

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The notion that one size fits all is a misnomer when it comes to inmate reintegration programs. Reentry programs that were formulated for male inmates have often proven ineffective in dealing with the unique physical, emotional, and social challenges faced by an ever-increasing population of female inmates. New programs have been developed for female offenders, but do they successfully solve these gender issues? Do they really help female inmates succeed postrelease?

These questions are the focus of this issue's cover story. Studies highlighted in the article deal with various female-oriented programs and demonstrate that an individualized approach helps female prisoners to reintegrate into society and avoid reincarceration.

Technologies are changing the face of today's society, and the Department of Justice and NIJ are both committed to providing the latest improvements to law enforcement officers. One such innovation is the Voice Response Translator (VRT). Developed with funding from NIJ, the VRT is a pocket-sized device that allows officers to speak immediately to non-English speaking subjects. This hands-free device, which can be programmed to repeat an officer's commands in a foreign language, enables officers to speak to non-English speaking persons without the aid of a human translator. NIJ is also developing several other technologies through its National Center for Law Enforcement and Corrections Training Center (NLECTC) system. These developments include equipment that detects trace amounts of illicit drugs on inmate mail, a program that enables previously incompatible data systems to communicate with one another, and a crime mapping computer program that helps pinpoint a likely offender's residence based on crime locations and patterns.

Focused studies of particular crimes also go a long way toward preventing victimization and deterring future criminal conduct. For example, understanding what draws a person into the lucrative but fleeting lifestyle of a telemarketing predator sheds light on how these organizations operate and how they ultimately can be detected and prosecuted. And uncovering the uncomfortable truth that modern day slavery is alive and well and thriving in many countries—including our own—is necessary if we are to isolate indicators of such conduct and ultimately eradicate the practice.



Sarah V. Hart
Director, National Institute of Justice