

Reentry MythBusters are fact sheets, designed to clarify existing federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated people (FIP) and their families.

These resources cover areas such as public housing, access to benefits, parental rights, employer incentives, Medicaid suspension/termination, and more.

As you will see, some federal laws and policies are less restrictive than is commonly perceived, as is the case with public housing and food assistance benefits. In several policy areas, states and localities have broad discretion in determining how policies are applied and/or have various opt out provisions for states (TANF and child support are examples here). In some cases, statutory barriers do not exist at all or are very limited, as is the case with federal hiring. In fact, some federal policies and practices contain incentives for assisting the formerly incarcerated population (i.e., federal bonding and tax incentives for employers hiring justice-involved individuals).

Who are Reentry Mythbusters for?

Prison, jail, probation, community corrections, and parole officials who want to ensure that individuals can access federal benefits, as appropriate, immediately upon release to help stabilize the critical first days and weeks after incarceration. Pre-release applications and procedures are available for certain federal benefits (Veterans, Social Security, food assistance, and student financial aid).

Reentry service providers and faith-based organizations who want to know how to access the laws and policies related to public housing, SNAP benefits, federal student financial aid, and Veterans, Social Security, and TANF benefits. The Reentry MythBusters also describe child support options, parental rights while incarcerated, and the appropriate use of criminal histories in hiring decisions.

Employers and workforce development specialists who are interested in the incentives and protections involved in hiring formerly convicted individuals. The Reentry MythBusters are also helpful to employers (including federal agencies) who want to better understand the appropriate use of a criminal record in making hiring decisions.

States and local agencies that want to understand, modify, or eliminate certain bans on benefits (such as TANF, SNAP) for people who have been convicted of drug felonies.

Directly-impacted leaders that want to work for change in their own communities and in the lives of those with whom they work, serve, and live.