

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT

L. FELIPE RESTREPO
CIRCUIT JUDGE

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To: Michael A. Chagares
Chief Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

Mitchell S. Goldberg
Chief Judge, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

From: L. Felipe Restrepo *LF Restrepo*
U.S. Circuit Judge

Scott W. Reid
Scott W. Reid
U.S. Magistrate Judge

Date: February 21, 2025

Re: 2024 Annual Report – Reentry Court Program

Our district's Reentry Court, also known as the Supervision to Aid Re-entry ("STAR") program, continued to thrive and receive national recognition for its seventeen-year history of achieving successful outcomes for returning citizens who pose a risk of recidivism for violent crime.

Individuals recently released from incarceration, especially when incarcerated for violent crimes, face a host of barriers that lead to reincarceration and negative public safety outcomes. Nearly two-thirds of individuals incarcerated for violent offenses in the federal prison system are rearrested, most within the first year and a half of release.¹ Nearly 40% of individuals who are rearrested are arrested for a new violent offense.² However, the STAR program demonstrates that these outcomes are preventable.

Since the program's inception, only 13% of our 523 participants have been rearrested or revoked. That rate is significantly below the district's revocation rate for similarly situated individuals not enrolled in our program. Our arrest/revocation rate has remained consistent throughout the program's existence.

¹ U.S. Sent'g Comm'n, *Recidivism of Federal Violent Offenders Released in 2010* at 5 (Feb. 2022), https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2022/20220210_Recidivism-Violence.pdf [<https://perma.cc/NF6K-SDST>].

² See *id.*

By reducing revocations and imprisonment, the reentry program saves taxpayers significant money based on an estimated \$44,090 per year (\$120.80 per day) cost of imprisonment per inmate.³ It also reduces the negative collateral consequences of reincarceration on families and our community, helping to improve generational outcomes and public safety.

This memorandum is submitted for review by the Board of Judges.

Highlights include:

- *The Program's High Graduation Rate:* 402 out of 523 (77%) total participants since 2007 have either graduated (402), are currently in the program (27), or have completed the program and will take part in the next graduation (8).
- *The Participants' Low Revocation/Arrest Rates:* Of the 523 total participants since 2007, only 69 (13%) failed to complete the program due to revocation (48) or rearrest (21).
- *The Lower Revocation/Arrest Rates of Participants as Compared to Similarly Situated Individuals:* The total of 69 arrests or revocations out of 523 program participants yields an overall revocation rate of 13%. This remains below the U.S. Probation Office's overall five-year average revocation rate of 31.4% for individuals with similar risk profiles.
- *Lower Revocation Rates District-Wide:* The reduced revocations for reentry participants have contributed to the reduction in our district's total revocation proceedings. Revocation rates have dropped nearly 52% from 218 in 2007, when our program started, to only 113 in 2024.⁴
- *Lower Revocation Rates Compared to National Trends:* The program's overall revocation rate of 13% is below the average revocation rates for all U.S. Probation Offices across the country, which is 34.3%. It is also far below most recent data related to national trends for similarly situated individuals, which shows that nearly 67.5% of individuals recently released for similar crimes are revoked.
- *Success rates continue to be validated by researchers in the field:* Our results have been consistently validated since 2010 by the LaSalle University Criminal Justice Department. Most recently, on February 11, 2020, Dr. Caitlin J. Taylor, Associate Professor of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, published an article in the *Justice Evaluation Journal* outlining her findings of the program's first 265 participants. Compared to similar individuals under supervision who were not in the program, reentry court participation reduced the odds of supervision revocation by

³ Annual Determination of Average Cost of Incarceration Fee (COIF), 88 Fed.Reg. 65405 (Dec. 6, 2024).

⁴ This reduction corresponds to the Probation Office's increased use of evidence-based practices to help reduce recidivism. In addition, the Probation Office has adopted many of the practices developed in Reentry Court for use with its general population.

62% and increased the odds of employment by 146%.⁵ Her research concluded that our program's success is an "extremely valuable contribution to the criminal justice system as well as to the wider society." Although arrest rates for reentry and non-reentry participants remained the same, Dr. Taylor found that reentry participants instead received sanctions "with minimal risk to public safety as opposed to being sent back to prison." Measuring success based on revocation and a return to prison rather than on the mere fact of arrest, Dr. Taylor concluded, establishes that the use of intermediate sanctions by our reentry program helps to reduce criminal justice system involvement. Reentry programs such as ours, she noted, provide valuable indicators of returning citizens' progress toward future desistance from crime and becoming productive members of our community. A 2020 study by Madelena Rizzo of Drexel University featured similar findings measured over a 36-month period and highlighted the significant impact of reentry graduation on reducing arrests and revocations.

- *Successful Implementation of Swift Sanctions:* Sanctions have been graduated and highly successful. Uniform sanctions are applied as part of our effort to employ evidence-based practices and improve our results. One of the program's strengths is the reentry judge's ability to impose swift sanctions for any deviation from the conditions of supervised release, or to encourage positive reentry behavior. The Reentry Team has strived for consistency and predictability in sanctions to ensure the participants are treated fairly. Sanctions have included the loss of weekly credit toward completion of the program, curfews, home detention, placement in a halfway house, and brief periods of imprisonment (maximum seven days). A sanction of imprisonment is imposed only after other sanctions have failed, and we have not had to use an imprisonment sanction in several years.
- *Resources Saved:* The reentry program has generated significant costs savings over 16 years based on the FY 2023 estimated annual rates of approximately \$44,090 per year (\$120.80 per day) for incarcerating a federal inmate and approximately \$41,437 for halfway house confinement.⁶ Beyond the cost of confinement, incarceration takes a broad negative economic toll on many aspects of society due to the loss of potential earnings of incarcerated individuals, the cost to family members for prison phone calls and commissary, among other factors.⁷

⁵ Criminal justice researchers are increasingly pointing to metrics besides recidivism to measure the success of reentry programs, noting that these sociological benefits in many instances are far better metrics of predicting sustained success for individuals recently released from incarceration and for improving overall public safety. See, e.g., Jeffrey Butts & Vincent Schiraldi, *Recidivism Reconsidered: Preserving the Community Justice Mission of Community Corrections* (Harv. Kennedy Sch., Mar. 2018), https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/wiener/programs/pcj/files/recidivism_reconsidered.pdf.

⁶ Annual Determination of Average Cost of Incarceration Fee (COIF), 88 Fed.Reg. 65405 (Dec. 6, 2024).

⁷ See generally Prison Policy Initiative, *Economics of Incarceration* https://www.prisonpolicy.org/research/economics_of_incarceration/ (last updated Jan. 23, 2025) (cataloguing numerous studies on the economic consequences of mass incarceration).

- *Sociological Benefits of the Program:* There have been countless intangible sociological benefits incurred by having participants employed and engaged in other positive aspects of community life, such as mentoring, volunteering, and parenting. The positive experiences shared by participants and their families during reentry sessions and graduations help balance the otherwise adversarial nature of the criminal justice system. The program also has heightened community awareness of issues faced by returning citizens and the need to give them support upon release from prison. Dr. Taylor has consistently cited those sociological benefits in her research of our program's success. These benefits are likely the driving force behind the program's lower recidivism rates and contribute to overall community safety.⁸
- *Increased Collaboration:* The program has solidified the positive working relationships among the judiciary, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the criminal defense bar, the legal community, area law schools, the Bureau of Prisons, the U.S. Marshals Service, and the U.S. Probation Office. These strengthened relationships have contributed to the formation of new programs that support returning citizens within the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.⁹ The program's success and collaborative spirit led to the creation of two other specialized courts in our district addressing drug addiction (Relapse Prevention Court) and mental health (STRIDES).
- *National Impact:* Our program continues to be a model program locally and nationally. On March 11, 2020, the Administrative Office for U.S. Courts published a video on our program that was distributed nationally. The video "Court Eases Reentry into the Community and Crime-Free Life" highlighted our program and its success as a national model. In 2010, former Attorney General Eric Holder visited our court and said the DOJ planned to replicate our reentry program nationally. We continue to develop innovative programs to assist reentry participants, many of which are being replicated by other federal district courts throughout the country. We have hosted visits from more than 25 federal courts, including Southern District of Florida, District of Massachusetts, District of New Jersey, Middle District of Tennessee, Southern District of New York, Eastern District of New York, Northern District of Georgia, and District of New Mexico. In 2023, three districts started Reentry Courts with the help of EDPA. The team also hosted visits from representatives from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Our team members have been featured at many national programs and trainings, including Federal Judicial Center conferences. Our program's materials are posted on the U.S. Sentencing Commission's website and

⁸ Harv. Univ. Inst. Pol's. Crim. Just. Pol'y Grp., *Successful Reentry: A Community-Level Analysis* (Dec. 2019), https://iop.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/2023-02/IOP_Policy_Program_2019_Reentry_Policy.pdf.

⁹ For example, Reentry Team members and program graduates have also spoken at and contributed to many of the 30 Reentry Simulations hosted by the U.S. Attorney's Office since 2022. The Reentry Team also regularly engages with the Bureau of Prisons on local programs and national reentry issues. For example, this year, Senior USPO Angela Sledge, Reentry Specialist Mia Lamb, Director of Reentry Programs Cyndi Zuidema, and AUSA Joan Burnes, and attorneys from the Federal Defenders gave a presentation to women incarcerated at the Federal Detention Center as part of the Bureau of Prisons' Release Orientation Program.

Judge Restrepo was featured on its “Commission Chats” podcast.¹⁰

I. Background

On June 3, 2007, the Board of Judges authorized a reentry program focusing on individuals in the City of Philadelphia with a significant risk of recidivism and history of violent crime. The Probation Department first identifies pre-release offenders with a Risk Prediction Index (“RPI”) of 5, 6, or 7 (on a 0 to 9 scale), or with a high Post-Conviction Risk Assessment (“PCRA”) score, and then seeks their consent to participate in the program.¹¹ Participants have a significant criminal background (most involving violent crime), need employment training/assistance, or are likely to benefit from the program’s resources in some other way.¹²

The program’s objectives include preventing recidivism, reducing the high rate of violent crime in the City of Philadelphia, and assisting high-risk returning citizens with the multiple social, family, and logistical issues they confront upon their return to society after years in prison. Intensive judicial oversight supplements the Probation Office’s supervisory regime, with ongoing input from the Federal Public Defender, the U.S. Attorney, and other community partners.

Approximately 30 to 40 participants, divided in two separate courts, attend bimonthly sessions in open court before a judge for 52 weeks. To graduate, a participant must achieve 52 weeks of compliance. Weekly credit is not awarded if a participant fails to meet program requirements or engages in new criminal activity. The sessions are monitored by Court Security Officers (CSO) and recorded by a court reporter. Representatives of the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Federal Public Defender’s Office, the Probation Office, and judges meet for an hour before each court session to discuss each participant’s progress and develop plans to help the participants succeed.¹³

¹⁰ U.S. Sent’g Comm’n, *Commission Chats: Episode 10: Problem Solving Courts miniseries, Part One- Judge Phil Restrepo and the STAR Court* (2023), <https://www.ussc.gov/about/commission-chats-episode-10>.

¹¹ Although the Probation Office will review reentry candidates recommended by sentencing judges or by counsel, the reentry team and Dr. Taylor believe it is critical to the program’s integrity that it enrolls only participants who meet the program’s eligibility requirements. For example, our program is not equipped to deal with individuals who have serious drug addiction or mental health problems and are better suited for specialists within the Probation Office. Similarly, evidence-based practices demonstrate that low-risk individuals do not benefit from the intensive oversight of a reentry court.

¹² In 2011-2012, Probation converted from the RPI score and now targets participants with a medium or high risk based on PCRA. The shift occurred because research has established the PCRA score may be a more accurate predictor of risks faced by ex-offenders. We now evaluate each participant for various “risk factors” in areas such as thinking, social associations, and problem solving.

¹³ Team members from the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Federal Community Defenders, and U.S. Probation Office currently include: Assistant U.S. Attorneys Anthony Carissimi, Joan Burnes, Laurie Magid, and Meaghan Farley; USAO Reentry Specialist Mia Lamb, and USAO Director of Reentry Programs Cyndi Zuidema; Assistant Federal Public Defenders Jesse Smith, Timothy Wright, Michael McCrossen, and Elizabeth Toplin; Probation Officers Angela Sledge and Karen Myslinski; Supervisory Probation Officers Kyle Watts and Fred Crawford, Administrative Assistant Dee Delany. In addition, Hon. Theodore McKee of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit serves as the back-up judge and attends both reentry court sessions.

The most unique aspect of the program is the group dynamic. All participants attend court as a group and are required individually to discuss their accomplishments and identify any obstacles they are encountering in the reentry process. This dialogue leads to the establishment of goals for the participant to achieve before the next court session. If the participant is not complying with the goals of the program or is violating the terms of release, graduated sanctions are imposed and explained to the entire group. Uniform sanctions are employed to foster positive changes in behavior and thereby avoid revocation proceedings.

II. Recent Updates & Accomplishments

1. In 2024, the program accepted 14 new participants and hosted two graduation ceremonies with a total of 25 graduates.
2. One of our most innovative and successful initiatives is the Drexel Reentry Project. In 2014, we worked with Dr. Kirk Heilbrun and his research team to develop a comprehensive assessment and intervention program to meet the needs of returning citizens. Dr. Heilbrun's team developed a cognitive behavioral therapy program featuring comprehensive assessment, motivational enhancement, and intervention with an aim to reduce the risk of recidivism for returning citizens. The project consists of an intake assessment; a session focused on providing assessment feedback and enhancing participant motivation for treatment, and two modules consisting of thirteen sessions each. The first module provides sessions on skills (e.g., communication and self-care skills) and an introduction to criminal thinking. The second module focuses on improving thinking styles and problem solving. Participants attend weekly group or individual therapy sessions consisting of relevant lessons, activities, and discussions.

Since 2015, 209 reentry participants were referred to Drexel. Of those participants, 81 have successfully completed the program and 11 are currently receiving treatment. Also, 117 participants either (1) declined to participate, (2) did not complete the program due to scheduling or other conflicts, (3) graduated from the STAR program prior to completing the recommended treatment, or (4) have been placed on a waitlist if they are not interested now, but likely will be in the future. There are 29 Drexel clinical psychology doctoral students who have served as clinicians and evaluators, along with six clinical psychology doctoral students from external programs.¹⁴

3. Our nationally recognized pilot program with the Philadelphia Housing Authority ("PHA") continued to provide affordable housing for returning citizens. This initiative provides vouchers for Section 8 affordable housing, thereby allowing reentry participants to secure free or low-cost rental housing in Philadelphia's private housing market. The vouchers are rotated to new participants every two years and since the program's inception in 2014 have enabled us to provide rental assistance to 45 reentry participants for stable and safe housing in low-crime neighborhoods. Since 2014, all but three participants living in PHA-subsidized housing

¹⁴ The project coordinator is Hailey Fasone. The supervising psychologist is Kirk Heilbrun. Other key project personnel over the past year have included Tierney Huppert and Avery Chard.

remained crime-free and fully compliant with their supervised release conditions. In 2022, PHA increased the number of vouchers for our program from 10 to 30. There are currently 19 people in the program. This year, 11 participants submitted applications to PHA.¹⁵

4. We expanded our financial literacy mentoring program with students and faculty from Temple's Fox School of Business. We enlisted the Fox School in 2017 to help reentry participants develop better skills in budgeting, saving, credit, banking, and finance. The Fox Financial Literacy team has provided monthly presentations and one-on-one consulting for reentry participants to provide financial literacy education and address personal finance-related issues. This year, a cohort of 12 Temple students contributed to Reentry Court and were supervised by Professors Jeffrey Boles and James M. Lammendola. The students gave six presentations during Court sessions on How to Identify and Protect Yourself from Scams, Setting Financial Goals, How to Build Savings, How to Manage Debt and Expenses, Credit, and Loans. One-on-one consulting was provided for 35 reentry participants that addressed personal finance-related issues such as establishing and maintaining personal and household budgets, setting short and long-term financial goals, reviewing credit reports, identifying ways in which to build credit scores, how to dispute a credit report, applying for secured credit cards, opening savings and checking bank accounts, understanding student loan obligations, addressing debt management, addressing automobile insurance questions, reading and understanding how medical expenses are insured on a medical bill, redeeming savings bonds that are jointly owned, understanding the different obligations when deciding whether to lease or own an automobile, social security issues, and how to get started in composing a Business Plan.

The Consumer Bankruptcy Assistance Project (CBAP) also provides assistance during the summer and winter months while students are on break from their academic year.¹⁶ This year, volunteers assisted with budgeting, small business development, and counseling participants on predatory loans, securing loans and credit, redeeming savings bonds that are jointly owned, tracking down judgments, and understanding student loan obligations, among other matters.

5. Since 2015, we have distributed \$52,583 in emergency assistance to reentry participants from a Philadelphia Bar Foundation fund established by the Hon. Gerald A. McHugh of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.¹⁷ Money from the Luongo Fund is used to assist reentry participants with emergency expenses, such as housing

¹⁵ Applicants for the housing vouchers are selected by a committee of Reentry Team members. This year, the committee AUSA Joan Burnes, Assistant Federal Defender Rossman Thompson, and Supervisory Probation Officer Fred Crawford.

¹⁶ The initiative is coordinated by Sherry Hoban, Esq. Volunteers include Leslie Baskin, David Searles, Zachary Perlick, Matthew Hamermesh, Neil Gupta, and Claudia Springer.

¹⁷ The fund is dedicated to Judge McHugh's mentor, former Chief Judge Alfred L. Luongo. Donations to the Luongo Fund constitute tax deductible contributions to the Philadelphia Bar Foundation, a nonprofit organization. Since 2015, 68 donors have contributed \$81,984 to the fund. Philadelphia Bar Foundation Executive Director Jessica Hilburn-Holmes, Paul Kirk, and Mary Mance assist with the management and coordination of the fund.

deposits, food, medical care, furniture, vocational testing, and other fees that cannot be paid by the U.S. Probation Office.

6. We continued our program in which law students represent reentry participants and graduates in various legal proceedings under the supervision of volunteer attorneys. Law students from Temple Law School, University of Pennsylvania Law School, and Drexel Law School worked with participants and graduates to resolve legal matters that pose significant obstacles to employment and successful reentry. For example, students helped participants and graduates obtain the dismissal of numerous traffic citations (saving them thousands of dollars in fines), establish payment plans for traffic fines, restore driving privileges, modify child custody and support orders, file for divorce, remove fraudulent credit accounts and negotiate debts, address property and landlord/tenant disputes, reduce or eliminate state court costs and fines, respond to tax audits, challenge employer wage theft, and address numerous additional legal matters. The students worked under the supervision of individual attorneys¹⁸ and attorneys from area law firms, including Ballard Spahr LLP, Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP, Duane Morris LLP, Hausfeld LLP, Montgomery McCracken Walker & Rhoads LLP, Hogan Lovells US LLP, Marcus & Marcus, LLC, Ormond Law, and Sherr Law Group.

In 2024, the legal interns assisted 45 participants and graduates, many of whom had multiple legal matters. They also successfully eliminated over \$30,000 in debt that participants and graduates had accrued as a result of traffic citations and state court costs and fines.

In addition to supporting reentry participants and graduates on legal matters, the students attend biweekly seminar classes and explored topics such as mass incarceration, restorative justice, the collateral consequences of conviction, and the need for innovative solutions to reduce recidivism. Maya Sosnov teaches the seminar and coordinates legal services for reentry participants and graduates.

7. We also continued our partnership with Temple University's Legal Aid Office. Students from Temple Law provide legal advice and/or appear in court on behalf of reentry participants for family law matters. This year, the Temple Legal Aid Office provided legal advice and/or representation in 14 legal matters for STAR participants. The Clinic provided extended representation in 10 family law matters (achieving positive results in 4, 1 client withdrew, and the other 5 matters remain open). The Clinic also provided legal advice for 4 STAR participants. Of these matters, 7 were custody matters, 6 were support matters, and 1 involved paternity. Clinic Fellow Tiffany Cobb, Esq. provided able supervision to the students this year while much of Family Law Litigation Clinic Director, Professor Sarah Katz's time was focused on a new project funded by the Stoneleigh Foundation. Professor Katz has also helped us create a network of Temple Law graduates who practice family law to take future cases outside of Philadelphia County.
8. Volunteer federal judicial law clerks continue to assist reentry participants, graduates, and general probationers with applying for public benefits and creating and updating

¹⁸ Alexandre Turner, Esq. and Thomas Ivory, Esq. continue to provide extensive support to the legal interns.

resumes.¹⁹ Law clerks help individuals obtain benefits, such as food stamps and health insurance. Working through Pennsylvania's online benefits application site, COMPASS, clerks meet with these individuals in the courthouse to help determine eligibility and complete the required applications and follow up. The clerks also assist if an individual's public benefits are reduced or terminated. In 2024, the program assisted 31 participants and graduates.²⁰

9. Employment initiatives continued to develop. All current reentry participants are employed, enrolled in job training, or engaged in volunteer opportunities in the community. Employer partners include JAM Catering, Our Closet, Neighborhood Film Co., Athena Global Advisors, MedLife, Philadelphia's Department of Parks & Recreation, PAR-Recycle Works, and Pierogie Kitchen.
10. Our team also continued to maintain and grow relationships with organizations that provide supportive services to the Philadelphia community:
 - The Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity continued to perform criminal record expungements for reentry participants. Attorneys meet with reentry participants to identify acquittals and dismissed cases that can be removed from the participant's state criminal record. Removal of non-convictions significantly reduces the participant's criminal history and removes a significant barrier to employment.
 - Community Legal Services provides representation to our participants in Social Security Disability appeals and landlord-tenant disputes.
 - The Wardrobe and Our Closet provide free clothing to reentry participants and the community at large.
 - The PREP Program, a course taught by Tom Duffin of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice pairs returning citizens with students from University of Pennsylvania Schools of Social Work, Business, and Law, to assist them with developing small business and entrepreneurship ideas.

¹⁹ In 2024, this initiative was led by Alexandra Kudatzky (Judge Reid), Andria Bibiloni (Judge Restrepo), Caitlin Rice (Judge Restrepo), and Matthew Meyer (Judge Restrepo). The following law clerks provided assistance: Dominique Fenton (Judge Restrepo), Molly Connor (Judge Kearney), Erica Rodarte (Judge McHugh), Will Hanna (Judge McHugh), Jahvonta Mason (Judge McKee), Taylor Frazier (Judge Freeman), Jim Santel (Judge Krause), David Silberthau (Judge Baylson), Samuel Rudovsky (Judge McHugh), TJ Rivera (Judge Restrepo), Wilberto Sicard (Judge Gallagher), Anna Newport (Judge Rufe), Owen Healy (Judge Goldberg/Judge Rendell), Edward McAuliffe (Judge Wolson), Carlos Martinez (Judge Sanchez), Margaret Hart (Judge Bartle), Jennifer Harchut (Judge Kenney/Judge Scott), Kennedy Barber-Fraser (Judge Quiñones Alejandro), Maria Cosma (Judge Bartle), Chanelle Jones (Judge Hodge), Victoria Burke (Judge Leeson), Alexa Levy (Judge Hodge).

²⁰ All law clerks meet with reentry participants under the supervision of Court Security Officers provided by the U.S. Marshals. Since most courthouse work became remote in March 2020, law clerks have continued to assist participants, communicating by phone and email.

- Council For Relationships provides individual and family therapy services.
 - Philadelphia FIGHT's Institute for Community Justice, a local nonprofit organization, provides comprehensive health and reentry services to the Philadelphia community.
 - PRO-ACT provides reentry participants with supportive services, opportunities for community service, and job readiness assistance. PRO-ACT also operates a reentry support group designed to provide individuals with a positive and safe peer support network and an opportunity to engage in candid discussions about struggles with reentry. Participants receive two weeks of extra credit for completing seven sessions.²¹
11. The Reentry Team established the Robin Nilon Community Partner Award given to organizations and individuals in the community who demonstrate exceptional commitment to supporting participants and graduates of the program. The award is a tribute to the legacy of Professor Robin Nilon, who was a devoted member of the Reentry Team until her passing in August 2024.
 12. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit continues to promote our program and the goals of reentry. In addition to employing reentry graduates, The Circuit created a reentry working group to help foster Circuit-wide collaboration and creativity on reentry issues. The Third Circuit has hosted four reentry conferences for teams from every court in the Circuit. Several Reentry Team members helped plan, participated on and led panels at the 2024 Third Circuit Reentry Summit. This year's conference featured panels highlighting the work of STAR and a Reentry Simulation by the U.S. Attorney's Office. The U.S. Sentencing Commission sent its team that studies alternative-to-incarceration court programs.
 13. Third Circuit staff also created an innovative tutoring program for reentry participants designed to provide educational guidance and support participants in their successful reentry into the community. Chiquita Dyer, a legal assistant in the Circuit Executive's Office, coordinates the tutoring program to help reentry participants achieve their educational goals concerning preparatory classes for GED testing, college entrance examinations, or job placement testing. The program provides participants with relevant resources, such as copies of the Pennsylvania Driver's Manual and the Pennsylvania Commercial Driver's manual. It also works with participants in obtaining copies of their GED or high school transcripts—two documents typically required by employers. The program receives support from community partners such as the City of Philadelphia Office of Adult Education Beyond Literacy Program, Graduate Philadelphia, Philadelphia Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC), Temple University Well Program, and Amy Y. Karf, Esq. of Karf, Karf, and Cerutti, P.C. Since August 2016, Third Circuit employees

²¹ In response to the drug-related murder of a reentry graduate in 2019, several reentry graduates visited a reentry session and offered to launch a mentoring program to help people previously incarcerated avoid a return to violent crime. Jack Land provides one-on-one assistance to participants and graduates and facilitates the Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program.

have tutored 127 participants.²²

14. ESSA Bank & Trust of Stroudsburg, PA provides low-interest, non-collateralized loans of up to \$15,000 to reentry participants for housing, education, or automobiles. Five reentry participants have obtained loans to purchase automobiles they required for commuting to work.
15. The Reentry Court Team also continues to assist individuals with items and processes that are essential to their successful reentry. As part of the intake process, the Team helps participants obtain credit reports, their birth certificates, social security cards, and state identification. The Team also helps participants register to vote.
16. This year, the U.S. Probation Office procured and developed an AlphaCard Identification System that issues identification for people on federal supervision that do not have that vital document. In addition, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has accepted the U.S. Probation Office's photo identification as a supporting document to obtain state-issued photo identification. The initiative was officially launched on April 11, 2024.
17. The success of EDPA's Reentry Court continues to influence the development of new reentry programs and criminal justice practices nationwide. Members of the team regularly provide guidance to other federal districts on best practices for establishing and operating Reentry Courts. This year, Senior USPO Karen Myslinski gave a presentation about Reentry Court to a criminal justice class at the Pennsylvania State University in Abington, PA. Mia Lamb and Cyndi Zuidema presented at the District of Hawaii's Probation & Pretrial Officer Retreat. Graduates of Reentry Court, alongside members of the Reentry Team, participated on panels at the U.S. Sentencing Commission, the 2024 Third Circuit Reentry Summit, and Reentry Simulations.²³

III. Conclusion

Our reentry court program continues to unite all players in the federal criminal justice system to reduce recidivism and help returning citizens rebuild their lives.

cc: Manuel A. Jimenez, Chief U.S. Probation Officer
Nelson S.T. Thayer, Jr., Acting U.S. Attorney
Eric Gartner, U.S. Marshal
George Wylesol, Clerk of Court
Lisa Evans Lewis, Chief Federal Defender
Christina Ruffino, Federal Judicial Center
Dr. Caitlin Taylor, La Salle University

²² The program is coordinated by Chiquita Dyer. The tutors are Aina Renwick, Carmella Wells, Christina Koperna, Julie Todd, Laura Greene, Lori Casner, Nicole Faust, Zipporah Melton, Waddah Madison, and Andrew Silva.

²³ Nate File, *What's it like to come home from prison? Reentry simulations let people experience it firsthand*, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER (May 2, 2024), <https://www.inquirer.com/news/philadelphia/prisoner-reentry-programs-simulator-20240502.html>.

Dr. Kirk Heilbrun, Drexel University
Kelvin Jeremiah, Executive Director, PHA
Margaret Wiegand, Third Circuit Executive