

Occasional Series on Reentry Research
Prisoner Reentry Institute at John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Evaluation of Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative

Panelist Biographies

October 23, 2009

Christy Visser is Co-Director of the Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies (Newark Office) and Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Delaware. Prior to joining the University of Delaware, she was Principal Research Associate with the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute in Washington, DC. From 1993 to 2000, Dr. Visser was the Science Advisor to the Director of the National Institute of Justice, the research arm of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Dr. Visser's research interests focus on communities and crime, substance use, criminal careers, the role of social factors in criminal desistance, and the evaluation of strategies for crime control and prevention. She has published widely on these and other topics in numerous social science journals, and co-edited *Prisoner Reentry and Crime in America*, with Jeremy Travis. Ms. Visser earned her Ph.D. in Sociology from Indiana University.

Ingrid Johnson is Chair of the Newark Reentry Advisory Board and manages the Office of Reentry for Mayor Corey Booker's administration in Newark. In that capacity, she oversees all prisoner reentry projects funded by or overseen by the City of Newark. She is also responsible for providing policy analysis on reentry issues and for expanding resources for reentry initiatives.

Prior to her work with Newark, Ms. Johnson served as a Supervising Attorney at Legal Services of New Jersey, where she oversaw the statewide Prisoner Reentry Project and Workers Legal Rights Project. In this capacity, she supervised a staff of 12 attorneys and oversaw a caseload that included addressing barriers to successful reentry. Before joining Legal Services, she was in private practice and devoted significant time to pro bono work, including serving as counsel to the New Jerseyans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (which successfully imposed a moratorium on executions) and handling a complex civil rights suit on behalf of mentally ill inmates. Ms. Johnson is a graduate of Rutgers Law School in Newark and obtained her undergraduate degree at Bryn Mawr College.

Ari Wax is the Assistant Commissioner for Program Management, Policy and Planning at the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) where he oversees the delivery of services in the areas of inmate educational, vocational and post-release transition programs, grievance resolution, counseling, and disability rights. He is also responsible for the Program's Division data management. Mr. Wax has spent more than two decades working in local government as a high level administrator, project manager and prosecuting attorney.

Mr. Wax also served as the Deputy Commissioner for Training, Organizational Development and T.E.A.M.S, a proactive management system similar to the New York City Police Department's Compstat system. Prior to assuming managerial roles at City agencies, Mr. Wax served in the Office of the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinator where he monitored and coordinated the activities of the five local prosecutors, NYPD, DOC and the courts in various efforts aimed at improving the efficiency of the criminal justice system through reorganization and automation. He received his J.D. from the George Washington University National Law Center and his B.A. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.