



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 Force (CRTF) Success During COVID-19

COVID-19 presented many challenges for the CRTFs, but they continued to provide services to individuals returning home from state incarceration. To date, the CRTFs, in partnership with the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), have provided a range of re-entry services to over 1,600 individuals during the 2020-2021 contract year. In addition, 64 percent of individuals who enrolled in a Cognitive Behavioral Intervention and/or Employment Readiness Curriculum program completed it. As programs continue operations beyond COVID-19, many CRTFS are beginning to see clients in-person for intakes and throughout the service coordination period, facilitate groups both in-person and virtually, and host job fairs and public outreach events, as well as hosting bi-monthly meetings virtually. All 20 County Re-Entry Task Forces (CRTFs) have been refunded for the 2021-2022 grant year.

Niagara CRTF and Community Missions Launch Culinary Arts TOWER Program

In August 2021, Community Missions of Niagara Frontier, Inc. in partnership with the Niagara County Reentry Task Force, will launch the TOWER program for individuals returning to the community from incarceration. The Tower Program provides training in culinary skills. The program is 13 weeks long and includes training in **Ready Set Work!**, as well as ten weeks in culinary arts. Community Missions has partnered with the Niagara County Community College to offer a Culinary “boot camp” at the College’s Culinary School, as well as through local chefs who provide on-the-job training. The Tower Program is free to participants, who receive necessary tools, clothing and education. Community partners will offer employment interviews to individuals who have successfully completed the program.

Welcome Family Services of Westchester to the County Re-Entry Task Force

Effective April 1, the Westchester County Re-Entry Task Force will offer services through a new service contract with Family Services of Westchester. Family Services of Westchester - Westchester CRTF Coordinator Joann Jaen, held the first bi-monthly meeting on June 30, kicking off an exciting collaboration with re-entry partners within the county. Westchester County Re-Entry Director Barbara Lambrose has played an integral part in contracting with the new service provider. We wish Barbara, and the new team at Family Services of Westchester, the best as they help returning citizens engage in service coordination, Cognitive Behavioral Intervention and Employment Readiness Interventions in Westchester.

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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](mailto:Taylor.Alfred@dcjs.ny.gov).

Past issues of *New York Re-Entry Today* are available on the [DCJS website](http://www.dcjny.gov). Bookmark the link!

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DCJS Recorded Webinars Now Available!

The DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (OPCA) delivered six “Lunch and Learn” webinars from April to June 2021. The recordings and PowerPoint slides are available on the [DCJS website](http://www.dcjny.gov) and the Integrated Justice (IJ) Portal: Resources>Reference Library>Community Corrections>Training/Events.

On June 16, DCJS hosted a Question and Answer Webinar for CRTFs on the Processing of County Re-Entry Task Force Referrals. OPCA staff provided a brief overview of process changes and answered some frequently asked questions. The webinar was recorded and is available on the [DCJS website](http://www.dcjny.gov) with the Questions and Answer Reference Guide.

On June 24, OPCA hosted approximately 190 individuals with the SUNY University Center for Academic and Workforce Development (UCAWD) on the Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) and Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN) Labs a joint webinar on programs in the Westchester/Long Island/NYC region. The 90-minute webinar was recorded and is available on the [DCJS website](http://www.dcjny.gov).

Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) Training

There is compelling evidence that unemployment impedes success in the community and contributes to recidivism. DCJS/OPCA is planning a second virtual 180-hour OWDS training this year, beginning in August. All questions should be directed to Frank F. Cangiano, of OPCA, via email at Frank.Cangiano@dcjs.ny.gov.

New Legislation

The NYS Driver’s License Suspension Reform Act, effective June 29, 2021, ends license suspension for unpaid traffic fines and fees, retroactively rescinds all failure to pay suspensions and mandates income-based payments plans for VTL fines, fees and mandatory surcharges. The Reform Act does *not* end suspensions due to driver responsibility assessments, child support, DWI, speeding in a work zone, vehicular homicide, failure to maintain auto insurance, failure to file an accident report and writing bad checks for ticket payments. The Reform Act also provides for a payment schedule with a minimum payment of \$25 a month or 2 percent of monthly income. More information about the law is available [here](http://www.dcjny.gov).

On May 4, Governor Cuomo signed legislation to restore voting rights for individuals incarcerated in state prison facilities, upon release. Introduced by Sen. Leroy Comrie and Assemblyman Daniel O’Donnell, the law expands upon an executive order, signed by Governor Cuomo in 2018, which restored voting rights for formerly-incarcerated New Yorkers — but not automatically upon leaving incarceration.

Trainings and Webinars

The Foundation and Practical Application of Risk, Need, and Responsivity in the Age of COVID-19 and Justice Reform

On July 21 the National Institute of Corrections hosted a 90-minute interactive webinar for community corrections and criminal justice professionals. The webinar covered the “Risk, Need, and Responsivity Model in the Age of COVID-19.” The webinar once available can be found [here](http://www.dcjny.gov).