WOMEN’S PRE-RELEASE FACT SHEET

Treating women’s incarceration as an afterthought has held back efforts to reduce recidivism and incarceration costs in Maryland.

THE ISSUE

- The number of men incarcerated in state prisons fell more than 5% between 2009 and 2015, while the number of women in state prisons fell only a fraction of a percent (0.29%).
- Women need reentry support for the sake of their families: As many as 75% of incarcerated women are primary caretakers of children, and 42% of mothers in state prisons nationwide may be single parents.
- Pre-release facilities can prepare women to reintegrate back into society by providing access to job training, employment, community resources, and comprehensive re-entry planning assistance within a less restrictive and safe environment.
- The state currently operates several dedicated pre-release and minimum security facilities for men, while operating ZERO dedicated facilities for women.
- Maryland closed the only state-wide and stand-alone women’s pre-release center in 2009, relocating all pre-release services to the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women (MCI-W).
- At MCI-W, women on pre-release status are co-housed with women on maximum security status. These women have expressed fear for their safety as they try to focus on planning for reentry. This fear is justified given the inmate assault rate at MCI-W is greater than that of both state-run prerelease facilities for men.
- Most importantly, women who are currently at MCI-W report that they do not feel prepared for their release due to a lack of support in planning for housing, employment and other re-entry needs.

PAST LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS & BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- As a cost containment action, the Maryland State Legislature decided to close the Baltimore Pre-Release Unit for Women (BPRUW) in 2009.
- According to the 2018 Maryland DOC Annual Report, the per-capita cost for housing a woman at MCI-W is over 13k more per year than the cost of housing a man at one of their stand-alone pre-release facilities.
- During the same year that BPRUW was closed, the Maryland General Assembly formed the Taskforce on Prisoner Reentry to explore ways to reduce recidivism and reduce barriers to reintegration.
- The taskforce’s final 2011 report emphasized the importance of supporting individuals in creating a comprehensive reentry plan and re-locating them to a separate facility several months prior to their release “where they would be closer to family and community resources that can provide them with important assistance.”

THE CLEAR NEED: A COMMUNITY-BASED PRE-RELEASE FACILITY FOR WOMEN

- The state of Maryland should reduce barriers to successful reentry for women by opening a community-based pre-release facility that more effectively serves the needs of returning women.
- This facility should provide access to physical and mental healthcare, education surrounding money management and job skills, job training and local employment, opportunities to reconnect with important family members and other social supports, connection to stable housing, and, most importantly, a thorough plan for continued access to support and services after release.

Get Involved!
Contact our Executive Director, Nicole Hanson at 443-600-0920
Call our offices at (443)-692-7132
Email us at getinfo@out4justice.org