



Experience in Action: Building Pathways to Access for Older Americans in Reentry

September 23rd, 2025

Who We Are



JustUScc.org

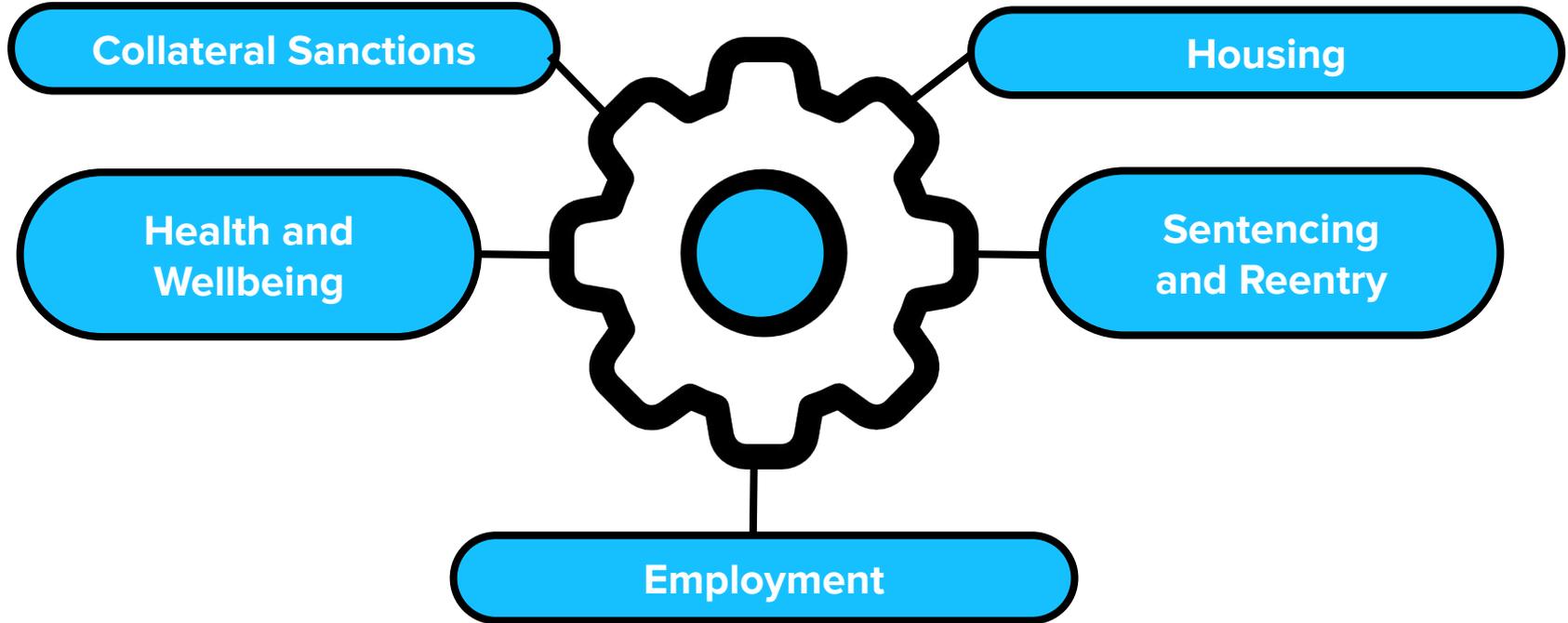
The JCC is a national federal policy table led by and created for individuals who are directly impacted. The JCC forms the connective tissue needed to catalyze full participation in policy practices and changes for formerly incarcerated people and directly impacted individuals and their communities.

Our Why

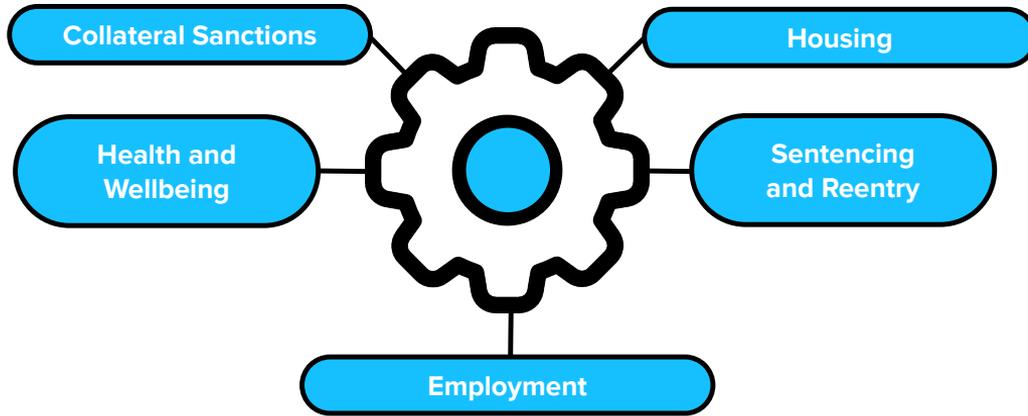


The voices of those most impacted by the criminal legal system have been missing and/or excluded from decision-making tables.

Priorities



Elder Justice A Multi-Priority Effort



Elder Justice — a concept essential to economic mobility — is often limited for the person returning from incarceration both by their changing basic needs as they age, as well as diminishing funding and access due to changes in federal programs and policy exclusions.

The legacy of mass incarceration has created a reality where the average age in prisons is climbing

Often, traditional programs may not be equipped to adequately serve the needs of reentering seniors

The advocacy community's efforts have historically not fully addressed this intersectional issue

Centered back to people



USAging

The Older Americans Act & Aging Policy

Olivia Umoren Ezeuko, Director, Public Policy and Advocacy
JustUs Coordinating Council Speaker Series

Background & Mission of USAging

- National network of 600+ Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)
- Advocates for the Title VI Native American Aging Programs that help older adults and people with disabilities live with optimal health, wellbeing, independence and dignity in their homes and communities.

What is an Area Agency on Aging (AAA)?

Overview of AAAs

- Formally established in the 1973 Older Americans Act (OAA) as the “on-the-ground” organizations charged with supporting older adults in the community.
- For 50 years, AAAs have served as the local leaders on aging by implementing local systems of coordinated aging and other home and community-based services for consumers.
- AAAs provide some services directly and others through contracts with local service providers. Most AAAs contract with local service providers for meals, transportation and in-home services. However, most AAAs are direct providers of Information and Referral/Assistance, case management, benefits/health insurance counseling and family caregiver support programs.

Older Americans Act of 1965, P.L. 89-73



President Lyndon Johnson signing the
OAA, July 14, 1965.

Core Services, Local Flexibility



Nutrition



Supportive
Services



Caregivers



Health &
Wellness



Elder Rights

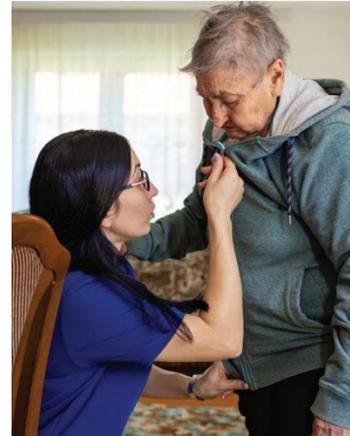
Older Americans Act

- Seven titles in the Act, added over time, reauthorizations every 3-5 years
- **Title II** established U.S. Administration on Aging
- **Title III (Grants for State and Community Programs)** is largest section of OAA and funds the bulk of services, including...
 - III B Supportive Services and Senior Centers: catch-all, flexible, 25 purposes!
 - III C Nutrition: most well-known, congregate meals (C1) and home-delivered (C2)
 - III D: Evidence-Based Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
 - III E: National Family Caregiver Support Program

OAA Title III B: Supportive Services...

- In-home help with living!
- Transportation
- Chore services
- Home modifications
- Social engagement activities
- Senior Centers
- Legal services
- Adult day services
- Any other services necessary

USAging



OAA Title III B: Information, Referral & Assistance



- Local hotlines to connect callers to HCBS and related services.
- Case management for HCBS
- Benefits and eligibility counselors
- Health insurance benefits counselors
- Care Transitions coaches
- Identification and prevention of elder abuse

Eldercare Locator National Call Center

Connecting Older Adults
and Their Caregivers
to Local Resources



1 (800) 677-1116 • www.eldercare.acl.gov

800.877.1116

Monday-Friday,
9:00 am ET to 8:00 pm
ET

eldercare.acl.gov

OAA Title III: There's So Much More!

- **C: Nutrition Services**
 - Home-Delivered Meals
 - Congregate Meals
 - Nutrition Services Incentive Program
- **E: National Family Caregiver Support Program**
 - Respite
 - Support and navigation help
 - Caregiver training
- **D: Evidence-Based Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Services**
 - Wellness and socialization programming at local senior/community centers
 - Chronic Disease Self-Management programs
 - Falls Prevention programs

The Older Americans Act does NOT exclude individuals with conviction histories from these essential services.



Older Americans Act



Photo courtesy of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe

- **Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program** is a low-income community service/employment program run by Dept. of Labor
- **Title VI: Native American Aging Programs**, competitive grants to tribes for supportive services and meals (Part A), caregiver program (Part C)
- **Title VII: Elder Rights** provides funding for Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, elder abuse prevention, some legal services

OAA Title V SCSEP

OAA Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program

- Nation's oldest program that provides community service and work-based job training opportunities for older Americans 55+
- Provides training for low-income, unemployed older adults, participants work average of 20 hrs/wk
- Matches eligible older adults with part-time training assignments for nonprofit organizations. For most, their SCSEP experience leads to permanent employment.
- Enrollment priority given to:
 - veterans and qualified spouses
 - individuals reentering from incarceration
 - individuals 65+
 - individuals with a disability
 - and more...

What's Happening with SCSEP?

- This spring, the President's HHS budget called for the elimination of the SCSEP program
 - Note: The President's budget is **only a proposal**, it cannot be implemented unless the House and Senate agree to mirror the proposal
- The Senate proposed to keep the program, but cut funding
- As of last week, the House proposed to eliminate the program entirely
- Future of SCSEP is unclear, but if eliminated, there will be implications related to new Medicaid work requirements from the "One Big Beautiful Bill" Act

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act

- OBBBA (H.R. 1) is a combination of:
 - major program increases (more than \$150 billion for Customs and Border Patrol, other homeland security programs; \$144 billion for defense projects)
 - historically large cuts to Medicaid (~\$1 trillion over 10 years) and SNAP (\$300+ billion over 10 years)
 - extension of 2017 tax cuts and new tax cuts (total cost ~\$3.7 billion)
- Cuts are to pay for tax cuts and increases but they don't fully do so: the bill generates \$3.3 trillion to the debt over 10 years (Source = Congressional Budget Office)

Medicaid Cuts Overview

- Nearly a trillion in Medicaid cuts over 10 years
- **NEW work requirements by Dec. 31, 2026; 80 hours of paid, volunteer or educational efforts a month for those 19-64 years old**
- Tightens eligibility, more frequent eligibility re-tests

What's Next?

- Government shutdown looming
- Congress' Deadline: September 30 because Fiscal Year 2026 begins October 1, 2025
- Last week House passed a temporary funding bill to fund the government until November, Senate rejected it
- Government funding outcomes unclear, shutdown could happen
- **The time for advocacy is now!**

Advocate for OAA!



- Sample Advocacy Alert suitable for deep grassroots and consumers!
- New OAA fact sheet for education
- Social media kit with multiple images and messages to use
- Coordinated with ADvancing States, MOWA, NANASP and NCOA
- *usaging.org/currentissuesandresources*



Leaders in Aging Well at Home

Public Policy Team

Amy Gotwals, Chief, Public Policy and External Affairs
Olivia Umoren Ezeuko, Director, Public Policy and Advocacy
Seth Ickes, Public Policy Associate
policy@usaging.org

1100 New Jersey Ave, SE, Suite 350
Washington, DC 20003
202.872.0888

www.facebook.com/theUSAging
www.x.com/theUSAging
www.instagram.com/theUSAging



JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

Justice in Aging is a national organization that uses the power of law to fight senior poverty by securing access to affordable health care, economic security, and the courts for older adults with limited resources.

Since 1972 we've focused our efforts primarily on fighting for people who have been marginalized and excluded from justice, such as women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with limited English proficiency.

Older adults and reentry

- Nearly a quarter of all individuals in prison are over 50 years of age – and this proportion has been rising for years.
- Older adults in prison face more mental and physical health challenges than their community-dwelling peers – including higher rates of cognitive issues and more issues with navigating activities of daily living.
- Access to health care is essential at reentry for older adults – to address urgent physical, mental, and long-term care needs.

Health care options at reentry

Focus of this presentation:

- **Medicaid**, available to low-income individuals. Eligibility varies by state
- **Medicare**, available to older adults and people with disabilities

Other options:

- Private health insurance available on an **ACA Exchange**. With subsidies, some plans are \$0 premiums
- Insurance available through a **current or former employer (including retiree or veterans coverage)**

Medicaid

- Available to low-income individuals
- Eligibility varies by states
- Organizations that can help with applications (local Medicaid offices; ACA navigators; hospitals; other assisters; Area Agencies on Aging; and local disability groups)
- State websites have information on eligibility and enrollment

Medicaid reentry demonstrations

- Some states have developed demonstrations to make the transition from incarceration to Medicaid easier.
- These demonstrations must include case management services pre-release, medication assisted therapy, and thirty day supply of medication, and assistance accessing services in the community.

Why Medicare is important for older adults at reentry

- Medicare is a federal health care program available for individual age 65 and over, and certain people with disabilities under age 65.
- Medicare may be the only coverage that an older adult is eligible for
- Medicare can offer better provider networks than other health programs like Medicaid
- Medicare is designed to start when a person becomes eligible. Late enrollment can trigger late enrollment penalties.
- Individuals can enroll in both Medicaid and Medicare at the same time

Medicare resources

- Networking / referral resources
 - SHIP counselors (SHIPhelp.org)
 - Opportunity for reentry advocates to connect with local SHIP programs
 - Opportunity for federal advocacy: call for adequate SHIP funding
- Written Resources
 - Medicare.org
 - Medicare and You
 - CMS' [Incarcerated Medicare Beneficiaries](#)

Medicare issues

These are issues that often come up; SHIP counselors can help and there are written resources for addressing:

- Late enrollment penalties (there are a number of options for addressing, including the [Post-Incarceration SEP](#))
- Navigating enrollment and managed care options
- Accessing Medicare Savings Program and other assistance with Medicare premiums and cost-sharing
- Dealing with past-due Medicare premiums

Recent changes to Medicare

Recently changed federal regulations make access to Medicare at reentry, effective January 2025.

- The post-incarceration Special Enrollment Period regulations were modified, making clear that people on parole and probation (and other statuses) are eligible. For more information, see Justice in Aging's post-incarceration [SEP brief](#).
- The Medicare payment regulation was modified, making clear that Medicare enrollees should be covered by Medicare while on parole and probation (and other statuses). For more information, see Justice in Aging's [fact sheet](#).

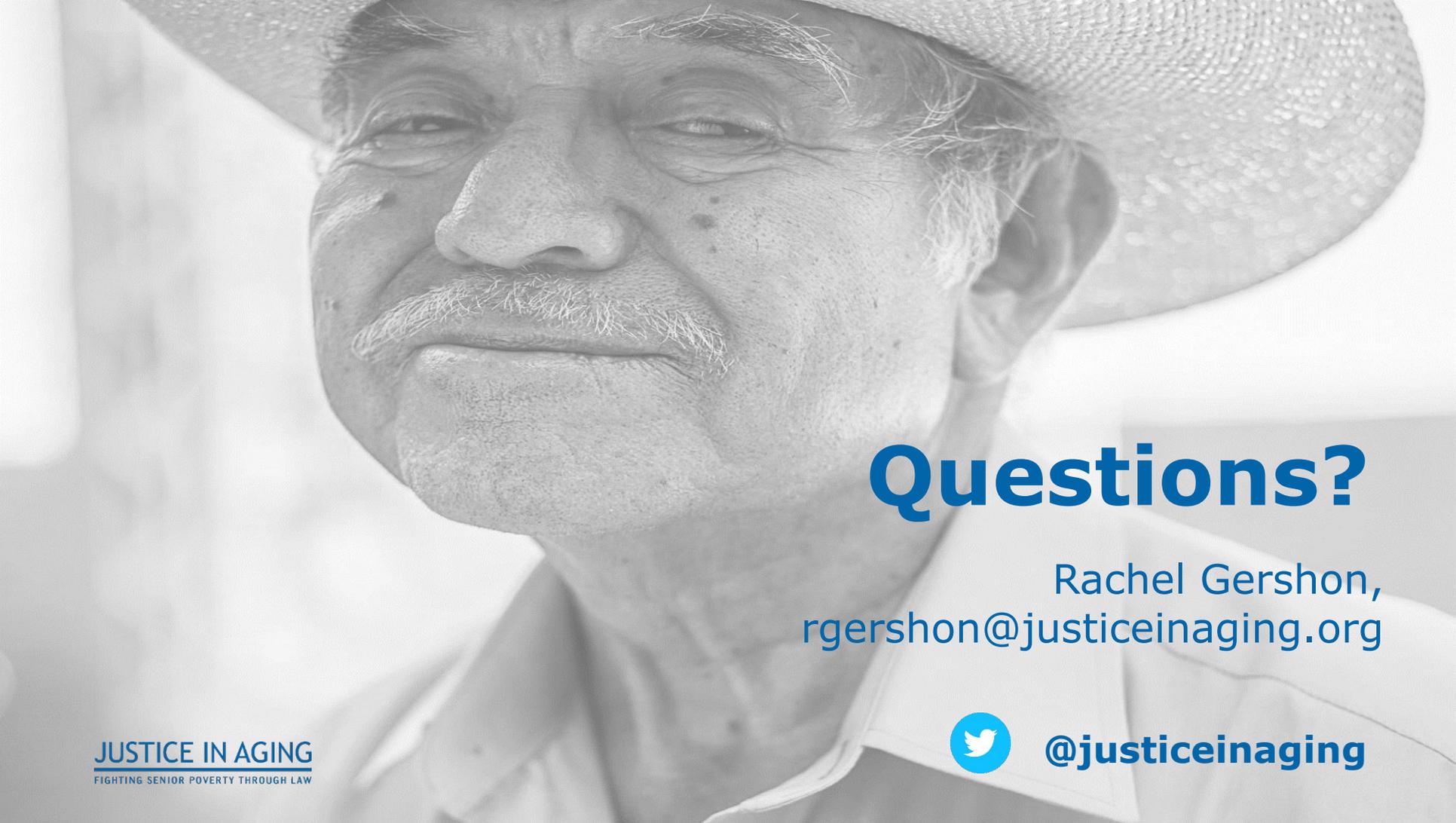
What about H.R. 1?

- H.R. 1 is a complicated statute, affecting Medicare, Medicaid, and other health care programs
- Many people will not lose health coverage. It is important to check
- Many opportunities to advocate at the federal and state level to mitigate harm

Resources

- Justice in Aging's reentry resources:

<https://justiceinaging.org/issues/reentry-formerly-incarcerated-older-adults/>



Questions?

Rachel Gershon,
rgershon@justiceinaging.org



[@justiceinaging](https://twitter.com/justiceinaging)

Serving Those Who Served Our Country in Uniform

[Find Your State's Homeless Reentering Veterans Specialist](#)

[Military Health System: Connect with Coaches and Mental Health Resources](#)

[Specialized Programming and Treatment Issues for Veterans in Jails and Prisons](#)

[Find a Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist](#)

[Veteran Intercepts in the Criminal Justice System](#)

[Veterans Pods in Jails and Prisons](#)

[California's Veteran Resentencing Legislation Overview](#)

[Council on Criminal Justice: Veterans Justice Commission Policy Recommendations](#)



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TAKE OUR SURVEY!!