



"New York is a state of opportunity, where individuals from all backgrounds and circumstances are given a fair chance to pursue their goals."

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Sept. 21, 2015

This newsletter shares news, policy and program updates and best practice information with 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

Regional Re-entry Job Summits

Nearly 100 professionals attended the state's third Re-entry Job Summit in October. Hosted in Buffalo, the summit targeted individuals from re-entry task forces and programs, human service providers, work force and economic development agencies and education, vocational rehabilitation and employment providers from Western New York and the Finger Lakes. Parole officers, corrections staff from the state's Wende Hub and federal and county probation officers also attended.

Presentations highlighted the nature and extent of work force needs, economic development activities and emerging opportunities for the re-entry population. Participants conveyed a strong commitment to utilize data and resources presented and maintained by the state Labor Department to identify living wage jobs for individuals released from prison.

Efforts are underway to coordinate a Central New York Regional Re-entry Jobs Summit in early 2016. In the interim, follow-up regional workshops are being scheduled with respective labor market analysts to allow more time for Task Force members to study Labor Department trend data, such as emerging occupational fields, and to identify employers who are actively hiring.

New York State Council on Re-entry and Reintegration

Governor Cuomo has accepted recommendations to reduce barriers for New Yorkers with criminal convictions from the state's Council on Re-entry and Reintegration. DCJS recently hosted a webinar to highlight regulatory changes designed to increase fairness for individuals returning home from prison:

- Set uniform guidelines to evaluate applicants seeking state occupational licenses with a presumption to grant a license when statute doesn't weigh against it.
- Adopt fair chance hiring for state agencies so applicants disclose criminal convictions later in the hiring process.
- Amend 10 state licensing/employment regulations to reduce barriers to those occupations.
- Utilize a new kiosk-based video technology system for job seekers to market themselves to potential employers without the pressure of formal applications and bureaucratic processes.

Learn more about the Council's recommendations: <http://on.ny.gov/1WdYPCw>

CRTF Meeting Dates

December 2015

Dec. 4: Albany

Dec. 9: Erie
Niagara

Dec. 10: Bronx Planners

Dec. 16: Schenectady

Dec. 17: Dutchess
Nassau
Rensselaer
Suffolk

Dec. 20: Ulster

January 2016

Jan. 11: Monroe

Jan. 13: Rockland

Jan. 20: Broome

Jan. 21: Onondaga
Westchester

Jan. 28: Bronx
Orange

February 2016

Feb. 4: Kings

The 19 CRTFs funded by the DCJS identify and manage services to moderate- and high-risk parolees and ensure the delivery of cognitive behavioral and employment services to them.

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CRTF Referrals to ATI Employment Programs

Program coordination is underway to link CRTF case referrals to ATI employment programs for job readiness and placement services. A referral form and process will be finalized for implementation. More information will follow.

Notable CRTF Practices

Membership Recommitment: In thanking members for their service and dedication to the CRTF, Nassau Co-Chair Rita Nolan also sought a renewal of commitment to fully participate in meetings and events during the 2015-16 program year. Many members wear multiple hats and have primary job functions. Rita's approach respects each member and his or her time while providing quiet leadership needed to continue the CRTF's success. This is a subtle practice that builds commitment and collaboration.

Mission Statements: A reconstituted Bronx CRTF is emerging as a result of the work of the Bronx DA's Office, which now sponsors the County Co-Chair. The Osborne Association now provides administrative support for the Task Force. Co-Chairs Maria Cortese and Muriel Harvey are running meetings to organize processes and to expand stakeholder membership. A membership survey is underway and CRTF planners are working to develop a mission statement. This is a basic affirmation, yet important for gaining community buy-in for the Task Force and its work.

Interactive Journaling: Suffolk CRTF will utilize Interactive Journaling as an evidence-based CBI, based on recent approval of their request by OPCA.

CBI Facilitator Schedules: Prior to Thinking for Change or Offender Workforce Development Specialist facilitator training classes, Broome Task Force Coordinator Jeff Pryor meets with prospective facilitators to schedule groups that they will run immediately after their training is completed. As a result of this proactive practice, the Task Force exceeded milestones at the four-month mark: 84 percent of the CBI enrollment measure and 53 percent successful completion of CBI enrollments. This is a simple, yet effective management tool.

Around the Task Forces

Albany County appointed *Malcolm Thorpe* as CRTF Coordinator and *Dana Kregel* is now the Rockland CRTF Coordinator.

Federal Shout Out to CEO

During an announcement earlier this fall, President Obama itemized federal criminal justice reforms to promote offender rehabilitation and re-entry. He cited private sector commitments supporting re-entry success and highlighted the Center of Employment Opportunities (CEO) and its commitment to more than double the people they serve, from 4,500 to 11,000 high-risk men and women across communities they serve nationally.

Following the President's announcement, federal officials visited CEO to discuss "what works" and to meet parolees who received job assistance. CEO serves Task Force clients and parolees in New York City, Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo and Rochester.