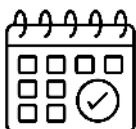


## Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable

### September 2023 Newsletter

## Roundtable Updates

### September Planning Council Meeting



Please join us for the upcoming Planning Council meeting on September 11th from 12:30-2pm on Zoom. All are welcome to attend. [Here is the link to register.](#)

It is time for our annual business meeting! This month, we will be voting to approve the Reentry Roundtable's revised bylaws. It will be **very important** that we have a quorum of Planning Council members present to usher in the new organizational structure.

The Executive Committee will also present the 2024 funder deliverables and give a preview of upcoming projects and initiatives. We hope to see you then!

[Zoom Meeting Registration](#)

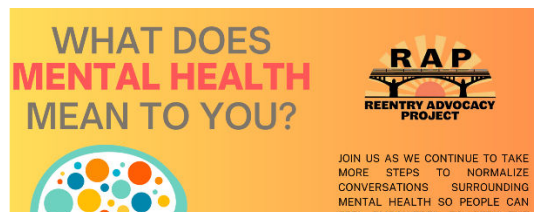
[2023 Planning Council Schedule](#)

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### Reentry Advocacy Project (RAP)

Are you or is someone you are close to directly impacted by the criminal justice system? If so, please join the Reentry Advocacy Project (RAP) for a monthly conversation with other folks with lived experience with incarceration and reentry.

Our next monthly meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 6, 2023 from 6-7pm. [Please click here to register for the meeting on Zoom.](#) See you soon!



In this meeting, we will continue last month's conversation on mental health. We will discuss taking more steps to normalize conversations surrounding mental health so people can feel empowered to seek the help they need.

You can stay up-to-date with RAP meeting times and other events by following them on [Facebook](#). Please contact Barbara Ornelas (Reentry Advocacy Fellow) at [info@reentryroundtable.org](mailto:info@reentryroundtable.org)



**MEAN TO YOU.**

JOIN US AS WE CONTINUE TO TAKE MORE STEPS TO NORMALIZE CONVERSATIONS SURROUNDING MENTAL HEALTH SO PEOPLE CAN FEEL EMPOWERED TO SEEK THE HELP THEY NEED.

MENTAL HEALTH IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS PHYSICAL HEALTH. IT AFFECTS HOW WE THINK, FEEL, AND ACT. TAKING CARE OF OUR MENTAL HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL FOR OVERALL WELL-BEING. HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL TIPS TO HELP YOU MAINTAIN GOOD MENTAL HEALTH.

PRACTICE SELF-CARE. TAKE TIME TO DO THINGS THAT YOU ENJOY, SUCH AS READING A BOOK, TAKING A WALK, OR HAVING A RELAXING BATH. PRIORITIZING SELF-CARE CAN HELP REDUCE STRESS AND IMPROVE MOOD.



**WEDNESDAY  
06 SEPT, 2023**

**VIA MEETING LINK  
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM**



**We're Over Halfway: Your Support Today will Help us Reach Our Goal!**

The Roundtable needs your support to increase opportunities for professional skill-building and mentorship for persons with justice system involvement. We are thrilled to announce that we have already raised \$1,800 of our \$3,500 goal - thank you so much to the donors who have contributed so far! Financial support from our network by September 15th is needed to allow our current Fellow to participate in two premier leadership cohort opportunities.

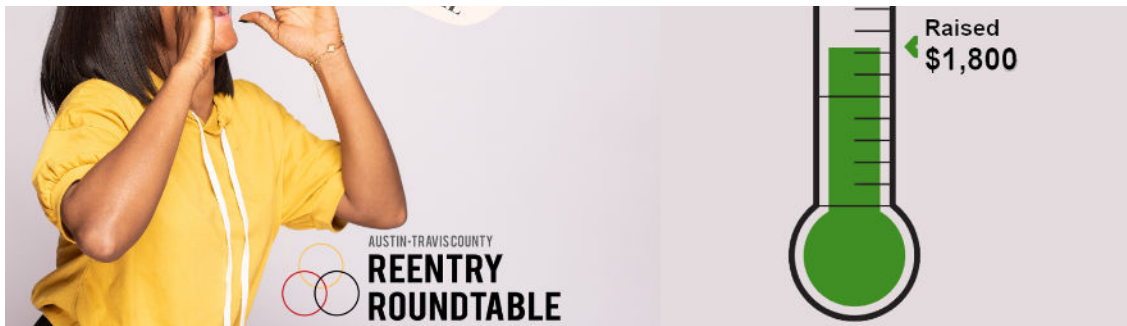
Beyond our short-term goal, the Roundtable will dedicate donations received through the end of 2023 to funding additional leadership and professional development opportunities for folks directly impacted by the criminal legal system, including the compensation of system-impacted persons participating in the Roundtable's new 15-member Coordinating Committee anticipated to begin in January 2024.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:  
LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN**



*We are*  
**51%**  
AT GOAL

**\$3,500**



We know that it is essential for persons directly impacted by the criminal legal system to have access to opportunities in peer support, advocacy, and leadership. Your tax-deductible gift today will help us reach these goals!

[Click here to donate!](#)

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### **Advocacy Corner: In the shadows - Navigating Barbara's Adrenaline Addiction**

*Written by Barbara Ornelas, Reentry Advocacy Fellow*

Addiction is a complex beast that can easily find its way into our lives, manifesting in various forms. While substances like drugs and alcohol often take center stage in discussions about addiction, there's another type that operates in the shadows, hidden within the thrill-seeking experiences that some individuals crave. This type of addiction revolves around the release of adrenaline—the body's natural "fight or flight" hormone. Just like substance abuse, this adrenaline addiction can have profound effects on a person's life, yet it's often overlooked or dismissed.

Picture racing down a racetrack in a hell-cat, the wind whipping against your face, heart racing, and senses sharpened. Imagine the sensation of leaping from an airplane, hurtling towards the earth at pulsating speeds, with the parachute barely opening in time. This experience embodies the adrenaline rush—an intoxicating blend of heightened awareness, racing heartbeats, and a surge of energy that can swiftly become an addiction. For me, fighting was my primary avenue to chase this adrenaline high. It became my reliable trigger for that intense rush. Unfortunately, this choice had grave consequences. When adrenaline addiction takes hold, it can lead to a series of choices that prioritize rush over reason. Engaging in high-risk behaviors like dangerous driving, extreme sports without proper safety precautions, or even participating in illicit activities to satisfy the craving for excitement can eventually catch up with individuals. The line between calculated risk and recklessness blurred as I consistently placed the fight above rational judgment. This pattern ultimately resulted in encounters with the law, and I found myself facing legal repercussions that led me to spend almost six years in prison.

[\[Continue reading on our website!\]](#)

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## Local Events & Opportunities

### On-Point Re-Entry Consortium Presents: Second Chance Job Fair



Are you ready for a fresh start? Don't miss the opportunity to connect with employers who believe in second chances at the upcoming Second Chance Job Fair. Whether you're looking to re-enter the workforce, explore new opportunities, or build a brighter future, this event is tailored to you.

**Date: September 27, 2023**

**Time: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm**

**Location: Workforce Solutions Capital Area**

**Address: 9001 N. IH 35 Ste. 110, Austin, Texas**

The Second Chance Job Fair is open to all justice impacted individuals who are eager to take the next step in their careers. It's a chance to meet employers who value your potential and are excited to offer a new beginning. First impressions matter! Put your best foot forward by dressing professionally. Whether it's your first job fair or a fresh start, presenting yourself confidently can make all the difference.

Scan the QR code on the flier to [register here](#) for this event. Secure your spot and take the first step towards new opportunities and a brighter future.

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### Statewide Leadership Council Presents: From Prison to Power

We're excited to share the upcoming "From Prison to Power" event hosted by the Statewide Leadership Council. Mark your calendars for an empowering gathering that's all about building a strong community of system-impacted advocates.

**Date: September 23, 2023**

**Time: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

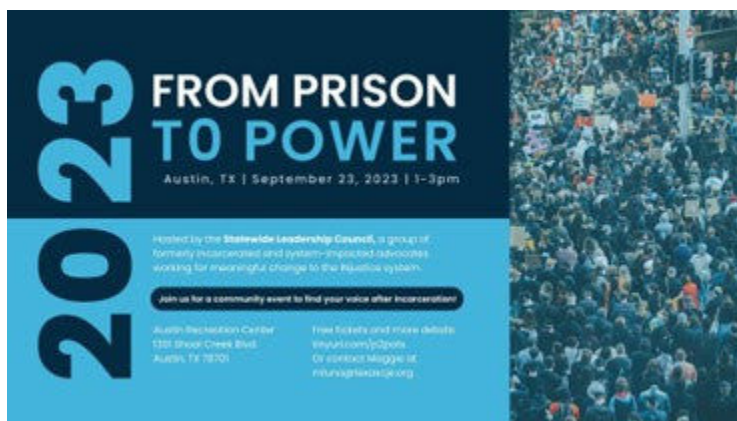
**Location: Austin Recreation Center**

**Address: [1301 Shoal Creek Blvd., Austin, Texas 78701](#)**

Join the Statewide Leadership Council for an inspiring day of community-building and resource sharing as we come together to support individuals finding their voices after incarceration. This event is a unique opportunity to connect with fellow advocates, share experiences, and learn from one another's journeys. Whether you've personally been impacted by the system or you're passionate about supporting those who have, "From Prison to Power" is your chance to be a part of a movement dedicated to positive change and empowerment.

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to make connections, find resources, and amplify your voice. For more information and to stay updated, visit the [event page on Facebook](#).

Let's stand together, learn from each other, and pave the way for a brighter future after incarceration. See you there!

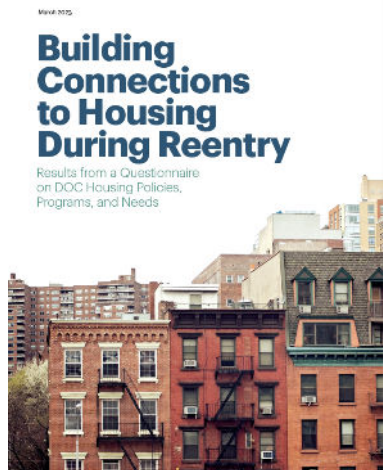


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## News and Resources

### Building Connections to Housing During Reentry

#### Results from a Questionnaire on DOC Housing Policies, Programs, and Needs



Securing stable, affordable housing is fundamental to successful reentry. To help policymakers build sustainable pathways to housing, The Council of State Governments Justice Center, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance, conducted the first national survey of state Departments of Corrections reentry coordinators, receiving responses from 37 out of 50 states plus the District of Columbia. This national report outlines current practices, highlighting areas where policymakers can direct efforts to increase connections to housing.

[Click here to read the report.](#)

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### Women's Storybook Project of Texas Prison Program

Women's Storybook Project prison program helps incarcerated mothers maintain contact with and bring comfort to their children. We help these mothers record stories and messages of love for their children and then mail the recordings along with the books so the children can hear their mother's voice and know that she is thinking of them.

Volunteers from Austin, Houston, San Antonio, and even as far away as Dallas and Fort Worth meet on the second or third Saturday of the month and carpool to one of the 10 prisons served by WSP. WSP currently engages about 16% of the 10,000 incarcerated mothers with children.

Spectrum News featured the project with interviews with Jill Gonzalez, the Executive Director, and project participants—click the video below to learn more! You may also contact the Women's Storybook Project by email: [info@storybookproject.org](mailto:info@storybookproject.org) or phone: 512-861-5110.





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