



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

April – Second Chance Month

Each April, the U.S Department of Justice celebrates Second Chance month, an opportunity to recognize the important work being done by professionals, agencies, and communities to support individuals who are returning home from incarceration. DCJS has funded re-entry programs since 2012 which provide a variety of programs, services and interventions to justice involved individuals. The 20 County Re-Entry Task Forces are successful in their mission and goal to strategically plan and meet the stabilization needs of individuals returning home and reduce their recidivism. Since 2019, the CRTFs have served over 7,500 people coming home from state incarceration. DCJS recently developed a CRTF Orientation video with DOCCS and several of our CRTF partners which highlighted five men and women who bravely shared their stories. They know firsthand the level of compassion, dedication, and professionalism that CRTF staff demonstrate each day in working with formerly incarcerated individuals. The orientation video, “[Resources for your Return Home](#),” 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.

OPCA Delivers Lunch and Learn Webinar on Procedural Justice

On April 5, more than 80 individuals participated in a Lunch and Learn Webinar titled, “What is Procedural Justice?” DCJS Commissioner Rossana Rosado welcomed the participants and spoke about making communities whole. Participants were provided introductions to Procedural Justice and how the Procedural Justice framework can be applied to the Community corrections field to establish trust and build rapport through the four pillars. Procedural Justice focuses on the way the courts, police and other legal authorities interact with the public, and how the characteristics of those interactions shape the public’s views of them, their willingness to obey the law, and actual crime rates. The four pillars of Procedural Justice are Neutrality, Voice, Respect and Trustworthiness. Every criminal justice professional can use the four pillars as guiding principles for practice in their everyday interaction with individuals. The full webinar recording is available [here](#). The next OPCA Lunch & Learn webinar is scheduled for May 24th titled, “Impact of Trauma on Justice Involved Individuals.” You may register [here](#).

Interactive Journaling Training

OPCA trained Probation Officers and other community corrections professionals as facilitators to lead Interactive Journaling cognitive behavioral intervention program-- **Courage to Change** series. This 2-day in-person training event took place in Albany on Mar. 28 and 29. A diverse group of 19 professionals across probation, ATI and Reentry programs participated and received certification to facilitate this evidenced-based program. The in-person training was facilitated by accomplished and certified IJ Trainers: Samantha Hollis, Community Corrections Representative II, from the ATI Unit at OPCA and Michele Clarke, Community Corrections Representative III, from the VER Unit at OPCA. OPCA plans to offer additional Interactive Journaling trainings in 2023. If your agency is interested in acquiring training in Interactive Journaling, please contact the OPCA Training Unit at opcatraining@dcjs.ny.gov for assistance.

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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 – Suffolk CRTF

In March of 2023, the Suffolk CRTF graduated eight individuals from Interactive Journaling. The Suffolk CRTF offers both **Interactive Journaling** and **Ready, Set, Work!** to individuals returning home. Both interventions are led by experienced facilitators who have had much success with engaging clients in the intervention. The CRTF offers bus passes and other incentives to clients to help motivate them to complete.

“The class was really good. The journals really helped with visualizing all the concepts we were learning about and it's something we could keep and look at in the future.” -CRTF Participant

Best Practice

The CRTF model is comprised of seven work plan objectives, including Community Outreach and/or Public Education. The CRTFs are contractually obligated to engage members of the community, including formerly incarcerated individuals and their families in building a comprehensive re-entry system through community education and outreach efforts. CRTFs often host job fairs, re-entry resource fairs, community forum discussions, as well as advertise their program via social media, pamphlets, or flyers. Some CRTFs have even purchased banners with their CRTF logo or name or used social media to spread the word about re-entry in their county.

Spotlight: Rockland CRTF Resource Fair

In 2021 and 2022, the Rockland CRTF set up tables inside the Palisades Mall as a way to reach the community and provide education on re-entry. They utilized re-entry trivia to increase awareness of barriers and decrease stigma, held Narcan training, provided free gifts for kids, offered access/connection to services, and provided peer support. Along with the education materials, the staff conducted outreach to each merchant in the mall to build relationships and inspire fair chance hiring. On April 25, the CRTF attended advocacy day in Albany with “Communities Not Cages” and conducted outreach in the malls and local parks on other days later in the week.

BJA Housing Report

As part of Second Chance Month, the Bureau of Justice Assistance released a housing report that highlights the national current practices and highlights areas where individuals can direct their advocacy efforts to increase housing opportunities. Read more [here](#).

Legislation Spotlight - Youthful Offender Designation

In November 2022, Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation (S.282/A.6769) that allows individuals who were under the age of 19 when they were convicted of a crime, and therefore eligible for youthful offender status, but denied the designation, to reapply for youthful offender status retroactively. For those convicted of a crime when they are under the age of 19, New York's Youthful Offender law provides the opportunity for their conviction to be replaced by a confidential, non-criminal adjudication and reduced prison sentence. A criminal record has lasting effects, including societal bias and limited access to employment - two significant barriers to rehabilitation that dramatically increase the likelihood of recidivism. Many of those under the age of 19 when convicted and eligible for youthful offender status are still not granted it. This legislation allows those who were not granted that designation to apply retroactively to obtain the designation of Youthful Offender, provided they have not been convicted of another crime in at least five years. Read more [here](#).