

*The National Academies of*  
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DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION  
*Committee on Law and Justice*  
*Committee on Evaluating Success Among People Released from Prison*

**Workshop on Evaluating Success Among People Released from Prison**  
**SPEAKER BIOSKETCHES**



**George Braucht's** 14,000+ hours of psychotherapy, supervision, and applied community psychology experience focuses on professional and peer workforce development that emphasizes continuous service quality and outcome improvement. In peer services, George co-founded the Certified Addiction Recovery Empowerment Specialist (CARES) Academy, a peer recovery coach training that is operational in several states, and the Forensic Peer Mentor Ready4Reentry training. Clinical program implementations he has led include a statewide recovery counseling program for people on parole, the Transitional Housing for

Offender Reentry Directory and Reentry Partnership Housing, Georgia's first two in-prison therapeutic community programs and the first five Day Reporting Centers, and several statewide reentry initiatives. George's teaching experience includes many years as a Psychology Professor. Curricula he has developed include an Enhanced Supervision Program training for correctional and reentry staff plus certification trainings for Recovery Residence Managers and for the Recovery Capital Scale. George is a Charter Board Member of the National Alliance for Recovery Residences and a Recovery Consultant for SAMHSA's Opioid Response Network. Little Richard, Otis Redding, the Allman Brothers Band and George, among others of course, hail from Macon GA where he lives nearby with his spouse, Jane, and a Miniature Pinscher he calls Frodo. Music, horticulture, and mythology are some of his passions.



**Susan Burton** is a leader in the criminal justice reform movement, founder of A New Way of Life, and outspoken voice to end mass incarceration. Following the tragic accidental death of her five-year-old son, Susan's world collapsed. Her loss snapped the final tether of resilience burdened by a past of pain and trauma. She descended into an emotional abyss of darkness and despair, but living in South Los Angeles, Susan didn't have access to the resources she needed to heal. Without support, she turned to drugs and alcohol, which led to nearly 20 years revolving in and out of prison. Drawing on her personal experiences, she founded A New Way of Life Reentry Project (ANWOL) in 1998, dedicating her life to helping other women break the cycle of incarceration.

ANWOL provides resources such as housing, case management, employment, legal services, leadership development and community organizing on behalf of, and with, people who struggle to rebuild their lives after incarceration. Susan has earned numerous awards and honors for her work. In 2010, she was named a CNN Top Ten Hero and received the prestigious Citizen Activist Award from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. She is a recipient of both the Encore Purpose Prize (2012) and the James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award (2014). In 2015, on the 50th Anniversary of Selma and the Voting Rights Act, Susan Burton was named by the Los Angeles Times as one of 18 New Civil Rights Leaders in the nation. Released in 2017, her memoir, *Becoming Ms. Burton*, received a 2018 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work in the category of Biography/Autobiography. *Becoming Ms. Burton* is also the recipient of the inaugural Goddard Riverside Stephan Russo Book Prize for Social Justice. She holds an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from California State University, Northridge.



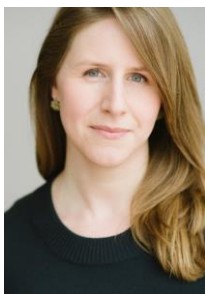
**Kenneth Cooper** is a native of New York City, NY. Raised in a Christian home and attending church throughout his youth, his life took a dangerous turn as he became involved in street activity as a young man. The violence of street life was certainly intended to be a means of bondage and death for Kenneth, but through the power of prayer it only served as fuel for his fiery testimony. After years of street involvement, Mr. Cooper was gloriously saved and set free. A mentor to young men of all ages, Mr. Cooper passionately serves in many different capacities. He is an active member of Restoring the Years Global Ministries. He actively serves on the RTYGM Prison Ministry. Mr. Cooper also serves as an active board member and CEO of Game Changers ReEntry & Mentorship Program, a 501 © (3) nonprofit entity. His mentoring efforts have continued

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mentoring youth at Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health. He is committed to the work of eliminating the school to prison pipeline. Mr. Cooper also works with North Cobb Officiating Association which allows him to continue his mentoring efforts both on and off the court. A diligent student, he attended Chattahoochee Technical College where he studied Public Speaking. He is also a Certified Anger Management Counselor committed to helping people experience truth and freedom in all areas of life.



**Jai Diamond** is a 27 year old Transgender Woman. During her 8 year prison sentence, and subsequent transfer to a Woman's Correctional facility, she discovered a passion for advocating for the success of current; and formally incarcerated Transgender women. Since her release from prison in 2019 she has worked for The Fortune Society and is currently a Peer Specialist after being promoted from Outreach Associate with the New York City Criminal Justice Agency. Ms. Diamond has interviewed with the Fortune Society regarding Transgender rights, Them publications and has been contacted by PBS for a documentary on parole. She will also be presenting to DOCCS on validating the Transgender experience this August. Currently in school for Criminal Justice Management she aspires to bring a more immersive and realistic version of Transitional Services into city and state facilities.



**Jennifer Doleac** is an Associate Professor of Economics at Texas A&M University, Director of the Justice Tech Lab, and host of the Probable Causation podcast. She is also a research fellow at IZA and a Senior Fellow at the Niskanen Center. She currently serves on the board of editors at the Journal of Economic Literature, and on the board of the American Economic Association's Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP). Professor Doleac is a leading expert on the economics of crime and discrimination, and a vocal proponent of using rigorous research to inform policy. Her research addresses topics such as DNA databases, prosecutorial reform, risk assessment algorithms, and the unintended consequences of "ban the box" policies. Professor Doleac's work has been supported by several governmental and philanthropic organizations, and her research has been published in leading academic journals including the *Review of Economics and Statistics*, the *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, and the *Economic Journal*. She is also frequently quoted in the media about criminal justice research and policy. Professor Doleac holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Stanford University, and a B.A. in Mathematics.



**Jerry Flores** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto Mississauga and Sociology tri-campus graduate department at the University of Toronto-St. George. He received a Ph.D. in Sociology at UC Santa Barbara in 2014. My interdisciplinary research investigates how institutions like schools, detention centers and the police come together to shape the lives of at-risk Latina and Indigenous women and girls in North America. Specifically, he pays attention to how these individuals' experiences are shaped by intergenerational trauma, family violence, as well as historical forms of gendered, racialized and class specific oppression as they pass through these institutions. For this work he has received a Ford Foundation Fellowship, UC President's Post Doctoral Award, Distinguished Early Career

Award from the ASA section on youth and childhood studies and various Federal and University-based grants. He wrote the book *Caught up*, authored multiple peer-reviewed publications and several news pieces.

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**Sarah Gallagher** is the NLIHC ERASE (End Rental Arrears to Stop Evictions) senior project director. Sarah will work with NLIHC staff and with state and local partners to ensure that the emergency rental assistance reaches the lowest-income and most marginalized renters it is intended to help. Sarah comes to NLIHC with more than 25 years of experience advancing innovative, equitable housing and social service policy and programs at the local, state, and national level. Most recently, Sarah was the CSH eastern region managing director overseeing CSH training, lending, technical assistance, and systems change work throughout Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, South

Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Prior to serving as managing director, Sarah was the CSH director of strategic initiatives, developing, evaluating, and scaling cross-sector supportive housing models like the CSH Social Innovation Initiative and the Frequent Users Services Engagement Program (FUSE), as well as launching the national Keeping Families Together One Roof Campaign. Before joining CSH, Sarah served as the first executive director of Journey Home, the local planning body for the Capitol Region Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. She was also executive director for discharge planning at the New York City Department of Correction, where she oversaw the discharge planning programs on Rikers Island and worked with City agencies to overcome barriers people face when leaving jail, and a housing case manager in Boston. Sarah holds a master's degree in urban policy and management from the New School and a B.A. in sociology from the University of Connecticut.



**Peggy C. Giordano** is Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus at Bowling Green State University. She has conducted several mixed-method investigations focused on the process of desisting from criminal behavior. Dr. Giordano's work has emphasized the complex interplay of cognitive changes, including identity transformations, and social experiences that often catalyze and help to cement a pattern of crime cessation. Early work centered on a sample serious juvenile offenders, particularly young women, who were followed up as adults. The study included interviews with at least one of the biological children as well as respondents, providing an intergenerational perspective on criminal continuity and change.

More recently, she has directed the Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS), a longitudinal investigation of a large heterogeneous community-based sample originally interviewed as adolescents, and now in their mid-thirties. This study has been the basis for examining specific catalysts for change (e.g., one's identity as a parent), and for highlighting that some problem behaviors (e.g., intimate partner violence) require consideration of distinct desistance dynamics. Along with colleagues Wendy Manning, Monica Longmore, and Jennifer Copp, she is currently completing a new study of desistance funded by the National Institute of Justice. This project includes structured interviews with respondents who early in the study evidenced criminal behavior, and for the first time, in-depth interviews with a parent and a romantic partner. These interviews, combined with respondents' own life history narratives, should provide a more complete portrait of the play of individual and social factors and how they combine to foster long-term behavior change.



**Adam Gelb** has been working for a more just and effective criminal justice system throughout a 34-year career as a journalist, congressional aide, senior state government official, and nonprofit executive. He currently is founder, president and CEO of the Council on Criminal Justice, an invitational membership organization and nonpartisan think tank dedicated to building consensus for policies and practices that enhance safety and justice for all. From 2006-2018, Gelb led criminal and juvenile justice reform initiatives at the Pew Charitable Trusts, producing groundbreaking national research that documented the high cost and low public safety return of traditional sentencing and corrections policies and helping 35 states develop, adopt and implement increasingly



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comprehensive and impactful reforms. Gelb's first job out of the University of Virginia was as a reporter at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, covering police and the drug war at its height in the late 1980s. After earning a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, he staffed the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee during negotiations and final passage of the landmark 1994 federal crime bill. From 1995 to 2000, as policy director for the lieutenant governor of Maryland, Gelb established several initiatives that focused comprehensive crime control and prevention efforts on at-risk people and neighborhoods. He served as executive director of the Georgia Sentencing Commission from 2001 to 2003 and, before joining Pew, as vice president for programs at the Georgia Council on Substance Abuse where he oversaw youth reentry and methamphetamine control programs. Gelb speaks frequently with the media about national trends and state innovations and advises policy makers on formulation of practical, cost-effective policies that are grounded in facts, evidence and fundamental principles of justice.



**Diane Good-Collins**, Director of Metropolitan Community College's 180 Re-entry Assistance Program (180 RAP), began her formal education while incarcerated at Nebraska Correctional Center for Women. When released in 2003, Diane continued her studies and began her 18-year career at Metropolitan Community College (MCC). Diane worked in various areas including TRiO, Adult Education, Academic Affairs and, prior to leading 180 RAP, she managed the MCC South Express. Diane and the 180 RAP team provide education, training, employment and transition support to the incarcerated and re-entry populations through the largest on campus Re-entry Center in the United States. Since 2015, 180 RAP, mainly staffed by individuals with lived experience, have assisted over 6,500 Nebraskans to succeed beyond

incarceration. Diane has served on the Nebraska Coordinated Re-entry Initiatives Workgroup since 2017. She is a member of the American Correctional Association Professional Education Council and was elected to the Delegate Assembly in 2020.



**Lila Kazemian** is Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She is a graduate of Université de Montréal in Canada, and she earned her Ph.D. in criminology at the Institute of Criminology of the University of Cambridge. She has published on the topics of desistance from crime, long-term incarceration, prisoner reintegration, life-course and criminal career research, and comparative criminology. Her recent research examines the process of positive growth and desistance from crime among long-term prisoners. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, the *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *Punishment & Society*, the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, and the *European Journal of Criminology*. She frequently serves as an expert in legal cases involving housing discrimination against individuals

with a criminal record.



**Pamela K. Lattimore** is Senior Director for Research Development for RTI's Division for Applied Justice Research and is responsible for leading the development of impactful multidisciplinary research focused on improving the understanding of crime and related problems, the criminal justice system, and the prevention and intervention activities designed to ameliorate societal problems. She has more than 30 years of experience evaluating interventions; investigating the causes and correlates of criminal behavior and developing approaches to improve criminal justice operations. Dr. Lattimore has led multiple multisite, multimodal evaluations and is principal investigator for the research under way for the Arnold Ventures' funded Advancing

Pretrial Policy and Research: A Project of the National Partnership for Pretrial Reform, which focuses on improving pretrial risk assessment and outcomes. She is a past Chair of the American Society of Criminology Division on

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Corrections and Sentencing, a Fellow of the Academy of Experimental Criminology, and a recipient of the American Correctional Association Peter P. Lejins Researcher Award, the American Society of Criminology Division on Corrections and Sentencing Distinguished Scholar Award, and the Academy of Experimental Criminology Joan McCord Award for distinguished experimental contributions to criminology and criminal justice. Dr. Lattimore has published extensively, has served on the editorial boards of multiple journals, and was the inaugural co-editor of the annual series Handbook on Corrections and Sentencing published by Routledge Press. Before joining RTI in 1998, Dr. Lattimore worked for 10 years at NIJ, most recently as director of the Criminal Justice and Criminal Behavior Division, Office of Research and Evaluation.



**Andrea Leverentz** is an associate professor and graduate program director in the Department of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She earned her PhD in Sociology from the University of Chicago. Her research focuses broadly on issues related to community, crime, and incarceration, including the impact of crime and incarceration on individuals and communities. Her first book, *The Ex-Prisoner's Dilemma: How Women Negotiate Competing Narratives of Reentry and Desistance* (Rutgers University Press 2014) looks at how women talk about and manage competing messages about what it means to return to their communities post-incarceration, and how their experiences are shaped by their roles as women, Black women, mothers, daughters, sisters, romantic partners, and employees. She also co-edited, with Elsa Chen

and Johnna Christian, *Beyond Recidivism: New Approaches to Research on Prisoner Reentry and Reintegration* (New York University Press 2020). Currently, she is finishing a book (with the University of California Press) on the processes through which neighborhood and place influence reentry experiences for people returning from incarceration, and how these processes shape community life. Her work has been funded by the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Justice. She is currently co-chair of the Division on People of Color and Crime of the American Society of Criminology and chair-elect of the Crime, Law, and Deviance Section of the American Sociological Association.



**Sam Lewis** is the Executive Director of the Anti Recidivism Coalition (ARC). Previously, Sam served as the Director of Inside Programs. A former life prisoner himself, Sam understands the various obstacles, challenges, and difficulties the prison and reentry populations face. In 2017, Sam created the Hope And Redemption Team (HART), a first-of-its kind initiative he built from scratch. The Hope & Redemption Team (HART) is a group of nine former California life prisoners who go back into California state prisons to provide hope, demonstrate that redemption is achievable, and to prepare participants for successful reentry into our communities. His work directing the Hope and Redemption Team exemplifies what's best about ARC: our desire to reach and walk with

those who have been most marginalized by society. Most Saturday nights, Sam leads the Hope and Redemption mentors who support youth currently housed at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall. These youth are facing potentially long prison sentences. The unique mentors are trained in Transformative Mentoring and use a peer-to-peer Credible Messenger model to encourage incarcerated youth to believe in themselves and pursue their education while incarcerated. Sam previously worked with Friends Outside Los Angeles County (FOLA) as Job Specialist, Case Manager, Employment Programs Supervisor, and Project Director, roles that reinforced his commitment to creating opportunities for formerly incarcerated men and women as they transition back into society. In 2018, Sam was the recipient of a Bank of America Neighborhood Builders Award, Uncommon Law's Uncommon Heroes award, and 2019 Danger Man Award.

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**Charles Loeffler** is an Associate Professor of Criminology at the University of Pennsylvania. His research examines the effects of criminal justice processes on life-course outcomes including the effects of imprisonment on recidivism. His current research also examines several other measurement problems in criminology. These include the development of new methods for measuring spatiotemporal crime patterns, wrongful convictions, and firearm use within community-supervised correctional populations. He holds an A.B. in Social Studies and Ph.D. in Sociology from Harvard University as well as a M.Phil in Criminology from Cambridge University.



**Shadd Maruna** is Professor of Criminology at Queen's University Belfast. Previously, he has worked at the University of Cambridge, SUNY Albany, and Rutgers University Newark, where he was the Dean of the School of Criminal Justice. His research focuses on desistance from crime and implications for prisoner reintegration. He is the author or editor of seven books, including, *Rehabilitation: Beyond the Risk Paradigm*, *Fifty Key Thinkers in Criminology*, and, most recently, *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. His book *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives* was named the Outstanding Contribution to Criminology in 2001. He received the inaugural Research Medal from the Howard League for Penal Reform for his research's impact on real world practice in the criminal justice system in 2012.



**Reuben Jonathan Miller** Reuben Jonathan Miller is a sociologist, criminologist and a social worker who teaches at the University of Chicago in the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy and Practice. He studies and writes about race, democracy, and the social life of the city. His first book, *Halfway Home: Race, Punishment and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration*, which was based on 15 years of research and practice with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people and their families, was published by Little Brown in February. Professor Miller lives and works on Chicago's Southside.



**Merry Morash** is a Professor in Criminal Justice at Michigan State University. Her research focuses on the interplay of agency, justice system programs and practices, and social structure as they affect women and girls who have broken the law and/or who are intimate partner violence. Two National Science Foundation grants supported her research team in carrying out a longitudinal interdisciplinary study of over 300 women on probation and parole. The research team included faculty and graduate students from the disciplines of Communication, Criminal Justice, and Psychology. One research focus was the effects of probation and parole agents' communication pattern and relationship style with clients on various outcomes (e.g., anxiety, reactance). A second research focus was justice-involved women's identity development and desistance. A third focus was identifying predictors of satisfaction with life, generativity, and recidivism for women under community supervision. Professor Morash is currently implementing a National Science Foundation grant to compare male and female clients paired with male and female agents on communication, relationships, employment outcomes, substance use outcomes, criminal associates, and recidivism. In the American Society of Criminology, Professor Morash is a Fellow and a recipient of the Award for Mentoring. Within the American Society of Criminology, she received the Distinguished Scholar Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Division on Women and crime, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Division on People of Color and Crime. She also received the Outstanding Mentor Award from the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.



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**Daniel S. Nagin** is Teresa and H. John Heinz III University Professor of Public Policy and Statistics at Heinz College, Carnegie Mellon University. He is an elected Fellow of the American Society of Criminology, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and American Academy of Political and Social Science and the recipient of the American Society of Criminology's Edwin H Sutherland Award in 2006, the Stockholm Prize in Criminology in 2014, Carnegie Mellon University's Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award in 2015, and the National Academy of Science Award for Scientific Reviewing in 2017. He is also the 2021 President of the American Society of Criminology. His research focuses on the evolution of criminal and antisocial behaviors over the life course, the deterrent effect of criminal and non-

criminal penalties on illegal behaviors, and the development of statistical methods for analyzing longitudinal data. His work has appeared in such diverse outlets as the American Economic Review, American Sociological Review, Journal of the American Statistical Association, American Journal of Sociology, Archives of General Psychiatry, Criminology, Child Development, Demography, Psychological Methodology, Law & Society Review, Crime and Justice Annual Review, Operations Research, and Stanford Law Review. He is also the author of Group-based Modeling of Development (Harvard University Press, 2005) and chaired and co-edited the report of the (US) National Academy of Science's Committee on Deterrence and the Death Penalty.



**Kara Nelson** is an advocate, activist, and entrepreneur. She is founder of KLN Consulting LLC, an organization dedicated to creating community-based solutions for reentry and recovery programs, through consulting, training and storytelling. Kara is currently the Director of Public Relations and Development at True North Recovery. True North Recovery provides inpatient, outpatient, recovery residences, reentry services, advocacy and peer support services to Alaska. She is a volunteer chaplain for the Alaska Department of Corrections and the former Director of Haven House Juneau, a recovery and reentry residence providing housing, peer support services, recovery and reentry assistance, coaching, advocacy and healing for women returning home from incarceration. A life-long Alaskan, a mother of three adult children, a

woman in recovery from substance use disorder and formerly incarcerated, all contributes to her fierce dedication to transforming our criminal legal system and recovery support services throughout the country. A multi-award winner, most notably, the Alaska First Lady's Volunteer of the Year Award in 2016 and in 2018, the Director's Award from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Washington DC, for her leadership and advocacy dedicated to justice reform, elevating addiction recovery services, and fighting for the civil rights of those incarcerated and directly impacted. She has served on multiple boards and coalitions devoted to reentry, transitional services, recovery and peer support, collaborating with lawmakers to shape ground-breaking legislation at local, state and federal levels. Most of all, Kara is passionate about seeing individuals, families, and communities experience healing, restoration, and transformation.



**Lisa Puglisi, MD** is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Yale University where she practices primary care and addiction medicine. She is the director of Transitions Clinic-New Haven, a multi-disciplinary clinic that is part of a national network of programs that focus on care of individuals who are returning to the community from incarceration. Her clinical practice includes treatment of addiction and hepatitis C in primary care and she also oversees a medical legal partnership. She has developed specific skills in training, hiring and supervising community health workers and directing interdisciplinary teams of physicians, midlevel providers, community health workers, research personnel and legal colleagues around the work of clinical care and research to improve the health of people with recent incarceration. She is originally from the New Haven area and deeply committed to the community. Lisa received her undergraduate degree from Tufts University, her medical degree from Albert Einstein College of Medicine and completed her medical training at Yale New Haven Hospital.

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**William Rhodes** holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Minnesota. Before entering private consulting, he was a principal scientist and fellow at Abt Associates Inc., a policy consulting firm in Cambridge, MA. While at Abt Associates, he was the principal investigator (with Gerry Gaes) or project director responsible for redesign of the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP), expanding the Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP), and assisting the federal Office of Probation and Pretrial Services (OPPS) to develop its performance measurement system. As a consultant, he assisted the Bureau of Justice Statistics with technical issues regarding the Survey of Prison Inmates including design plans for a recidivism study. He is currently working with William Sabol and Gerry Gaes on a study of parole outcomes. Bill has authored papers on estimating criminal recidivism. Some papers exploit the longitudinal features of the NCRP to capture the often-recurrent nature of prison/parole histories. His work with the OPPS created an appreciation for the complex relationship between revocations for technical violations and returning to prison for new crimes. His work with Sabol and Gaes is using a competing events survival model to better understand the interaction between two reasons for recidivism: reentering prison for technical violations and reentering prison because of new crimes.



**Dana Rice** is the Assistant Dean for Master's Degrees and an Assistant Professor of Public Health Leadership at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health. Dr. Rice's work examines best practices in public health leadership and community engagement with a health equity, social justice and human rights lens. Her specific area of focus is examining the impact of mass criminalization and mass incarceration on public health. She was a recipient of the student-nominated Award for Excellence in Teaching and Innovation, the peer-nominated Delta Omega Faculty Award and is a UNC Equity in Teaching fellow. Prior to coming to UNC, Dr. Rice spent 20 years working in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Her most recent work was dedicated to providing oversight to an HIV/STD screening program in a large urban jail and teaching graduate public health and medical students how to translate applied public health practice skills to a variety of community settings. Dr. Rice currently teaches the MPH Integrated Learning Experience course for students in the Leadership in Practice, Health Policy & Management and Nutrition/RD concentrations. She also teaches a series of graduate elective courses on mass criminalization, mass incarceration and public health. Dr. Rice holds a Doctorate of Public Health with a concentration in Social and Behavioral Health from Boston University School of Public Health, a Master of Science in Health Services Research from Wayne State University School of Medicine, and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Clark-Atlanta University.



**Walter Strauss** began studying law while imprisoned with the aim of appealing his case and reduce his sentence. Along the way, with the skills and knowledge he acquired from arguing his own case, Walter assisted other incarcerated people with their cases. He became a self-taught lawyer, harnessing a trait that would aide him throughout his life: persistence. Around the time Walter was immersed in law jargon, he started taking classes in prison about criminal justice. He went on to work as a paralegal at the Fortune Society, received an MA in criminal justice at John Jay College, and graduated from Rutgers Law School. He eventually became a Housing Court judge in New York - and one of the first formerly incarcerated judges in New York State.



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**Nneka Tapia**, psychologist and former warden and Executive Director of the Cook County Department of Corrections, is our first Leader in Residence. We're providing her with strategic and communications support on her mission to improve the mental health of young Chicagoans. During her fellowship, she is developing initiatives to influence the support of a trauma-sensitive city for Chicago's youth including those whose parents have been incarcerated.



**John Valverde** is President and CEO of YouthBuild USA. He joined YouthBuild in 2017 after decades of work as an advocate for creating access to opportunity and removing barriers for formerly incarcerated and marginalized people. John began working with imprisoned individuals in 1992 to ensure access to HIV/AIDS counseling, high school equivalency instruction, alternatives to violence programs, and college education. In 1998, he co-founded Hudson Link for Higher Education, the first privately funded accredited college program in New York's prisons. As a leader of lived experience who was incarcerated at the age of 21, John is a true reflection of the importance of healing and equity of second chances and example for the young people of YouthBuild who are seeking their own second chance. John is a

Marano Fellow of the Aspen Institute's Sector Skills Academy, a Pahara-Aspen Education Fellow, co-chair of the National Service, Civic Engagement and Volunteering pillar of the Partnership for American Democracy and member of the New York State Council on Community Re-entry and Reintegration. He holds a Master of Professional Studies in Urban Ministry from the New York Theological Seminary and a bachelor's degree in behavioral science from Mercy College.



**Venus Woods** is a grass-roots community advocate, activist and entrepreneur for criminal justice reform. A lifelong Alaskan, mother of three daughters, and a formerly incarcerated woman in long term recovery from substance use disorder. Through her personal experiences, she works to reduce the stigma, and prejudice surrounding formerly incarcerated and/or convicted individuals. In her past employment with Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Venus was responsible for multiple Recovery and Reentry grants including two Second Chance Act, awards. Venus has direct experience compiling the Planning and Implementation guide, utilizing the RnR tool and understands the Bureau of Justice Assistance, grant process. In addition to being a 2017 Leading with Conviction (LwC) cohort graduate, she is also Alaska's co-lead for Recovery Advocacy

Project (RAP), RAP is working to build a visible and effective constituency in demand of community and public policy based solutions in response to America's addiction crisis. Venus is a certified Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) Facilitator and has facilitated groups for community reentry programs, community residential centers, and the Alaska Federal Hope Court. She has served on multiple boards and coalitions devoted to reentry, transitional services, corrections reform, and Peer Support. Currently Venus is the Director of HIV Prevention and Education with the Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association and runs a statewide Syringe Service Program.



**Caryn York** is Executive Director of the Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF), an independent, statewide nonprofit organization that promotes policies and programs to help low-wage workers advance to high-wage jobs. Caryn is the first African American Female to lead the twenty-two-year organization. Caryn works tirelessly to encourage key policymakers and stakeholders to adopt and support policies and programs that eliminate educational and employment barriers to facilitate the successful entry, or re-entry, of low income adult workers and jobseekers into the workforce. Caryn has been instrumental in leading numerous state and local policy reform efforts that focus on individuals with a criminal background including, but not limited to, 'Ban

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the Box' laws, expansion of criminal record expungement and shielding laws, the development, passage, and implementation of the Maryland Justice Reinvestment Act, and statewide bail reform. Caryn majored in International Studies at Washington College, and has worked within state and local politics for over 10 years.