

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/how-family-ties-help-incarcerated-people-return-from-jail-to-the-community>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Guest blogger Stefan LoBuglio is chief of Pre-Release and Reentry Services in the Montgomery County (Maryland) Department of Correction and Rehabilitation.

As the division chief of one of the pilot sites the [Montgomery County \(Maryland\) Pre-Release Center](#) in the Family Justice Programs [Close to Home project](#), I was extremely pleased to participate. We are lucky in the field of corrections to have Vera yet again provide us with insightful action-oriented research that highlights the challenges and draws upon the opportunities at our disposal to assist incarcerated people prepare for their return home. The Family Justice Program has given corrections professionals two decades of on-the-ground experience and research that demonstrates the value of working with families of incarcerated individuals. While those of us who work in corrections may know this intuitively, [the Close to Home project report](#) offers compelling documentation of this finding. Moreover, the report honestly describes a great paradox. Just at a time when the correctional field has much better information about effective reentry strategies, we are besieged with fiscal cutbacks that impinge upon programming and services for incarcerated people. Family Justices work points the way for correctional agencies to improve reentry with modest costs. While Montgomery County has worked extensively with families of incarcerated people for nearly four decades, the training and the tools from Vera affirmed the value of our commitment in this area and gave us new methods to deepen our ties with families. I also credit this project with challenging me as the administrator to look at ways to increase family involvement in times of cutbacks, which we did by increasing visiting periods from six to seven days a week. Although we were not able to implement the Relational Inquiry Tool for our security staff (Resident Supervisors) during the project period, I was interested in Vera's experience with security staff at the facility in Green Lake County, Wisconsin, and we will explore this possibility in the future.

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