

Assata M. Thomas is a nationally recognized reentry strategist, author, speaker, and systems transformation leader with over 20 years of experience driving equitable criminal justice reform and community healing. She currently serves as Executive Director of the City of Philadelphia's Office of Reentry Partnerships, where she leads citywide reentry policy, advises the Chief Public Safety Director, and manages multi-million-dollar budgets aligned with mayoral priorities. Under her leadership, she established Philadelphia's first Neighborhood Resource Center, launched a groundbreaking grassroots micro-grant initiative distributing \$100K to community organizations, and revitalized the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition into a robust network of over 150 organizations.

As Founder and CEO of **Assata Michelle Enterprises**, she extends her impact nationally, providing strategic consulting on reentry ecosystem design, workforce development, and organizational transformation to cities, corporations, and community organizations. Her work integrates Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) frameworks into comprehensive curricula that address the complex needs of justice-impacted communities.

Assata's career trajectory reflects exceptional leadership and rapid advancement. At Philadelphia FIGHT's Institute for Community Justice, she ascended from Case Manager to Chief Community Justice Officer in just seven years, overseeing a \$1.6M budget and leading a team of 20+ staff delivering integrated reentry and public health services. Her earlier roles include Director at Cornerstone Developing Agency, where she directed operations for 20 residential reentry homes, and positions spanning Life Skills Coordinator and Senior Correction Officer with the New Jersey Department of Corrections.

A proud graduate of Rutgers University (B.A. in African Studies and Urban Studies with honors, minor in Sociology), Vermont Law and Graduate School (Master of Restorative Justice with a 3.8 GPA and honors), and Harvard Kennedy School (Executive Certificate in Leadership for Social Impact), Assata combines rigorous academic training with lived experience navigating the justice system. As someone who has personally faced the challenges of a felony conviction, she brings unparalleled authenticity and insight to her work, blending professional expertise with deep understanding of the barriers and resilience required for successful reentry.

Her contributions have been recognized with the 2024 Trailblazer Award and the 2025 Above and Beyond Women Award. She is an accomplished author whose work includes *Reclaiming Potential: The New Frontier of Criminal Justice Advocacy*, a comprehensive guide supporting organizations, cities, and advocates in designing effective reentry ecosystems, and *Forward Only: Speak Power. Live Change.*, a devotional guide for changemakers and social justice advocates. Through her speaking engagements, she addresses topics ranging from reentry as economic development strategy to restorative justice practices and leadership development for justice-impacted professionals.

Assata's work is distinguished by her ability to operate at the intersection of policy and practice, translating organizational goals into actionable initiatives that improve

outcomes and drive systemic change. Her expertise spans program management, fiscal oversight, stakeholder engagement, curriculum development, change leadership, and cross-sector collaboration. She is renowned for her integrity, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to empowering underserved populations and transforming systems that have historically caused harm into frameworks for healing and opportunity.