

# **Reentry in California – Overcoming Legal Barriers to Community Reintegration 2017**

San Francisco, Live Webcast and [www.pli.edu](http://www.pli.edu),\* August 11, 2017

## **Why You Should Attend**

In the past three decades, incarceration rates have exploded in the U.S., such that today we incarcerate over two million people, more than any other country in the world. The result is that many more people encounter the criminal justice system at some point in their lives. Indeed, an estimated 1 in 3 adults in California has an arrest or conviction record, and low-income people and people of color are disproportionately affected.

A person with a prior record faces significant barriers to employment, occupational licensing, and other basic necessities like housing, even when the record is old or relatively minor. Now more than ever, immigrants face the threat of deportation based on criminal justice contacts as minor as an arrest that did not result in conviction. This training is designed to give lawyers a foundation in the collateral consequences of contact with the criminal justice system, as well as tools for representing clients in need of reentry legal services.

## **What You Will Learn**

- Walking the Talk in Allyship – How to Effectively Support Criminal Justice Impacted Communities
- Criminal Record Remedy Updates
- “Reentry” in the Era of Criminalization of Poverty – Bail, Court Fees, and Traffic Courts
- Overcoming Barriers to Employment and Occupational Licensing for People with Criminal Records

## **Who Should Attend**

All attorneys interested in or currently assisting pro bono clients with reentry legal services through representation or in clinical settings, law firm pro bono coordinators, managers and partners, law clinic students and faculty, and public interest and non-profit organization attorneys and staff would benefit from attending this program.

## **Program Schedule**

9:00

### **Program Overview and Introductions**

***Sarah Crowley, Jude Pond***

9:15

### **Walking the Talk in Allyship – How to Effectively Support Criminal Justice Impacted Communities**

The purpose of this panel will be to discuss ways in which allies without direct experience with the criminal justice system can build stronger bridges and deeper relationships with those who do. Topics for discussion will be how even those who are well-intentioned may overlook their own blind spots when they are crafting policy, public statements, litigation, etc., if they are not actively and authentically engaging with impacted communities.

***Brandon Greene (Panel Leader); Joseph Calderon, John Jones III, Taina Vargas-Edmond***

10:15

### **Criminal Record Remedy Updates**

The stakes of criminal justice reform have never been higher, particularly for immigrants at risk of deportation due to contact with the criminal justice system. This panel will focus on recent additions to the criminal record remedies toolkit, including felony resentencing and reclassification under Prop 47 and remedies under Proposition 64 (the marijuana legalization initiative), and strategies for assisting immigrant clients who have had contacts with the criminal justice system.

***Sarah Crowley (Panel Leader); Raha Jorjani, Kara Portnow***

11:15

Networking Break

11:30

### **“Reentry” in the Era of Criminalization of Poverty – Bail, Court Fees, and Traffic Courts**

As people are released from prison, or successfully complete the terms of their probation, they are faced with a staggering amount of debt related to their criminal convictions. As the debt goes unpaid, people are punished through extended supervision, further incarceration, driver's license suspensions, and late penalties. The result is that many poor people are further penalized for their inability to pay, and continue in a cycle of poverty. Courts charge people for many aspects of their incarceration and supervision, including fingerprinting, writing pre-sentencing reports, and for costs associated with probation. People can also accumulate substantial court-ordered debt through traffic court, where a \$100 ticket can turn into a \$490 ticket. The median bail in California is \$50,000, and 10 percent – what would be needed to pay a bail agent for release – is \$5,000, an amount beyond the reach of most Californians. This panel will discuss legal strategies for combatting court-ordered debt for clients, and outline the legal and political advocacy in criminal court, traffic court, and bail reform, including new laws and rules that took effect in 2017.

***Theresa Zhen (Panel Leader); Avni Desai, Jennifer Kim, Ellen McDonnell***

12:30

**Overcoming Barriers to Employment and Occupational Licensing for People with Criminal Records**

Stable employment reduces the likelihood of recidivism and provides a path out of poverty for people with criminal records. Unfortunately, criminal records present significant barriers to securing employment and occupational licenses, a prerequisite to many jobs in California at a range of skill levels. Applicants and the employers or agencies screening them are frequently unaware of the legal requirements that apply to criminal record screening in the employment and licensing contexts. In addition, criminal record reporters – including commercial background check companies and public agencies such as the California Department of Motor Vehicles and Department of Justice – often report inaccurate or over-broad criminal record information.

The panelists will provide an overview of existing laws that apply to criminal record screening by employers and occupational licensing agencies, privacy and consumer protections that limit the reporting of criminal record information, and procedures permitting record subjects to review and correct improperly reported information.

***Jude Pond (Panel Leader); Danielle Mahones, CT Turney-Lewis***

1:30

*Adjourn*

# Faculty

## Co-Chairs

### **Sarah Crowley**

Director, Clean Slate Practice  
East Bay Community Law Center  
Berkeley, California

### **Jude Pond**

Thurgood Marshall Fellow  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area  
San Francisco, California

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### **Joseph Calderon**

Prisoner Reentry Network  
Oakland, California

### **Avni Desai**

Public Policy Manager  
Community Housing Partnership  
San Francisco, California

### **Brandon Greene**

Supervising Attorney, Clean Slate Practice  
East Bay Community Law Center  
Berkeley, California

### **John Jones III**

Life Coach  
Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice  
Oakland, California

### **Raha Jorjani**

Immigration Defense Attorney  
Alameda County Public Defender's Office  
Oakland, California

### **Jennifer Kim**

Director of Programs  
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights  
Oakland, California

**Danielle Mahones**

Program and Capacity Consultant  
Bay Area Black Workers Center  
Oakland, California

**Ellen McDonnell**

Reentry Coordinator and Deputy Public Defender  
Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office  
Martinez, California

**Kara Portnow**

Deputy Public Defender; Proposition 47 and 64 Coordinator  
Alameda County Public Defender's Office  
Oakland, California

**CT Turney-Lewis**

Supervising Staff Attorney  
A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project  
Los Angeles, California

**Taina Vargas-Edmond**

Statewide Advocacy Coordinator  
Ella Baker Center for Human Rights  
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**Theresa Zhen**

Supervising Attorney, Clean Slate Practice  
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**Senior Program Attorney:** Christina Thompson