

What Michigan May be Missing in Reducing Michigan Recidivism Rates

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GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, UNITED STATES, January 26, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Michigan's in the top ten in reducing recidivism. Yet, a local research says, not so fast. Is Michigan REALLY Keeping Ex-Offenders Out of Prison?

"As an African American who has been indelibly touched by the realities of the criminal justice system, whether a neighbor, cousin, brother, husband, uncle or friend – being of color in America means knowing somebody who has been affected by incarceration," says Capella University Doctoral Candidate, Linda F. Williams, MSW. She adds, "However, recidivism is an equal opportunity disease."

The Truth is IN THE DRILL DOWN

Between 2012 and 2013, Michigan reduced recidivism rates from 31% to 28.9%. There is no denying the significance of these numbers. According to a March 29, 2017 press release, the achievement moved Michigan into one of the top 10 states in the nation with the lowest recidivism rates. "These numbers measure reincarceration within the first three years of release. Williams is conducting a doctoral study that focuses on successful reintegration beyond the 3 to 5 year mark."



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Linda F. Williams, MSW

Michigan achieved this remarkable milestone, in part, by addressing many of the cumulative psychosocial and socioeconomic disadvantages facing most exoffenders. Education and high-demand vocational training, augmented by cognitive mental health services are part of Michigan's reintegration intervention strategy. Yet, recidivism looms as an ongoing national challenge in spite of over 30 years of criminal justice research.



Linda F. Williams, MSW

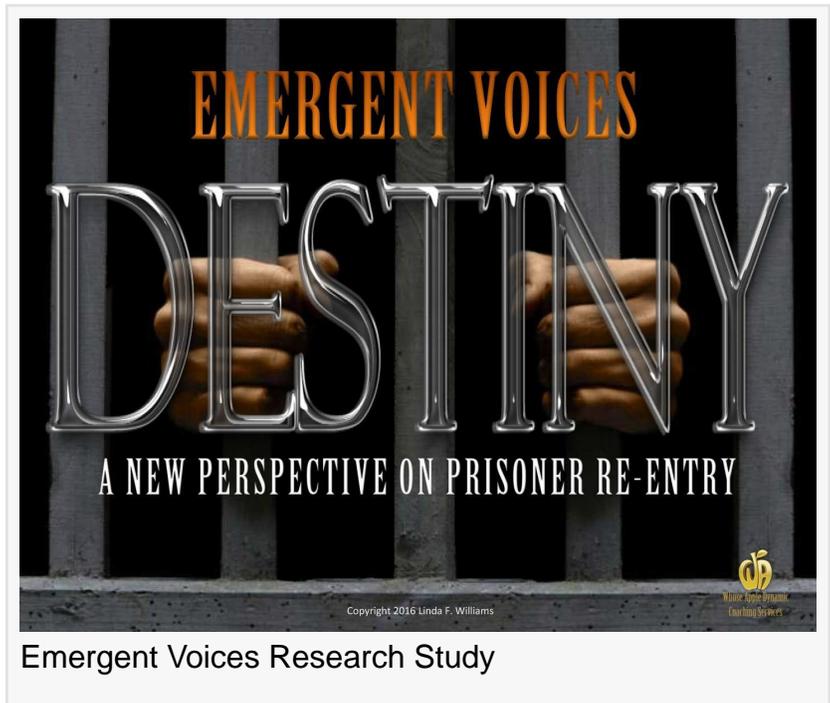
While Michigan's three-year mark is in keeping with the [March 2016 United States Sentencing Commission \(USSC\)](#) report documenting the outcomes of 25,431 federal offenders released in 2005, the report also showed that many of the subjects (27.1%) recidivated within two years of release and 6.6% recidivated in year-three. Here is the rub, according to Williams. By the eighth post-release year, 49.3% had recidivated. What is unclear, according to Williams, is how many of those who had not

recidivated in the first three years were included in that eighth-year figure.

A considerable number of exoffenders face the same cumulative post-release disadvantages. Williams is studying the question of why do some prevail in reintegration while others do not. "It will take more than thinking outside the box to achieve sustainable reductions in recidivism. Asking the people who have experienced this, may result in a whole new perspective on the matter."

UNTOLD STORIES: Rethinking the Proverbial "Box"

Williams is currently conducting research that she describes as asking, "What is the box and is the box, as defined, accurately described?" She wants to know the stories of those who have successfully reintegrated despite systemic challenges. "I can think of no better person to define 'the box' than those who have successfully navigated the choppy waters of reintegration."



Emergent Voices Research Study

During her undergraduate work at Calvin College, Williams completed an applied research project on recidivism. That report was instrumental in a Exodus Correctional Ministries, Prison Fellowship and Hope Network partnership in a prisoner reentry program in Grand Rapids. Herb Start, who was then the Hope Network CEO, asked Williams to co-write the Prison Fellowship New Initiatives Grant proposal. The program was modeled after recommendations in the thesis. Williams went on to earn a Masters of Social Work from Western Michigan University.

"Emergent Voices: Reintegration and Desistance from the Perspectives of Formerly Criminal Justice-Involved Individuals" is a research project Williams is conducting as part of her doctoral studies at the Capella University School of Public Service Leadership. Dr. Robin Erasing, PhD is supervising the study, which is designed to understand, from the perspectives of formerly criminal justice involved individuals, turning points that led to their decisions to desist from criminal activity.

IF YOU WERE PREVIOUSLY INCARCERATED IN A MICHIGAN JAIL OR PRISON

Formerly incarcerated individuals who:

- * Have a most recent release date of January 1, 2009 or before
- * Are ages 25 through 64
- * Live in the state of Michigan

You may volunteer for the study.

For more information visit the [Emergent Voices Research website](#) or email Williams at LW5553@CapellaUniversity.edu.

CURRENT OR FORMER MDOC PROBATION OR PAROLE OFFICERS

Probation or Parole officers can give their insights on recidivism by taking an online survey or visiting the EmergentVoicesResearch.com for more information.

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