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**FULLY FUNDING THE SECOND CHANCE ACT:**  
**GIVING STATES AND LOCALITIES THE TOOLS TO HELP PEOPLE**  
**SUCCESSFULLY REENTER THE COMMUNITY FROM INCARCERATION**

In April 2008, the Second Chance Act, bipartisan legislation aimed at helping States and localities better address the needs of individuals reentering the community from the criminal justice system, became law. However, until Congress allocates funding, the promise of the Second Chance Act cannot be realized. **We urge you to support funding the Second Chance Act, authorized at \$165 million per year, at the highest possible levels in the FY 2010 appropriations process.** With federal funding, the Second Chance Act will better enable states and localities to help formerly incarcerated individuals return to the community, thus creating safer communities and saving scarce critical resources.

Over 600,000 individuals return to communities every year from U.S. state and federal prisons, and millions return from local jails. Funding the Second Chance Act at the highest possible levels will help States and localities better meet the needs of people who are reentering the community, including those adults and juveniles in need of drug and alcohol addiction treatment.

- **While many people with drug and alcohol problems do not commit crimes, there is a clear link between crime and untreated addiction to alcohol and other drugs.** Between 60 and 80 percent of individuals under supervision of the criminal justice system in the U.S. were either under the influence of alcohol or other drugs when they committed an offense, committed the offense to support a drug addiction, were charged with a drug-related crime, or were using drugs or alcohol regularly.
- **Addiction treatment is effective, reduces recidivism, and saves money.** Addiction treatment has been shown to cut drug use in half, reduce crime by 80 percent, and reduce arrests by up to 64 percent. Additionally, addiction treatment is sustainable; treatment services are significantly associated with a 67 percent reduction in weekly cocaine use, a 65 percent reduction in weekly heroin use, a 52 percent decrease in heavy alcohol, and a 61 percent reduction in illegal activity. Moreover, these results are generally stable for the same clients five years post treatment.
- **However, a very small percentage of people in need of drug and alcohol addiction services, including those who have been involved in the criminal justice system, receive these life-saving treatment services.** According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), in 2007, 23.2 million people, or 9.6 percent of the population, were classified with substance dependence or abuse. However, only 2.4 million, or just over 10 percent of those who needed treatment, received it at a specialty facility. Therefore, there were 20.8 million people, or 8.4 percent of the

population, who needed treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol use problem but did not receive it.

The centerpiece of the Second Chance Act is the reauthorization of a Department of Justice (DOJ) grant program for people returning to the community from incarceration. The legislation authorizes \$55 million for grants to States and local areas to create or strengthen the systems that help adults and youth transition into the community when they are released from incarceration by providing drug addiction and mental health treatment, job training and education opportunities, housing and other necessary services.

Grants authorized in the Second Chance Act can be used for various addiction treatment services, including:

- Providing a full continuum of addiction treatment services including outpatient, comprehensive residential services, and recovery services to people reentering the community from prison, jail or a juvenile facility
- Expanding addiction treatment centers that offer family-based comprehensive treatment services for parents and their children as a complete family unit
- Providing or facilitating health care services, including drug addiction screening, treatment, and aftercare; infectious disease screening and treatment; and screening, assessment and aftercare for mental health services, to reentering individuals

Reentry success has implications for public safety, the welfare of children and families, growing fiscal issues and community health. Providing funding for the programs of the Second Chance Act will be an extremely important first step in assisting formerly incarcerated people to become self-sufficient members of society. **We urge you to support funding for the Second Chance Act at the highest possible levels in the FY 2010 appropriations process.**

*Please contact Nisha Thakker ([nthakker@lac.org](mailto:nthakker@lac.org)) at the Legal Action Center (202-544-5478) with any questions.*