

Discussion Guide

Understanding and Reaching Crime Victims with Incarceration Histories: A Webinar for VOCA Administrators, Part 2

By Kaitlin Kall

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These discussion questions can be used to help facilitate a dialogue with your colleagues about how the content of this webinar applies to your work.

Webinar description:

In the [second part of this two-part webinar series for VOCA administrators](#), Michelle Garcia, Director of the District of Columbia Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants (OVSJG) discusses her office's efforts to increase funding to service providers working with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated survivors. Additionally, Ashley McSwain, Director of Community Family Life Services in Washington, DC, discusses her organization's programming for women with histories of incarceration and victimization and shares how she successfully obtained VOCA funding from Michelle's office to support this work.

Discussion Questions for VOCA Administrators

1. In her presentation, Michelle discusses the false dichotomy of “victim” and “offender”. What were your reactions to the idea that many people have been both “victims” and “offenders”? Does your agency make funding decisions based on fixed ideas of who “victims” and “offenders” are? If so, what do you think it would take to change or expand these ideas?
2. In order to increase funding for services for formerly incarcerated survivors, Michelle recommends conducting outreach to reentry service providers when a new grant solicitation is open. How might your agency identify existing reentry service providers in your state? How can you help educate reentry service providers on the existence of VOCA funds?
3. Ashley discusses the ways in which solicitation language may discourage some reentry-focused organizations from applying for VOCA funding. What changes could you make in your solicitations to signal a willingness to fund programs that serve formerly incarcerated people?

Discussion Questions for Victim Service Providers

1. In this webinar, Michelle discusses the ways in which victim service agencies and reentry service providers often operate in silos. Does this seem to be true in your state or community? How do you think these silos, if present in your area, impact formerly incarcerated survivors in your community?

2. How well-equipped is your agency to serve a victim who has experienced trauma and instability stemming from incarceration? What steps could you take to enhance this capacity?
3. Michelle and Ashley encourage forming partnerships with other organizations when applying for VOCA grants. What reentry service providers in your area may be open to working with your organization? How might you approach these agencies about collaborating on a grant proposal?

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