CHANGING The NARRATIVE By CHANGING The REALITY

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

VSC

VOICES FOR A SECOND CHANCE

BRIDGING THE GAP FROM INCARCERATION TO COMMUNITY

Every sunrise is a reminder that you have another chance to be better.

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"At VSC my team knows that we are a non-judgemental zone.

We welcome everyone because we are here to serve.

Many of the individuals we work with come from the most under resourced communities in the District. We help them find their hope, rebuild their lives, and chart their course."

PAULA THOMPSON, PRESIDENT & CEO
VOICES FOR A SECOND CHANCE

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Partners for Justice

I AM EXCITED TO SHARE this 2025 report on the work of Voices for a Second Chance (VSC) that continues to dispel the narrative which has shaped the perception of justice system involved individuals. Too often, they are labeled as offenders, criminals, and portrayed as the primary drivers of crime and threats to public safety. These harmful characterizations overlook the humanity of individuals who are working to reunite with their families, contribute positively to their communities, and rebuild their lives. *In Washington, DC, system involved individuals —with a history of arrest, conviction, or incarceration, can have high rates of recidivism, driven by significant, often insurmountable, reentry barriers and entrenched stereotypes.*

On the following pages we will share VSC's efforts to interrupt this sequence of impediments and restrictions that can prevent the success of our clients. We are dedicated to continuing to collaborate with our partners to change the narrative and show that when these obstacles are addressed and removed, a new narrative emerges. We will share wellness activities; outreach to the homeless; reaching clients before they are released from jail, prison, or during community supervision; our podcasts; and peer support and mentoring that help redefine our clients' outcomes. Our reentry case managers, outreach workers, clinicians, and navigators, use trauma-informed interventions to help clients overcome their past and redefine their future.

This annual report will highlight the efforts and accomplishments of some of our clients and their successes. We are so proud of their hard work. With the support of our staff and partners, we will continue to help them actualize their worth and commitment to positive change in their lives. VSC will illustrate how we address the root causes of crime —such as lack of housing, quality education and training, viable employment, positive peer or group connections, treatment, compassionate understanding, and access to resources. As shown in these pages, VSC creates a system of reclamation and meaningful achievement.

We are so happy to share how VSC staff work with these men and women to **CHANGE THE NARRATIVE** on what they have to offer if given an equitable chance to improve.

Thank you for your support of this work.

With peace and humanity.

Paula Thompson



President & CEO
Voices for A Second Chance

"Peer support is a 'radical possibility' that transforms stigma into mutual hope... It's about creating dynamics that promote health in all our relationships."

- Shery Mead (2010)

Values, Mission, and Goals

Our services enable our clients to create, maintain, and strengthen family and community ties by addressing disparities in physical health, behavioral health, employment, housing, and safety, noted as barriers to success. Our interventions are designed to fulfill specific needs at different times in the lives of our clients. VSC has four phases of intervention:

1) First Responder;
2) Welcome Home;
3) Moving towards Stability; and
4) Community of Voices.

The investment in these simplistic but vital services, are the critical steps toward setting a course of positive transition. It takes a community effort to encourage and make resources available for real second chances to be realized. Once individuals have completed their debt to society, one should not have to bear the shame and stigma indefinitely. A true **"welcome home"** is what VSC strives to provide to every man and woman we encounter daily, making careful determinants and connections toward a path of full restoration.

The mission of VSC is to ensure that returning citizens can successfully reintegrate into their communities following incarceration.



INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IS A CRITICAL TRAIT FOR ENDURANCE

What Does It Take To Change The Narrative

The community of men and women who were formerly incarcerated or those under probation, parole or community release are VSC's constituents. To change the narrative they must overcome the following factors in DC.

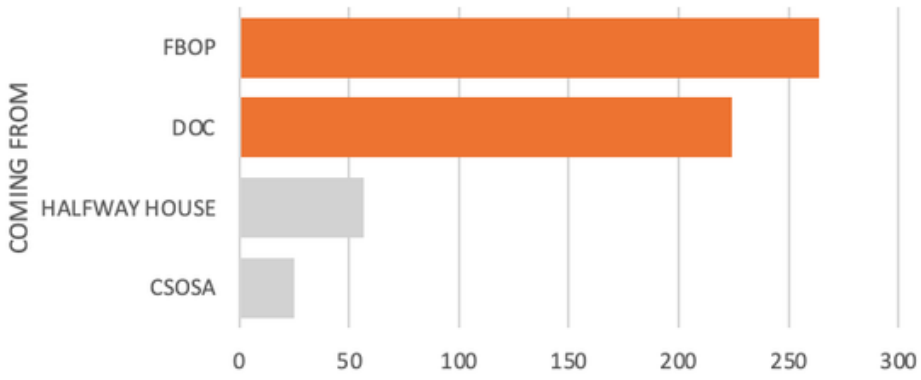
- In 2025, the District of Columbia experienced a surge in criminal justice contact driven by a federal law enforcement intervention, with the daily jail population rising to over 2,100 by late September.
- Approximately 20,000 people in D.C. are under correctional control (incarceration, probation, or parole) at any given time.
- In Washington, D.C., the term "justice-involved" refers to individuals who are interacting with the criminal justice system, including those currently incarcerated, on probation or parole, or with a publicly available arrest or conviction record.
- This includes a wide range of people, from those currently serving time in local or federal facilities to those who have been released and are working to reintegrate into the community.
- According to a report from the Council for Court Excellence, about 1 in 15 Black adults in DC are either incarcerated or on community supervision.

In 2025, 96% of VSC's new clients were
Black/African American



- Each year, at least 12,000 different people are booked into DC local jails.
- Additionally, more than 68,000 individuals have a publicly accessible arrest or conviction record.
- D.C. faces unique challenges due to the lack of a prison in the city. Individuals who are incarcerated in the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP), are placed far from home, which impedes contact with their families and interferes with their ability to take advantage of reentry resources that could help them upon release.
- DC citizens are currently placed in FBOP halfway houses in Baltimore or Delaware upon release from prison.
- **In 2025, VSC served a total of 3070 clients at different stages of intervention.**

The majority of VSC clients were released from FBOP (prison) and DOC (DC Jails)



46% of new clients in 2025 were released from prison;
39% were released from DC jails;
10% were released from VOA (FBOP halfway house in Baltimore); and
4% were on probation or parole with CSOSA.

Clients Who Have Changed The Narrative Must Acquire Housing, Employment and Treatment



In 2025, among the clients in the Moving Towards Stability phase:

57 RECEIVED TRAINING

71 RECEIVED EMPLOYMENT

33 RECEIVED TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

44 RECEIVED INDEPENDENT LIVING

The Collateral Consequences Can Impact A Lot Of Factors For Justice Involved Citizens, Families And Communities

- Justice system involvement can lead to higher recidivism rates, victimization, poor health outcomes, and difficulties with housing and employment.
- It impacts the family constellation, childhood wellbeing, community stability, safety, the city-wide human capital, and the city's tax base.



Helping To Change The Narrative

VSC's first responders provide in-reach to give hope to those scheduled for release from confinement

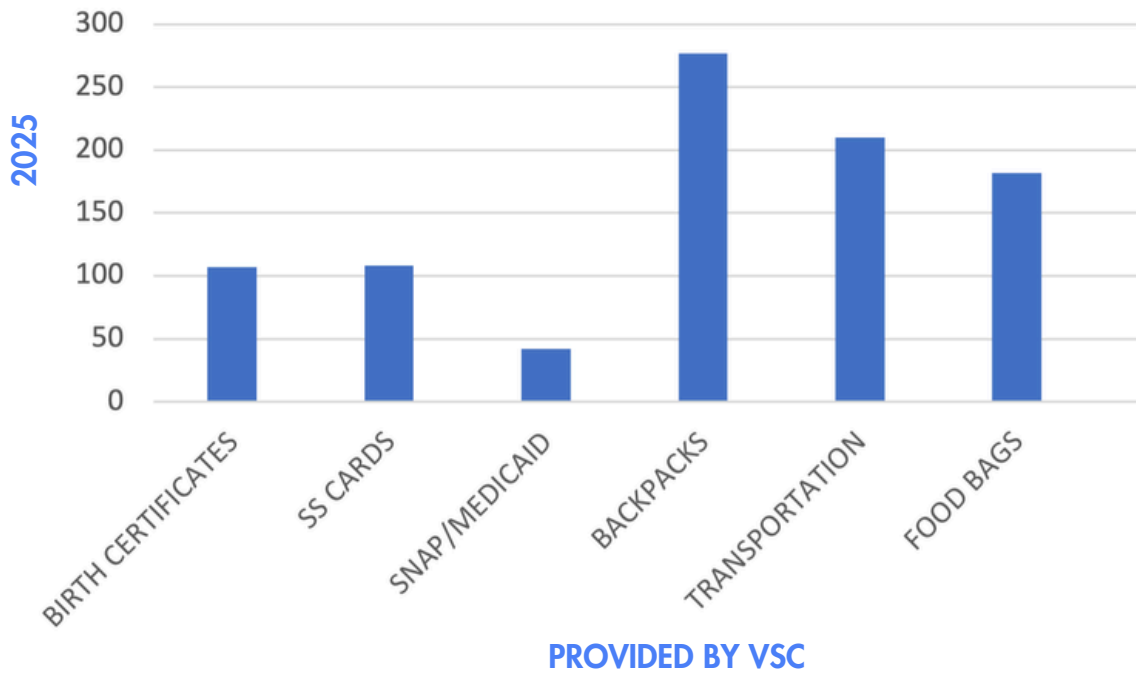


Photo credit: Christopher Ziemnowicz

- In 2025 VSC staff made 97 visits to the halfway houses in Baltimore and Delaware to provide pre-release support to individuals scheduled to be released back to DC.
- Staff visited the DC DOC Jails 197 times to engage potential clients scheduled for release.
- VSC staff joined a group from DC to visit Alderson Women's prison in 2025 to provide resources for women scheduled to be released. In addition, staff visited FBOP's Petersburgh, VA, and Cumberland, MD institutions.

Welcoming Home Our DC Residents And Neighbors Is An Important Step Towards Changing the Narrative

- Since 2023 VSC has provided 5,203 office based services to clients (1,265 in 2025 alone).
- Over the past three years VSC staff has touched a total of 9,549 individuals and offered reeentry planning and case management
- To help clients be reacclimated post release, staff offered the following stability tools.



During the Welcome Home phase, VSC staff identified the high incidence of homelessness and housing insecurity (60% in 2025) among the clients being released from incarceration. Housing insecurity includes couch surfing with friends and relatives, living in shelters, or living on the streets. The New Terrain Program was established to provide individuals with stabilization supports.

During this time, VSC staff assists them with a variety of supports which include applying for transitional or permanent housing, gift cards for food and clothes, communication electronics, rental assistance, help with outstanding bills, acquiring furniture for apartments, and winter coats. In 2025, VSC provided a total of 594 hotel nights.

Since the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding expired following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2023, many of the intervention opportunities declined as can be seen in the chart below.

NEW TERRAIN	2023	2024	2025
APPLICATIONS	493	327	311
GIFT CARDS	507	351	325
ELECTRONICS (laptops, phones, tablets)	25	7	35
RENTAL ASSISTANCE	34	24	18
BILLS ASSISTANCE	2		4
FURNITURE	8	8	3
WINTER COATS		40	
HOTEL NIGHTS	995	1182	594



WELCOME HOME!

VSC had 1265 office visits during the Welcome Home Phase.

- **88%** of new clients were male.
- **80%** were between the ages of 25 and 54.
- **65%** were parents.
- **85%** were unemployed.
- **60%** were homeless.
- **38%** reported mental health challenges.
- **54%** reported a history of substance use.
- **23%** reported physical health challenges.
- **43%** had no medical insurance.

Positive Peer Support Changes Lives And Strengthens Their Movement Towards Stability



Moving Toward Stability is designed to offer tools that connect clients to ongoing opportunities for success. Those who continue with VSC during this phase participate in progressive housing support, Staying On Track group sessions, and peer support groups as part of the networking and social support component. Gender-specific wellness groups are a successful setting for individuals to share their journey in a safe supportive environment.



Self Actualization Appears In A ***Community Of Voices***

Community of Voices reconnects clients with their civic responsibilities using the historical lessons on voting and civil rights to train them to promote policies and practices across the city for better services for all justice involved citizens. This phase includes opportunities to meet with local and national criminal justice leaders during the 33-week Train Our Voices (TOV) sessions. VSC also produces a client hosted podcast, Solutions from the Yard.



The beauty of TOV is the opportunity for reflection and thoughtful discussion among participants.

"Train Our Voices (TOV) is not built for speed. It is built for distance."

- MAURICE TYREE, 2025 TOV GRADUATE

Solutions From The Yard Podcast

Twenty-Four podcast sessions were conducted in 2025 which covered a variety of topics related to the experience of being justice involved in DC and nationally.



THE TOPICS INCLUDED:

- **The SHU - the history and impact of solitary confinement**
- **Juvenile Delinquency - a consequence of the lack of educational options.**
- **Public Safety and the use of excessive and fatal force and accountability by law enforcement.**





A Special Focus On Wellness



The DC Health HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, STD and Tuberculosis Administration (HAHSTA) Black Women's Health Initiative Micro-Grants

VSC was awarded the **Black Women's Health Initiative Grant**, funded by HAHSTA HealthHIV, for a second year.



VSC launched this renewed HAHSTA partnership with the first session of our **Healing Each Other Respectfully (HER)** group's seven-part series, "Mou Mou's and Mocktails." This created an intentional space rooted in wellness, community, and joy for Black women. The "Mou Mou and Mocktails" gathering provided a gender-specific environment for women to connect, reflect, and support one another in a safe and affirming setting.







Outreach to those who are unhoused

While outreach to individuals in jails, prisons, and halfway houses before release remains a core component of VSC's approach, ensuring that clients are supported and engaged in the community after release is just as critical to successful reentry. Given the high rates of housing instability among clients, staff engage in targeted outreach that includes distributing food and resources while building relationships that encourage ongoing engagement with VSC services.

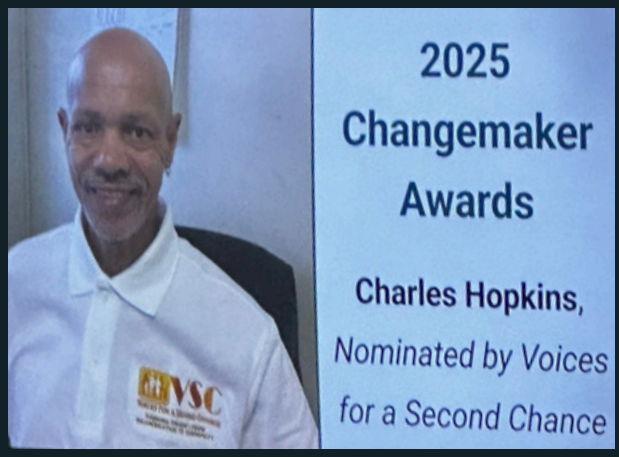
Meeting people where they are, the outreach team delivers survival bags and VSC information to individuals living in tent encampments and on the streets, strengthening trust and pathways to support.





WE CAN CHANGE THE NARRATIVE

SpurLocal Changemaker Award



We celebrated **Mr. Charles Hopkins**, VSC's Peer Engagement and Outreach Coordinator, as a recipient of SpurLocal's Changemaker Award. This award honors his leadership, unwavering commitment, and meaningful impact within the non-profit space and broader community. The award reflects his dedication to advancing positive change and supporting individuals impacted by the justice system. As a team member with lived experience of incarceration, Mr. Hopkins embodies the power of second chances and serves as a powerful example of how narratives can be transformed through leadership, resilience, and service.



Maurice Tyree's Presentation And Book Signing Event At Georgetown University





Mr. Maurice Tyree, a TOV graduate, completed his book, *The Darkest Part of My Blackness*. Mr. Tyree is a native of Washington, D.C., who was convicted at the age of 27. He is now 47-years-old. While incarcerated, he worked to transform himself, and now works to share his story while continuing his journey of self-improvement as a poet, philosopher, and scholar. He tells his story through letters and poems written during and since his time in prison.

"Thank you VSC for your assistance in helping me to integrate back into society. I have just been awarded a 5-year contract at NIH managing their substation!"

- Charles Stewart,
certified solar panelist and trained electrician





Mr. Charles Stewart is currently certified by the North American Board for Electrical Practitioners. He is also a Business Administration major. He found that the more education he got the less he was interested in violence and the streets.



These are only a glimpse into the many stories of clients who are challenging stigma, reclaiming their futures, and *CHANGING THE NARRATIVE*.

"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

- Martin Luther King Jr.



VSC Team



Eric Franklin, Isabelle Garcia, Charles Hopkins, Quincy Williams, LaNasa Clarkson, Paula Thompson, Lennox DaSilva, Sheila Brockington, Chelsea Canterbury, and Basimah Coldwell

VSC Board Members' Strategic Planning Session





Board of Directors

Officers:

Jeremy Wiley
Board Chair

Paula Thompson
President/CEO

Ingrid Gardiner
Treasurer

Brandon Myers, J.D.
General Counsel

Members:

Kevin Glandon, J.D.

Amia Trigg, J.D.

Lauren Green

Special Recognition



Nonprofit Leadership Award

VSC President and CEO Paula C. Thompson was named a 2025 David Bradt & Alex Orfinger Nonprofit Leadership Awardee by the Greater Washington Community Foundation. As part of this honor, she will attend The Women's Leadership Forum at Harvard Business School in 2026, further strengthening her leadership and vision for VSC.

2025 John Thompson Jr. Legacy of a Dream Award





Georgetown University presented the ***2025 John Thompson Jr. Legacy of a Dream Award*** to Paula C. Thompson, President & CEO of Voices for a Second Chance on January 19, 2025. Recognized at the Kennedy Center during the 21st annual Let Freedom Ring Celebration, she was honored for her work supporting incarcerated and newly released individuals in Washington, DC. Named after the late Georgetown basketball coach John Thompson Jr., this award honors local leaders who exemplify Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s spirit, focusing on social justice. Under her leadership, VSC was recognized for providing critical services, including reentry support, family and community connection, and resources for over 2,000 individuals annually.

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How To Become A VSC Partner

Go to www.vscdc.org, click on the **"DONATE"** button in the upper right hand corner of the site and upon completion of the form, click the **"DONATE"** button at the bottom of the page.

We welcome volunteers, donors, sponsors and supporters as we move the agenda forward to support justice involved citizens.

VSC

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