computer literacy training	101
# consumers received Certified Pre- Apprenticeship training	20

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