



# Tool 7.3: Sample Report Release Invite Letter

[insert your organization's logo or put on organizational letterhead]

January 2009

Dear Friend,

We cordially invite you to the release of a report, *Stuck in the System: How NYS Can Improve Public Health by Aligning the Penal Code with Public Health Law*. This report is the result of a community survey administered by Voices of Community Advocates and Leaders (VOCAL) and analyzed by the Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project. The report documents the experiences of Syringe Exchange Program (SEP)/Extended Syringe Access Program (ESAP) participants and offers several recommendations to improve public health and safety in New York State.

*Stuck in the System* will be officially released on Friday, January 29th, 2009 at 10am at a press conference at 250 Broadway in the Lower Manhattan.

Syringe exchange programs promote safe-syringe practices, reduce the spread of HIV and other blood borne illnesses, and improve overall public health. These lawful programs allow properly documented participants to possess sterile or used syringes. However, the New York State Penal code does not recognize the Public Health Law exemptions and many lawful SEP participants are subjected to harassment, arrest or even incarceration, significantly reducing the effectiveness of these programs.

VOCAL, the nation's only membership organization led by active and former users developed this research project to document the experiences of SEP and ESAP participants. With research support from the Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project, VOCAL conducted over 75 surveys, 10 in-depth interviews and additional literature reviews. *Stuck in the System* contains the results of the surveys and interviews, as well as several vital policy recommendations that will increase the effectiveness of syringe exchange programs and improve public health and safety.

**What:** Press Conference and Release of *Stuck in the System: How NYS Can Improve Public Health by Aligning the Penal Code with Public Health Law*

**When:** Friday, January 29th, 2009 at 10am

**Where:** 250 Broadway in Lower Manhattan

If you have any questions or would like to RSVP for the press conference, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Voices of Community Advocates and Leaders (VOCAL)  
The Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project