

Community Organizing is a Reentry Program!

Project UNSHACKLE'S Community Partnership in Philadelphia

In Philadelphia, Project UNSHACKLE is working with the Support Center for Prison Advocacy, a city-wide coalition linking civic engagement, faith-based organizing, and HIV advocacy.

The Support Center for Prison Advocacy is Project UNSHACKLE's first community partnership, launched with Philadelphia activists because of the pressing need to address the city's prison reentry crisis.

Know the Issue

When someone goes to prison, the whole community is affected. Community struggles do not stop when loved ones come home. Once released, people will face difficulties accessing the support they need to move forward and make new lives.

Our partnership was founded on the belief that we all need to come together to build safer and more vibrant communities, while harnessing the leadership of people who are formerly imprisoned.

In so doing, we not only promote the successful reentry of individuals as full and active participants in our communities, but we also build the leadership of the real experts to effect change in criminal justice policy. Put simply, community organizing is a reentry program that keeps people out of jail.



Organizing to Win

In the coming year, we are working to assess existing Philadelphia neighborhood infrastructure around family and reentry support; stimulate neighborhood dialogue around needed support and services; develop neighborhood-directed plans for community restoration and healing; and convene neighborhood steering committees to implement these plans and facilitate the civic inclusion of formerly imprisoned residents.

This partnership is concentrated in several heavily impacted sections of the city, including South and Southwest Philadelphia, Frankford, North Central Philadelphia and Germantown, coordinating a series of 'Neighborhood Speak Outs.' Our goal is to open face to face dialogue among people who are formerly imprisoned, faith leaders and local community leaders in a manner that will help focus their attention on strategies to strengthen civil society and infrastructure in these communities, and that will have a clear follow-up strategy for change.

This growing neighborhood network has already mobilized to fight back in the midst of the city budgeting process. Neighborhood leaders reached out to others in their communities with flyers and teach-ins, so that everyone had the tools to take action against the impending cuts to essential reentry services!

Learn More

For more information on Project UNSHACKLE's work at the intersection of HIV and imprisonment, please go to <http://www.champnetwork.org/unshackle>.

For more information on the Support Center for Prison Advocacy, please go to <http://www.champnetwork.org/media/unshackle/SupportCenter4PrisonAdvocacy-brochure.doc>.