NACo, Better Futures Enterprises announce partnership to advance cost-saving, smart justice practices

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) and Better Futures Enterprises, formerly known as The NetWork for Better Futures, have launched a strategic partnership to advance smart justice reforms that will promote better outcomes for individuals returning to communities from jail or prison, enhance public safety, and use public dollars more efficiently.

Each year more than 9 million individuals cycle in and out of county and local jails and an additional 700,000 are released from state or federal prisons, according to the Federal Interagency Reentry Council. Without strong family ties or other support systems, many of these individuals are ill-prepared to return to their communities and end up back in the criminal justice system.

“NACo looks forward to our new partnership with Better Futures Enterprises to develop and share innovative ways for counties to assist individuals with a successful transition to their community following their release from jail or prison,” said NACo President Chris Rodgers, commissioner, Douglas County, Neb. Rodgers has made Smart Justice a 2013 NACo priority. “The goal is to help counties use their existing resources more efficiently to break the costly cycle of incarceration, release, incarceration, release.”

Better Futures Minnesota, a project of Better Futures Enterprises, is a social enterprise that was established as a demonstration pilot in 2007 by a team of Minnesota’s leading health care, housing, workforce, community corrections, and human service practitioners.

The new strategic partnership is being funded in part by a grant by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. NACo will provide information, resources, and assistance on how this model might potentially address some of the issues NACo members face with a high-risk, reentering population.

-more-
In addition, an advisory board of county officials and other community leaders from across the country will be convened to provide feedback on the model.

“We are excited about collaborating with county leaders from across the country interested in re-engineering how essential services are organized, delivered, and financed in their communities,” said Steve Thomas, president and CEO of Better Futures.

For more information contact Maeghan Gilmore at 202.942.4261 or Marcia Soto at 612.455.6133 ext.125.

###

**About NACo**

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,069 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).

**About Better Futures Enterprises**

Better Futures Enterprises, a non-profit social enterprise that originated in Minnesota’s Hennepin and Ramsey counties, offers men who are most likely to end up on the streets, in jail or in prison—and who want to change – the chance to earn an honest living and walk a better path. Unlike traditional reentry models, the Better Futures formula is based on the four fundamentals, all of which are interconnected: jobs, housing, health, and coaching, supported by meaningful relationships and a vibrant community. This integrated approach to improving lives is leading to reduced spending by counties and better results for high-risk men. For more information about Better Futures Enterprises, visit [www.betterfuturesenterprises.com](http://www.betterfuturesenterprises.com).