



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2026 Illinois Reentry Conference:

Where Collaboration, Education, and Innovation Lead to Equity in Health and Healing

CHICAGO, IL - On March 12, 2026, at 9 a.m. CST, the Illinois Reentry Conference kicks off at Malcolm X College. More than 300 people have registered, representing leaders, community members, people who are justice-impacted, service providers, and advocates in the fields of public health, healthcare, social services, and criminal justice. Those gathered will explore themes of health and healing, support, dignity, and equity.

This annual conference builds skills and creates space for conversation around health equity, social justice, and reentry services to support individuals who are justice-impacted. This year's plenary and workshop speakers will address topics such as navigating reentry trauma, strategies for systemic change, managing processes and barriers around registrable offenses, providing HIV care without stigma, public library resources for people who are justice-impacted, using AI to support human service delivery, expungement, the incredible value of peer support, mental health and healing, and the many manifestations of power. Creative artists who are justice-impacted will share their stories in poetry and spoken word, local and statewide organizations will connect with conference participants during a resource fair, and the day will culminate in the presentation of Community Reentry Champion and Health Justice Legacy Awards.

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC), through its Community Reentry Project (CRP), hosts the Illinois Reentry Conference annually. Through partnerships with Cermak Health Services and Transforming Reentry Services, CRP provides HIV health education to approximately 3,000 people who are currently incarcerated in the Cook County Department of Corrections, assists approximately 1,050 formerly incarcerated individuals with obtaining legal identification, and distributes approximately 8,720 discharge planning packets annually, under PHIMC's direction. Additionally, CRP hosts a variety of networking and training opportunities for people with lived experience and professionals working in reentry, HIV, behavioral health, healthcare, corrections, and criminal justice. These opportunities include quarterly statewide meetings, quarterly corrections discharge planning trainings, and annual Illinois Reentry Conferences, engaging nearly 700 individuals each year.

The 2026 Illinois Reentry Conference mainstage features:

- *Turning Pain Into Purpose*, by Morning Plenary Expert Reginald Smith, Executive Director of Pure Living Transitional House
- *From Survival to Power: Healing, Leadership, and System Change Led by Directly Impacted Communities*, by Afternoon Plenary Expert Marlon Chamberlain, Executive Director of the Illinois Coalition to End Permanent Punishment

- Spoken Word and Poetry throughout the day by Sandra Brown, Marketta Gilford, and three artists from Women Initiating New Directions (WIND) – Monse Arreola, Latrice Johnson, and Queen Brown
- *Community Reentry Champion and Health Justice Legacy Award Presentations*

Workshops will be offered by presenters and facilitators working independently and representing a wide variety of organizations, including Chicago Public Library, Illinois Coalition to End Permanent Punishment, Heritage Behavioral Health Center, Latino Reentry Reintegration Services, Inc., Leading By Example-MS, Office of the State Appellate Defender, Reentry Café, Untapped Solutions, and ViiV Healthcare:

- *AI Reentry Agents: The Future of Case Management and Second Chances*
- *Beginning to Register: A Different Type of Reentry*
- *Exoneree: A different path to reentry*
- *Guidance on Expunging and Sealing of Criminal Records*
- *The Justice Impacted Crisis*
- *The Next Chapter: Library Resources for Reentry*
- *The Non-Tangible Harms of Reentry*
- *Pivot to Power*
- *State Grant 235 IDHS & IDOC Successful Reentry - Accomplishments, Challenges, and the Importance of Peer Support*
- *Reentry Is Public Health: The Impact of Clean Slate Illinois*
- *Ring the Alarm, Preparing the Village: Re-Entry and HIV Care Without Stigma*

“At the Illinois Reentry Conference, we will celebrate the power of transformation and the commitment required to reclaim one’s life,” says Brittany Spralls, PHIMC Community Reentry Project Manager and organizer of the conference. “Guided by dignity in every conversation, the conference seeks to create meaningful opportunities for individuals who are justice-impacted to heal, for communities to flourish, and for systems to evolve toward greater equity and support.”

The 2026 Illinois Reentry Conference is funded by Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and sponsored by ViiV Healthcare, Rudd Resources, UChicago Medicine, Illinois HIV Care Connect, and Illinois Public Health Association.

For more information, please visit <https://phimc.org/initiatives/crp/illinois-reentry-conference/>

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Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago (PHIMC) advances health justice and strengthens public health through innovation and partnerships that align people, strategies, and resources. Through organizational development, systems transformation, fiscal management, and program implementation, PHIMC leads efforts to ensure systems are compassionate, affirming, and racially equitable, supporting health and well-being for all people.

Community Reentry Project (CRP) is a multi-stakeholder project that coordinates efforts to ensure that people living with and at highest risk for HIV transition smoothly from incarceration to communities. CRP facilitates a comprehensive system of HIV care and support services throughout Illinois. Partners include Cermak Health Services of Cook County and Transforming Reentry Services.