

Re*Membering



Improve the health and safety of Oregon communities by reauthorizing Re*Membering which provides reentry-focused civil legal services to women during incarceration.

Re*Membering provides civil legal assistance to people incarcerated in Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (CCCF) to address legal issues that might become or already are barriers to their successful reentry into the community. It is a pilot program of the Oregon Justice Resource Center (OJRC) established in 2019 through funding authorized by the legislature.

The issue

Almost everyone incarcerated in Oregon will return to our communities one day. Many will cycle through our criminal justice system more than once, caught in a cycle of poverty, marginalization, crime, and incarceration. Our communities pay a high price. New skills and a genuine commitment to change may not be enough for post-prison success due to overwhelming legal, social, and economic barriers.

Many challenges faced by formerly incarcerated people are a result of civil legal issues unaddressed during or exacerbated by incarceration, as well as more than a thousand Oregon laws and policies that are barriers to full participation in society by those with criminal histories.

Access to civil legal services is difficult to obtain. Once released, most people cannot afford an attorney. Pro bono attorneys and legal aid cannot meet the demand. Due to the specialized nature of legal work and the breadth of legal issues one person may face, a single attorney in the community generally cannot provide the person enough assistance.

Legal issues facing incarcerated Oregonians



Child custody and parental rights



Debt



Housing and employment



Suspended/revoked driver licenses



Real property



Personal property



Other basic human needs

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“[You] gave me a place to come home to – literally. [You] saved my home. It’s a huge benefit to not have to go to transitional housing.”

Client feedback

Investing in civil legal services for currently incarcerated people will help reduce the risk of recidivism and increase the chances of stability. Tackling problems before they spiral out of control saves resources later. Helping people get ready for their return to society just makes sense.

OJRC attorneys have been working with people at CCCF since 2014. Their skills in problem-solving, collaboration, synthesizing information, and communication are a good fit for a range of needs. The OJRC is well-equipped to learn from client experiences, provide quality public and stakeholder education, and help identify reforms to improve reentry.

Examples of assistance

- Helped a client avoid foreclosure of her home.
- Helped a client who lost parental rights establish a written agreement allowing continued communication between herself, her young child, and the adoptive parents.
- Helped a client address property code violation notices to protect her home from further legal action.
- Helped a client address concerns about her identity and credit after receiving notice from a state agency that her personal information was exposed to a data breach.
- Helped a client enforce her right to phone and video contact with her children who reside out-of-state, so they can maintain their relationship until she is able to reunite with them.
- Helped clients remit tens of thousands of dollars in fines and other debt.
- Helped client develop a safety plan against possible harassment by an abusive former partner after her release.
- Helped clients safeguard inherited property and other personal property.

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“As women, inmates, humans, we constantly feel degraded, dehumanized and unworthy. There were many times when I felt almost speechless because you helped me more than I asked for and I didn’t feel like I deserved such generosity and kindness.”

Client feedback

Re*Membering has done amazing work since it began meeting with clients in late November 2019



In the first three months, we received over 200 requests for services.



We have served women releasing to 20 different counties, with 75% releasing to counties outside the metropolitan tri-county (Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas) area.



We have a volunteer attorney advisory committee with more than a dozen members, covering a range of issue areas.