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Effective Practices to Facilitate Rural Reentry: A Policy Analysis

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Effective Practices to Facilitate Rural Reentry: A Policy Analysis

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Reentry Matters

6,741,400 persons under the supervision of US corrections (Kaeble, Glaze, Rountis, & Minton, 2016)

Average of 680,000 released from state and federal prisons annually (James, 2014)

- 2/3 recidivate within 3 years (Durse, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014)

In 2008, \$75 billion spent on corrections and incarceration (Schmitt, Warner, & Gupta, 2010)

Financial and societal costs

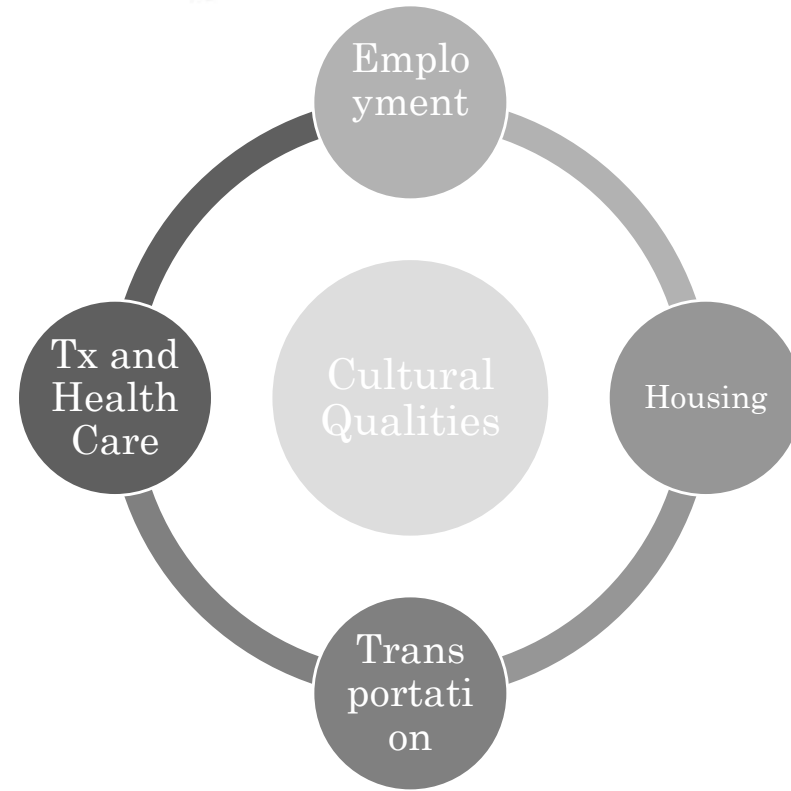
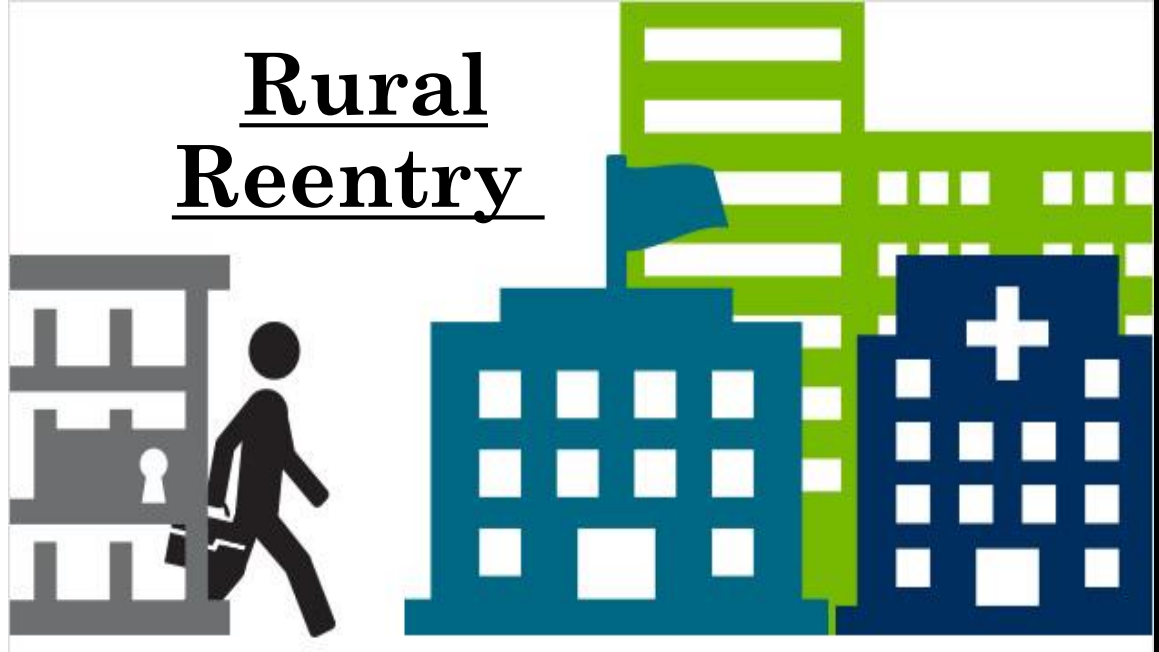
Rural Reentry
Rarely examined



Policies and programs designed for urban reentry



Unique challenges for rural returning citizens often ignored



The Problem...

- Statistics for those returning to rural areas is uncertain (lack of research)
- 65 million rural citizens (1/4 of the US population; Mather, Jacobsen, & Pollard, 2015).
- Urban models may not necessarily be translatable to rural needs



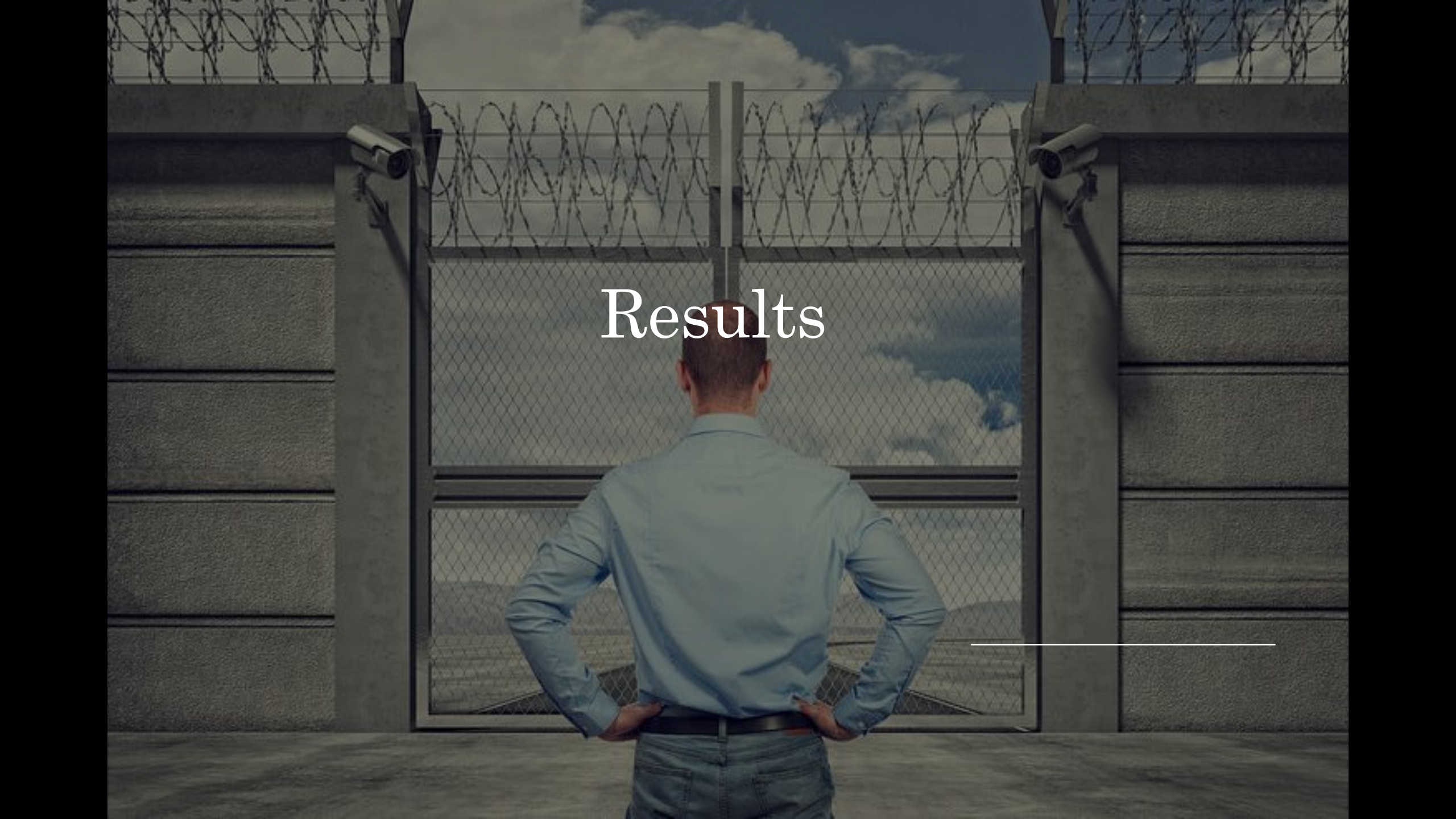
Review current policies and practices in the realm of US reentry to determine applicability/fit (or lack thereof) to identified rural reentry barriers and needs.

Aim

Methods:

Rational Model of Policy
Analysis
(Patton, Sawicki, &
Clark, 2015)

1. Intelligence gathering
 - Policy search: PRISMA method (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009)
 - Organization of data to define problems and goals
2. Identify problems
3. Identification and evaluation of alternative plans/policies
4. Choose preferred option*



Results



Employment Policies



Fair Chance Act (2003)

- Ban the Box
- Removal of criminal history box from public employment applications; limits investigations into backgrounds, and improves hiring rates (Avery & Hernandez, 2018; Southern Coalition for Social Justice, 2014)



Fair Criminal Record Screening Amendment (2014)

- Prevents unlawful job applicant screenings (i.e., inquiring about history during interviews)
- If offer is revoked, there must be a “legitimate business reason” presented.
- Violations = penalties



Equal Employment Opportunity Commission policies (EEOC, 2012)

- Guides use of records for employment decisions (arrest vs. convictions)
- Individual screening process (naturex2; time)
- Responsibility on employers to justify exclusion and returning citizens offered opportunity to explain
- Some states have laws limiting employer liability when hiring individuals with backgrounds

Occupational Licensing: Tennessee Fresh Start FRESH Act (2018)

- Licensing authorities cannot deny applications because of unrelated convictions and allows for applicant petition prior to application completion to check to disqualifications





Employment Policies: Rural Fit

- Smaller ‘Ban the Box’ effects (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2002)
 - 32% of employers don’t require background checks, but majority (62%) will not consider an individual with a criminal background
 - Anonymity of applications in rural vs. urban
 - “Off the books” jobs
- Employment at sufficient wages
 - Licensing = 10-15% higher pay (WHEP, 2015)
 - Wage disparity
 - Education disparity

Employment Policies: Implications for Change

- Education for business owners
- Increased anonymity in the hiring process (Rinne, 2014)
- Employers reported incentive from vocational training in or post-prison (Fahey et al., 2006)
 - GED
 - Training
 - Licensure
 - Consider needs of communities





Housing Policies

Public Housing

Transitional Housing

- **Public Housing:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD, 2016)
 - Makes recommendations including discouraging PHA blanket bans against tenants with arrests → consider nature² and time.
 - Oakland Housing Authorities: Consideration of circumstances and individual trials
 - Screen denials dropped from 12% to 0.8%; of the 0.8% denied, 64% who pursued hearing had decision reversed (OHA, 2012)
 - New York City Housing Authority: Revised background check policy and exclusionary period (Bae, deZerega, Kang-Brown, Shanahan, & Subramaian, 2016)
 - NYCHA Family Reentry Pilot Program (FRPP, 2016)
- **Transitional Housing**
 - US Department of Justice (2016): Use of halfway homes
 - Project Greenlight (NYC; Rodriguez & Brown, 2003)
 - Gwinnett Reentry Intervention Program (GRIP; GA)
 - 3-year recidivism rate for those in GRIP = 8% (Andersen, Tate, & Carr, 2015)

Public Housing Policy: Rural Fit and Implications for Change

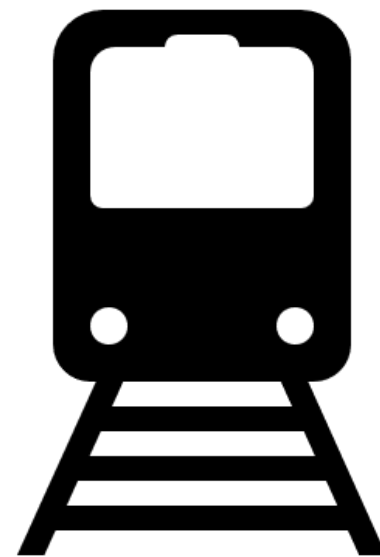
- Public housing availability
 - Consistent decrease in federal housing investments (HAC, 2013)
- NYCHA FRPP
 - Promising for rural returning citizens
 - Utilization of existing housing
 - Social support and family reunification
 - Barrier: Case management services



Transitional Housing Policy: Rural Fit and Implications for Change?

- Lack of resources to connect
- Urban Institute examined 53 TH programs for families
 - 90 percent acceptance for families
 - Complete lack of programs from rural areas
- Funding barriers (concentrated in more urban areas)
- HUD recommendations for screening emphasized not only in public market, as private more available
- Focus on families and family reunification
- Search for alternative funding options (Wodahl, 2006)
 - USD Agriculture's Rural Housing Services for substance use disorder (2016)
 - Grants (Fannie Mae Foundation)
- Vacant properties
 - US DOJ guideline for rehabilitating abandoned property
 - Housing and employment

Transportation



Drivers Licensees

- Automatic suspension laws (drug convictions)
 - Utah removed mandatory suspension
 - Massachusetts repealed conditions of automatic suspension and waived \$500 reinstatement fee
- Better Drive Act (2017)
 - Federal funds no longer withheld from states who do not automatically suspend
- Licenses suspension as punishment for outstanding court debts (43 states still practicing)
 - Changes include eliminations of such policies (CA), driving on suspended counted as traffic infraction vs. jail-time misdemeanor (CO); and affordable payment plans (VA)

Public Transportation

- Public Health Service Act (1944): grants to expand rural healthcare access through transport
- Mobility Services for all Americans (US Department of Transportation, 2016)
- The Ride Home Program (2013)

Drivers License: Rural Fit

- Heavy reliance on private transportation
- Opioid epidemic in rural communities related to licenses
- Low-income areas and low wages
 - Waiver of reinstatement fees
 - Affordable payment plans



Public Transportation: Rural Fit & Implications

- Dependent on existing resources and the needs of the communities (Stauffer, 2008)
 - Help for all (more partnership potential?)
 - Route planning
 - Discounted fees
 - RHP
 - Adjustments: Prioritizing needs
- Mobile units that eliminate some transportation needs
 - Community needs
 - Placement
 - Distance between services
 - Transportation hubs
 - Occupancy rate
 - Telehealth & Technology
 - Wyoming: Skype-based remote law offices (WJB, 2018)
 - Reentry preparation
 - Pennsylvania: Juveniles
 - Alaska: Life skills
 - Illinois: Virtual reality practice



Treatment & Health Care



- Rural Health Clinic Services Act (1977)
 - Additional reimbursements for clinicians in underserved areas
 - Increasing employment of PAs and NPs
- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA, 2010)
 - Expansion for insurance and Medicaid in participating states (rural and returning, depending on state)
 - Individuals with SMI enrolled in Medicaid while incarcerated are more likely to access services covered (MH and SA)

Treatment & Healthcare

Rural Fit

- In states with expansion, Medicaid coverage rate increased ~6% (Foutz, Artiga, & Garfield, 2017)
- ~65% of rural uninsured live in non-expansion states
- Coverage does not automatically include the addition of lacked services
 - 13% of rural counties have no behavioral health providers

Implication for Change

- Incentives (loan repayment)
- Tele-Health
- Communication between health care professionals and correctional facilities
 - Scheduled transition
- Integrated Health Care



Cultural Qualities





Trust in Services

- Continuity of care and building of relationships
- Increased show-rates and health outcomes for returning citizens who were connected with PCPs and case management prior to release (Vigilante et al., 1999; Wang et al., 2010; Young et al., 2015)

Social Support

- Rural value of kinship (Weisheit & Donnermeyer, 2000)
- Maintenance of social support while incarceration to reduce recidivism (Bales & Mears, 2008; Derkzen, Gobeil, & Gileno, 2009).
 - Policies vary by institution regarding length and number of visits
 - Alaska and NY encourage visitation to strengthen ties to the community and family
 - Parent-child visitation (Office of Child Development, 2011).

Trust in Services: Rural Fit & Implications for Change



- Building trust via pre-release coordination
- Information packets with all necessary information (ACA and providers)
 - Include photos if possible
- Not just limited to healthcare profession
 - Faith groups, case officers, mental health, and other community groups
- Families/Support Systems too (Martinez, 2006)

Social Support: Rural Fit & Implications for Change

- ~63% of individuals in state prison are 100+ miles from their family (Mumola, 2004)
 - Emphasis on mail, phone calls, and virtual visitation
 - Pigeonly
- Transportation for family to facilities at reduced/no cost (FairShake Reentry Resource Center)
 - Hub locations
- Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS)
 - Increase community connectivity via coordinated visits with community volunteers
 - Operates in all federal and military prisons



Conclusions & Limitations

Summary



- Several domains of policy beneficial to rural reentry
 - ACA
 - Drivers licenses and reinstatements
 - Occupational licenses
- Improvements and expansions necessary
 - Systematic and grassroot level
 - Ex: occupational licensing opportunities

Future Directions & Limitations

- Specific offense types
 - “Hard to place”
- A more in-depth look at local policies for direct, specific changes
- Look at reentry policy/programming in other countries
- Privatized prisons
 - 7% of state; 18% of federal prisons
- General lack of research on rural communities
 - Expand research and outcome data in these areas



Questions?

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