1. Build on What Reentry Service Providers are Doing and Doing Well - Providing Integrated Wraparound Services as the Foundation for Success

Organizations like NJRC empower court-involved individuals to achieve healthy self-sufficiency by providing employment training and helping secure job opportunities, helping individuals obtain medical, mental and behavioral health services (including addiction treatment), providing legal services (e.g., expungement, license restoration), and connecting individuals to housing. Addressing the needs of the whole person and providing ongoing case management and services ensures success and continued stability. These services work to provide the backbone of healthy and lasting reentry.

There are several additional areas where service providers can fashion their services in a way that advances the goals of employment:

- Addiction Treatment & Mental Health. Industry leaders have identified SUD and mental health treatment as perhaps the most critical among these services; through a trauma-informed and therapeutic approach, reentry service providers can link their clients to medical, mental and behavioral healthcare services that for many are a precondition to successful reentry and future employment. Evidence that such treatment is in place can be determinative for a tentative employer.

- Soft Skills. Organizations can also fold the development of soft skills into their services to best position clients—this includes both life skills work (conflict resolution, stress management, and time management) but also lessons from experienced human resources experts on interviewing skills and how to market yourself.

- Mentorship – “Adopt a Returning Citizen.” Additionally, through a new initiative, Adopt a Returning Citizen, NJRC is working with employers and industry leaders across the state to link clients to employment-focused mentors. These mentors are there as a resource for clients as they launch (and re-launch) their careers, providing mental and emotional support, career advice, and, above all, to be there as a positive source of fellowship.
TOP-LINE OVERVIEW

April, Second Chances Month, presents an opportunity to promote smart investment in reentry at a critical moment for the court-involved population and the country. Release without opportunity is not sufficient; we need to align our systems and strategies and create opportunities to ensure that these individuals thrive. Focusing Second Chances month efforts on employment is a way of acknowledging the dire state of the economy and employment for the reentry population while drawing attention to how upcoming federal initiatives and spending can be targeted towards solutions.

- **Critical Juncture.** Discussion of what makes this moment so critical – unemployment combined with accelerated release of vulnerable individuals at risk of overdose.

- **Smart Investment in a Model of Service.** Smart policy and programming for reentry requires investment in three elements: (a) address critical need through reentry-focused support services and case management; (b) reduce the prejudice against hiring reentry by establishing partnerships with industry-leaders and employers to who commit to hire reentry, and encouraging culture and policy change so companies become more reentry-friendly; and (c) targeted job training and workforce development for in-demand jobs and industries to fill skill gaps.

- **Federal and/or State Role.** Overview of what government can do – invest in reentry service providers; incentivize reentry hiring; and better prepare inmates prior to release.

This initiative highlights (1) the challenges and opportunities of reentry services, (2) a model that supports targeted employment and skill development for the employment pipeline, as well as (3) quality job placement with proven partners.
Second Generation Reentry employs the critical necessity of industry recognized skill-based certification as the foundational training for long term successful employment. The New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC) is committed to providing our participants with our traditional wraparound services, including state and federal benefits, healthcare, legal services, housing referrals, and employment. Yet, employment now requires that NJRC tests, determine appropriate career tracks, and provide the necessary skill training and apprenticeship to establish a career.

The 29,000 square foot Governor’s Reentry Training & Employment Center in Kearny, NJ, is a generous offering of Wendy Neu of the Hugo Neu Corporation. The facility houses 9 classrooms and conference spaces where NJRC participants will receive training in six (6) major certification skill sets: 1) Solar Technology, 2) Construction Industry, 3) CISCO Certification Networking Technician Certification, 4) Automobile Mechanics Training, 5) SEIU/Healthcare Maintenance, 6) GED/high school diploma, as well as, providing private access to Telemedicine and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).

Private business partners will work in partnership with NJDOL accredited training vendors to provide a substantive apprenticeship training. NJRC is currently recruiting program participants for the commencement of training classes, which will begin on Monday, April 26th.

The Governor’s Reentry Training & Employment Center and the NJRC “employer network” will mentor NJRC program participants who have enrolled in the center with an employer onboarding process for those who have been deemed “work ready,” obtained certification, and have been federally bonded for employment.
Apply Today

We have a large range of classes and services for court-involved citizens. We offer development for Plumbing Assistant & Building Maintenance, Electrical Assistant & HVAC, General Education Development (GED), General Construction, Cisco Certification, Mechanics, Veterans Services, Solar Panel Installation, Certified Phlebotomy Technician, and Telemedicine & Addiction Treatment.
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2. Targeting Industries and Appropriate Trainings and Conducting Trainings Directly

The host of challenges facing the reentry population requires a tailored approach that is smart about directing clients to career opportunities with ladders for growth and in industries with staying power.

- **Three Key Criteria: In-Demand Jobs, Growth Industries, Achievable Skill-Gap.** The key first step is to identify industries that meet three criteria:

  1. they have in-demand jobs
  2. there is an easily closeable skill gap for entry-level jobs
  3. the industries are both well-positioned to thrive in our economy and present ladders for growth that are achievable for the formerly incarcerated.

These industries include construction, green jobs and smart buildings (e.g., electrical, carpentry), food services, healthcare and IT training. It is incumbent on us to take an expansive view of the Biden Administration’s plans to invest in green jobs and infrastructure; these investments extend beyond just construction jobs, but also draw on skilled labor needed in the knowledge economy. For example, green jobs increasingly include investments in revolutionizing our grid which will draw on IT training and a labor force skilled in computer systems and the Internet of Things.

- **Customized Trainings – Industry Designed, Hiring Commitments, and Complementary Work.** Training for the reentry population must be customized. Linking training to supportive services is essential. As are other elements: formerly incarcerated individuals face financial and housing challenges that intensify the need to find job placement as quickly as possible following release.

NJRC provides skilled based training with "industry recognized credentials" to ensure that NJRC participants have the capacity, knowledge, and skills to be well positioned for employments and to be productive employees. NJRC will design pre-apprenticeships and training curriculum responsive to employer requirements.
3. Quality Placement and Partnership Approach

Securing hiring commitments from employers to hire graduates of training programs is perhaps more important than the training itself. For some employers, this may mean expanding their existing commitment to the reentry population by helping to place them in new job categories; for others, it means bringing them into the fold, pre-apprenticeship training, and apprenticeship training in private, public, and union employment.

For both, a variety of strategies are needed:

• **Build the Case for Success Through Partnerships and Promoting Reentry via Established Industry Networks.** When reentry service providers and criminal justice advocates partner with leading business associations, they can use these relationships as a platform to elevate successes and enlist the involvement of other industry leaders. NJRC has partnered with the New Jersey Business Industry Association (NJBIA) on a workgroup that enlists industry leaders to commit to hiring court-involved individuals.

• Some strategies include “Hire One,” where employers can get involved by committing to hiring one formerly incarcerated person. The idea is that a successful experience will lead to more hires. Workgroups like these create platforms for marketing the advantages of hiring reentry (see below).

• **Marketing the Advantages of Hiring Reentry – Retention, Hard Work and Savings.** Employers who have a history of reentry-friendly hiring practices have one thing in common: experience employing formerly incarcerated individuals demonstrates that they are worth the investment. NJRC is working with new partners including private, public, and union employment across industries—construction, the energy sector, and tech companies—to market the advantages of hiring reentry. These advantages include retention/decrease in turnover, the value of the worker, and savings: Higher Retention: Studies indicate that employers who hire individuals with criminal records have higher
retention rates:

1. **Higher retention rates** translates to savings to companies: according to the Center for American Progress, the cost of employer turnover is between 16% and 20% of the employee’s salary.

2. **Hard Work:** Individuals with criminal backgrounds tend to work harder: a USA Army study demonstrates that individuals with criminal histories were 33% more likely to be promoted, attributed to work ethic.

3. **Savings via Formal Partnership:** By creating a pipeline between training, pre-apprenticeship and employment opportunities, NJRC will help reduce employers’ costs by, effectively, acting as a recruiter for employers. Savings to companies will accrue through reduced aggregated cost factor, including through human resources and training costs.

4. **Benefits:** Employers hiring the formerly incarcerated can take advantage of federal Work Opportunity Tax Credits and federal bonding program.

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International Union of Operating Engineers represents a “best practice” of excellence in employment training.
New Jersey Reentry Corporation (NJRC) Program Data

NJRC is committed to providing critically needed services to court-involved individuals. Case management and legal services link clients to addiction treatment, structured sober housing, job training and employment, mental health and medical care; thereby, assisting clients to achieve healthy self-sufficiency, reducing recidivism, and fostering safer communities.

10 Locations
• Bergen County • Essex County
• Hudson County • Middlesex County
• Monmouth County • Ocean County
• Passaic County • Union County

13,613 NJRC Program Participants
50,062 Persons Released in NJ 2021
3,220 NJ Overdose Deaths 2021

Sources: NJDOC/CJR Report; CDC; NJCares (adjusted)

NJRC Stats at a Glance

19.7% Rearrest
10% Reincarceration
1,527 Apprenticeship Training
49.7% Employment (adjusted seasonally)
9,824 Medicaid
7,860 Intensive Outpatient Program/Medication Assisted Treatment
4,847 Medical Treatment
1,894 Psychiatric Treatment Facilities Behavioral/Mental Health
2,134 MVC Identification Restored/Acquired
2,088 Birth Certificates Obtained
17 Latin American Nations Documents
2,192 Persons referred through NJDOC MOU for Public Health Emergency
2,744 Participants (not PHE releasees) Enrolled in Fiscal Year 2020
73 Pro Bono Attorneys

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- Revolution Foods
- Robert Half Staffing
- Seton Hall University
- Staffing Alternatives
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