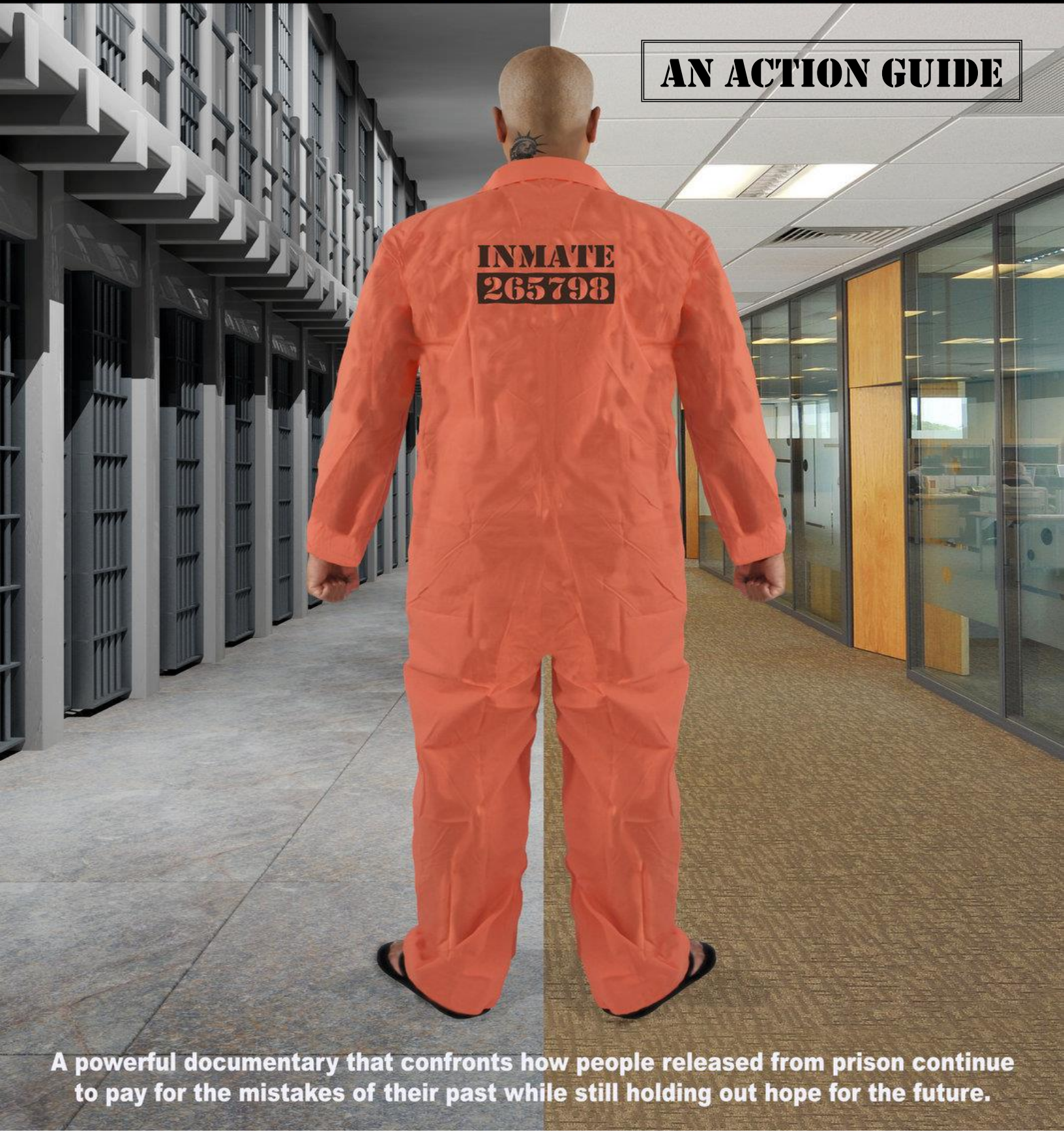


RELEASED

WHEN DOES THE SENTENCE END?

AN ACTION GUIDE



A powerful documentary that confronts how people released from prison continue to pay for the mistakes of their past while still holding out hope for the future.

“RELEASED” is a 45-minute documentary, created to address the experiences of individuals formerly involved with the criminal justice system. Often, these individuals have participated in job development and coaching services intended to prepare and connect them with employment opportunities, before and after being released from incarceration. However, opportunities for meaningful and sustainable employment are frequently scarce.

There are many terrific workforce development programs available to “hard-to-employ” populations, including those with criminal records. The documentary highlights a few initiatives serving a portion of this population, through job-readiness and career-pathway components such as basic education assessments, technical training, soft-skill development, cognitive restructuring, resume writing, and more. However, these services are of no benefit if that person is still unable to secure a stable, quality, livable-wage job.

“Stable employment – like stable housing, family and community support, and access to substance abuse and mental health treatment – is critical to the rehabilitation, stability and successful reentry of individuals who have been incarcerated and are returning to our communities. We all benefit when individuals formerly involved with the justice system are able to obtain employment earning family-sustaining wages. And conversely, if reentry fails, we all pay the price.”

- U.S. Department of Labor, [Expanding Employment Opportunities as a Reentry Strategy Fact Sheet](#) (June 30, 2014)

This Action Guide is a companion to the documentary, designed to give you specific ways to help.

A CALL TO ACTION: For the Business Community

In addition to hosting a Documentary & Discussion screening of "RELEASED," here are specific ways to take action...

- ✓ Review the [National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction](#) to learn more about specific restrictions that limit people with criminal records from accessing employment, occupational licensing, and other opportunities.
- ✓ Review [Best Practice Standards: The Proper Use of Criminal Records in Hiring](#), which helps employers make informed decisions when hiring applicants with a criminal record and avoid liability.
- ✓ Contact the [Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives](#) (ACCE), to request support, access to resources, and training on hiring people with criminal records.
- ✓ Meet with executives and human resource personnel within your company to discuss a simple policy change that would "[ban the box](#)," or remove the conviction history check box from employment applications. This creates a fair chance to compete for jobs within your company, by allowing employers to judge applicants on their qualifications first, without the stigma of a record. Review the [Ban the Box Guide](#) for more information.
- ✓ Collaborate with a social service or workforce development agency in your area that can refer skilled workers who have completed a job-training program, tailored to meet your company needs. A partnership such as this would offer your company additional supportive services to manage your new fair chance hiring practices.

"No one can do everything, but everyone can do something."

Max Lucado

A CALL TO ACTION: For the Faith Community

In addition to hosting a Documentary & Discussion screening of “RELEASED,” here are specific ways to take action...

- ✓ Review the [National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction](#) to learn more about specific restrictions that limit people with criminal records from accessing employment, occupational licensing, and other opportunities.
- ✓ Contact the Georgia Department of Community Supervision to join [Healing Communities of Georgia](#). Healing Communities is a network of faith-based organizations and agencies, working together as trained and certified “Stations of Hope,” to help returning citizens reintegrate back into society.
- ✓ Create a Reentry Services Directory, compiled of all the voluntary services that your worship facility and congregational membership have to offer a person coming home from prison. This Directory could be available to local probation and community supervision offices and/or on the internet.
- ✓ Connect with or create a reentry coalition in your city, county or region. Coalitions serve as a clearinghouse and unified force to leverage the resources of all entities involved, for people coming home from prison. The [Metro Atlanta Reentry Coalition](#) is one example.
- ✓ Host periodic workshops and employment fairs at your place of worship for individuals formerly involved with the justice system. Partner with local businesses, social service providers, and government agencies to provide information and resources.

“No one can do everything, but everyone can do something.”

Max Lucado

A CALL TO ACTION: For the Community At-Large

In addition to attending a Documentary & Discussion screening of “RELEASED,” here are specific ways to take action...

- ✓ Review the [National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction](#) to learn more about specific restrictions that limit people with criminal records from accessing employment, occupational licensing, and other opportunities.
- ✓ Contact the Georgia Department of Community Supervision to sign up for the [“I Choose Support” Mentoring Movement](#). Through this mentoring initiative, you are trained to help returning citizens transition from prison to the community.
- ✓ Connect with or create a reentry coalition in your city, county or region. Coalitions leverage the resources of all entities involved, to serve as a clearinghouse and unified force for people coming home from prison. The [Greater Gwinnett Reentry Alliance](#) is a fantastic model.
- ✓ Volunteer with a social service agency in your area. You have many skills, abilities and resources that nonprofit organizations working with “hard-to-employ” populations could utilize.

“No one can do everything, but everyone can do something.”

Max Lucado

NOTES:



"No one can do everything, but everyone can do something."

Max Lucado