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Berks County Community Reentry Wins Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award

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Due to its remarkable success reducing recidivism and helping ex-offenders transition back into the community, the National Criminal Justice Association is pleased to honor the Berks County Community Reentry Program with its Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Award. The award is given out annually at the National Forum on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. This year's conference will take place Aug. 9-11 in Bellevue, Washington.

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The Community Reentry Program, developed in 2007, provides coordinated community based services to individuals recently released from jail, with a focus on job training and employment opportunities. The program operates by enlisting local agencies, organizations, and individuals willing to assist in the successful re-entry of ex-offenders into the community. Ex-offenders are matched with job opportunities and provided with the assistance and intensive training necessary to succeed.

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“Successful ex-offender reentry is crucial to reducing overall crime as it lowers associated costs – both human and financial,” said Timothy J. Daley, Criminal Justice Program Director for the 23rd Judicial District of Pennsylvania. “The Berks County Reentry Program succeeds because of the hard work done to engage the community in building cooperation and collaborations with stakeholders in the courtroom and in the prison. Carefully designed, the Berks County Reentry Program guides resources to critical focus areas that include employment, substance abuse intervention and housing assistance.”

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Of the program graduates that have been released, 69 percent have remained out of jail and 64 percent are employed. The reentry program provided assistance over 1,000 times in 2008, including over 600 referrals and immediate direct assistance over 450 times. This is all with the participation and cooperation of more than 35 agencies.

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The NCJA Outstanding Criminal Justice Program Awards are a way to seek out and share successful criminal justice programs. The purpose of these awards is to highlight programs that:

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