



April 24 – 30, 2016 is National Re-entry Week

This newsletter shares news, policy and program updates and best practice information to 19 County Re-entry Task Forces (CRTFs) and community stakeholders.

Funded by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, the Task Forces are located in the following counties:

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

Re-entry Job Summit Series

More than 110 people attended the state's fourth Re-entry Job Summit in February. Targeting the state's Central, Southern Tier and Mohawk Valley regions, the summit in Syracuse brought together representatives from correctional facilities, community supervision and county re-entry programs; employment service providers; the State University of New York and state Labor and Education departments; Regional Economic Development Councils, workforce investment boards and staff from county departments of probation, social services, district attorneys' offices, community-based organizations, treatment providers, employers and neighborhood organizations.

The agenda focused on emerging economic and employment trends within each regional economy and the associated job opportunities for hard-to-place populations, including individuals released from prison. Richard Tobe, the state's Director of Upstate Revitalization, spoke and encouraged CRTF representatives to contact their Regional Economic Development Council and join appropriate workgroups to advance employment consideration for those they serve. This is a unique opportunity for re-entry programs to advocate and pursue jobs for those under community supervision.

2016 OWDS Training Scheduled

Friday, April 1 is the deadline for applications for the 10th Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) Training, scheduled this year for the weeks of May 23-27, July 25-29 and Sept 12-16, in Albany. This National Institute of Corrections (NIC) certified, evidence-based training is offered to ACCES/VR, CRTFs, county probation departments and ATI programs. The 180-hour training focuses on offender employment practices, including preparing for, obtaining and retaining employment. Participants also are trained to lead 20-hour Ready, Set, Work! (RSW!) job readiness groups. All CRTF graduates of the training are expected to facilitate RSW! groups with re-entry participants and to submit class rosters and outcome reports to DCJS.

Important Webinar: Save the Date

2 p.m. Monday, April 18: DCJS will host a webinar on CRTF Case File Documentation. The webinar will feature a panel of CRTF coordinators, DCJS auditors and re-entry program staff discussing documentation and retention requirements of CRTF case files.

CRTF Meeting Dates

April 2016

April 1: Albany
April 6: Kings
April 7: Suffolk
April 13: Erie
Niagara
Rockland
April 14: Nassau
Rensselaer
April 20: Broome
Schenectady
April 21: Dutchess
April 22: Manhattan

May 2016

May 6: Oneida
May 9: Monroe
May 18: Ulster
May 19: Onondaga
May 26: Bronx
Orange
Westchester

New York Re-entry Today is published by the DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (OPCA).

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April 24 – 30, 2016 is National Re-entry Week

The federal Justice Department recently announced the designation of April 24 through 30, 2016, as National Re-entry Week.

This week presents an opportunity for county re-entry programs to increase public support for programs and community alliances that help individuals released from prison re-settle in their community as productive citizens.

Federal justice agencies are organizing events statewide and county re-entry programs are encouraged to participate in these events or organize your own. Activities can include job fairs, re-entry roundtables and listening sessions with formerly incarcerated individuals, special events for children of incarcerated parents and raising awareness by submitting opinion essays or letters to the editor to local media.

New York State Bar Association Adopts Re-entry Recommendations

For more than three years, the Special Committee on Re-entry of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) has worked to identify and address re-entry barriers. In January, NYSBA adopted the report and recommendations prepared by the Special Committee.

One key area identified was higher education. The Education from the Inside Out (EIO) Coalition, led by the Center for Community Alternatives in Syracuse, has worked for several years to increase access to higher education for incarcerated people and people in the community with criminal records.

NYSBA endorsed the Fair Access to Education Act, a bill pending in the state Legislature, which would “ban the box” on college admissions applications, making it an unlawful discriminatory practice for a college to ask about or consider an applicant's past criminal justice system involvement.

The Association also called upon the state Legislature to overturn the 1995 ban on incarcerated people receiving student financial aid awards and to restore eligibility for the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). In an editorial published on Feb. 16, *The New York Times* supported the higher education recommendations and strongly advocated for access to college programs for people in prison and people with criminal history records.

State Fiscal Year 2016-17: Heads Up

There are several changes proposed to take effect in the new fiscal year:

- The CRTF contract program period may run from Oct. 1, 2016 through Sept. 30, 2017. Current contracts would be extended and increased for milestone achievements during the July 1, 2016 - Sept. 30, 2016 quarter.
- DCJS will release a new request for applications (RFA) during April, once the state budget for the new fiscal year is enacted.
- The RFA will follow a competitive process: all applications submitted for funding consideration must include a statement of approval by the County Co-chair and DOCCS Co-chair.

Additional information will be provided when available.

Around the Task Forces

Welcome to Richard Rosado, newly appointed as Manhattan DOCCS Co-Chair and to Amy Colon, who is the new Ulster CRTF coordinator.