



The Goldring Reentry Initiative

Mission:

The Goldring Reentry Initiative (GRI) aims to address the epidemic of mass incarceration and empower returning citizens in their transition back into society. Through equipping Master of Social Work students with the knowledge and skills to make meaningful contributions in the criminal justice field, the GRI uniquely advocates for incarcerated individuals and addresses barriers to successful reentry.

About the Program:

The Goldring Reentry Initiative (GRI), a program within the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2), is a field placement option for Master of Social Work (MSW) students. MSW students, referred to as GRI Caseworkers, work one-on-one with individuals as they transition out of the Philadelphia Department of Prisons (PDP), both pre- and post-release, to provide therapeutic case management support.

Structure:

The continuum of care model within which the GRI operates is designed to bridge the service gap between jail and the community to support clients in their transition back into society. GRI Student Caseworkers meet with a caseload of clients weekly for approximately the last three months of a client's incarceration and their first three months in the community. Together, clients and caseworkers prepare comprehensive reentry plans and work to implement the plans upon release.

Clients can be court stipulated to participate in the GRI, referred by an attorney, or they can express interest in GRI participation on their own. If a client is referred through an attorney or expresses interest in the GRI, their case must be reviewed to determine if they are eligible to participate based on their legal situation. When GRI clients are accepted into the program, they are assigned a specific release date that is approved by the District Attorney's Office, the Defender Association or other defense counsel, and the GRI's supervising judge. Clients are required to work with their caseworker for at least three months following their release to ensure a successful transition back into the community.

Upcoming Changes:

Beginning in June 2025 the GRI will shift its efforts to support the development of SP2's Criminal Justice [Hub](#) model with Community Partners. The GRI will move away from the provision of direct services to reconfigure our work related to the criminal legal system. Rather than operating our own program for returning citizens, we will partner with other agencies serving this population to enhance capacity across organizations in the Greater Philadelphia area.

For Perspective Students:

The GRI is currently accepting MSW student interns for the 2024-2025 school year. As GRI Caseworkers, clinical and macro MSW students gain knowledge and skills through a variety of activities including individual therapeutic sessions with justice-impacted individuals, weekly group seminar, weekly individual and group supervision, interdisciplinary coordination with community partners, experience in criminal legal settings, and more. Interested students can contact GRI Program Director, Mary Archer at maryarch@upenn.edu, for more information about the application process.

Contact Information:

Mary Archer, MSW
GRI Program Director, Goldring Reentry Initiative
215.573.7942 maryarch@upenn.edu

Catherine Weigley, MSS, LCSW
GRI Clinical Director, Goldring Reentry Initiative
215.898.2505 weigleyc@sp2.upenn.edu

