

## Governor Christie Marks National Reentry Week April 24-30

Friday, April 29, 2016

Tags: [Addiction Taskforce](#)



### Visits Program That Helps Ex-Offenders Find Employment

**Trenton, NJ** – Building upon his commitment to help ex-offenders re-enter society while keeping violent offenders off the streets, Governor Christie today marked National Reentry Week by visiting the Greater Newark Conservancy, part of the New Jersey Reentry Corporation. Governor Christie announced his initiative for a one-stop model for connecting comprehensive services to ex-offenders re-entering society in his 2015 State of the State address.

This groundbreaking program, launched under the guidance of the Governor’s Facing Addiction Task Force, is designed to streamline services available to ex-offenders to ensure they receive the kind of support they need to reclaim their lives and eventually move off government safety net programs and into the workplace.

“We have made it a priority to fundamentally change the way we deal with substance use disorders and incarceration in New Jersey so people can reclaim their lives once they leave prison,” said Governor Christie. “Innovative re-entry programs are vital for ex-offenders to successfully reenter into society, break the costly cycle of criminality and lead productive lives.”

The New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC) is a non-profit with a mission to remove all barriers to employment for citizens returning from jail or prison, focused on the idea that gainful employment is the most critical aspect of post-prison re-entry. Currently, there are four operational Reentry Corporation sites in Jersey City, Newark, Paterson and Toms River.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reports that more than 40 percent of offenders return to state prison within three years of their release and 75 percent of men and 83 percent of women returning to state prison report using illegal drugs.

In his 2016 State of the State Address, Governor Christie directed the Department of Corrections and the Department of Human Services to implement the first-ever dedicated licensed substance abuse disorder treatment program at Mid-State Correctional Facility. He proposed \$2 million to reopen the facility next year under the administration of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Completion of that program will allow inmates to be eligible for social services upon release, providing an important safety net for offenders transitioning back into the community.

This program and the historic shift it represents is possible due to the success of New Jersey’s recidivism and re-entry programs, long championed by Governor Christie. Under the Christie Administration, from 2011 to 2014 the state’s prison population declined by nearly 10 percent. The state’s recidivism rate has dropped from 37 percent in 2007 to 31.3 percent in 2011. According to a study by The Sentencing Project, New Jersey is first among four states that have reduced their prison populations by more than 20 percent – 31 percent since 1999. New Jersey’s state-sentenced inmate population in county jails, roughly 1,500 before Governor Christie took office, is now below 200, which allows more offenders to begin the New Jersey Department of Correction’s (NJDOC) highly regarded re-entry programming as soon as possible.

Another program that is impacting recidivism is the statewide mandatory drug court program, which will be implemented in all of the state’s counties by 2017. It is currently operational in nine vicinages: Ocean; Hudson; Somerset/Hunterdon/Warren; Passaic, Mercer; Atlantic/Cape May; Bergen; Burlington and Monmouth. Essex, Cumberland/Salem/Gloucester, and Middlesex are slated to begin in July 2016. The final three courts, in Camden,

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Morris/Sussex, and Union, are to be phased in by July 2017. In 2015, 5,344 people received treatment through Drug Court and 19,080 people since the program's inception. The rate at which drug court graduates are rearrested and reconvicted is significantly lower than prior to the start of this program. The most recent data shows 18 percent are rearrested for new offenses and the reconviction rate is just 7 percent as compared to rearrest rates for drug offenders released from prison that stand at 56 percent with a reconviction rate of 43 percent.

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