

**Title** *Ready Access: Reentry Services for Decarcerated Populations*

**Issue/challenge statement:**

Upon decarceration, many individuals are unaware of the existence of their local libraries, that membership is free, and that there is an abundance of resources available to them. California libraries have an outstanding number of informational, vocational, cultural, educational, and recreational resources that can be branded, packaged and tailored to individuals upon reentry to the community. In this initiative we will bring awareness to these service populations, and provide the tools necessary to assist and host a safe place for people wanting to better their lives.

**2 project outcomes:**

1. Decarcerated individuals receive educational, recreational, vocational, and cultural support with increased knowledge and access to library programs, services, and classes.
2. These individuals will come to view the library as a welcoming and relevant support system, empowering them in the present and with eyes on the future.

To achieve these outcomes, we have created a toolkit/website (<https://sites.google.com/view/ready-access/home>) that will be two-fold:

a. Outward Facing:

- i. Map of Libraries
- ii. Additional Resources
- iii. Reading List

b. Inward Facing:

- i. Welcome video
- ii. California Fact Sheet
- iii. Map of Carceral Institutions.
- iv. Initiating Partnership Workflow/Templates
- v. Programming Workflow
- vi. Website Template
- vii. Glossary of Terms

The toolkit will be distributed via CALIX, with an initial goal of being added to ten California public libraries' websites. The broader goal is to have Greg Lucas and the State Library team fully endorse Ready Access and invite the Social Justice Team to the next California Director's Summit to present the Toolkit and recommend the initiative be adopted by the majority of library systems represented.

**Why did we choose this topic:**

The initiative was produced by four California librarians who have worked with incarcerated and decarcerated individuals and understand their unique informational needs, and foresee how well-positioned the library is to meet these needs. The value of the toolkit cannot be overstated: if successfully followed it will raise the awareness of decarcerated individuals of their local libraries, its programs, collections, and services; and California library staff will garner empathy and feel empowered to serve decarcerated individuals.