

MORCA

MAYOR'S OFFICE ON RETURNING CITIZEN AFFAIRS

FY 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Mayor's office of Returning Citizens Affairs (MORCA) is the District of Columbia's agency for reintegration, and remains the only office of its kind in the nation. MORCA plays a vital role in connecting previously incarcerated District residents to the essential resources and services necessary for their successful reentry and has made the agency a national model for communities grappling with the idea of how to support men and women returning from incarceration.

I am proud to lead the office charged with ensuring that DC's returning citizens have access to the education, economic opportunity, resources, safe neighborhoods, and infrastructure they need to contribute and enjoy all that the District has to offer. I am humbled to serve as Director because, as a government under the leadership of Mayor Bowser, I believe we can and will make the District the national model for opportunity and prosperity for all residents, especially returning citizens.

In FY17, MORCA continued to embrace and expand its responsibility to facilitate successful reintegration for returning citizens back into the communities of the District, and coordinate the efforts of several of its vital municipal, community and faith-based partners. Under the leadership of Mayor Muriel Bowser, MORCA has focused on strategic partnerships to create pathways to successful reentry, initiatives aimed at reducing crime, and creating safer communities for all residents. Mayor Bowser has tasked MORCA with providing or facilitating the connection to all services and resources that exist in the District for returning citizens. MORCA is the conduit through which men and women who return home can access all of the opportunities available to them, and where they can find direction to navigate the reentry landscape in the District. The opportunities and initiatives provided through MORCA assistance are meant to be the keys to successful reintegration.



BRIAN FERGUSON

Executive Director

Mayor's Office on Returning Citizen Affairs



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Data suggests that individuals who remain connected to their communities while incarcerated are less likely to return to prison. In the District of Columbia, over 2,000 District residents return annually from incarceration. The Mayor's Office of Returning Citizen Affairs (MORCA) provides referral services such as career development, job placement, and social services to support District residents who are recently released from incarceration. MORCA also conducts prison outreach activities to inform residents incarcerated in the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) of the available resources available to facilitate successful reentry.

MORCA's mission is to reshape the image of reentrants through creativity and innovation, in order to introduce new ideas and programs into the post-release socialization processes throughout the reentry community. MORCA regularly engages with federal, faith, and community-based organizations through partnerships to best serve reentrants throughout all eight wards.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MORCA is proud of the work and dedication each member of our team during FY17. Please see a listing of MORCA's high-level accomplishments; further details can be found in the corresponding section in this report.

- Finalized Pathways to Work Driver License Initiative to start October 2017
- Hired case managers to provide wrap-around services to MORCA residents
- Assisted 200+ residents in securing employment in various industries throughout the District of Columbia
- Implemented outreach efforts including family reunification trips, halfway house orientations, and weekly DOC outreach
- Implemented paperless sign-in and registration throughout MORCA operations
- Redesigned the MORCA Website
- Launched a MORCA monthly newsletter
- Registered 1,104 returning citizens to vote
- Implemented Reentry Calendar



OUTREACH

In FY17 MORCA saw an incredible increase in our outreach capabilities. From the frequency of family reunification trips, creation of an outreach team, establishing a newsletter, creation of a reentry calendar, hosting annual events, expanding media outreach, and implementation of an internet GIS Map. MORCA has been extremely involved with its constituents and the community in FY17.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION TRIPS

MORCA’s Family Reunification trips allow families to maintain and strengthen relationships through visitation. Family Reunification trips are conducted once a month to different facilities where DC residents are incarcerated. These trips are meant to minimize the stressors that are compounded by the distance and separation from family. Additionally, these trips are at NO cost to the family members. In FY17 over 420 family members participated in the family reunification trips. Below is a list of facilities that were visited during FY17:

Fiscal Year 2017 Family Reunification Trips	
Hazelton Federal Correctional Complex	Bruceton Mills, West Virginia
Hazelton Federal Correctional Complex	Bruceton Mills, West Virginia
Hazelton Federal Correctional Complex	Bruceton Mills, West Virginia
FCI Fairton	Fairton, New Jersey
FCI Fairton	Fairton, New Jersey
Hazelton Federal Correctional Complex	Bruceton Mills, West Virginia
FCI Cumberland	Cumberland, Maryland



CREATION OF REENTRY OUTREACH TEAM

In FY17 MORCA took the initiative and created a reentry outreach team. This team is comprised of members from various government agencies, non-profits, and other community-based organizations. MORCA is also a member of a number of reentry task forces which include the Commission on Reentry and Returning Citizens, the CJCC Steering Committee, The Reentry Task Force and the Reentry Action Network.

NEWSLETTER

It is important to MORCA that we are transparent with our constituents, stakeholders, and the DC community. In FY17 the establishment of a newsletter was imperative to keep our stakeholders up to date with what is happening with MORCA and in the reentry community. The newsletter highlights the events held by the agency and agency partners. Additionally, stakeholders can access this information directly from MORCA's website and the mayor's newsletter.

CALENDAR

In FY17 MORCA implemented a Reentry Calendar that can be accessed via the 'Reentry Calendar' tab on the MORCA website. The goal is to keep the reentry community informed about events happening across the district.



EVENTS

In FY17 MORCA held and/or participated in 45 outreach events. Events are extremely important for our office as it allows MORCA to interact directly with the community, acknowledge and encourage the achievements of returning citizens, get to know their families, and work as a bridge between returning citizens and the community. The annual events that MORCA hosted are considered the cornerstone of the office's mission: To provide zealous advocacy, high-quality services and products, 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.

EXCELLENCE IN REENTRY AWARD CEREMONY

On June 27th, 2017 Mayor Bowser and MORCA celebrated the many significant contributions of returning citizens in the District and of the men and women who do amazing work with MORCA for the benefit of this community. MORCA hosted a reception where Mayor Bowser and Director Ferguson remarks and presented awards to eight dynamic residents.

Excellence in Reentry Awards were awarded to, Rev. Dr. Yvonne Cooper, Mr. Charles Jones, Mr. Cedrick Hendricks, Ms. Paula Thompson, Mr. Evans Ray, Mr. Jerell Brown, and Mr. Lorenzo Stewart. The Reentry Hall of Fame award was presented to Mr. Charles Thornton.





ANNUAL RETURNING CITIZEN FAMILY DAY COOKOUT

On July 30th, 2017 MORCA hosted an event in partnership with the National Association for the Advancement of Returning Citizens. The purpose of the event was to foster a communal environment for children and families of formerly incarcerated individuals. This event specifically highlighted family reunification and nurtured the bond shared between formerly incarcerated District residents and their families. The WHAT band performed live at the cookout. The event included MoonBounce, Pony Rides, Bungee Run, and a DJ. Additionally, the event included snow cones, cotton candy, and other types of food. Ben & Jerry's also attended the event and provided free ice cream to the attendees.





PROGRAMS

Access to programs is an important component of being able to reduce recidivism. These programs are dedicated to providing senior housing vouchers, mini job fairs, ID vouchers, employment connections, training opportunities, and partnerships with different organizations. In FY17, our workforce development opportunities have helped over 200 constituents find employment.

SENIOR VOUCHER PROGRAM

To advance the goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring, MORCA in partnership with DCHA (DC Housing Authority) has implemented the Homeless Senior Voucher Program. MORCA's Outreach Specialist coordinated this program. Senior citizens (age 63 or older) received a voucher to secure 180 days of housing which can be extended if there are extenuating circumstances. During FY17 we provided housing vouchers to 10 senior citizens. There are 9 seniors placed in permanent housing and 1 waiting to sign their lease.

JOB FAIRS

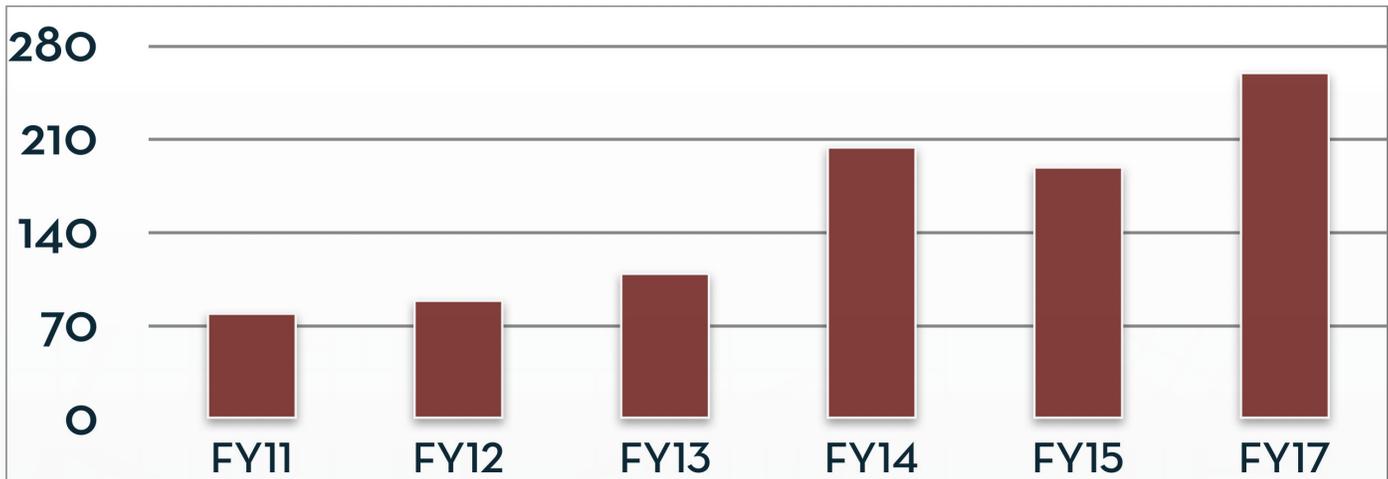
To further the Mayor's goal for employment connection for Returning Citizens in DC, we held job fairs with our local and private business partners in the DCmetro area. Businesses contact MORCA's Workforce Development Specialist who can provide them with potential candidates for their openings. In preparation for the interview residents are encouraged to use our computer lab in order to build resumes and cover letters. Examples of employers who have hired our constituents have been Holland Enterprises, Belfast, Distinct Relocates, Supreme Concrete, and Beltway Cleaning services.

In FY17, 41 residents were hired through these jobs fairs.



JOB OPPORTUNITIES

MORCA JOB PLACEMENTS



CDL & FLAGGERS CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Our CDL and Flaggers certification programs were created to pursue the Mayor's goal of increasing pathways to the middle class for residents including, returning citizens. Our Commercial Driving License program with DPW has been extremely effective. MORCA's Workforce Development Specialist coordinates these efforts. Participants are expected to attend a bi-monthly class run by DPW, which will prepare them for obtaining a commercial driver's license and Flaggers certification. This will translate into job opportunities for returning citizens as well as a way for them to participate and give back to the community. In FY17, 128 constituents completed the CDL training program and received their permits. 72 residents obtained their Flaggers certification.



ID VOUCHER PROGRAM

Returning citizens often do not have any other form of identification other than their prison and jail ID. A Driver's license or ID card is necessary for being able to operate vehicles and apply for jobs. Residents must first obtain their birth certificate and a social security card. MORCA provides referrals for community-based organizations that will provide funds for our constituents to obtain their birth certificates. In FY17 we were able to provide 2,500 ID vouchers for returning citizens.

VOTER REGISTRATION

All over the nation many returning and incarcerated citizens have either lost or do not have access to the right to vote. This is a fundamental part of our democracy that has been taken away from returning citizens who make up significant amounts of Black and Latino voting age citizens. MORCA encourages returning citizens to vote and provides literature about voting rights to constituents in office. In DC once you are released you can vote but you have to re-register. It is extremely important for returning citizens to get registered in order to make sure their voices are heard and that they are appropriately represented, like other citizens in the DC community. MORCA has registered 1,104 voters in FY17

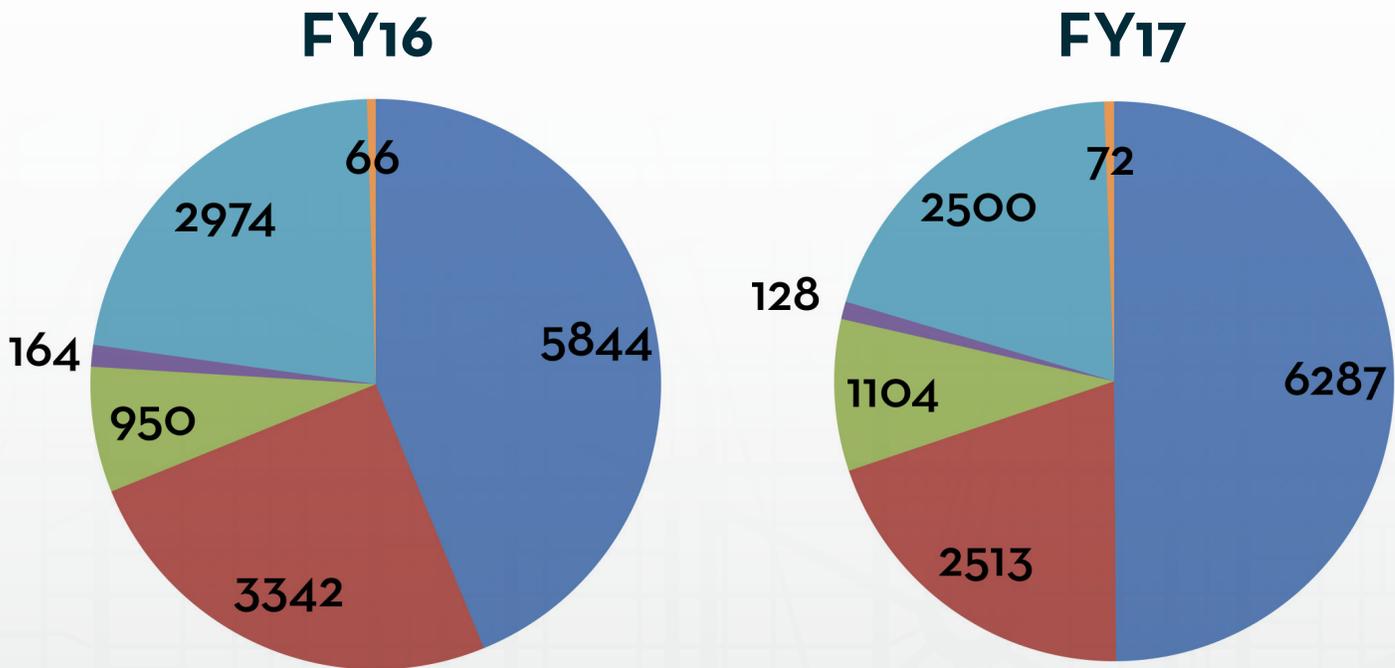
INTERNET GIS MAPPING

In FY17 MORCA implemented a GIS mapping tool on our website in order to help to return citizens locate resources and services with ease. The GIS map displays various resources and services on a digital map along with metro stops near those locations. The tool also contains office hours and phone numbers of the different organizations our constituents are trying to reach.



MORCA DATA

Since FY 16 MORCA has been implementing digital record keeping and has continued into FY17. MORCA hopes to expand upon our current digital record keeping in FY18. Digital record keeping has provided versatility allowing staff to use iPads and iPhones to keep track of data collection. Current Digital Records can be seen on the chart below.



- Number of People Served
- New Registration
- Voter Registration
- Received CDL Training
- ID Vouchers
- Flagger Certification Training

