



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

- Albany
- Bronx
- Broome
- Dutchess
- Erie
- Kings
- Monroe
- Nassau
- Niagara
- New York
- Oneida
- Onondaga
- Orange
- Queens
- Rensselaer
- Rockland
- Schenectady
- Suffolk
- Ulster
- Westchester

The New York State Council on Community Re-entry and Reintegration aims to reduce barriers for New Yorkers with criminal convictions.

County Re-entry Task Forces Services—Services Continue with Increased Client Participation in Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions and Employment

As of April 1, the CRTFs reached the six-month mark of their contract year. The CRTFs have continued to work extremely hard to continue to deliver service coordination to high-risk individuals releasing from the Department of Corrections and Community Supervisions (DOCCS). Many of CRTFs have returned to either fully in-person services or utilize a hybrid model. As of April 1, all 20 CRTFs have begun service coordination plans for 1,237 individuals and 55 percent of those who were enrolled in an employment readiness program, completed said program. Lastly, all 20 CRTFs combined have reached 51 percent of the total expected Cognitive Behavioral Interventions enrollment milestones for the contract year.

Governor’s “Jails to Jobs” Program--Workforce Development Specialists Training

On March 21, DCJS kicked off its 18th Workforce Development Specialist Training and its *first class* dedicated to DOCCS staff. Fourteen parole officers and six re-entry staff began the 180-hour certified and challenging training program and will soon join more than 400 certified specialists, who are authorized to lead individuals in groups through the 20-hour **Ready, Set, Work!** Program. Specialists are certified to utilize specific competencies and related skills to assist individuals with criminal histories make informed decisions about jobs and career paths, based on knowledge of their interests, skills/abilities, and values; educational and occupational opportunities; and the realities of the work world.

New York City CRTFs Collaborate with Queensboro Correctional Facility

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the New York CRTF had a strong relationship with Queensboro Correctional Facility and was able to consistently conduct “in-reach” efforts to connect more individuals releasing to Manhattan. Recently, all four NYC CRTFs met with program services staff at Queensboro Correctional Facility to conduct virtual informational sessions with individuals releasing to New York, Queens, Bronx, and Kings counties. Each CRTF will have an opportunity to share specific programs offered through the Task Forces and connect with individuals prior to their release. Transition planning is essential to success in re-entry.

Virtual Meeting and Case Conferencing Committee Refresher Training

On March 30, OPCA delivered a training to CRTF Coordinators, Co-Chairs and CRTF staff on the “dos and don’ts” of virtual meetings as well as a refresher on the case conferencing process. The training was very well attended, and participants were able to ask questions and engage in discussion regarding barriers and obstacles they may experience. The recording of the training has been posted to the DCJS website and can be found [here](#).

Spotlight: Fresh Start Career Expo – Suffolk CRTF

The Suffolk CRTF has partnered with Suffolk County Department of Labor, Licensing and Consumer Affairs, and the Suffolk County Legal Aid Society to host a job fair at the Long Island Cares Community Engagement Center. *The Job Fair was attended by 87 job seekers* and was the most successful job fair since the onset of COVID-19. The plan is to host additional job fairs at local libraries for targeted industries and populations, such as manufacturing, healthcare, individuals with disabilities and veterans. Liz Justesen, of the Legal Aid Society, did a presentation for employers on hiring individuals with justice involvement with the hope of changing their perspectives when interviewing qualified candidates. The CRTF has also reached out to the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office to potentially partner on a job fair in late Summer or early Fall.

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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](#).

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Client Success Story: The Oneida CRTF is located at the Workforce Investment Board in Utica. Members of the CRTF have been working with a client who was released from DOCCS in July of 2021, after spending 16 years incarcerated. The CRTF assisted the individual with obtaining his personal identification documentation, linking him to community support services and securing a New York State driver's license. This individual has been able to secure several part-time jobs, and, due to his strong work ethic, trustworthiness, and attention to detail, one employer has been referring him to other businesses for additional part-time work. The client is motivated to take the next step and begin planning for his future. The participant recently went to the Utica city clerk to apply for a business certificate so he can start his own business cleaning refuse from residential and commercial property. With the assistance of the CRTF, the client met with the Mohawk Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC) via Zoom. The SBDC has agreed to assist by providing resources on how to develop a strong business plan. In addition, the SBDC also did their research for various grant programs that target individuals involved with the criminal justice system for additional funding and linked him with two available resources already. He hopes to establish a strong credit history; secure a loan to purchase business insurance, truck and trailer; help give back by employing others returning to the community; and become a marketable business owner in Oneida County.

***Ready, Set, Work!* Graduations – Monroe and Niagara CRTFs**

On April 8, the Monroe CRTF held a graduation ceremony for four individuals who successfully completed the ***Ready, Set, Work!*** program. This was facilitated by CRTF Case Manager Lesly Urena, *who recently graduated* from the Workforce Development Specialist training and this cohort represents Lesly's first class. The Niagara CRTF graduated eight individuals from ***Ready, Set, Work!*** in March. ***Ready, Set, Work!*** is a 20-hour employment readiness curriculum that aids students with identifying their skills and interests, how to search for a job and, ultimately, how to prepare for and conduct a job interview. Congratulations to all!

Restore the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for Incarcerated Individuals

In 1995, a New York State law prohibited incarcerated people from receiving state financial aid. Governor Kathy Hochul prioritized higher education in her State of the State address and the 2022-2023 Budget includes dramatic reforms to TAP. The program now includes financial aid assistance for part-time students, students in non-credit micro credential programs, and incarcerated individuals.

Potential Funding: FY 2022 Second Chance Act Community-based Reentry Program

The Bureau of Justice Assistance is seeking applications for funding under the Second Chance Act to provide grants to nonprofit organizations and Indian tribes to provide reentry services and programs. The Bureau is seeking applications to implement or expand reentry programs that demonstrate strong partnerships with corrections, parole, probation, other reentry service providers and stakeholders. These partnerships should develop comprehensive case management plans that directly address criminogenic risk and needs, as determined by validated criminogenic risk assessments, and include delivery or facilitation of services. More information regarding deadlines and the actual grant guidelines can be found [here](#).