

**NCLR**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

# **They All Come Home:**



**Breaking the Cycle Between  
Prison and the Community**

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) – the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States – works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of more than 300 affiliated community-based organizations (CBOs), NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. To achieve its mission, NCLR conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Latino perspective in five key areas – assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. In addition, it provides capacity-building assistance to its affiliates who work at the state and local level to advance opportunities for individuals and families.

Founded in 1968, NCLR is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan, tax-exempt organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCLR serves all Hispanic subgroups in all regions of the country and has operations in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Antonio, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. For more information, please visit [www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)

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# Acknowledgments

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# Introduction

During its 28th Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) convened a workshop entitled, *They All Come Home: Breaking the Cycle Between Prison and the Community*. NCLR had the pleasure to host several experts who discussed programs and services designed to respond to the prisoner reentry crisis.

Every year more than 650,000 adults and approximately 100,000 juveniles ages 17 and younger are released from prisons and juvenile correctional facilities into the community. Approximately one-third of them are Latinos. Studies from the Department of Justice show that more than two-thirds (67%) of them will be rearrested for a felony or a serious misdemeanor within three years after release. Few of the 750,000 are prepared for their release and few receive any supportive services whatsoever beyond a bus ticket and a small amount of spending money; one-third of all correctional departments provide no funds to prisoners upon release.

Furthermore, while 70-85% of state prisoners need substance abuse treatment, only 13% receive it while incarcerated. In addition to substance abuse disorders, many of those leaving jail and prison have other chronic health issues, no housing, little education or job training, and generally lack resources to allow them to reintegrate. All of these barriers are further heightened if the person leaving prison or a juvenile correctional facility does not speak English well. That is the reality of many of the Latino federal prisoners who are expected to come out of prison over time. In most cases they will have little or no access to the limited services available to formerly incarcerated people.

The unacceptably high recidivism rates demonstrate that prisoner reentry strategies have failed and that policy-makers at all levels – correctional personnel, governmental agencies, and service providers – must collaborate to find a solution that keeps communities safe.

In his 2004 State of the Union address, President Bush correctly stated: “We know from long experience that if [former prisoners] can’t find work, or a home or help, they are much more likely to commit more crimes and return



to prison ... America is the land of the second chance, and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.”

Shortly thereafter, the 108th Congress introduced a prisoner reentry bill which, if passed, would address many of the barriers that the reentering population faces. In June 2004, the “Second Chance Act of 2004: Community Safety through Recidivism Prevention” (H.R. 4676) was introduced by Representatives Rob Portman (R-OH), Danny Davis (D-IL), Mark Souder (R-IN), and Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH), but was not passed. A year later, with a new Congress in place, Congressman Chris Cannon (R-UT) reintroduced the “Second Chance Act,” which garners bipartisan support from more than 80 sponsors. The Senate also introduced a companion bill (S. 1934) later in 2005, Senators Arlen Specter (R-PA), Joseph Biden (D-DE), and Sam Brownback (R-KS) are leading the effort in the Senate.

*They All Come Home: Breaking the Cycle Between Prison and the Community* offers model programs that are culturally and linguistically competent and that, if replicated, could help turn formerly incarcerated people from community liabilities into community assets.



# Executive Summary

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is committed to educating the Latino community, policy-makers, corrections personnel, and the public at-large about the challenges that Latinos in the justice system encounter when trying to access reentry services and programs. *They All Come Home: Breaking the Cycle Between Prison and the Community*, a workshop at the 2004 NCLR Annual Conference, was part of NCLR's continuous work in the criminal and juvenile justice field. The session shed light on the importance of and dire need for comprehensive prisoner reentry strategies and programs and brought together local experts from the reentry field to discuss county-level programs, faith-based services, youth programs, and reentry services inside and outside of the prison walls.

One of the common themes throughout the workshop was the importance of preparing people for the moment of reentry into the community. The strategies vary but include education, job training, and substance abuse and mental health treatment, which will help individuals get and hold a job and secure a place to live. This ultimately will help them fulfill their responsibilities, including supporting their families. Another important lesson of the session was the importance of building bridges between the prison system, community-based service providers, and local/state agencies that can render a whole host of services from parenting skills, to job placement, to transitional housing, and other basic services that are critical for helping those who have lost ties with the community. And lastly, panelists discussed the infinite value of targeting programs for limited-English-proficient formerly incarcerated people who, without having programs tailored to their language ability, will be relegated to nothing more than their old criminal habits which led them to prison in the first place.

Dorothy Vigil, Warden, ASPC Safford Correctional Center, pointed out that prison education programs such as the General Education Diploma (GED) and skills training from which inmates can obtain a certificate are linked to job marketability, which in turn has been proven to reduce recidivism rates. Additionally, Ms. Vigil talked about the benefits of prison industries and reported that “part of what [inmates] earn goes into their housing and into paying some of the bills they incurred while they were out and as part of their restitution.”



Mary Keehl, former Bureau Administrator, Arizona Department of Community Corrections, discussed other barriers that formerly incarcerated individuals face once they are released. Specifically, she talked about the ineligibility of people with a criminal record to live in public housing. Ms. Keehl also highlighted the Correctional Officer Offender Liaison (COOL) program funded through the state drug treatment and education fund, also known as Proposition 200. “The COOL program pays for some substance abuse treatment, case management, and medication, because without basic health services formerly incarcerated individuals have less of a chance to succeed in the outside world.”

Joe Avila, Prison Fellowship, contended that the success of prisoner reentry comes from within each person who is behind bars. “You need to change their hearts,” Avila said. “That’s why we are happy to work with the Department of Corrections, work with other secular organizations, and help to change hearts. . . . [That way] they’ll want to stay out.” He spoke candidly about his own experience serving a prison sentence and about how his life was turned around by the volunteers of Prison Fellowship. “We helped [Latino inmates] fill out documents so they could get some of the things that the English-speaking prisoners were getting, because in prison they are at a disadvantage. They don’t speak the language. And not only that, if they have an INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service, now ICE, U.S. Immigration and Custom Enforcement] hold on them, they are considered a subculture.”

The importance of providing adequate reentry services for youth who are incarcerated or in detention was covered by Georgette Kleinpeter-Greenwood, Executive Coach, Southwest Key Program, Inc. (an NCLR affiliate). She described many youth reentry programs run by community-based service providers, including her program. “Our mission at Southwest Key is to work with youth. We want them to be at home in the community and not in detention centers or jails. We want them at home with their families and their communities. Our goal is to help them find self-worth within themselves, in their families, and in their community.”

Serena Cruz, Multnomah County Commissioner in Oregon, talked about “wraparound” services rendered in her county and how these have paid off. “We’ve given our staff a lot of new training options. We’ve focused on cultural competency, recognizing how Oregon and Portland are diversifying



so rapidly that the county has to keep pace with the [demographic] changes....Another unique thing we found is that as we try to get folks ready to go back into the community, we found that they qualified for Social Security benefits but nobody was paying any attention to when they would get those benefits, and how they would get them. So we started working on a project to get folks signed up for benefits before they leave the institution.”

Ultimately, what unites all of those who work on reentry issues is the common goal of maintaining public safety by eliminating or at a minimum reducing recidivism. A coordinated and strategic combination of services and programs inside and outside the justice system which take into account all of the barriers faced by the reentering population will help reduce the unacceptably high recidivism rates of today. The lessons from this workshop can inform policy-makers, service providers, governmental agencies, and corrections personnel in the development and implementation of strategies for the more than 750,000 people coming out of prison every year.





# Welcome

By Angela Maria Arboleda

**Ms. Arboleda:** Good afternoon, and welcome to *They All Come Home: Breaking the Cycle Between Prison and the Community*.

My name is Angela Maria Arboleda. I'm the Civil Rights Policy Analyst at the National Council of La Raza, and I will serve as the moderator for this session. At NCLR, my portfolio includes working on issues of criminal justice, juvenile justice, and reentry. We are here today to talk about reentry and its effects on the Latino community.

Many of you in the corrections field know what I mean when I say "reentry." In a criminal justice context, it refers to when people come back into the community after serving a prison sentence. Today we will hear from a panel of experts who are working in the field and who are running perhaps some of the most successful reentry programs in the country. We will learn from them about the importance of accessible programs in the areas of housing, job training, substance abuse, and mental health. All of these programs help ensure that the recidivism rate goes down and that people who are coming back from the prison system become productive members of society.

Before I turn it over to our panel, let me give you a few statistics so that we have a clear understanding about the reentry crisis we are in today. And I say it's a crisis because there over half a million people reentering into society every year, including 650,000 adults and 100,000 juveniles. That is, 1,700 people coming back into society every single day. About two-third of them will recidivate, or go back to prison, after three years of being released. Many of these individuals have no place to sleep, they have lost touch with their family, they are substance abusers, they suffer from mental health or other illnesses, they have no access to money, and more often than not they have no job skills. In addition, incarcerated individuals are oftentimes released at midnight, sometimes very far away from home. They are given a bus ticket to the next town, and perhaps \$3 or \$4 in their pocket; the lucky ones get as much as \$50 upon release.





I would say that we, as a community and as a society, have failed these individuals because we have not provided them with the tools necessary to succeed after they come out of prison.

So at this session, we will focus on programs that work and that help ensure that incarcerated people come back ready to integrate and be productive members of society, not as a burden and definitely not as a threat to public safety.

The format of this session is simple: Our speakers will provide opening remarks for seven to ten minutes. You will hear from me at the end of their presentations, and I'll tell you about NCLR's advocacy work in Washington, DC. In particular, I'll tell you about a piece of reentry legislation that was introduced just this past Thursday. I ask that speakers stick to that time to allow for the next part of the session which is questions and answers. I hope that the audience participates fully and gives us their input. Also, in the back of the room is a table with materials and resources on prisoner reentry, including a memo that was prepared for Congressmembers and their staff by the Reentry Working Group of which NCLR is a part. In addition, you have received evaluation forms. Please turn them in on your way out of the workshop.

Before we begin, please note that there is a court reporter here; she is recording the session which will be transcribed later. It's important not to talk at the same time or else she's not going to be able to get each person speaking.

I hope this is a very successful and open conversation. Let's begin.



## Opening Remarks

**Ms. Arboleda:** I asked Dorothy Vigil, a Warden from the Arizona Department of Corrections, to go first because she will be talking about reentry strategies and programs from inside prison.

**Ms. Vigil:** One of my theme songs in prison is “To Dream the Impossible Dream.” So usually when we have awards for our staff, which is every three months, I sing them the song. I was tempted to sing that to you, but I won’t do that. I also wanted to say that I’ve been in prison – actually in September I will start my 24th year in prison, but she gave me away by starting to talk about my credentials and that kind of stuff. But I will start my 24th year in September working for the Department of Corrections. Prior to that, I was a teacher for ten years. And you might ask, “How come you got out of teaching?” Well, I think I saw that education at that time was not keeping up with the technology in today’s world, with TV and everything else that kids have. So I decided to see what was closer to education, and I came across corrections. And that’s where I have been.

Just today, I was reading an article – and maybe all of you have read it also – in terms of corrections. It’s a good article. And I think it’s stating facts in terms of how we’re getting people, offenders, ready to go back into the community. Let me just give you a couple of things. I put a fact sheet back there that was recently done by our department on an Arizona inmate recidivism study. It’s very well done. Let me tell you, it’s startling. It talks about recidivism rate reductions. I believe that is in part due to prison industry programs. We’re the highest, 34%, for prison industry programs.

I oversee four industry programs, and almost 200 inmates are participating in them. They make more money than the normal inmates who work. They usually make 50 cents an hour, at most. These inmates make the minimum wage. Part of what they earn goes into their housing and into paying some of the bills that they incurred while they were out and as part of what they have to do for their restitution.

Anyway, make sure that you pick this up. It’s very, very good. And I’m sure that those of you who are from out of state can compare what’s going on in



the other states. Currently, we have – there are almost 32,000 inmates incarcerated in the state of Arizona. That’s a large number, wouldn’t you say?

Now what has happened for that to occur is that in 1994, we had a truth-in-sentencing bill. And basically what that meant was [getting] tough on crime. You commit a crime, you’re going to do some time. And they have really come in. We might release 300 in one month and we receive 300 in one month. One of the things that our new director made us become very much aware of was the recidivism. Our concentration was pretty much on security, and we have good security, but she brought it to our attention that we have a high recidivism rate of inmates coming back. Offenders that are released and are coming right back. And so she had us look at that.

Our emphasis today is that we need to look in terms of how we are preparing inmates to be productive citizens in the community. They will, for the most part, be released. So what are we doing to prepare them not to come back?

We have put a lot more emphasis on education. Currently we have ten complexes. And a complex in the state of Arizona is like this – you have a warden, which I am, and then you have units. A family, you might say. The complex that I am assigned to is in Safford, Arizona, which is about four hours from here. Beautiful country. And we have approximately 1,800 inmates. Now when I came here the other day, I looked at my population and I had almost 1,700, which meant that we had some releases and some being moved around.

Interestingly enough, out of the almost 32,000 inmates incarcerated in the state of Arizona in our system, almost 12,000 are Latinos. One of the things that I have found extremely rewarding, if you can call that rewarding, because I do love what I do, I have a passion for what I do because I believe that it’s an opportunity to help people change. And more so now that the focus is on programming, making sure that they get their GED, making sure that they get their eighth-grade diploma, making sure that they get into programs that are going to help them out in the community.

So that’s a high number. I would say that probably almost a third of our population is Latinos. One of the ways that my culture has helped me is that the inmates sort of lighten up when I am walking in the yards and I start speaking Spanish to them. And it just lightens them up and they start talking



and then they seek me out when I come into the yards. It's unfortunate that today many Latinos who work in our correctional system don't know Spanish. And so the inmate is trying to say something and they are a little embarrassed.

Let me talk about the committing offenses. We have about 20 different offenses that get people into prison. The highest is assault. There are 15 counties in Arizona; I serve in three of them: Greenlee, Cochise, and Graham Counties. In terms of the education that these offenders have completed when they come in, 10,000 have a secondary education. That's a good number but it stops right there. Almost 10,000 have finished their GED and about 5,000 have completed their high school diploma. Our emphasis is to ensure that they have a high school diploma or a GED because that's what will get them into the door. We also have vocational classes. We have masonry, building maintenance, refrigeration, and a couple of other classes, and we look to see what is marketable in the community. For example, we have 130 inmates who [work at] a tomato [greenhouse]. They make the minimum wage. And right now they are trying to develop an agricultural program so that they can get credit. However, our masonry class is one of the programs that could possibly be cut.

We looked to see when an inmate leaves the prison with a certificate in masonry how much he would be making out in the community. Almost \$16 an hour. We looked to see how much the agricultural class with a certificate would earn. It was almost \$7 an hour. So which is the class that we need to get rid of, if we get rid of any? That would be the agricultural [class].

What I'm working on is since we have a higher custody level – a level three, which is a controlled yard, they do not go out in the community at all – I'm trying to bring that agricultural class there since they are all enclosed and they have gardens and that kind of stuff. We're looking to see what will earn them some money, honest money, because most of them have made good money but not honest and have still not been able to take care of their families.

In Safford, in the complex that I'm assigned to, we have approximately 1,700 - our capacity is 1,800. Our Chicanos – our Latino population right now in that complex is 571. So it's not a big number. Safford, Arizona, is pretty much a different kind of environment. I think we have very few Black families and we certainly have – like I said, the capacity is 1,800.



Let me just summarize that our efforts right now are to ensure that every seat in our classroom is used. We say “butt to butt.” Every chair needs to be filled with someone going to school. And so far in our complex we are the highest. Ninety percent of our inmates are going to school. So I feel proud of that because when they are going to school, they are staying out of trouble and hopefully gaining something that will help them when they come out.

Now Mary is going to talk about something different. I spoke with you about my concentration. While inmates are in the prison, there is the realization that’s coming to more of us; that is, all of these offenders, at some point, are going to be back out in the community and we want them to be productive citizens in the community. So that’s our goal.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Thank you. So now let’s turn it over to Mary Keehl, Bureau Administrator for the Community Supervision Bureau, Arizona Department of Corrections. From this point onward we are looking at reentry programs outside of the prison system.

**Ms. Keehl:** Thank you. Good afternoon, colleagues. I’m honored to have been asked to be a presenter, and I hope I can answer your questions as I go along.

My responsibility is for 18 parole offices throughout the state of Arizona. Even though we have 15 counties, we have 18 parole offices throughout the state. We have approximately 5,364 offenders on supervision as of this morning. That means they are out on community supervision. Approximately 30% of those are Latinos. One of the things that’s staggering, and I believe you will agree with me, is that 52% of the offenders on supervision are 34 years old or younger. Isn’t that amazing? Thirty-four years or younger. That’s 52%. That’s the age when most folks are building their homes, raising their kids, getting their careers in line and everything. That’s sad. I just wanted to share that with you.

One of the challenges that our offenders are faced with coming out into the community is their lack of education. Dorothy, my colleague, mentioned that we are pushing education inside the prison. However, it is voluntary. One of the things we recently started doing about approximately two years ago is if you’re going to get an early temporary release, you have to have met literacy requirements. For those folks who clearly cannot read because they have disabilities or other challenges, the literacy requirement is waived. However,



they still come out with no education, lack of marketable skills. Can you imagine trying to get a job when all you've done is shoplifted or pushed drugs?

And now you're 35, 36 and you're trying to change your life, but what have you got to offer that employer? No education, no job skills. So that's one of the biggest challenges they face upon reentry.

Another [big issue] for reentry is the lack of housing. Most of the people in Maricopa County – most of the apartment complexes throughout the state of Arizona have crime-free zoning initiatives that prohibit any offender from residing at that apartment complex. So now you want to come live with your sister, cousin, aunt or uncle, even ex-wife or wife, but you can't reside there because it's a crime-free housing apartment, or zoning regulations prohibit you from residing there. That is one of the major threats that we have. Last year, we had 1,734 offenders released homeless. In other words, when their day came to be released, they were given \$50 kick-out money if it was a first time and told, "Go for it, report to your parole officer, you're homeless." So we are very aware that – we're very sensitive to that in the community corrections unit. One of the things that we're doing to help is [that], in 1998, we implemented the COOL program.

Has anybody heard about the COOL program? It stands for Correctional Officer Offender Liaison. It is funded through the drug treatment and education fund, also known as Prop. 200 which came about in 1998, I believe. So that's how we pay for some substance abuse treatment, case management, medication. And we've expanded now. As of August, we're going to be offering peer mentoring and peer support. That's a new concept. Because, like the presentation here, [the fact] is that they are coming back. And some of you have heard of the saying, "Not in my backyard"? Well, guess what? They are coming back and they are going to be in your backyard.

So that's one of the things that we are doing to try to address their issues. We also have the Co-Occurring Disorder pilot program, which we started in – we started doing the actual proposal in 2002 and it was implemented in January of 2003. So far, we've had 61 folks – I'm going to call them "folks" instead of offenders. I believe I can do that in this setting. Because we used to call them inmates, but now we are calling them offenders. This came





from our director. We are trying to get in with – her mission is – her philosophy is a parallel universe, trying to get them to think along these lines.

Anyway, the Co-Occurring Disorder [program] covers you if you have both a mental health issue and a substance abuse issue. Therefore, you might be eligible to have six months of housing paid for while you are in this program. You must be programming, working, you must be employable. That's one of the criteria. And you contribute 30% of your salary toward your rent. Our case manager actually goes to your house once a week and the parole officer sees you once a week. That appears to be a successful program.

However, as you can imagine, the cost is high and we don't have the funds. But it's a pilot. I believe it's one of the first in the country.

A new program that we have, and some of you folks have heard about it on the news, is Senate Bill 1291. It's called the Transition Drug Program. It was signed into law by Governor Napolitano in August of 2003 and we implemented it – the first rollout of offenders came out on March 29, 2004. The folks participating in this program must meet strict criteria. They must be the lowest of the low-risk level coming out into the community. They are eligible for up to a six-month early release. That's a high incentive, isn't it? If I was eligible to get out in December, I could actually get out today, June 28. So that's an incentive on its own.

Another thing that the program is going to offer, a piece that I think is very innovative, is peer mentoring, peer support, seminars, classes inside the prison, and seminars outside, and the mentor can go into the prison as well. That is something new that we're trying – like I said, it's only been ongoing for about three months. We've released 160 into the community as of Friday. So we will [soon] have statistics and see how that works. It's a ten-year program.

One of the things that I would like you to think about is some of the challenges that really make or break the success of someone coming out of prison. We have found that it helps if they have been employed while they have been incarcerated. Also, if they have participated in some substance abuse treatment or any kind of counseling, that also is helping. And another thing that is crucial is that they have a family or someone who cares about them on the outside, someone who is making them think about what life is going to be like when they get out.



With that in mind, one of the things that we have done in the community corrections unit is to make a video, a Transition Reentry video. I don't know if anyone else is doing it in the country, but we've done that and it comes with a workbook. This is shown to people – to folks – within six months to a year prior to their earliest release date to get them to start thinking, “What am I going to do, where am I going, what are my triggers that got me in here in the first place?”

For the most part, the focus was to lock them up, throw away the key. Don't worry about them until you have to open the door to get them out. But now we are thinking, that's not working. So transition pre-release - let's put the correction back in corrections. And I ask you, if you have any people you know of who are working in the prison setting, be sympathetic to them. And if you know of anyone who's come out of prison and is trying to get a job, give them a chance. Everybody deserves that chance.

Thank you.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Thank you, Mary. Very well said.

Next we'll hear from Joe Avila from the Prison Fellowship.

**Mr. Avila:** Good afternoon. Thank you for the invitation to be here. I represent Prison Fellowship and Justice Fellowship. I am an employee of Prison Fellowship Ministry. I am here to represent Pat Nolan with Justice Fellowship. Prison Fellowship itself is involved in getting the church to be involved – we are a faith-based organization. We don't accept state funds so we can kind of do what we want and preach Jesus.

But anyway, we heard a lot of statistics and a lot of things about education, working programs, and opportunities for inmates – I'm sorry, I used the word. I was one; I can use it – for prisoners' reentry. But, you know all of these – you can throw everything you want at these guys and these women. If you don't change their hearts, it's not going to work, period. You need to change their hearts. That's why we are happy to work with the Department of Corrections, work with other secular organizations, and help to change hearts. This way, when we change hearts and give them the opportunity to come outside, give them some job skills, give them some education, they'll want to stay out.





We help them to mend their broken families; we help them to mend their broken relationships. We help them to walk out with their head up high because we've given them some dignity; we've given them resources to where they can embrace the resources and make something good of themselves. This has – this isn't even on here – but as they were talking, I said [to myself], “You know what? I really need to share with you a little bit of my story.”

My story is this: I went to prison, and I was in there for six and a half years. But when I went to prison, somebody reached out to me and told me there's a better life than the life I was living before. I took that to task right from the very beginning. Instead of fighting my case and prolonging my trial so perhaps I could get a shorter sentence, my heart had changed. And I said: “You know what; I'm not going to put the family of my victim through a trial. I'm going to go back to the judge and say, ‘Yes, I did it. I'm the one. Sentence me.’ And that's the end of it.” I did get sentenced. I got the maximum sentence, but at the same time, I decided that I was going to get an education in prison. I decided that I was going to read books, do whatever I could to get the opportunity to succeed when I got out. And while I'm doing that, I realized, “This is what I want to do for the rest of my life.”

So I embraced other prisoners and other prisoners embraced me. And what happened is we went ahead and we educated ourselves, we started peer counseling inside, we started pre-release programs inside. In other words, we helped – especially the undocumented immigrants – we helped them to read and write. We helped them to fill out documents so they could get some of the things that the English-speaking prisoners were getting. Because in prison, they are at a disadvantage. They don't speak the language. And not only that, if they have an INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service, now the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)] hold on them, they are considered a subculture. I mean, you already have a subculture when you're going into prison, but now you're even lower than that. And plus, what happens is you can't fill out a request for medical attention; you can't fill out a visiting form or things like that. You just get dusted to the bottom. Some have even lost their release dates because of the confusion.

So what we did in prison, we extended that, and upon my release I brought several people – I didn't bring them out with me, but who were released at



the same time – and we decided to take society and educate them about the reentry of prisoners.

We started mentoring programs in California. We started pre-release programs, like I said before. We started social programs. For instance, when a prisoner gets out, somebody mentioned they had \$50 in their pocket. When they come out, they have no clothes to wear. So we started engaging the church and asking them for help. We have a program right now where, several weeks before the prisoner gets out, we send them a full set of clothing. That, again, gives them a little dignity to get out, and when they get out, they kind of blend in with society. If they wear some of the prison garb that they wear inside, the very first thing people do when they see them is look down on them and they don't have a chance. We encourage them to see their parole agents. We encourage them to start a relationship with their parole agent. Their parole agent wants to see them succeed. How do we do that? We have to give them the right attitude. Most of the parolees that I talk to have disrespected the system for a long time, have disrespected the guards who guard them, have disrespected the institution that put them in, and they are going to disrespect the parole agents who are supposed to supervise them when they are released.

So we try to change their hearts. And if you change their hearts, you change their attitudes. Parole agents want to see them succeed. So what happens then? We ask the parole agents to refer them to us. And, on a weekly basis, we open up our doors at a few ministries and give them three sets of clothing so they can work, so they can have clothes to wear for work. We give them job referrals, we give them bus tokens, and we give them phone cards, whatever it takes to make them succeed.

A good model for this – in fact, I'm really proud of this – is at the parole agency in Fresno, California. Every month, all the parolees are required to go – we call it a symposium. When we first started, there were about ten agencies there. We were helping them with clothing, with some of the other things. And we just kept on doing it, and then it grew to 15.

Last month, we had 37 agencies including the Social Security Administration, the Department of Motor Vehicles, the community colleges, giving these people, these parolees, a chance, saying, “You know what? You are valued. We do respect you. We do love you, and we want to give you a chance to succeed out here.” Because if we give them a chance to succeed out here,



we're not going to pay that \$34,000 a year to incarcerate them. Not only that, they are going to give back to the community. They are going to pay taxes. They are going to pay their fair share. This is what it's all about. When you're talking about reentry, you're not just talking about throwing something at them. You're talking about walking with them, giving them the tools they need, especially the honor of being a citizen of this country.

I really, really believe that we can change the hearts of people once we actually educate them to know that they are one of us. We can't have that great divide. Especially in California – I was talking about three strikes the other day. The third strike is the most damaging to society. Because of the third strike, we're putting them away. We're done with them. The second strike – the second strike opens up the juvenile record for sentencing purposes.

Now what we're seeing is we have a 17-year-old who has probably committed a crime of burglary or something like that. We open up his juvenile record for sentencing purposes. We make him spend 85% of his sentence, and then we up the sentence from about seven to eight years to 12 years.

I was talking to the chief of police the other day, and his big thing is we're dealing with these violent parolees. I said, "Look, in 1993, you instituted the second strike. You gave them 12 years' prison, adding on five years to their sentence. You made them do 85% of 12 years. You didn't give them any program to go by – to help themselves from the inside. And now, do the math. You're releasing them this year and they are mad as hell. What's going to happen?"

So what we need to do, we need to come together, secular and non-secular, come together and change the hearts of the prisoners. Bring them out, not call them a prisoner anymore, but embrace them as a member of society and just give them a hand up, not a handout. And I guarantee you it will work. It worked with me and it's worked with hundreds of people I know.

Thank you very much.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Thank you, Joe.

Our next panelist is Georgette Kleinpeter-Greenwood. She works for Southwest Key Program, one of our proud affiliates. They have been



working on juvenile justice issues and reentry for youth for years. So please help me welcome Georgette.

**Ms. Kleinpeter-Greenwood:** Good evening. Southwest Key is a nonprofit organization based in Austin, Texas, where our corporate office is. We have been in business since 1987, [and] we operate programs in seven different states. We have about 19 different models that we work with, with different youth.

At Southwest Key, Dr. Sanchez, our founder, really had a passion for working with youth and he wanted to make sure that those youth, when reentering society, could be successful. So our mission at Southwest Key is to work with youth. We want them to be at home in the community and not in detention centers or jails. We want them at home with their families and their communities. Our goal is to help them find self-worth within themselves, in their families, and in their community so that hopefully they don't have to meet the people like – some of the other people we have on our panel.

One of the critical components of our program at Southwest Key is that we believe when you need help, you need help; you don't want a whole lot of runaround. We believe in immediate response.

Someone tells us they need food or they need housing or they don't have clothes or they need medical attention; our response is to do it. We ask questions later. So that's one of the things that is very, very important to us. We believe in bringing the family into what we do with the youth.

Oftentimes, you try to treat the person who has the problem or the offender who committed this crime and you forget where he or she came from. You forget about their family and how it affects their family. And you forget about where they have to go back to. So one of the things we do is to involve the family and the community in making the person who's coming back into the community successful.

We have a lot of different programs at Southwest Key. We have about 19 different models. I'll highlight some of them for you today.

We have juvenile tracking services; that's one of our most unique programs. I may be a little partial to it because I started off in that program. We work with youth who have been either arrested for the first time or who have actually been in detention – and in Texas, they call it the Texas Youth



Commission – who have actually been committed and are now out on parole and coming back home.

We have caseworkers, clinicians, the whole nine yards, and we go and we work with those clients at home, in the community, at their jobs. This program is so unique because we are there. Because the courts or the judge can say they want this youth at Southwest Key, which oftentimes means the difference between a youth getting out of detention and staying there for days, years, or whatever you have, because we are there.

So we're going to act as an extension of the court, but we're also going to bring in a few

Southwest Key policies and philosophies into the picture, which means we're going to pay attention to what they need and we're going to, again, help them find that self-worth.

It's very interesting because we go in the morning and we go at night. It's never the same. What you end up doing that I think is unique about this program versus a lot of programs is that you see what's really happening – because you can go and put on an act for some of the programs out there. But if you don't know somebody is coming, it's kind of hard to put on that act. So you get to see the good times and the bad times and you really get to involve the family.

We see the youth in their home two to five times a day. They get to see a lot of us. Sometimes that's good; sometimes just okay. Sometimes it's not that good. That's one of our popular programs in Texas and in Georgia.

And one of the other programs we offer is what's called the Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program. Are any of you familiar with those types of programs? We operate a few of those programs in Texas.

The Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program is a long name for something simple. Earlier, when youth were suspended from school for whatever types of crimes or offenses, they were put into detention centers. They weren't given an opportunity to be educated or they were sent home. You'd also see them walking through the communities and doing different things. What the law then said is that we have to educate those youth. So what we've done at Southwest Key is to start a few of those programs.



We have three in Texas where we work with youth who have been put out of school for some kind of crime. A lot of times it's assault, sometimes it's drug use, sometimes it's carrying a weapon, and sometimes it's just plain old being bad. And rather than them sitting in a detention center or sitting at home, they come and work with us. What is unique is that we recognize at Southwest Key that education is important. But just as important as education is the behavioral aspect and all the emotional baggage that they come with.

One of the things we do is try to find out why they couldn't be successful in a big school. We have education, we have a clinician there – we make sure that's a part of what they do every day. So a lot of times – it's really unique because we help those children go back into their schools and we have a liaison who goes back with them and does work with the school and the youth to help transition them back into their home school. But it oftentimes makes a big difference in whether youth drop out, because we get kids sometimes in the sixth grade – the sixth grade – who are suspended or put out of school for a year.

We're working with children from sixth grade up to 12th grade. And this really makes a big difference. If somebody can stop and say to them, this is why education is important for you – not why it's important for us – but why it's important for you, that makes a difference in whether or not they get involved with the juvenile justice system and eventually the adult system later. So that's another one of our programs that we are proud of.

We have an Independent Living Program where we work with youth coming out of TYC [Texas Youth Commission] and we work with those youth again, to help them reenter society, help them re-socialize into the community. They've been locked up. So we help them get a job, we help them fill out applications, we help them get an apartment, we help them do all of the things, the life skills and everything that they need to have in order to be successful.

Rather than kick them out and give them their \$50 – I don't think that they even get that much in Texas with TYC. That's a fight just to get that much – they want to take it down to \$35. So we had to withstand that battle. We don't just give them that money. We help them use that money and give them skills. We work with those youth from six to nine months before they go on their own. That's another one of our programs.





The Family Keys Program, another program we operate, works with the family – plain and simple. They work with kids who are in need of supervision and the families actually request help. They are requesting help for everything from abuse, to substance abuse, to physical or sexual abuse, and they want help; they want someone to sit and help them figure out how to keep their family whole. How do they stop their children from going into the system and being just another statistic that someone like you or I talk about? That's very important. This is another one of our programs that I am really proud of.

One of the other programs we have is the Residential Treatment Center. When youth come and spend time with us – anywhere from six months to nine months - and they have committed offenses, the same types of offenses that we talked about earlier, they stay with us and we teach them all of these skills, the social skills. Because a lot of times, when you go into programs, the system is so keen on punishing that they have forgotten to rehabilitate.

I was excited to hear about some of the programs that the other panelists were talking about. Somebody has actually figured out that that's not working. So it's exciting.

We have many opportunities to help because we're not a part of the jail system. They finish their term with us in this residential treatment center and we can help them. We can rehabilitate them.

Another program is the Girls Empowerment Program, Voices of Youth, which we operate in New York. That particular program works with the children in the child protective system. And it's really unique because those youth run the program. They are the people in charge. They are the people who make the decisions.

And what they are trying to do is reform the child protective service system. They all have been there, from the program director on down, who I believe is 23 years old and was in the child protective services until she was 18. And they have youth who go out and speak to big organizations like this and tell them about what they've experienced and how to make it better.

As you can tell, I could keep going on and on because we have quite a bit, but I'm afraid of getting dinged. I hadn't paid attention to our time yet. But one of the things that I want to end with is that I'm excited to be here. I'm excited to have heard the things that I heard, to know that there are people who really want to make a difference. A lot of people are working with



adults. We're working with our juveniles so that they won't end up in a system like this. And just know that your continued support and help in issues that involve the criminal justice system, whether it be juvenile or adult, is much needed and much appreciated. So I encourage you all to continue working in this field.

Thank you all. I appreciate your time.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Thank you Georgette for addressing the importance of providing adequate reentry services for youth who are in detention or incarceration. It's critical to think about the entire incarcerated population that includes both youth and adults.

Next is the county commissioner from Multnomah County, Serena Cruz. She will tell us about both youth and adult programs in Oregon.

**Ms. Cruz:** Good afternoon, everybody. I am really honored to join you today. I find myself in a funny place on this panel. As an elected official, I sit here with all of you doers in the audience and the doers of this panel: Dorothy, Mary, Joe, Georgette. And, you know, those who can't do, run for office. My job today is to give you a little bit of a picture of what we're doing in the local government in Portland and Multnomah County and why we think what we're doing on the local level gives us a little more flexibility and gives us a chance to work on these issues in a very adaptive and hopeful way.

I'd like to begin with a little bit of background about Portland and Multnomah County. We're the largest county in the state of Oregon. There are about 660,000 people in the county. And I've got the slides on a handout in the back, if you want them at all.

In Oregon the state doesn't run parole and probation. They've instead divided up the money and sent it out into the local communities for the counties to manage. We use all of those state dollars, and we're in charge of parole and probation in our county.

Then, because my colleagues and I think that offender reentry is of such critical importance to our community stability, to the safety, to the kinds of values that we hold dear, we also put in local tax dollars in addition to the state money to fund programs like alcohol and drug treatment, mental health – all of those things that we have found to be so critical in our community.





To give you a sense of what our caseload is, on the adult side there are 9,000 people. Twelve and a half percent of that caseload is Latino, even though only 7.5% of our population is Latino. And we're growing quickly in Oregon. Just another note – I know we're little compared to many of you, but we've tripled in population in the past ten years. And our projected growth rate is right up there with the rest of you in just a few short years.

On the juvenile side, we have a smaller caseload of 2,800, and 10.7% of those folks are Latino. And so I'll go now to some of the things that we've done.

Before my time at the county, the previous director, Elyse Clawson, who is now working in Boston, and the current director of community justice, Joanne Fuller, really restructured community justice. That took a lot of organizational development change; it took focusing on practices and it took collaboration with a lot of partners. I'll go into a little bit more detail about that.

On the organizational development side, we spend a lot of time working with all of our staff. Again, this comes from the board to the director to the staff, that we care about these issues and we don't believe in pure punishment and in parole – returning people to jail without thinking about what sanctions could be used instead and trying to think about all of these different things. So we start from the top. We've also made behavioral changes in offender rehabilitation, one of our core organizational values. We really believe that the most effective way to contribute to public safety is to address the reasons why folks get involved in criminal activities.

We've given our staff a lot of new training options. We've focused on cultural competency, recognizing again how Oregon and Portland are diversifying so rapidly that the county has to keep pace with the changes and really focus on research and evaluation. We keep a unit staffed up to make sure that what we're doing works and that we keep it going.

On risk needs assessment, our focus in Multnomah County is to look at the high, medium, and low offenders. Do we have an assessment tool that's been tested? And then we focus our resources on the high-risk offenders, because those are the ones who are at risk to re-offend. And we figure if we can get that population not to re-offend or to re-offend less, then we really increase the benefit to the community.



And we're focusing on the criminogenic factors, to use a technical term, and these include the big four, which have been talked about by the members of the panel. They are stability, economic and skill resources, addiction and thinking process, as well as pro-social and antisocial associates – to get community, to get structure and support around people.

I'll give you one little bit of research. Research indicates that incarceration alone can actually increase recidivism by as much as 7%, while treatment plans can reduce recidivism 13-34%. So in working with the offenders, I'll give you some of the different programs that we've been doing.

The Transition Services Unit, or TSU, works with high-risk offenders. Those frequently are the mentally ill, sex offenders, violent offenders. TSU arranges subsidized housing, medication, social services, and treatment. We have reduced the abscond rate to 5% and the failure rate to less than 10% for this high-risk population. And the base rate for those things is about 15-20% and 50%. So we're proud of the strides that we've made and are focusing on those resources.

Then we won a Going Home grant. I think that was because we not only focused on the criminal side of these issues, but on the human and social services side as well, starting to better coordinate our human and social services with the kind of capital resources of the City of Portland. And in doing so, we're getting more of the housing targeted toward all of our populations, all of the special-needs population. That includes the offender population, because, as we all know, offenders are among the hardest to house in a community.

Another unique thing we found is that as we try to get folks ready to go back into the community, we found that they qualified for Social Security benefits but nobody was paying any attention to when they would get those benefits, and how they would get them.

So we started working on a project to get folks signed up for benefits before they leave the institution. We've got grant money that covers the time period until they actually become eligible, and when they are eligible, they can move on, which obviously is important if they're going to be able to have the money to pay for housing and all of those kinds of things.

One of the other things we do is have specific caseloads. Cognitive restructuring is something that's been kind of discussed today. We contract



with some nonprofit agencies in our community. One of them is Better People. They do multisystemic therapy. And listening to some of those stories, like listening to Joe, it's so incredibly powerful to hear people talk about the kinds of changes that they have made in their lives and what it was that helped them do it.

I'll talk briefly about our adult education program. I've got a slide here that shows some of the research that we've done before people enter the Londer Learning Center. We've had about 272 arrests. Two years after the Londer Learning Center, we cut that by over half and it was down to 113 arrests. And that's just one figure that gives you a sense of what it is we're doing.

So briefly, on collaboration, the partners that it takes to pull this kind of thing off are clearly the local and the state government's support, the state corrections – we wouldn't make it without it – and then all of the nonprofit agencies who work together along with other government agencies to make something like this happen.

One of our big efforts on the juvenile side – I've mostly been talking about adults – is to reduce the number of kids in detention. Again, the fewer kids there are who end up in detention, the less likely they are to learn even more criminal behaviors.

We've reduced our use of detention 66% since 1993 and we've made tremendous gains in the disparity between White kids going in and kids of color going in. And you can see that on this chart. Because it shows that from 1994 there's a gap. There are more minorities than White kids, until you get down to about 1997 and 1998, where they are very close. And then going forward, they are very close.

The numbers are going up. We went up to 38% two years ago because we're actually sending fewer kids to detention. So the percentage of kids going is higher. You keep making that population smaller and smaller and then the percentage of those that go gets higher.

To talk about some challenges to successful reentry, I feel like, listening to Joe, we got religion on this issue, but our chapel started to fall apart around us the moment we got religion. Our county has gone through three years of cut cycles, as I'm sure many of you have in this economic downturn. So we've cut numerous programs that were really good things. But at the same time, because you've got these priorities in place, you try to maintain some



of that on a small level. And personally, because I'm an elected official, I can say this kind of thing. I believe a new administration will make a huge change in getting those kinds of investments back into our community and into people. We've just seen a dramatic loss in the past few years.

In Oregon – Multnomah County – we've got to move more on the culturally-specific services to deal with the changing population. We've seen a dramatic increase in Latino youth getting involved in gangs, and we really need to focus on that because our community has services and systems set up for African American gangs but not for Latinos. It's something we're getting a handle on.

And concerning the geographic remoteness of state prisons – one of the things we are doing as a part of this whole project is to send our parole officers out into the prisons to meet with the offenders six months before they are released to come back into our community, whether they are in eastern Oregon or in Portland.

So that's some of what we're doing, and those are some of the challenges. Please feel free to contact me or the director of our community justice program, Joanne Fuller.

So with that, thank you very much.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Well, clearly you saw that this panel was a powerful one.

**Ms. Cruz:** Unfortunately I have to leave; I have a plane to catch, but thank you for the invitation.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Thank you, Serena, for sharing your perspective with us.

Now it is my turn to talk to you about the reentry landscape in Washington. But before I do that, you may be asking yourself, "Why should I care? Is prisoner reentry really a Latino issue, especially when we have so many other issues to tend to?"

And the answer to those two questions are, that you should care because we are talking about our own Latino brothers and sisters, our mothers, fathers, and sons – they are coming back to live in our neighborhoods, their children go to school with your children, and if they are not working side by side with you, they may become a problem for your family. Reentry and criminal and juvenile justice issues are Latino issues. The proof is that this year Latinos in



federal prison alone were 31% of the federal inmate population, while Latinos constitute only 13% of the general U.S. population. So it is clear that reentry is a Latino issue, because it's our loved ones who are in prison and who are coming back. Of the 650,000 adults reentering society every year, about one-third are Latinos.

Prisoner reentry is a hot issue right now; it is an incredibly important and timely issue. How many of you know that President Bush, during his 2004 State of the Union address, made a commitment to the country to work on reentry issues? And he dedicated \$300 million over the next three years to reentry programs. As a result, Congressman Rob Portman from Ohio [now U.S. Trade Representative] and Congressman Danny Davis from Illinois got together to propose a solution for reentry. Their bill is called the "Second Chance Act," H.R. 4676 (now H.R. 1704). It's already been introduced in the House of Representatives. There is a press release in the back of the room which talks about NCLR's support of this bill.

This legislation is an important first step toward reducing today's unacceptably high recidivism rate and its accompanying costs, including the threat to public safety. This bill does mainly two things: first, it would provide some funds for state and local governments and to community-based organizations to provide programs like the ones that you've heard about targeting formerly incarcerated populations. These programs include job training, education, housing, family reunification, substance abuse, and mental health services. NCLR's work on this bill aims to ensure that the limited-English-proficient (LEP) formerly incarcerated population is served and that family reunification strategies are strengthened.

The second component of this bill is to make a clearinghouse for data collection and data dissemination on people who are reentering. Believe it or not, that does not exist. There is no national repository of information that collects and disseminates data about programs that work and don't work.

This is a good bill. It is not a silver bullet, but it is the first step in the right direction. It is particularly good because it could provide resources to community-based organizations – like NCLR affiliates – that provide services to people coming out of prison. This is good because it means that a formerly incarcerated Latino could receive services right in his/her community, by an organization that understands his/her culture and language. The [types of] community-based organizations that could receive



these funds range from substance abuse and mental health providers, to workforce development organizations, to mentoring programs.

This legislation was introduced in the House this Thursday, and we are working with the Senate – Senator Brownback, Republican from Kansas – to introduce it in the Senate, hopefully before the session is over.

The “Second Chance Act” has a good chance of becoming a reality. It is a bipartisan bill. For those of you who know Washington politics, you know that the only way to make any legislation move is by having a bill that is supported by both parties. And this bill has that; it is a bipartisan bill, which is supported by the White House.

Perhaps the most encouraging thing of all is that for the first time in many years, we’re giving national attention to a problem that has been with us for many, many years. For the first time, the President of the United States acknowledged that reentry as we’ve been doing it is a problem, and that this issue is worth looking into and finding solutions for. I believe that President Bush wants to make reentry his legacy, one of his legacies in criminal justice. I hope he does.

I want to urge all of you, I want to challenge all of you, to contact your members of Congress to urge them to work in a bipartisan manner to ensure that this bill becomes a reality.

In addition to that, I would like to encourage all of you to talk to the Latino community, your churches, your neighborhoods, about the importance of criminal and juvenile justice issues. We need to ensure that we are all talking the criminal-justice, juvenile-justice reentry talk if we want to make people coming out of prison into productive members of society and if we want to maintain safe communities.

Oftentimes I say that the Latino community has a lot to learn from the African American community, especially when it comes to criminal justice and reentry issues. Latinos feel ashamed of their family members who are behind bars. We try not to think or talk about it. Unfortunately, if we stay quiet and ashamed we lose and the community as a whole loses. NCLR is urging the Latino community to think about criminal and juvenile justice as a Latino issue, just as you already do with education, immigration, or health care. And that way, the nation as a whole will benefit.





That's it from me and the legislative update. Remember to contact your senators and representatives and encourage them to support the "Second Chance Act."

As you witnessed, this panel provided lots of information, a lot of different model programs that work for both adults and youth coming back home after spending time in the criminal or juvenile justice system. But ultimately, this panel showed us that there are good programs out there and that reentry need not be a crisis, but an opportunity for reform and productivity.



# Audience Questions and Answers

**Ms. Arboleda:** Now I want to open it up for Q and A, and I want to invite former Congressman Garcia from New York to come up to the microphone.

**Mr. Garcia:** I want to first of all thank you – thank all of you. I happen to be a Christian. I happen to be on the board of Prison Fellowship, and I happen also to be a person who was incarcerated. As a congressman, I went to jail, and I want everybody here to know that I went to jail. And after four months, the government said that they were wrong. The Court of Appeals took everything and threw everything out. I say that to you because it's extremely important to understand I've seen lives changed, I've seen people turn themselves around.

And I will tell you, without hesitation, even if you get an inmate – excuse me, one of the folks – who comes out, every one of us in this room, in our lives, goes through peaks and valleys. Every one of us, whether we're incarcerated or we're not incarcerated.

What we have tried to do in Prison Fellowship is to get these people to understand that their spiritual life and their relationship with Jesus Christ – and I say that proudly – is the key. Because if you do come out and find yourself in a situation, even if you are out, you're still not happy. What we're trying to accomplish is to make people have a life that means something.

As I say to each and every one of you here, I'm delighted with all that you are doing. I think it's very important. For 25 years, I was a senator and a congressman, and I was always involved in prisons because I come from the South Bronx and I saw too many of my friends go to prison – I was at Attica prison. When I grew up, I was in three hostage situations.

But I think Joe said it better than anybody. If a person's heart is not right – as my daughter said to me when I was incarcerated – even some of us who are outside are in our prison. But I will say to each and every one of you, my life has changed – I now preach. I go everywhere they ask me to go to talk about how Jesus Christ has turned my life around. I'm still in Washington, I'm still a lobbyist. I'm with a law firm there and I'm going to





do everything humanly possible, because I know all of these people – I am now an authority on all of this.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Thank you, Congressman. Had I known that we had a Latino congressman who cares and understands this issue, I would've called on you a long time ago.

Also, if you work at or know of a reentry program please come to the microphone and share that with the rest of us.

**Audience Member:** My name is Emily Wetter and I work at the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections Reentry Program Initiative through the recipients of the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative Going Home grant. Our efforts are in four rural counties. We work with juveniles exclusively to improve their transition from incarceration back to their community.

And thank you very much.

**Audience Member:** I'm Gladys, and I'm from Maui, and we also are a recipient of that Going Home grant. So we're very excited about that. And the reason I wanted to be here today was I wanted to hear what other people are doing around the country. My staff was in Washington, DC, at a partnership conference while I was here.

I want to share some resources with you. I think we're all doing the same kinds of things.

We understand what is needed. It has to be comprehensive. You have to do everything from education to family to housing to tools to clothes to driver's licenses – the whole nine yards.

Where do you find the money? That's the big deal. You've got to really do the PR. You've got to prime your community to understand that this is an investment and that spending \$35,000 to send – in our case, we send our inmates to you. Large numbers of Hawaii inmates come to the mainland to be housed because we don't have enough prison space, which is crazy. Then they are alienated from their families. So we've got our government realizing that this is not a good thing.

I want to share something with you folks that I found purely by accident. I think it was an act of God. I was searching the Internet one day and came



upon a program called the Delancey Street Foundation. If you have not heard about them, go to the Internet and look them up. They are based in San Francisco on the Embarcadero. They serve over 500 people right there in that facility and they are being replicated around the country. They do not have locks on their doors. They have alternative sentencing. The participants live and work there. They are educated. A few weeks ago, 15 of them graduated with degrees in urban planning. These are former murderers, armed robbers, and whatever. It's fabulous. Check them out. They are coming to Maui. We are going to do a Delancey Street model on Maui.

The other thing I wanted to tell you is, what we've got to do, folks, is advocacy. It's all about advocacy. It's all about advocacy.

We are a small island. I have people say, "You're going to build that thing next to me?" And I say: "You know what? Better a Delancey Street than living next to you doing an ice house." What do you want? They are going to come back.

They've paid their debt. I hate the saying, "They've paid their debt to society." When do they not pay any more?

**Audience Member:** I work for a nonprofit agency out of San Diego County. Mainly, we provide social services, and we have a variety of them. We have Head Start, charter schools, we have a lot of programs. But the ones we're using the most are those with male and female facilities. It's like a miracle when they get out of there.

They have residential facilities, and they are living in facilities that serve 10 and 15 individuals. These individuals need to have a vision to reenter society as an individual, but, most important, they want to regain the custody of their children and the trust of the family as well as the trust of society. And they are allowed to go and work, come back. They share experiences. They share the chores. They cook their own food and they also provide community work for society and the community.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Thank you. I want to invite any questions for the panelists; please come to the microphone.

**Audience Member:** My name is DiMitrio. I have been an employee with the Federal Bureau of Prisons for the past 13 years and three years with



the Department of Corrections. And I really wanted to hear was what each one of you had to say.

During my career, I've been assaulted twice, been in two riots. And I got into corrections because my dad was an inmate, and I wanted to go in there and make a difference. And 13 years in the federal government and three years at the state, I don't think that's possible. I really believe that prison is a horrible, horrible place, not only for inmates, but for the staff working there. And it's up to you guys to come up with new programs all the time. Another new program, that's all I have heard – one program after another. And the only person on that panel that really had something to say was the gentleman up there about changing their hearts.

I really believe that's the key to it all. It's not some new program. It's having the ability to change these people's hearts. And it comes down to the staff that works there. Your job is to motivate the staff that works with the prisons. And I think you're not doing a good job because it's not working. Prison construction has increased in the past ten years. The prison population has increased and increased. So whatever you're doing, it is not working. And I've been in the middle of it all and I've seen more money going to prison construction and less money going to education, and our government is behind all of that. If there's anything we can do, it's to devote more time and money to juvenile corrections and get them while they are young before they grow up and become career criminals.

**Ms. Keehl:** DiMitrio, I myself started as a correctional officer at Brown when it was traditionally unheard of for Latinas, females, to be working in the Mexican security prison. So I can share some of your viewpoints in that. I remember that some of my colleagues in Brown mostly did not speak Spanish. I was one of the few females, in particular Latinas, and I would get name-called and all kinds of things that I won't say here in mixed company. And yeah, it was tough. That was 26 years ago. I was 26 years younger. It was tough, but I stuck it out. But you know what? Somebody has got to do that job.

And you know what? You're right. I believe that the backbone of the Department of Corrections is inside the prisons. However, we also have to think, they are going to be coming home too. And thank you for doing a great job. I'm sure you are.



**Mr. Avila:** DiMitrio, you just touched on one area, and you're right. Generally, the recidivism rate is going down a little bit on that. But the problem is the population is not going down. What's that tell you? That tells you that we're growing in prisoners. We have juveniles – we have juveniles who we're just training how to be prisoners. To some of them, it's an honor – an honor to get dressed blues in California. I don't know what color you have here in Arizona.

**Ms. Vigil:** Orange.

**Mr. Avila:** Not only that, let me tell you a story. A guy walked out with his pair of boots, probably worth \$10, that he was issued in prison. He went back to his town in Fresno and sold those boots for a hundred dollars to a gang because that's what they want to do. They can't wait until the day they get into prison.

Now we're obviously a non-secular group, but we're working with a secular group, PAL, Police Activities League. They've asked us to come alongside them, to include volunteers for their buddies program, which is a mentoring program for at-risk juveniles. I said, "This is unheard of, the church working with the police department." You know what? The answer is now we get our background checks done by the police department and we get it at no cost. They are the lead agency, so the liability falls on them. All we have to do is invite the church to volunteer to do this.

The first day in Fresno, California, when we asked the church to help, we produced 300 mentors to come alongside at-risk youth. We got 24 churches that asked us to come and give a presentation so their congregations could get involved with mentoring.

This is what we need to do across the United States. We need to collaborate with each other for one cause, and it's to save these people's lives. And we need to cut off the supply lines of juveniles going into prisons. If we do that and then we work on reentry, what happens is the gap gets smaller and our population is going to drop.

**Audience Member:** That's all very good, but the thing that I'm seeing today, right now, in the prison system is that when our wardens and our associate wardens and our deputy wardens retire after 25, 30 years in a prison, they get jobs working for private prisons as CEOs and associate wardens, so they are making a whole career about the incarceration of human lives. That's their whole career.



I've got 17 years working in prisons. You know what? If I could do it all over again, I would. But I have just a few more years to go before I can retire, and I want out. But these people get 25, 30 years working in a prison – a horrible, rotten place – and make a career out of it. And they are challenged by it every day and they are excited about this incarceration of lives and then they go on and retire and get a job as a CEO of some private prison they make more of a career out of. These people are making our decisions in our prison systems.

We need to go to our youth and invest more money in education.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Thank you. The reason why the prison population has grown so much and why we are locking up nonviolent offenders is because politicians in Washington and in different states have changed the laws. And the laws are more and more punitive for less serious crimes. Instead, we need to start talking about offering alternatives to incarceration for people who do not pose a threat to society. What I mean by that is that if you commit a nonviolent crime, for example a minor drug crime, you should not be locked up. Instead, you should be assessed and treated for drug addiction, because until you kick the habit, nothing will change. This approach makes sense because you are keeping people away from prison, but you're also saving money. It costs between \$20,000 and \$30,000 more, depending on the state, to send someone to prison than to send them to an in-patient treatment center. Every time I talk about the money saved through treatment, instead of incarceration, to county officials and state and federal government elected officials – everyone's eyes light up, and that's because everyone is experiencing a budget crunch.

So to put the blame solely on corrections personnel is perhaps the easy way out. I think that people in the corrections profession are honorable people. They want to make a difference. It is not up to them to determine how long of a sentence people serve. It is up to the laws that are being passed that allow these institutions to exist. They simply follow the rules. Now of course, there is always room for improvement; the treatment in some prison facilities could and should improve. That goes without saying.

If we had more wise congressmembers in Washington, DC, we would get rid of mandatory minimums, which have been sending thousands of low-level, nonviolent offenders to prisons across the nation, and we would spend more time, energy, and resources on high-quality reentry services for those people



who are serving time in prison. But that's not happening in Washington and it's not happening fast enough in the 50 states. Instead, more mandatory minimums are being enacted by Congress, judges' discretion is limited or removed, and prosecutors are given leeway to do whatever they want through their prosecutorial discretion. That's what's happening.

And guess what? The few resources that are out there are not going to community corrections or to treatment. They are going to prisons. So I hope that all of you are fired up and go back to your community and get involved in this issue.

**Audience Member:** My name is Patrick, and I am from California. I am with the Dimensions student organization.

My concern deviates from reentry but it's about the overall system. I'd like to say that in the United States we have 5% of the rural population. But with that said, we have 25% of the world's prison population. So you can see that number is disproportionate.

The number of Latinos and Black Americans make up 22% of the United States population, but they make up over 65% of the prison population. So if that doesn't catch your eye – I don't know.

My question is, given that prisons have become more of a profitable institution, do you feel that profit incentives have created incentives for tough-on-crime laws?

**Ms. Vigil:** Well, when you talk about profit incentives, I can't relate to that because I work for the state. We're certainly not a profit-making organization. I do know that we have private prisons, and we have probably five here in Arizona.

The Department of Corrections has not been totally responsible for this. Not because they are competitors with us, but because of the quality that we try to put into the prisons.

Another thing is that our mission for those who work in the prison is to protect the public – and I was glad that Angela talked about the fact that we don't make the laws. We have to abide by the laws.





Recently, we had an escape from one of the prisons. It was very costly to catch that escapee, and we were only too happy that no citizen was hurt or killed.

So in terms of profit-making, I can't relate to that.

**Mr. Avila:** I'll address that real quick. Yeah, it's profit-making. What happened is that because of the laws we put in, we've given a demand to an industry. We've started laws to incarcerate men and women for long periods of time. So because of that, we had to build prisons. And because we're building the prisons, now it's a common industry. Now, we can change that. We can change that by tailoring the laws to the crime. Right now, if you're in California, for instance, and it's your first offense for selling drugs or something like that, you're going to prison. You're not going to a halfway house, you're not going to diversion, you're not going to alternative sentence.

See, if we started doing that, then the industry wouldn't be as big as it is. Companies like CC [Correctional Corporation] all saw an opportunity to make money because we, the government, have given them a customer. So I don't think it's anybody's fault. You know, they are being entrepreneurs. They are making a profit. But if we change the laws and tailor the punishment to the crime, and if we believe in restoring justice and helping these guys who break the law to restore the community through restitution, reparation, or whatever, then what happens is we're not supplying so many prisoners to the prison and then it becomes less of an industry.

**Audience Member:** I'll be quick. Dorothy, I think it's great that you have programs in your prison, but I'm not sure if you're promising jobs to these people coming out – because it's important that they know they have something to look forward to.

Mary, I commend you for your sensitivity. I think we all need to realize that people who are in prisons are our brothers, our sisters, our moms, dads, and not only do they want to come out and do well, but we all want to see them excel.

And, Joe, I'm not a religious person, but I commend you for making it out and coming out and helping others.

And, Georgette, it's cool that you guys have programs that the government doesn't seem to care about or bother with, not that I can see.



My question is, if we have what you say, \$300 million, is that right?

**Audience Member:** To me that's like a slap in the face. That's like – it's just making fun of it. We can send \$87 billion to Iraq and billions all across the world, but we can't take care of ourselves.

Now when laws are passed, lobbyists are, by far, some of the most important people, not just the policy-makers, but the lobbyists, because the lobbyists are pushing the policy-makers to make those laws.

Do we have lobbyists who are encouraging those tough laws to go the other way so that we have better programs, so that we create laws that are helping our people? Is there money getting funneled to that? And, if not, then who are our people who are trying to take care of the community and these youth who we're all trying to look after?

**Ms. Arboleda:** I can answer that question, being a lobbyist in Washington.

Yes, I'm one of those lobbyists who is trying to push in the other direction, making sure that laws are changed, that we have alternatives to incarceration, that the programs inside and outside the prison fit the needs of the Latino community.

As I said before, NCLR is working on this issue at the federal level. There was no one in the United States working at the federal level exclusively on behalf of Latinos in the criminal and juvenile justice system. At the local level, we have people rendering programs like Southwest Key, and they have been lobbying at the state level, but no one at the federal level.

NCLR is part of a working group that is working hard to enact the "Second Chance Act," which is a good first step in addressing prisoner reentry. Another of the organizations working on this issue, and very much taking the lead, is Justice Fellowship and Pat Nolan, president and chief lobbyist of this organization, which works to reform the criminal justice system to reflect biblically-based principles of restorative justice.

So there is a concerted effort – a group of advocates who care about what happens to people while they are in prison, but also what happens to them after they are released from prison, and how their families and communities are affected by incarceration.





**Ms. Keehl:** I would also like to add that – this is just food for thought – it would cost between \$5,000 to \$8,000 to put someone in a residential treatment program - a substance abuser, a nonviolent drug offender. And it's going to cost you \$34,000 a year to house them in a prison. The question is what makes more sense?

**Mr. Avila:** Let me just address that \$300 million. Before the \$300 million, there was nothing. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to – wherever part of that \$300 million goes to - and I know where part of it's going – collaborate with them, and I want to help them build the model, a model that is so successful that the rest of the nation is going to see that, yes, we need that.

And now what's going to happen, because of public outcry, the laws will be changed and these programs, like that specific model, are going to be funded. So \$300 million isn't very much, you're right. But at least it's a start.

Somebody is starting to look at the criminal justice system now. I applaud Bush for that.

**Audience Member:** First of all, let me commend all of you. I have a few questions. You talked about lowest-risk offenders. Would that be your habitual criminal or would that incorporate the drug person that's, you know, going to come back out and get strung out again? What does that mean, the lowest-risk person?

Another question that I have is, you said it has to be in their heart, you have to change their heart. The only heart I know about is what somebody else said, the heart to go out and kill somebody, the heart to go out and beat somebody up.

That kind of heart is all I knew about, until I got hit in the face with the other kind of heart, what you're talking about. How long and how aggressively are we trying to change the programming that has taken more than 15 years, they say, of unworthiness that's instilled in these people?

What are we doing about that? And how aggressively are we going after these new programs or better programs? What are we doing about that?

**Ms. Keehl:** The first question was Senate Bill 1219, the transition to our program; there are zero criteria that you have to meet. First, you have to be



in prison for a time. You have to have had a drug-crime offense; you have to be low-low or low-medium level for general risk and violence risk.

In other words, these are the folks that most likely would have made it anyway because they were the lowest risk that we have. And for the most part, they could not have been convicted of a sex offense or aggravated assault or arson. And they have to have a place to stay. That's a kicker right there. We're finding a lot of these folks are being disqualified because they have no place to stay. And one of the criteria is that you must have a pre-approved placement to be considered.

As far as how aggressively they are going after programs, we are constantly hunting, searching for grants. I believe – and this is my own personal opinion having been in this business for a while – How can you get folks to start thinking about staying clean and sober and be productive citizens when they are trying to scrounge around for a roof over their head and something to eat?

**Audience Member:** My name is Roberto, and I just got out of prison, and it's been a long time. And I read the paper and it says \$600 million goes into prisons. And you know how much I earned in prison? Thirty-five cents an hour. And that's if I was lucky and I worked. Do you know, out of 40 people in the dormitory or in the building, fewer than 20 people are working? Vocationals? Forget it. Education? It's a slap in the face. We spend a lot of money on buildings. Why don't we spend a lot of money staffing them with the proper people?

When I got out, like they said, I had \$50. What can I do with \$50? I'm close to 60 years old. I have no work history. Nobody wants to hire me. I'm an ex-felon. I'm a Mexicano. Where else can I go?

**Ms. Arboleda:** We run into cases like yours very often; it's definitely a big problem. What I can suggest for you specifically is to reach out to your local community-based service providers. They may be able to guide you or give you some of the services you may need, for example job training. For the rest of us, we need to keep on raising the issue and addressing it with members of Congress until there are no more people who come out of prison with no options; because if we continue to fail them, then their only real option is to commit another crime to survive.



**Ms. Keehl:** Roberto, it's not all futile for you. If you're on supervision still – are you?

**Roberto:** No.

**Ms. Keehl:** Well, we can still – we do have community transition specialists that help someone coming out of prison. Did you max out your number? Is that what you did?

**Roberto:** Yes.

**Ms. Keehl:** We can still assist you with bus tickets. We have a job developer through the Arizona Department of Corrections and a parole officer who will help you. Before you leave, I'd like to give you my card and you can call me.

**Roberto:** Thank you.

Audience Member: I want to quickly follow up on something that Angela said about the importance of sentencing reform in this whole state. And I really want to hold that up as a key. I think many of us have a real short memory in this country and think that the way things are is the way they have always been and the way that they have to be.

And actually, these were decisions that were made over the past 30 years to get tough on crime, to create these laws. And they do not have to stay that way. We can actually do something in the state of Arizona and whatever state you happen to be from, as well as nationally.

I want to make a little plug for my program. I'm with the American Friends Service Committee. It's a nonprofit social justice program, and we're here in Arizona and across the country. We have a criminal justice program here. We're trying to work in coalition with organizations all over the state and with other national organizations to push a sentencing reform agenda here in Arizona with our legislature.

And I would be more than happy to talk with anyone who is from Arizona or anyone else who would like to get involved in that.

**Ms. Arboleda:** Thank you. It is programs and campaigns like that one that change laws. Sometimes we have better luck going state by state. I know it's longer that way, but sometimes we're able to see changes locally



first, and eventually the change will happen nationally at the federal level. I know of similar efforts in Michigan where they were able to restructure mandatory minimums in that state. And I am aware that there is an ongoing campaign effort here in Arizona.

**Audience Member:** My name is Monique Cordina, and my questions are for Dorothy and Mary.

I've actually had the opportunity to visit eight of the state prison complexes as a state auditor. I'm not here working. I'm just here on my own because I'm just interested in the issue.

One program that I got to look at was Arizona Correctional Industries [ACI]. And the scope of our audit was failing to look at the liability of the programs. We did look at who was entering the programs, but mainly we were commenting on ACI. Is it a self-sufficient operation?

One of the things that I noticed in visiting the Arizona prisons is that quite a few programs are in sex offender yards. And I can't remember who said this, but someone said that they like to hire – they like to have the business on the sex offender yards because they are well-behaved as inmates. It's a low institutional risk. High community risk, but low institutional risk.

So the question I have for you is, if there are quite a few of the sex offenders who are working in the prison industries, are there any specialized programs in place to deal with that population? I didn't really have a chance to look at that issue.

**Ms. Vigil:** Are you talking about whether there are any special programs for the sex offenders? Services so that they are ready when they get out?

**Ms. Cordina:** Right. Because I think from the community standpoint, I think a lot of us want to see people transition well back into the community, but I think there is a fear among the general population of sex offenders.

So are there special programs that you have in place to deal with that population?

**Ms. Vigil:** Yes. Absolutely, just like we have a couple of substance abuse programs – like Winchester, a prison in Tucson. I don't know if you had a chance to go there. But any inmate that goes there – there are less than 300 – has to get into treatment for substance abuse.



of their sex offense, and they get counseling and participate in groups in relation to that. But they also have other opportunities that we have in other prisons, such as education, vocational training. The only thing different there is they can't go outside the prison. So I would say that we do offer the same programs.

Now, again, because of funding, the therapeutic kind of counseling that they would need is not there.

**Ms. Keehl:** On the community aspect of it, what we do is we – for the month of May, and I'm using that month because that's when the stats – we do them at the end of the month. We had 222 registered sex offenders on community supervision. One hundred and twenty of those were in Maricopa County. When you come out on supervision, you register as a sex offender. You are required to attend substance abuse treatment, drug urinalysis, and have a pre-approved placement. Those who don't have a pre-approved placement, and if they are in a shelter or halfway house, we also have alternatives.

For example, if they were very violent and dangerous, we do have a global positioning system, GPS – I'm sure you've heard of that – that we also utilize on these folks. They are monitored very carefully while they are on supervision. After they get off supervision, that's another story. Of course, they register with each county that they reside in.

**Audience Member:** My name is Martin and I'm from Ohio. This is just a quick comment to Mr. Avila. You're talking about changing the minds of the people coming out of prison, because I too fall into that category. And I think what we need to do in talking about the recidivism rate is change the minds and educate the people – the employers out there need to see that there are some of us that come out that can make a difference and that have changed our lives. And also, I was just wondering, have any of your groups here had some kind of experience working with employers where you put people into job sectors with them?

**Mr. Avila:** In fact, we do. That's a good question. In fact, we have some employers that will hire no one but parolees because of the type of work they are getting. We have a manufacturing firm in Fresno, California, that manufactures vans for the CIA, the FBI, and other institutions like that, where they convert them. We sent them a few ex-prisoners, and their work



ethic was so good that they called us and said that they wanted more. Now they are hiring nothing but ex-offenders.

And another short story in Nevada. Nevada has seen – 15 years ago Nevada was locking up prisoners and throwing away the keys. Why? Because they weren't Nevada citizens. They were from Arizona, New Mexico, California, and the surrounding states. They didn't care about them. But what happened is Nevada started growing in population. The inmates became - were Nevada citizens. They really do care about them. So what they did is they started an industry where they gave job skills to the inmates. John Sheldy builds his shelving in the desert by Las Vegas and several other corporations are building semi-chassis there. What they do is they pay these inmates a reasonable wage, what they would be getting outside. The inmates are able to purchase their own tools, and 25% of what the inmates make in there goes back into the program. What happens there is they begin to expand the program, because the inmates are funding the program. Twenty-five percent goes into the restitution fund and 50% of it they get to save for when they get out. Three inmates were released in Reno, Nevada, at the same time. They pooled their money together and they opened up a body shop. They had the skills. They are now employing 25 people. This was three and a half years ago.

So I think that's what's happening. We're starting to educate employers and the employers see that the work ethic is good. They are showing up to work because they are talking about changed lives, and we're beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel.

**Ms. Vigil:** In one of our prisons, we have 30 inmates who are a wildland fire crew. And you know all of these fires that are going on in Arizona, they will call us and we have three staff members who go with them. We like to call them "hotshots." And when these inmates leave, they are hired for the forestry fire department.

**Ms. Kleinpeter-Greenwood:** One of the things that we also do at Southwest Key is we usually choose to speak to not only the lawmakers in Texas; we had an opportunity to sit down with our representative and have him actually hear from the youth about the Juvenile Justice Center and what they believe will make it better. We'll be doing that in different states.



We're going to California, as a matter of fact, with some youth. We're going to have an opportunity to do that again. So that's really important to be able to reform the system. So, yes, we are.

**Ms. Arboleda:** I want to close this panel by thanking all of you, the panel and the audience. This was a great workshop. I am proud and humbled to be able to do this work on behalf of the Latino community.

*Gracias.*





# Panelist Biographies

## Dorothy Vigil

Dorothy Vigil began her career in corrections in 1981 as the first superintendent of the former New Dawn Juvenile Correctional Center of Arizona. Five years later, she became the Deputy Warden, and in 2003, she became Warden for the Arizona Department of Corrections in Safford.

Warden Vigil received her master's degree in social work from Arizona State University and a master's degree in counseling and education from Seattle University. She has worked with male and female offenders at various levels of security. Warden Vigil is strongly focused on employee retention; she serves as a career mentor for staff and encourages professionalism and leadership.

## Mary Jimenez-Keehl

Mary Jimenez-Keehl received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Ottawa University and her Parole Officer Certification from Parole Officer Academy. She has been employed with the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) for the last 23 years. She began her career with ADC as a Correctional Counselor from Halfway House.

At the time of the presentation, Ms. Jimenez-Keehl was the Bureau Administrator for the Community Supervision Bureau, overseeing the offender population released into the community under supervision, 18 parole officers located throughout the state, 122 parole support staff, and all contracts involving the treatment of offenders, such as counseling and substance abuse treatment. Today, she serves as Associate Deputy Warden for the Arizona State Prison Perryville-Lumley Unit, which houses high-level custody inmates.

## Joe Avila

After a deadly car crash which killed a 17-year-old girl, Joe spent six and a half years in prison. Since his release in 1999, he has undergone a successful transition and spiritual redemption. He has shared his story throughout the U.S. and Mexico.





Mr. Avila is currently the Executive Director for Prison Fellowship of Northern California and Nevada. Joe is an ordained minister and received his education from Patten Bible College, Oakland, California; Bethany Bible Correspondence, Alabama; and Fresno Pacific University. He serves on the Board of Elders for his church, and Board of Directors for the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program, First Base After-Care Ministry. Mr. Avila is also a member of the City as Parish, Fresno, California and is a part of a national focus group concerning reentry of prisoners.

## Georgette Kleinpeter-Greenwood

Georgette Kleinpeter-Greenwood received her bachelor of science degree from the University of Texas in Austin. For 13 years, she has worked with youth in the foster care and juvenile justice system. She has worked with various facility-based, field, and outreach services to provide training to youth in the areas of drugs and alcohol abuse, education, and life skills.

Ms. Kleinpeter-Greenwood has been with the Southwest Key Program since early 2002. As the Executive Coach, she maintains an active role in grant writing, contract negotiations, staff training, and program start-ups. She has been successfully managing Southwest Key programs in the Texas cities of Austin, Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio, and in Phoenix, Arizona. These programs include counseling, home-based tracking services, residential facilities, and an alternative educational school.

## Serena Cruz

A Multnomah County Commissioner since 1998, Serena Cruz represents North and Northeast Portland. After receiving her undergraduate degree at Lewis & Clark College, Cruz earned a master's degree in public policy from the Kennedy School of Government of Harvard and a law degree from the Boalt Hall School of Law of University of California, Berkeley.

As a County Commissioner, she has worked hard on issues of education, affordable housing, and alcohol and drug treatment programs to build stronger, healthier communities. She is currently a member of various committees, including the Living Wages Review Board, Coalition for Latino Education, Housing and Community Development Committee, Alcohol and Drug Working Group, and Over-Representation of Minorities in the Criminal Justice System.



## Angela Maria Arboleda

Angela Maria Arboleda is the Civil Rights Policy Analyst at the National Council of La Raza (NCLR). Ms. Arboleda is responsible for civil rights and criminal justice policy analysis, advocacy activities, and research impacting Latinos in the United States.

In that capacity, Ms. Arboleda focuses on juvenile justice, hate crimes, racial profiling, sentencing reform and reentry issues, police brutality, and civil rights discrimination by state, local, and federal law enforcement. She is also responsible for monitoring congressional activities and preparing policy papers, testimony, and legislative memoranda on federal legislation that affects Latinos. Ms. Arboleda has authored many publications, the most recent one being *Lost Opportunities: The Reality of Latinos in the U.S. Criminal Justice System* – the first book to ever focus on Latinos in the justice system. Additionally, Ms. Arboleda represents NCLR in both mainstream and Spanish-language media.

