

Electronic Press Kit

AFTER INCARCERATION, THERE'S LIFE

BEYOND THE WALL



"Beyond the Wall is riveting, gritty, powerful and provocative, but it is not a film – it is real life."

– Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian

The film captures "the powerful emotional, financial and even spiritual challenges they face as they try to stay out of prison."

– WBUR Radio Boston

"Stark Reality" – Newburyport News

1 | Table of Contents

This Electronic Press Kit is intended for use by journalists and other publishers to support their coverage of *Beyond the Wall* and the issues that it presents. Use for other purposes requires written permission from the Freedom Behind Bars Foundation.

About the Film	2
Film Descriptions	3
Logos & Key Art	4
The Subjects	5
The Filmmakers	7
The Issues	8
About The Campaign	9
Public Affairs.....	11
Research and Resources	12
Quotes From Senior Professionals.....	14
Info Graphics	16
By the Numbers	17

March 22, 2017
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2 About the Film

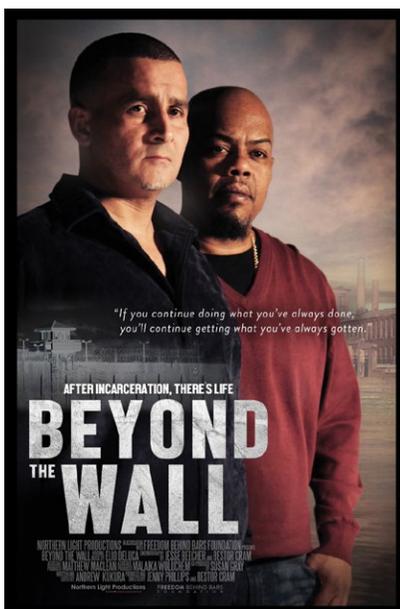
Beyond the Wall is a 76-minute documentary feature film that follows five formerly incarcerated men who are attempting to rebuild their lives on the outside with little or no support from our criminal justice system.

Their stories revolve around one central figure, a former prisoner named Louie Diaz, (lower left) who works with each man to help him maintain his sobriety and his freedom. Through compelling and intimate scenes, the film vividly captures the struggle for survival outside the prison walls that have contained the lives of these men.

Beyond the Wall is an inspirational and educational tool that can help lead to productive discussion about corrections and reentry services in communities across the country.

Much of the filming takes place on the streets of Lowell and Lawrence, Massachusetts. These are cities built along the banks of the Merrimack River (lower right) to power once thriving textile mills. Those mills are now shuttered and the cities struggle with poverty, crime and drug addiction. The winding river, never far from the eye of the camera, reminds us that amidst the ongoing crises in the lives of these men, time is always in motion and even if they experience a fall it's not the end...the river flows on.

Beyond the Wall is an observational documentary, achieved by trust between the filmmakers and the subjects who have allowed the camera to capture moments of vulnerability. The narrative arc of the film is focused on Louie Diaz, who lives in the eye of the storm. Louie becomes the storyteller of lives laid bare as individuals and families struggle to escape the cycle of relapse and recidivism.



Film Details

Runtime: 76 minutes

Rating: NR

Genres: Documentary, Criminal Justice, Drama

Subtitles/Closed Captioning: None

3 | Film Descriptions

Very Short Description (60 words):

Beyond the Wall follows five formerly incarcerated men who are attempting to rebuild their lives on the outside with little support from our criminal justice system. Through personal stories of reentry—including relapse, recovery and redemption, *Beyond the Wall* puts a human face on the social, economic and emotional barriers encountered by returning citizens, their families and their communities.

Short Description (150 words)

Beyond the Wall offers a stirring portrait of life after prison, as it follows five formerly incarcerated men who are attempting to rebuild their lives on the outside, with little support from our criminal justice system. The film reveals a reality that runs against the grain of conventional wisdom and established public policies governing reentry.

While recently released individuals navigate an anemic system of re-entry procedures in the institutions of the criminal justice system, the reality is that survival requires maneuvering through the informal and often chaotic world of the streets. These men have to knit together for themselves the very services and supports that the state re-entry system starkly lacks.

Through personal stories of re-entry—including relapse, recovery and redemption, *Beyond the Wall* puts a human face on the social, economic and emotional barriers encountered by returning citizens, their families and their communities.

Long Description (200 words)

Beyond the Wall offers a stirring portrait of life after prison, as it follows five formerly incarcerated men who are attempting to rebuild their lives on the outside, with little support from our criminal justice system. The film reveals a reality that runs against the grain of conventional wisdom and established public policies governing reentry.

While recently released individuals navigate an anemic system of re-entry procedures in the institutions of the criminal justice system, the reality is that survival requires maneuvering through the informal and often chaotic world of the streets. These men have to knit together for themselves the very services and supports that the state re-entry system starkly lacks.

To remain crime free and drug free after release, prisoners must relinquish their old lives and build new ones. Through personal stories of re-entry—including relapse, recovery and redemption—*Beyond the Wall* puts a human face on the social, economic and emotional barriers encountered by returning citizens. In bearing witness to their struggles, we are offered insights and hope for ways prison re-entry can be more successful.

Beyond the Wall humanizes the social, economic and emotional barriers encountered by citizens (and their families) returning to their communities following incarceration.

4 | Logos & Key Art

Movie title artwork:

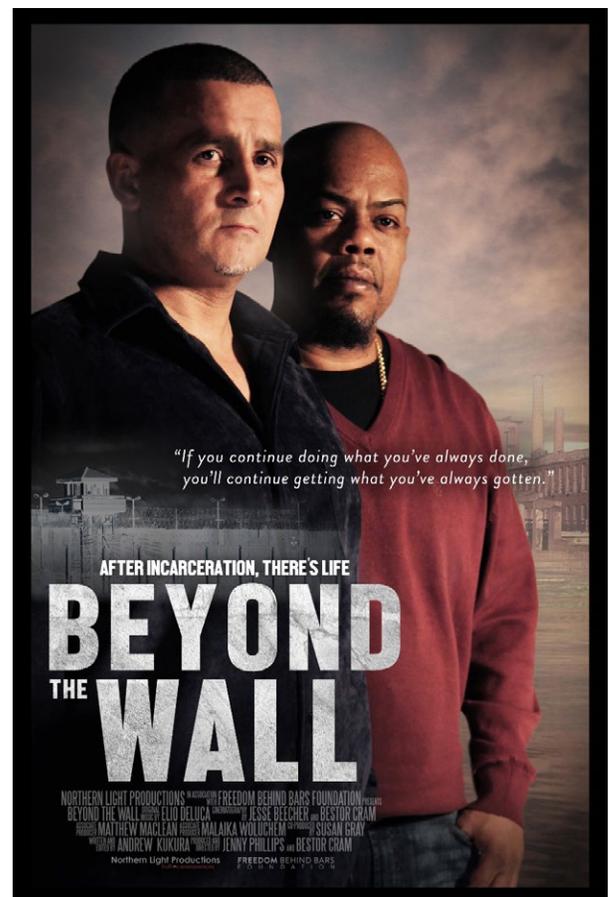
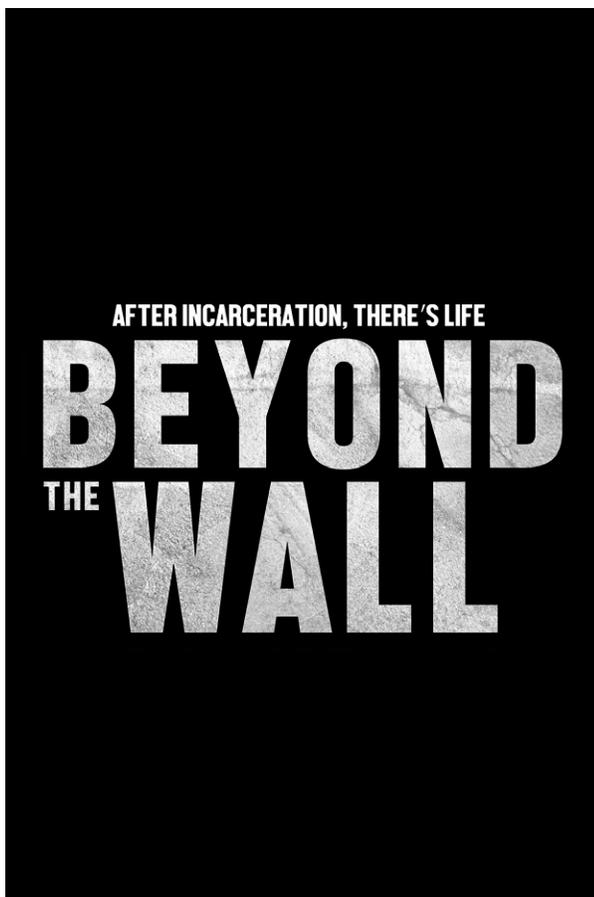
[Download 4" wide transparent png](#)

[Download 8" wide transparent png](#)

Film poster:

[Download 12" x 18" lo-res jpg](#)

[Download 12" x 18" Hi-res PDF](#)



5 | The Subjects

Louie Diaz is a substance abuse counselor and re-entry specialist with the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office. In his youth, drawn in by the money and excitement, Louie sold drugs and stolen jewelry and became involved in a car theft ring. During his struggles with addiction, he received a ten-year prison sentence for stabbing a police officer while trying to flee a crime scene. It was during his last sentence that he made a commitment to change his life and developed a passion for helping other returning citizens. As a counselor and re-entry specialist, Louie now tends to the emotional and physical needs of others. We witness the strain this work places on him. Because he was formerly incarcerated, he finds obstacles that at times prevent him from doing his job. Louie knows drugs and crime from both a criminal and a treatment perspective. He knows all the signs and symptoms of relapse and when and how to intervene. If anyone falters, he is there to help.

Billy Cabrera is a former prisoner and drug addict. Billy's dream of becoming a Master Barber and opening his own barbershop came true with the help of his recovery network. Using the barbershop as a gathering place, Billy and Louie began assisting others on their path to reentry and recovery. Billy's Barber Shop offers free haircuts, cups of coffee and a resource center for returning citizens. It has become a vital link in the chain of re-entry supports, and even the local prisons and jails send returning citizens there.

Jesus Ruiz is 29 years old and has spent most of his adult life behind bars. Despite a long history of incarceration and 98 charges on his criminal record, Jesus will leave prison this time without any parole, supervision or support services. He has "wrapped up" his sentence. As we follow Jesus through his final days in prison, he expresses confidence that this time will be different. He is not coming back. With six children to support and mounting bills, Jesus walks a narrow line between living a sober, crime-free life and reverting to dealing for fast money.

Julio Rivera is recently released from maximum-security prison and admitted into a drug rehabilitation program. After saying his final goodbyes to his family and vocalizing thoughts of suicide, Julio's daughter asks Louie for help. Julio commits to a treatment program, challenging himself not to relapse by leaning on the support of Louie, Billy and his family and choosing sobriety one day at a time.

6 | The **Subjects** (continued)

Pablo De Los Santos was incarcerated for assault and placed in protective custody. He dreams of one day earning his G.E.D. and going to college, but struggles with homelessness and drug addiction. With sub-zero temperatures and the snow of winter fast approaching, Louie tries to help him get off the streets and into a drug rehabilitation program.

Brian “Diddy” Nolette has been in and out of the criminal justice system since he was a teenager serving an adult sentence. He has been incarcerated 17 times, and at 32 years old he attempts to build a new life working as a barber and painter. Being incarcerated is the only life he has known since adolescence and he struggles in his new environment with the mounting pressures of life on the outside. He admits that he will never be able to beat his addiction unless he leaves the temptations and negative influences of his friends and the community he grew up in.

Rey Ortiz is a husband and father of five who hits rock bottom and asks for help with his addiction because he no longer wants to hurt his family. Rey participates in a residential detox program, volunteering as a cook and eventually gaining employment in a restaurant, his first time ever working.

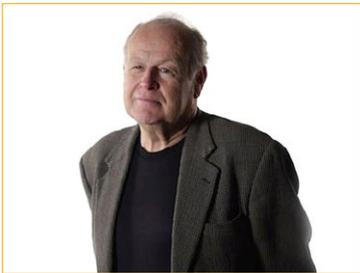


Brian “Diddy” Nolette

7 | The Filmmakers



Jenny Phillips is a cultural anthropologist, filmmaker, writer and psychiatric nurse. She has a psychotherapy practice in Concord, Massachusetts, specializing in crisis intervention, family and marriage therapy, behavioral medicine, and mindfulness training. In 2002, working with the Alabama Department of Correction (DOC), Jenny successfully brought a Vipassana meditation program inside a maximum-security prison in Alabama. In 2008, Phillips produced and directed a documentary film, *The Dhamma Brothers*, with a national theatrical release and national broadcast on public television. Jenny is producer/director of *Beyond the Wall*.



Bestor Cram has over 25 years of experience as a director, producer and cinematographer. He founded Northern Light Productions, which has produced and directed scores of films including broadcast documentaries that concentrate on issues relating to contemporary society, science, art and history. His cinematography credits include the 1995 Documentary Academy Award winner, *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision* and the acclaimed feature documentaries *After Innocence* and *Wrestling with Angels: Playwright Tony Kushner*, the Emmy nominated Discovery Channel special *Mysteries of the Sea: Freak Waves*; the HBO special *Mumia Abu-Jamal: A Case For Reasonable Doubt?*, the PBS/BBC series, *China in the Red*, and the PBS American Experience on Eleanor Roosevelt. Bestor's *Unfinished Symphony* premiered at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival and his current projects include four feature documentaries: *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*, *The Orangeburg Massacre*, *Killer Poet* and *Shoot the Messengers*. He is a producer of *Singing Revolution*, a recent theatrical release.



Andrew Kukura is a documentary filmmaker with 11 years professional experience as a producer, editor and writer. He has produced both short and long-format work for independents, broadcast outlets, museums, and non-profits. Recently, Andrew edited *Here Brothers Fought*, a 20-minute orientation for the Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi and *One Day at a Time*, a history of Alcoholics Anonymous for the Hazleton Institute. He was the editor and writer for *The Dhamma Brothers* and *Circus Without Borders*.

8 | The Issues

The United States incarcerates Americans at globally unprecedented rates. What's more, within three years of release approximately two-thirds of the formerly incarcerated are rearrested and sent back to prison.

- **There are 2.3 million people incarcerated in U.S. prisons and jails on any given day**
- **In the United States over 700,00 people are released from prisons each year**
- **11 million people cycle through local jails each year**
- **65% have a history of substance abuse**
- **68% are re-incarcerated within three years**

This is a public policy disaster.

It requires an enormous amount of time, energy, and money to manage this failing system that promotes recidivism and ensures a dismal future for most when their incarceration ends. States spend lavishly on prisons and jails, and the personnel to run them. But too often they spend insufficiently on the programs and resources that will keep the formerly incarcerated out of jail.

Our campaign is currently focused on policy and practice developments in the states of Massachusetts, Georgia and California. Policy and Issue Overviews are available on each of these three states.

Today jails are, with limited exceptions, city or county-level facilities that are governed by local law enforcement or departments of correction. They provide short-term confinement for individuals awaiting trial, sentencing or both and individuals serving a term less than one year.

In contrast, prisons are facilities run by the state or federal government, typically confining felons or individuals serving sentences longer than a single year. The statistics gathered and presented on this site differ between jails and prisons. Why? Basically, individuals spend less time in jails than in prisons. As a result, more people cycle through the jail system and are therefore recidivating at higher rates.

Source: VERA and Bureau of Justice Statistics

9 | About **The Campaign**

After Incarceration, There's Life is an national engagement campaign that intends to reach a wide audience through its screening series and by producing a number of digital materials, sound bytes, info graphics and memes that will be created to help spread the philosophy and ideas of the campaign on social media. These pieces can be easily adopted and re-branded by organizations working within the criminal justice reform space and will be highly share-able.

Campaign Goals



Provide a forum for best practice sharing among key stakeholders and bring together coalitions of support to create new solutions.



Increase availability of **comprehensive and treatment focused reentry programming** for returning citizens.



Educate communities about the realities of incarceration and offer opportunities to get involved, featuring formerly incarcerated individuals as potential leaders in their community.

Engaging Returning Citizens

In order for the necessary programs and resources to be developed that will support returning citizens, it is paramount to promote an understanding of a valuable and often ignored resource: the formerly incarcerated who have successfully transitioned back into society. Through strategic outreach, and the networks of our partners, the campaign will ensure that formerly incarcerated individuals play a starring role in each of the other initiatives listed below.

About **The Campaign** (continued)

State By State Screening Series

The campaign will develop state-specific strategies in targeted locations, coordinated with reentry events or programming already in development. Screenings of the film will feature local stakeholders; law enforcement, district attorneys, judges, state and city agencies and staff that implement reentry programming, corrections officers, substance abuse clinicians, churches and ministries, other NGOs and key personnel.

Screenings will include facilitated conversations to work toward local solutions, including but not limited to: sharing best practices, establishing a local speaker's bureau for the formerly incarcerated, and any other activities that help to build a seamless connection between prisons and jails and community-based programs.

Community Screening Series

Recognizing the need to educate communities about the realities of incarceration and offer opportunities to get involved, the general public will be included in screening conversations in order to provide an interconnected framework of support for returning citizens. Politicians, re-entry or corrections staff or local residents who were formerly incarcerated and are now serving as mentors will be invited to speak about the issues from a local perspective. Conversations will revolve around breaking down common stereotypes and barriers specific to their location. Intended outcomes from these events include increased involvement from the community in mentoring, donation and volunteer opportunities within local re-entry programming.

Prison Screening Series

Beyond the Wall will continue to screen in correctional facilities. Through these screenings, and the development and distribution of a unique film-based curriculum, the campaign aims to stimulate new conversations about re-entry and support preparation of individuals for release. Ultimately, this can strengthen re-entry and create more successful transitions into treatment programs.

Discussion Guide

A campaign-focused discussion guide will provide additional resources for further involvement in the campaign.

Public Affairs

Beyond the Wall has been embraced by the law enforcement and correctional community, and has been screened by U.S. Attorneys, Departments of Corrections, state legislators and major law enforcement conferences. The film is being hailed as an important tool in helping both professionals and formerly incarcerated individuals—and their families—to understand the array of challenges associated with re-entry.

Beyond the Wall will continue to engage policymakers, public officials, and the corrections community to promote the goals of the campaign and the ongoing use of the film as tool for education and action.

Major public officials who have screened the film:

Senate President Stanley C. Rosenberg,
Massachusetts Senate

Members of the Massachusetts State House
and Senate

Middlesex County Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian

Jay Virbel, Director, Division of Rehabilitative
Programs, California Department of
Corrections and Rehabilitation

Middlesex Police Chiefs Association

Middlesex County District Attorney
Marian Ryan

Carmen M. Ortiz, U.S. Attorney for the
District of Massachusetts

Mark Heffernan at the The Child Support
Enforcement Division of the Massachusetts
Department of Revenue

Screenings at major conferences and professional gatherings:

Massachusetts State House

2016 American Correctional Association
Annual Conference

International Community Corrections
Association (ICCA) Conference

The Alliance for Business Leadership

Darbari S. Seth Foundation Conference
on Nonviolence

12 | **Research and Resources**

Major Studies and Sources

Vera Institute of Justice

<http://www.vera.org/research>

Incarcerations Front Door: The Misuse of Jails in America (Feb 2015)

<https://www.vera.org/publications/incarcerations-front-door-the-misuse-of-jails-in-america>

Employing your Mission: Building Cultural Competence in Reentry Service Agencies through the Hiring of Individuals who were formerly Incarcerated or in Recovery

https://fortunesociety.org/wp-content/files_mf/1483559286Slide10.pdf

Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice

<https://www.bjs.gov>

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education, RAND 2013

http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR266.html

Mass Incarceration, The Whole Pie

The Sentencing Project, 2016

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2016.html>

Recidivism Among Federal Offenders: A Comprehensive Overview

United States Sentencing Commission, 2016

http://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2016/recidivism_overview.pdf

Research and Resources (continued)

Journalism and Articles

You Just Got Out of Prison: Now What?

NY Times Magazine, July 2015
https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/19/magazine/you-just-got-out-of-prison-now-what.html?_r=0

Seven Things to Know About Repeat Offenders

The Marshall Project, March 2016
<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2016/03/09/seven-things-to-know-about-repeat-offenders?ref=collections#.vMzRvHpmV>

From Solitary to the Streets

NPR, June 2015
<http://www.npr.org/2015/06/11/413208055/from-solitary-to-the-streets-released-inmates-get-little-help>

Life Beyond Bars: One Man's Journey From Prison to College

NY Times, November 2016
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/06/education/edlife/from-prison-to-college.html>

How One Nonprofit Breaks the Cycle of Incarceration

The Atlantic (Citylab), February 2017
<https://www.citylab.com/work/2017/02/how-one-nonprofit-breaks-the-cycle-of-incarceration/517296/>

Even in Texas, Mass Imprisonment Is Going Out of Style

NY Times, February 2017
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/14/opinion/even-in-texas-mass-imprisonment-is-going-out-of-style.html?_r=0

Inside a Killer Drug Epidemic: A look at America's Opioid Crisis

NY Times, January 2017
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/06/us/opioid-crisis-epidemic.html?smid=fb-share&_r=0

A Peek Behind Bars, and An Invitation To Re-imagine Prison

Connecticut Mirror, November 2016
<http://ctmirror.org/2016/11/21/a-peek-behind-bars-and-an-invitation-to-reimagine-prison/>

At Somers Prison, Inmates Work from Within To Reduce Recidivism

Hartford Courant, September 2016
<http://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-somers-inmate-program-1001-20160930-story.html>

Quotes From Senior Professionals

Equal measures heartbreaking and inspirational, *Beyond the Wall* pulls back the curtain on the gritty reality of what it means to be a poor “ex-con” in America. *Beyond the Wall* presents its subjects in all their human complexity, forcing the viewer to see them as human beings worthy of our attention and compassion.

Andrew Silverman
Deputy Chief Counsel, Public Defender Division of the
Massachusetts Committee for Public Counsel Services (former)

Beyond the Wall forces you to experience the overwhelming challenges that need to be overcome by returning citizens. Court personnel, judges and prosecutors should see *Beyond the Wall* to help them empathize and understand the support that is necessary to those they are sentencing.

Carmen M. Ortiz
United States Attorney
District of Massachusetts

Beyond the Wall provides an accurate portrayal of the recurrent difficulties that citizens returning from incarceration and their case managers confront as they pursue successful reintegration into the community. Reentry is a returning citizen's journey home, rife with the obstacles of employment, housing, mental and physical health, and substance abuse that can eventually emerge as barriers. *Beyond the Wall* highlights the struggles returning citizens with substance use disorder meet daily resulting in multiple setbacks, heartache, and sometimes death. This documentary amplifies the voice of a constituency with little representation but with great needs and greater promise if given a second chance.

--Frank DeLuca, Reentry Coordinator
Boston Police Department

Quotes From Senior Professionals (continued)

Beyond the Wall is riveting, gritty, powerful and provocative, but it is not a film – it is real life. It shows us the all too real visceral desperation of those trying to battle addiction and overcome the hurdles created by a period of incarceration. It also reveals the hope that lies in the action and commitment of men like Louis Diaz and Billy Cabrera, who have overcome those same hurdles and now dedicate their lives to offering support to those that society would often just as soon forget.

--Middlesex County Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian

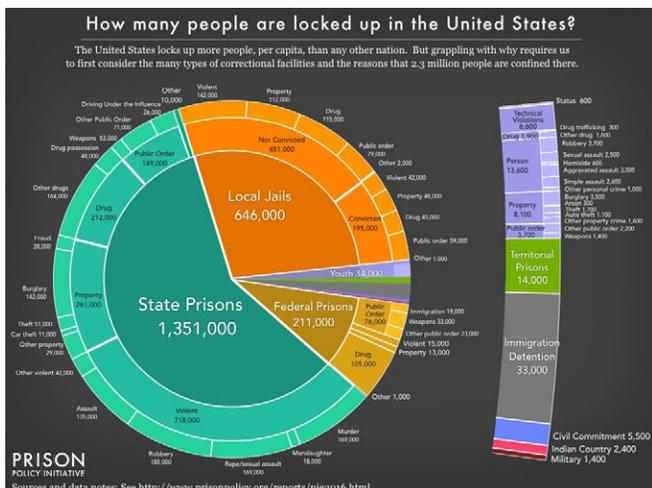
Beyond the Wall captures “the powerful emotional, financial and even spiritual challenges they face as they try to stay out of prison.”

– WBUR Radio Boston

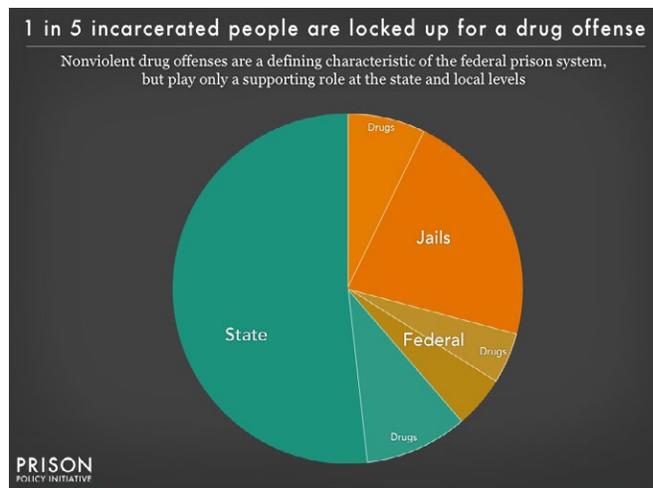
Wow. Watch this great video from @cut_50's #DayOfEmpathy partner in #Massachusetts; @MassINC & @BTWDoc!

--CNN's Van Jones

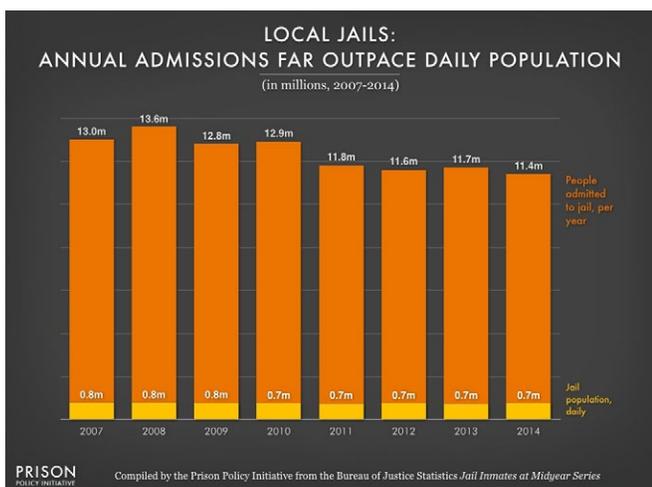
16 | Info Graphics



How many people are locked up in the United States?
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B7JVO5yhpVMMOWdOQ3VJa2JQMlk>



1 in 5 incarcerated people are locked up for a drug offense
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B7JVO5yhpVMMZGVpWHNGU0RDd3M>



Local jails: annual admissions far outpace daily population
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B7JVO5yhpVMMMSjYzcnBHMWhLYVE>

17 | By the **Numbers**

California

129,405¹
In Custody

44,124²
On Parole

\$64,000³
Annual cost per inmate

Of the 42,661 State prison offenders released in 2010-2011, **81.6% returned within three years.**⁴

Nationally, 53% of state prison offenders meet the criteria for drug dependency -- **only 15% participate in a drug rehabilitation program by a trained professional.**⁵

CA state prison offenders that receive substance abuse treatment return to prison at a rate of 15.3%, compared to a return rate of 46.5% in those offenders that do not receive substance abuse treatment.⁶

Offenders aged 18- to 19-years-old have a 59.1 percent recidivism rate to State prison. Offenders age 60 and older have a 31.1 recidivism rate to State prison.⁷

^{1,5} Georgia Department of Corrections, Average Counts, http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/sites/all/themes/gdc/pdf/Avg_Daily_Pop_By_Facility_Type_CY2016.pdf

² Georgia Department of Community Supervision, 2015 Annual Report, <https://www.joomag.com/magazine/dcs-annual-report-2015/0113326001450363524?short>

^{3,4,7} National Institute of Corrections, Georgia, <http://nicic.gov/statestats/?st=ga>

^{6,8} Georgia Department of Corrections, Inmate Statistical Profile, Inmates Released During CY2016, http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/sites/all/themes/gdc/pdf/Profile_inmate_releases_CY2016.pdf

18 | By the **Numbers** (continued)

Georgia

36,876¹

In Custody

180,000²

On Parole

\$21,039³

Annual cost per inmate

Georgia's crime rate is **20% higher** than the national average.⁴

In 2016, the number of offenders exceeded facility capacity by **2,995 people**⁵

52.86% of current offenders have been incarcerated more than once⁶

GA has more probationers than the national average by **300%**⁷

16.37 Years – The mean (average) for all GA prison sentences⁸

^{1,2} California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Weekly Report - March 1, 2017, http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch/WeeklyWed/TPOP1A/TPOP1Ad170301.pdf

³ Los Angeles Times, California Prison Spending is Out of Whack, <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-de-incarceration-dividend-20160114-story.html>

^{4,6,7} California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2015 Outcome Evaluations, http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult_Research_Branch/Research_Documents/2015_Outcome_Evaluation_Report_8-25-2016.pdf

⁵ Bureau of Justice, Drug Use and Dependence, State and Federal Prisoners, 2004, <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/dudsfp04.pdf>

19 | By the **Numbers** (continued)

Massachusetts

10,014¹

In Custody

2,514²

On Parole

\$47,102³

Annual cost per inmate

MA had 5,680 release hearings in 2014, of which **3,427 were granted parole** (or 60% of hearings)⁴

96% of the male population had a sentence of three or more years⁵

2.5 years – the average institutional stay⁶

Average recidivism rate for a three-year period is **32%**⁷

39% of paroled inmates return within three years due a technical violation of parole⁸

^{1,2,5-8} Massachusetts Department of Corrections, Prison Population Trends 2015, <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/doc/research-reports/pop-trends/prisonpoptrends-2015-final.pdf>

³ National Institute of Corrections, Massachusetts, <http://nicic.gov/statestats/?st=MA#footwrap>

⁴ Parole Board Massachusetts, Annual Statistical Report 2014, <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/pb/2014annualstatisticalreport.pdf>

