

APART

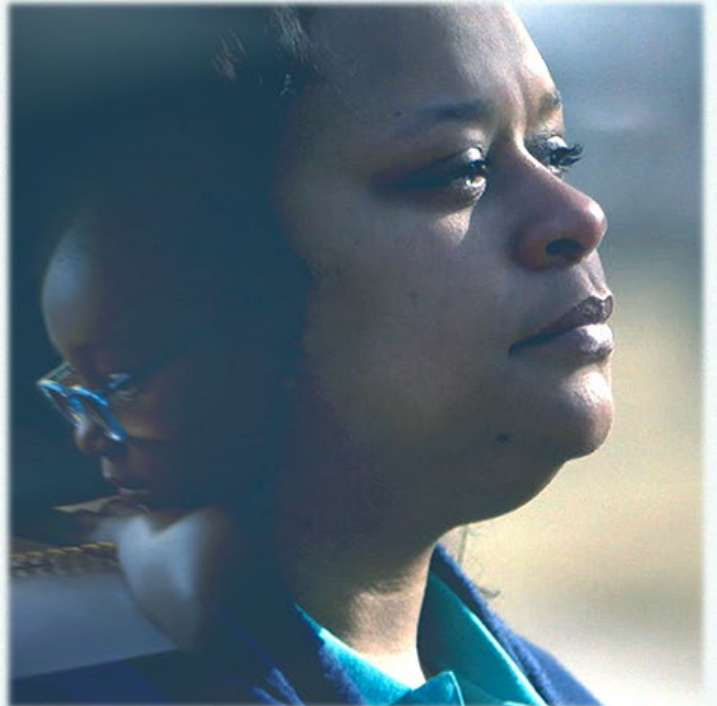
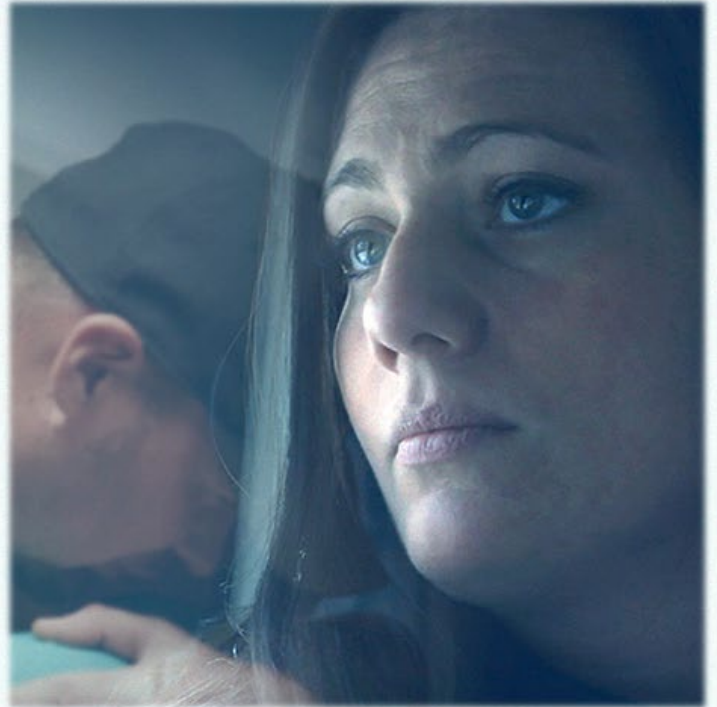


Table of Contents

From the Filmmaker	3
About the Film	4
How to Watch the Film	4
Screening Objectives	5
Background Information	6
Incarceration in the United States	6
Public Health and Prisons	7
Effects of Incarceration on Families	7
Reducing Incarceration	8
Discussing the Film	10
Framing the Conversation	10
Discussion Questions	11
Potential Partners	12
Engagement Ideas	14
Additional Resources	15
Glossary	16
Credits	17

FROM THE FILMMAKER



Jennifer Redfearn, Director/Producer

The United States is awakening to the crisis of mass incarceration and the “war on drugs,” but the devastating effects these forces have had on women are still underreported. Since the 1980s, the number of women in prison has grown by a staggering 800%. Most Americans don’t know that women are now the fastest-growing segment of the prison population, and 80 percent of women entering the system are mothers.

In 2016, I traveled to Cleveland, Ohio, to learn more about a new reentry program created to address the unique needs of women returning home from prison. My partner, Tim Metzger, and I talked to more than three dozen women in the program. The stories they shared with us were at once profoundly engaging, moving, and at times gut-wrenching.

Most of the women we met were in prison due to drugs or drug-related charges; almost all had faced an early trauma—physical abuse, sexual abuse, or a family legacy of drugs and incarceration. Their stories paint a vivid picture of the complex forces that drive women into the system and the challenges they face when returning home. All of them were concerned about finding work and housing, and I was particularly struck by the conversations we had about restoring relationships with their children.

Viewers will experience intimacy in the film that we developed over time. I’m thinking of a particular scene with Tomika and Bailee. In December, the reentry program organized a holiday party for the women and their families. Some of the women hadn’t seen

their families in months. Tomika told us she was finally ready to tell her six-year-old daughter that she was in prison, and she invited us to sit at the table and film this profound moment with her family. It was a tough moment for everyone involved, yet it powerfully shows how difficult the separation is for mothers and their children. We realized it was important for an audience to confront this side of the story — the side most of us don’t get to see.

The issues raised in this film are part of a much larger conversation we’re having in the U.S. about inequality, racism, drugs, and mass incarceration. We made *Apart* as one piece of this wider conversation with a focus on maternal incarceration. I hope the film encourages audiences to grapple with how incarceration impacts mothers, children, families, and, as a result, entire communities. I hope it compels audiences to ask, “how can we take the steps necessary to move away from the current punitive model to one that’s more just and restorative?”

I’m grateful to have had the opportunity to film with Tomika, Amanda, Lydia, and Malika over the years, and I deeply appreciate their candor and strength when sharing their stories with us. Ideally, I hope we can learn from their experience and this film can help with the ongoing work to build a more just society.

—Jennifer Redfearn, Director/Producer

ABOUT THE FILM



This intimate portrait examines the impact of America's war on drugs through three mothers attempting to rebuild lives derailed by drugs and prison. As Tomika, Lydia, and Amanda prepare to rejoin their families after years of incarceration, they enter an innovative prison program in Cleveland, Ohio where they lean on each other and mentors who have also been in prison. With the hope of redemption on the horizon, the women work to regain the trust of their children and combat stigmas associated with people who have been incarcerated.

Independent Lens proudly presents *Apart* as part of our community screening series, Indie Lens Pop-Up, and the Stories for Justice initiative, a public media partnership to spark community conversations and boost the work of people on the front lines of justice reform. Learn more: pbs.org/indielenspopup and itvs.org/stories-for-justice.

How to Watch the Film

Community Screenings:

January 22–March 7, 2022

Independent Lens Broadcast Premiere (**check local listings**):

Monday, February 21, 2022

Stream online at video.pbs.org:

February 21–March 22, 2022

SCREENING OBJECTIVES



Apart tells the stories of women and their loved ones whose lives have been upended by the criminal justice system. Amanda, Tomika, and Lydia, the mothers featured in the film, are but three of the growing number of women who have been incarcerated in U.S. prisons.

Each screening event for the film *Apart* is an opportunity for members of your community to hear from those in the community who have been impacted by the justice system. We encourage you to invite to your event people who have been incarcerated and the families of current or formerly incarcerated people. Additional potential participants include service providers, faith leaders, activists, and local businesses who support people who have been incarcerated. We hope that your screening event achieves the following goals:

- Promotes the dignity of people who have been impacted by the justice system by challenging the stigma of incarceration and encouraging understanding and generosity toward people who have been incarcerated.
- Educates people about the rising incarceration rates among women, most of whom are caregivers, and the challenges of reentry.

- Promotes thoughtful discussions about the justice system as it relates to separation of parents and children and extreme sentencing for drug-related charges.
- Creates dialogue about solutions that better serve communities who have been affected by incarceration and/or addiction.

“The system is designed to be punitive. But to me, it’s about getting our lives restored. And we need support to do that. Remember, ladies: Every human soul needs help at some point or another.”

—Cheryl, *Apart*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



This section provides more context about the topics in the film to help a viewer better understand the stories of people who have been incarcerated. You can use the facts included here at your event, in promotions, and on social media as a way to educate your community about the criminal justice system.

Incarceration in the United States

The U.S. jail and prison population has exploded over the last 40 years. In the 1980s, the United States began what politicians called a “war on drugs,” which pushed the criminal justice system to penalize anyone involved with drug use. Since then, the number of Americans incarcerated for drug offenses has risen from 40,900 in 1980 to 430,926 in 2019.¹ Women have been the fastest-growing segment of the overall incarcerated population. From 1980 to 2019, the number of women in state and federal prisons has increased by more than 800 percent—from 12,331 to 111,360.² The United States spends more than \$80 billion each year incarcerating Americans.³

As part of the war on drugs, politicians created mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses, which local judges are required to follow regardless of the unique circumstances of the case or how the defendant was involved. As a result, the system locked up more people and kept them there for longer. In 1986, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, which provided for increased penalties for violations of the Controlled Substance Act,

increased spending for the war on drugs, and increased or added mandatory sentences. In 2004, the average sentence for people convicted of a drug offense was 62 months in prison—three times higher than it was in 1986.⁴ Today, nearly half of all people in federal prisons—more than 67,000—are being held on drug charges.⁵

Lawmakers created disproportionately harsh mandatory minimum sentences for drugs that were more prevalent in Black and Latinx communities in the 1980s.⁶ For example, the penalty for possession or sale of crack rocks, which were more available in Black communities, was 100 times harsher than that for the possession or sale of powder cocaine, a similar drug more prevalent in white communities. People addicted to crack faced long sentences and few treatment options. As a result, the Black incarceration rate in America grew from about 600 per 100,000 people in 1970 to 1,808 in 2000. In the same period, the rate for the Latinx population grew from 208 per 100,000 people to 615, and the white incarceration rate grew from 103 per 100,000 people to 242.⁶

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the last decade, policymakers have pushed reforms to decrease the prison population. However, programs have been more effective at lowering the men's prison population than the women's. In 35 states, women's incarceration has grown.² In eight states—Alabama, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin—the women's prison population increased even as the men's population decreased.² In 19 states, including Ohio, the growth in the women's population in state prisons continues to outpace that of men.² For state-by-state trends by gender, see this resource from Prison Policy: prisonpolicy.org/reports/women_overtime.html.

Sources:

1. sentencingproject.org/criminal-justice-facts
2. prisonpolicy.org/reports/women_overtime.html
3. themarshallproject.org/2019/12/17/the-hidden-cost-of-incarceration
4. famm.org/wp-content/uploads/FS-MMs-in-a-Nutshell.pdf
5. bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_offenses.jsp
6. pbs.org/newshour/nation/50-year-war-on-drugs-imprisoned-millions-of-black-americans

Public Health and Prisons

The opioid crisis in America has fueled mass incarceration. Starting in the 1990s, pharmaceutical companies marketed prescription painkillers containing opioids as nonaddictive, and doctors regularly prescribed them to patients for pain management. Within two decades, however, it was clear that millions were addicted, creating a widespread public health crisis in the United States. In 2019 alone, more than 10 million people misused prescription opioids, and more than 70,000 people died from overdose.¹ The strain of the crisis has been acutely felt not only by families, but also by community first responders and the criminal justice system.

Rates of substance use disorders are between five and seven times higher among people who are incarcerated than in the general population.² Many people entering the system, especially women, are survivors of trauma and sexual abuse. Almost half of women who serve a year or more in state or federal prison were physically or sexually assaulted prior to incarceration.³

Some people who are incarcerated have serious psychiatric conditions, such as schizophrenia. These conditions are made exponentially worse by incarceration, especially when prisons do not consistently provide prescription medication to patients with serious mental health disorders.⁴ For someone suffering from an untreated mental health condition, incarceration can be deadly. Suicide is the leading cause of death in jails and prisons, and numbers are on the rise.⁵ Critics argue that more lives could be saved if people with mental health conditions were treated in a healthcare facility, rather than in a punitive criminal justice environment. For more on this topic, see the *Independent Lens* film *Bedlam*: pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/bedlam.

Sources:

1. hhs.gov/opioids/about-the-epidemic/index.html
2. ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK555719
3. traumapsychnews.com/2018/07/trauma-before-incarceration-examining-the-role-of-adverse-childhood-experiences
4. themarshallproject.org/2018/11/21/treatment-denied-the-mental-health-crisis-in-federal-prisons
5. prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/06/08/prison_mortality

“Breaking that cycle of addiction is what I think about every day. I want my son to know that he doesn't have to live like how my mom lived, and her mom lived, and all of his aunts and uncles live. I want him to know that there is a world outside of that.”

—Amanda, *Apart*

Effects of Incarceration on Families

Incarceration affects more than just the people who get locked up. It dramatically alters the lives of their loved ones as well. The majority of all incarcerated people are parents of minors. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, about half of all people in state prisons and two-thirds of those in federal prisons are parents of children under the age of 18.¹ But that number is much higher for women who are incarcerated. Of the 2.8 million women who enter the U.S. criminal justice system each year, about 80 percent are mothers, and approximately 55,000 are pregnant when they are admitted.² A 2016 study found that nearly 1.5 million children have a parent who is incarcerated.¹

Children with parents who are incarcerated experience a significant hardship. Like Amanda's and Tomika's children in the film, their lives are often uprooted, and they have to live with relatives while their parent is incarcerated. Nearly half of mothers incarcerated were single parents the month before their arrest, which forces their children to be displaced.¹

The incarceration of a parent can throw a child into financial crisis. About half of all parents in state prisons provided the primary financial support for their children before they were incarcerated.¹ Adding to the financial burden caused by the loss of the primary provider are the costs incurred by family members to support their incarcerated loved one. Many have to travel hundreds of miles to visit loved ones and have to pay high fees just to make a phone call. Although the Federal Communications Commission has capped the cost of phone calls in federal prisons at \$0.21 per

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



minute (\$0.25 per minute for collect calls), 80 percent of calls are made to and from state prisons and local jails, and phone companies charge as much as \$1 per minute for someone inside to call a lawyer or loved one.³

In addition to the material hardships, the emotional trauma of being separated from a parent who is incarcerated can have profound lasting effects on the development of a child. Confusion, sadness, fear, anger, and embarrassment are all common emotions for children with a parent who is incarcerated.⁴ Depression and antisocial behavior are also more likely, which can affect the child's ability to attain education.⁵ Some studies suggest that children traumatized by the incarceration of a parent, especially a mother, are more likely to be incarcerated themselves—creating a cycle of incarceration that impacts multiple generations in one family.⁵

Sources:

1. [bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/pptmcspi16st.pdf](https://www.bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/pptmcspi16st.pdf)
2. [prisonpolicy.org/blog/2018/05/13/mothers-day-2018](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2018/05/13/mothers-day-2018)
3. [prisonpolicy.org/phones/state_of_phone_justice.html](https://www.prisonpolicy.org/phones/state_of_phone_justice.html)
4. [prisonfellowship.org/resources/training-resources/family/ministry-basics/impact-of-incarceration-on-children](https://www.prisonfellowship.org/resources/training-resources/family/ministry-basics/impact-of-incarceration-on-children)
5. [nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/hidden-consequences-impact-incarceration-dependent-children](https://www.nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/hidden-consequences-impact-incarceration-dependent-children)

“The only way I could see my mom just is to take a three-hour drive to prison. I can’t see her as much as I’d like, and I can’t talk to her as much as I’d like, and it just makes me hurt.”

—Tyler, *Apart*

Reducing Incarceration

In an effort to reduce their prison populations, communities are trying more prevention programs and alternatives to incarceration. Prevention aims to help community members avoid the criminal justice system all together by investing in programs that address poverty, education disparities, and addiction—which are common predictors of incarceration.¹ Specialized courts, including drug, alcohol, mental health, and veteran courts, are designed for health treatment sentencing instead of incarceration.² For a map of drug treatment courts around the country, visit this interactive site by the National Drug Court Resource Center (NDCRC) ndcrc.org/interactive-maps.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When people are in prison, some are eligible to participate in earned release programs (see Glossary), which incentivize good behavior with the promise of early release. People facing severe health conditions or old age may also be eligible for a compassionate early release in some states. Compiled by Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), this guide provides the laws on compassionate early release state by state: famm.org/our-work/compassionate-release/everywhere-and-nowhere.

After people leave prison, the goal is for them not to return. The United States has a high rate of recidivism—nearly two-thirds of all formerly incarcerated individuals are rearrested within three years of their release, and nearly half are incarcerated again.³ People reentering society face many obstacles to their success. They carry with them the mark of a prior conviction that makes it difficult to secure affordable housing and employment. Landlords and employers routinely perform background checks, and some ask for people to disclose convictions directly on their applications, which often disqualifies them for consideration before they've had a chance to interview. Nearly 75 percent of formerly incarcerated individuals are still unemployed a year after release—putting them at greater risk of recidivism.⁴

Career development programs in prison have been a critical solution to preventing recidivism. Chopping for Change, for example, is the reentry program featured in the film for women released from the North East Reintegration Center in Ohio. The program is run by the Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry. It provides workforce development training and behavioral health counseling for women in the system. At the end of the program, women receive a diploma in Advanced Culinary Arts and Hospitality.⁵

Local organizations and governments have been doing more to encourage equal employment opportunities for people who have been incarcerated. “Second chance” or “fair chance” hiring is a business practice that recruits employees who have reentered the job market after incarceration. The U.S. Department of Labor incentivizes second-chance hiring by providing companies a Work Opportunity Tax Credit of up to 25 percent of the employee's first year of wages. Many employers, including Walmart, Starbucks, and Home Depot, participate.⁴

In 2019, the United States passed the Fair Chance Act, which prohibits federal agencies and their contractors from requesting information about a job applicant's arrest and conviction record until after offering the job to the applicant. Known as “Ban the Box,” this change enables an applicant to have a fair chance to make a first impression in an interview for a job with the federal government. In addition, 37 states have adopted a similar policy in their own government hiring practices, and 15 states have extended Ban the Box to private employers: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.⁶

Sources:

1. nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/hidden-consequences-impact-incarceration-dependent-children
2. vera.org/downloads/Publications/treatment-alternatives-to-incarceration-for-people-with-mental-health-needs-in-the-criminal-justice-system-the-cost-savings-implications/legacy_downloads/treatment-alternatives-to-incarceration.pdf
3. prisonpolicy.org/research/recidivism_and_reentry
4. forbes.com/sites/theyec/2020/11/06/hiring-as-a-second-chance/?sh=3802df244585
5. lutheranmetro.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/LMM-Brochure-7X7-8-pager-spreads.pdf
6. nelp.org/publication/ban-the-box-fair-chance-hiring-state-and-local-guide

“And then, I was just gone. Anything he thought of a mother, I shattered. They know that I'm at the end of my sentence. So I do hope I can put their world right side up. But... I can't take what they've been through away.”

—Lydia, *Apart*

DISCUSSING THE FILM



After watching the film, help your group process what they've seen by inviting them to join in a respectful conversation. Arrange for a moderator to lead a facilitated discussion or a panel of speakers. Event planners can choose from the most relevant discussion questions below to guide the conversation.

Framing the Conversation

The language used to talk about incarceration can have an effect on how the people involved with the system view themselves and how others treat them. It can be helpful to talk with your speakers and moderator in advance of the discussion to agree on a common language that you will use.

“People-first language” is a way of referring to people that prioritizes their humanity. Whenever possible, using people’s names instead of a group they belong to is always recommended. Phrases such as “people who have been incarcerated” or “people who have a felony on their record” are preferable to words such as “prisoner” or “felon.”

The Marshall Project’s Language Project recommends avoiding terms such as “inmate,” “offender,” “prisoner,” “felon,” or “ex-con” to describe people who have been involved with the justice system. These words can have a dehumanizing and demoralizing effect on

the people they describe. We recommend setting an intention to avoid these words in your promotions and at your event as well.

To learn more about people-first language, see the Marshall Project’s Language Project: themarshallproject.org/2021/04/12/the-language-project.

“Everybody that comes to jail is not bad. They just made mistakes, and so they come to jail so that they can pay back.”

—Ria, *Apart*

DISCUSSING THE FILM

Discussion Questions

Start a conversation with your guest speakers or your audience using these questions inspired by the film. You can also use questions to generate online conversation to build interest before or after your screening event.

1. What stories included in *Apart* stood out to you? Could you relate to any of the experiences shared in the film?
2. What factors contributed to the incarceration of the people featured in the film? What common themes did you hear from one person's story to the next?
3. What do you admire about the women featured in the film? Why do you think Tomika's, Lydia's, and Amanda's children should feel proud of their mothers?
4. How did Lydia, Amanda, and Tomika describe how they felt about their incarceration?
5. How would you describe the stigma of incarceration? How do you think it affects people who are incarcerated and their loved ones?
6. What emotions did you see the children of Tomika, Lydia, and Amanda express in the film? How does incarceration impact children emotionally?
7. How else are children with parents in prison affected by the incarceration of their parent? How are their lives impacted when their parent is incarcerated?
8. Why do you think peer mentorship in prison is effective? How would you describe the relationships among the women featured in the film?
9. What challenges did Amanda, Lydia, and Tomika face during reentry? How does society treat formerly incarcerated people differently?
10. How did Tomika's and Lydia's families support them during reentry? From what we see in the film, what support did they have that Amanda did not have?
11. What does someone need to reenter society after incarceration? What helps people who have been incarcerated be successful after a setback?
12. What examples of resilience did you see in the film? What does resilience mean to you?
13. Since the 1980s, incarceration rates for women have increased 800 percent. What policy decisions are driving the dramatic increase in the prison population?
14. How do you think communities should be responding to the public health crisis of opioid addiction? What role, if any, should the criminal justice system play?
15. What are the alternatives to incarceration? Are there local programs that aim to prevent or divert people from being incarcerated?
16. Do you think parents with young children should be incarcerated? If not, why? What about people with substance use disorders or mental health issues?
17. The Chopping for Change program featured in the film provides personal and professional development to people who are incarcerated. How do you think programs like this can help people succeed?
18. What is second-chance, or fair-chance, hiring? Why is it important for communities to promote second-chance hiring?
19. What benefits do second-chance hires bring to the workplace? Why should an employer participate? What benefits do these practices bring to the community?
20. Did the film change the way you feel about incarceration? If so, how?

“It’s been very tough being a single father, raising my two boys, but ... it’s got to be done. And I’m there for them, so we’re going to get through this, one way or another.”

—Derek, *Apart*

POTENTIAL PARTNERS



There are many groups working in criminal justice reform that are looking to partner with media makers to help amplify the stories of formerly incarcerated people. Extend an invitation to collaborate on planning, promoting, speaking at, and/or moderating the event.

- Partner with organizations run by **incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people**—especially women—and/or their families. These community leaders can speak for themselves about their experiences with the criminal justice system and rising above it. Your event can help provide a platform for them to share their leadership with the community. Check out the Formerly Incarcerated & Convicted People and Families Movement (FICPFM) for recommendations in your state: ficpfm.org/network.
- Invite **peer mentors or reentry service providers**, such as work training programs or sober living houses, to talk about their approach to supporting formerly incarcerated people and their families. For a state-by-state guide to reentry programs, see this list from Reentry Works: reentryworks.com/employment/Links.aspx.
- **Child welfare groups** that serve children with incarcerated family members can speak to the effects of incarceration on childhood development and how they work to provide support. For a guide to organizations that support children and families of the incarcerated, see the Child Welfare Information Gateway: childwelfare.gov/organizations/?CWIGFunctionsaction=rols:main.dspList&rolType=Custom&RS_ID=113&rList=ROL.
- Ask **faith-based leaders** that work in the prisons to share their experiences counseling people who are incarcerated and/or their families. The reentry program in the film, for example, is run by a Lutheran ministry group. Most prisons have faith services for Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and other religions. Several are also working with meditation leaders to provide mindfulness training in prisons. Reach out to your local faith leaders to ask about programs they offer.

“The system is designed to be punitive. But to me, it’s about getting our lives restored. And we need support to do that. Remember, ladies: Every human soul needs help at some point or another.”

—Cheryl, *Apart*

POTENTIAL PARTNERS



- Invite **women's empowerment organizations**, such as the YWCA, ywca.org, and **women and gender studies programs** at your local university, nwsa.org/page/phdprogramlist. Ask these groups to share the services they are providing and their research on the specific needs of women who are incarcerated or who are reentering society. You could also reach out to the criminal justice study program at your local university to see if someone can speak on the broad issue of mass incarceration.
- Several national nonprofit organizations focus on the **effects of incarceration on families** and from a family perspective, such as Families Against Mandatory Minimums, famm.org, whose mission is "to create a more fair and effective justice system that respects our American values of individual accountability and dignity while keeping our communities safe," and Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, prisonerswithchildren.org, which organizes communities impacted by the criminal justice system and advocates to release incarcerated people, to restore human and civil rights, and to reunify families and communities.

"People have their moms, and I don't. I feel like it's not fair. Moms are supposed to be there for you, and close. She's there for me, of course, but she's just like, she's not close there for me. Like, I want to ride my bike with her, I want to go to amusement parks, water parks with her. I want her to see everything that I do, go everywhere I go."

—Bailee, *Apart*

ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

In addition to discussions, special activities tailored to the film can help an audience member engage more deeply in the issues. Any of these recommendations could be organized as a complement to the screening to make the experience even more impactful for your guests.

- Invite guests to share feedback through **DocSCALE** (bit.ly/apart-survey). DocSCALE is a simple, interactive feedback platform developed by ITVS that invites audiences to share reactions with one another and find out where they agree or differ while providing insightful data about the impact of the film and screening.
- Incorporate a **short film** into your screening or promotions. Stories for Justice (S4) from *Independent Lens* includes a collection of short films that highlight different communities, experiences, and the justice system. These films can help you focus the conversation on a specific sub-topic (e.g., mental health, sentencing laws, restorative justice) or community (by demographics—regional, urban, rural). Find relevant shorts publicly available on YouTube for virtual and in-person screenings: *Just Over the Line*; *The D.A.'s Dilemma*; *I Am Not Going to Change 400 Years in 4*; *Constance*; *Trouble at Lake Monroe*; *A Call Away*; and *An Oklahoma Mental Health Crisis*.
- Host a **job fair** to promote opportunities with second-chance hiring companies. The businesses featured in the film included Tim Horton's and DoorDash. Ask your event partners if they have a directory of local businesses that do second-chance hiring. This is also a good list to promote widely on social media and during broadcast so viewers know which businesses to support with their patronage.
 - See this list from Prison Fellowship for a few national companies that may be located near you: prisonfellowship.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/top10Agencies_web_mar28_v2-1.pdf
 - Search the Second Chance Business Coalition: secondchancebusinesscoalition.org
 - See this resource from the University of Southern California: careers.usc.edu/students/diversity-resources/formerly-incarcerated
- Ask your organization to adopt its own **second-chance hiring policy** if it does not already have one. If you are organizing a screening event on behalf of a library, university, or public media station, check with your Human Resources department to see how your organization regards hiring people who have been incarcerated. If they agree to adopt any new policies, you could announce the decision before or at your screening event as a way to publicly encourage other employers to do the same. Here are a few questions you can use to approach your HR department:
 - Does the organization ask for criminal history directly on its job applications? If so, would the organization consider removing that to give people with prior convictions a better chance at getting an interview? Learn more about the movement to Ban the Box: nelp.org/publication/ban-the-box-fair-chance-hiring-state-and-local-guide
 - Does the organization specifically recruit people who have been incarcerated in job postings? If not, would they consider creating a policy to start a second-chance hiring program? This toolkit from the Second Chance Business Coalition is an additional resource for employers: secondchancebusinesscoalition.org/get-started.
- Create opportunities for **peer mentorship** among formerly incarcerated people at your event. You could ask your partners or someone with experience in peer mentorship in the prisons to facilitate a workshop like the ones seen in the film. Or if you are limited on time, your facilitator could do a few ice-breakers to help people connect with others that share similar experiences. If people would like to sign up to learn how to be mentors, you can direct them to the Prison Fellowship for more information: prisonfellowship.org/resources/training-resources/mentoring-ministry/on-going-ministry/become-a-reentry-mentor/#.
- Organize a **professional clothing drive** to benefit people going through reentry. One of the first things Amanda does when she leaves prison is stop to pick up a few new clothes to start her new life. Having a professional wardrobe for job interviews can help boost the confidence of formerly incarcerated people when they go into an interview.
- You could create an **awards ceremony or special multimedia content** to celebrate local community members who have overcome the obstacles of incarceration. Recognizing the resilience and accomplishments of formerly incarcerated people can go a long way to breaking down the stigma of incarceration in your community.
- In some special circumstances, you may be able to arrange for your screening to take place at a **correctional facility**, although any group that wants to work with a department of corrections has to go through an extended screening process, which may not be realistic for a one-time event. However, partnering with an organization that has already been approved to work inside the prison could be an opportunity to hear directly from people who are incarcerated. Refer to the Potential Partners section of this guide for recommendations of groups you could ask.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Get to know the organizations working on issues related to the criminal justice system.

- **Independent Lens** is America's home for independent documentary film and the presenter of the film *Apart*. pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/apart
- **Stories for Justice** is a public media partnership presented by *Independent Lens* that aims to spark community conversations and boost the work of people on the front lines of justice reform. *Apart* is one of a series of films focused on the criminal justice system. itvs.org/stories-for-justice
- **Represent Justice**, an impact partner for the film *Apart*, uses the power of media to engage audiences in reimagining the justice system and to create real demand for change. representjustice.org
- **Brennan Center for Justice** is an independent, nonpartisan law and policy organization that works to reform, revitalize, and, when necessary, defend our country's systems of democracy and justice. brennancenter.org
- **Legal Services for Prisoners with Children** organizes communities impacted by the criminal justice system and advocates to release incarcerated people, to restore human and civil rights, and to reunify families and communities. prisonerswithchildren.org
- **The Marshall Project** is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization that seeks to create and sustain a sense of national urgency about the U.S. criminal justice system. themarshallproject.org
- **Prison Policy Institute** is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization that exposes the broader harm of mass criminalization to spark advocacy campaigns for a more just society. prisonpolicy.org
- **The Sentencing Project** works for a fair and effective U.S. criminal justice system by producing research to promote reforms in sentencing policy, addressing unjust racial disparities and practices, and advocating for alternatives to incarceration. sentencingproject.org
- **Vera Institute of Justice** works with others who share its vision of tackling the most pressing injustices of our day—from the causes and consequences of mass incarceration, racial disparities, and the loss of public trust in law enforcement to the unmet needs of the vulnerable, the marginalized, and those harmed by crime and violence. vera.org

GLOSSARY

- **Compassionate release**—Bureau of Prisons program that allows people who are incarcerated to gain early release because of an “extraordinary and compelling” reason, including a serious health condition or old age.
- **Earned release**—Program that incentivizes people who are incarcerated to earn early release, or parole, through good behavior, among other factors; programs vary from state to state.
- **Felony**—Category of crime more serious than a misdemeanor; felony crimes often involve violence, but they also include nonviolent property damage and theft depending on the extent of the loss. Nonviolent drug charges can also be classed as felonies including trafficking and possession.
- **Jail**—Place of confinement for those with short sentences (under a year) and a holding facility for the newly arrested and people awaiting trial.
- **Mandatory minimum**—Minimum sentence as set by lawmakers that local judges are required to impose regardless of the unique circumstances of a case or how the defendant was involved in the case; mandatory sentences vary by state.
- **Mass incarceration**—United States’ approach to incarceration that involves incarcerating vast numbers of the U.S. population in federal and state prisons as well as in local jails.
- **Parole**—Release of a person in prison with strict conditions imposed on the person’s behavior; there are different types of parole. A person in prison’s release can be early, both at the discretion of a parole board (often called “discretionary” parole) and through credits earned for what is commonly referred to as good behavior (often called “mandatory” parole) (also see “earned release” above), or the person’s release can occur when they have served their full sentence (often called “expiatory” parole). Specifics vary by state.
- **Prison**—Facility for people convicted of felony crimes; sentences can range from one year to life in prison and, in some states, include the death penalty.
- **Reentry**—The process of reintegrating into society after a period of incarceration, which is often court supervised and includes establishing a home and employment.
- **Recidivism**—The phenomenon of previously-incarcerated people being arrested again and/or returning to incarceration after being released.
- **Sentence**—The punishment of a defendant found guilty by a court; the punishment is either set by the judge or is mandated by law.
- **War on drugs**—A set of policies implemented by President Richard Nixon in 1971; after a four-year hiatus during President Jimmy Carter’s term, President Ronald Reagan reinforced and expanded Nixon’s policies, further increasing criminal penalties for drug use. These policies have and continue to disproportionately affect Black and Latinx communities, even as drug laws and mandatory sentences for drug-related crimes have been softening in most states.

Credits

GUIDE WRITER

Renee Gasch

COPY EDITOR

Joan D. Saunders

GUIDE DESIGNER

Mary Miguel

Jr. Designer

ITVS ENGAGEMENT & IMPACT TEAM

Michael Bare

Outreach Strategist

Beatriz Castillo

Senior Director, Engagement Operations

Kristy Chin

Sr. Manager, Engagement & Impact

Eric Martin

Senior Strategist

Zoe Stahl

Associate Manager, Engagement & Impact

Fred Wong

Senior Director of National Partnerships

GUIDE ADVISORS

Carla Fleisher

Vice President of Impact Distribution,
Represent Justice

Tim Metzger

Producer, *Apart*

Jennifer Redfearn

Director/Producer, *Apart*

INDEPENDENT LENS

Independent Lens is an Emmy®

Award-winning weekly series airing on PBS Monday nights at 10:00 PM. The acclaimed series, with Lois Vossen as executive producer, features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by ITVS, the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding from PBS, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more visit pbs.org/independentlens.

Join the conversation:

With #ApartPBS at [facebook.com/independentlens](https://www.facebook.com/independentlens) and on Twitter @IndependentLens.

ITVS

ITVS is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that has, for over 25 years, funded and partnered with a diverse range of documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning films and then airs them for free on PBS via our weekly series, *Independent Lens*, as well as other series through our digital platform, OVEE. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. For more information, visit itvs.org.

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,500 locally owned and operated public television and radio stations nationwide. CPB is also the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program development for public radio, television and related online services. For more information, visit cpb.org, follow us on Twitter @CPBmedia, Facebook and LinkedIn and subscribe for other updates.



MacArthur
Foundation

Wyncote
Foundation



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT for the **ARTS**
arts.gov