

# AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES MANAGING INCARCERATION AND ITS ALTERNATIVES

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## BACKGROUND

13<sup>th</sup> Amendment (2016) a Netflix Original Film: This 1 hour, 40 minute film traces the movement from slavery through Reconstruction, forced migration, mass incarceration, 3 strikes, mandatory minimum sentencing, SB 1070, and Probation/Parole privatization. It is essential viewing for those who wish to understand why

1 in 3 African Americans have been incarcerated. 2.3 million currently incarcerated

99% of those arrested plead guilty even when innocent rather than face threat of longer sentences

Ex-offenders face systemic impoverishment after release due to State, Federal and municipal laws requiring payment for periods of incarceration. monitoring devices and probation/parole oversight. Their rights to vote are often permanently lost and their employment opportunities limited due to the "question on the application".

## ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION AND PROGRAMS FOR EX-OFFENDERS

We have the knowledge of what works for families in which members have experienced incarceration. We have not consistently used that knowledge to support programming.

Effective programs for juveniles and adults have been in existence since the 1970s. The Wilder Foundation (Minnesota) has an extensive research library community-based alternatives to incarceration.

Restorative Justice Programs exist throughout the U.S

Prisoner Re-Entry Programs Sporadically Funded

Community-Based Initiatives – Matthew 25 Ministries (Florida)

Grassroots Organizations: Moms Groups, Sons and Daughters of the Incarcerated, Black Lives Matter movement

## CHALLENGES

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) <https://www.alec.org> . Their mission: "limited, free markets, federalism". Claims membership representing 60 million legislators and business owners and employs 30 million people.

Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) <http://www.cca.com> Their mission: "innovation, efficiency, cost effectiveness and achievement" in privatization service provision. Since 1983, many of the municipal, state and federal correctional institutions have contracted with CCA to provide food, medical/dental/mental health, and security services. 13,000 employees.

## INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES

1. Educate Yourself: What programs exist in your community as alternatives to incarceration, re-entry initiatives, separation of adult and juvenile services, family reunification activities? How are these funded? Can ex-offenders or their families live near you? What is the cost of community-based programming versus incarceration in your locale? Does your research/teaching include the historical, social and political differentials contributing to incarceration experienced by families?
2. Educate Others: How do ALEC and CCA operate within your communities? What is the relationship of ALEC to accessible programs and laws for you and your neighbors who may have had trouble with the law?

## INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

How are students who have been in trouble with the law treated at your institution?

What relationships do your legislators have to ALEC and CCA? How do those rules affect who enters and is maintained in your institution? How is ALEC influencing the issue of academic freedom at your institution?

Are discussions of ethnic, racial, gender identity differences contextualized in the broader institutional, historical, social and political factors that have exacerbated these differences in the U.S.?

## ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES

How many NCFR sessions annually focus on families who have been in trouble with the law?

When will NCFR issue a position paper on incarceration and its effects on families?