



This newsletter shares information, policy and program updates and best practice information to 20 County Re-entry Task Forces and community stakeholders.

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New DOCCS/DCJS County Re-entry Task Force (CRTF) Orientation Video “Resources for Your Return Home”

DCJS funds 20 County Re-entry Task Forces (CRTFs) across NYS with the goal of supporting individuals returning to their communities by providing essential resources for successful re-entry. In 2020, DCJS began developing a CRTF Orientation video with DOCCS and several of our CRTF partners. The video is now complete, and DCJS could not be prouder of the men and women who bravely shared their stories. They know first-hand the level of compassion, dedication, and professionalism that all CRTF staff demonstrate each day in working with formerly incarcerated individuals.

Accordingly, DCJS and DOCCS present the CRTF Orientation Video, [“Resources for Your Return Home”](#) with expectation that the video will be shown in DOCCS facilities and parole offices wherever possible. The orientation video was developed to show incarcerated individuals, as well as those just returning home, how helpful the CRTF services can be in a variety of different ways.

This video could not have been created without each CRTF and the important work you do each day. A special thank you to NYS DOCCS for their dedicated partnership, especially Kent Wian, for producing this video, as well as DCJS staff Melinda Vick, Taylor Alfred and Frank Cangiano, and the Office of Public Information.

Fundamentals of Community Corrections (FCC) Training

DCJS-OPCA held its second three-day virtual FCC training in December. The FCC is an evidence-based curriculum designed especially for community correction professionals, specifically those beginning their careers, but suitable for all. The curriculum provides the skills necessary to help engage program participants and target the criminogenic needs required for behavior change. Effective client engagement, race & equity, case planning, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE); professional wellness; and participant rights have all been included in the updated curriculum. The second class of the new FCC included 17 participants from 15 agencies across New York State, reflecting a diverse range of professional experience. On the final day of the training, Tania Chandler Peterson, from EAC, gave closing remarks.

Congratulations to Albany CRTF!

On Dec. 7, the Albany County Re-entry Task Force received the Community Partner Award from the Center for Employment Opportunities. The award was in appreciation for their outstanding and dedicated service to justice involved individuals. Congratulations to all members of the Albany CRTF team!



Erica Anderson, Albany CRTF Coordinator accepted the award.

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For more information on any of the topics mentioned within, to report any difficulties you may have experienced receiving this email, or if you have any information you would like included in the next issue, please contact [Taylor Alfred](#).

Past issues of *New York Re-Entry Today* are available on the [DCJS website](#). Bookmark the link!

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Client Testimonial: Queens CRTF

In May of 2022, Mr. Jorge SanPablo enrolled with the Queens CRTF, successfully completed the CBI-EMP program and offered an internship as a peer navigator in the recovery center at the Fortune Society. While engaged in the internship, Mr. SanPablo participated in the digital equity program to enhance his computer skills. Mr. SanPablo is now employed full-time at Acacia Network as a case manager. He is responsible for conducting urinalysis and screening clients receiving medicated assisted treatment. Mr. SanPablo expresses his sincere appreciation for the assistance that the task force provided.

Spotlight: The Lilac House – Westchester County

Pamela Zimba, Founder and Project Director, learned upon her release from incarceration that there is a significant lack of appropriate, supportive housing in Westchester County. After living at a shelter and realizing it was not designed for individuals coming home from prison, and that the shelter staff lacked the special skills to help individuals address their needs, she set out to help individuals herself. After being incarcerated for six years, she learned that technology had changed significantly, and she struggled with the technology advancements. This motivated her to start a transitional house for women returning home from incarceration. She purchased a house, which is being renovated to realize her dream. When completed, the Lilac House will house up to seven women initially, with the goal of helping women be successfully transitioned within a two-year timeframe. The primary focus will be to help individuals save the funds to become independent including the purchase of furniture and rent for a home of their own. Initially individuals will be referred to community providers for substance abuse, mental health and any other treatment needs. The program is now accepting applications. More information can be found [here](#).

Spotlight: Project Porchlight – Dutchess County

Nikole Johannesen, from Hudson River Housing, provided a presentation on Project Porchlight at the most recent Dutchess CRTF bi-monthly meeting. Project Porchlight is a pre-homeless shelter and alternative shelter program. Project Porchlight provides individuals a place to stop in, wash their clothes, obtain nutritional meals, take a hot shower or just rest. Project Porchlight is located at the rear of a property located at 310 Mill Street, Poughkeepsie, NY. It is a smaller location than the homeless shelter and is open Monday-Friday from 8am-4:30pm and after hours as needed. Other services provided are assistance with applications (employment or DSS), the ability to charge a cell phone, and obtain water/snacks. Project Porchlight was established to prevent homelessness, while providing information and various supports to clients to prevent them from having to go to the shelter. This location is not considered a “drop-in center”, as there is a care management team available during operating hours. The care management team also works in the community to assist individuals living on the streets.

SUNY waives admission application fees

This past August, SUNY began [waiving admission application fees](#) for high school seniors at designated public high schools across the state. This initiative expands upon waivers previously announced for various individuals facing financial hardship including students eligible for Educational Opportunity Program, or students graduating with an AA or AS from SUNY or CUNY. SUNY typically requires a \$50 non-refundable application fee for each of its 64 locations.

New Legislation

On Dec. 12, Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation ([S.7658-B/A.8869-B](#)) that protects victims of hate crimes from being mistreated by insurance companies. The new law prohibits insurers from canceling insurance, raising premiums, refusing to issue a policy, or refusing to renew a policy solely on the basis that one or more claims have been made for a loss that is a result of a hate crime. This new law will apply to individuals, religious organizations, or nonprofits organized and operated for religious, charitable, or educational purposes.