

## STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, POTSDAM

# Advancing Opportunites: Career Supports for Returning Citizens

## INTRODUCTION

Individuals reintegrating into society after incarceration often face significant challenges in securing stable employment and rebuilding their lives. The lack of career support and opportunities for returning citizens contributes to heightened rates of recidivism and impedes successful reentry into their communities.

## INTERNSHIP DESCRIPTION

This internship allowed me to bring a unique perspective rooted in lived experience, combine it with my studies of human services, and ground it in systematic research, to contribute insights and solutions to enhance career supports for returning citizens.

One of my key responsibilities involved actively connecting individuals with relevant people and organizations to facilitate their reentry journey. This hands-on approach included working intensively with one individual to help secure meaningful employment post-incarceration, highlighting the practical application of our collaborative efforts.

Additionally, I played a crucial role in synthesizing meeting discussions and research findings, distilling key insights to inform program enhancements and strategies for supporting successful reintegration.

This immersive experience allowed me to contribute directly to improving outcomes for returning citizens and gain invaluable real-world skills in navigating the complexities of reentry support programs.

## COLLABORATIVE INSIGHTS

### Ithaka S+R Reentry Board Meeting

- 1 Clear service definitions for successful initiatives
- 2 Critical First 90-Day Period of Reentry
- 3 Emerging role of Navigators in reentry support
- 4 Timelines for service delivery and placement
- 5 Directly impacted individuals in organizational roles

### Meeting with St. Lawrence Health

- 1 Services for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and job opportunities
- 2 OASAS Certifications, Peer Advocacy, and Counselor Roles
- 3 Importance of credible messengers in SUD treatment

### Meeting with Defy Ventures

- 1 Defy Ventures' professional development and entrepreneurship workshops
- 2 Connection opportunities with former students
- 3 The Role Initiative and Work Opportunities

## FINDINGS

- The internship underscored the critical need for individualized case management and navigation in supporting returning citizens post-incarceration.
- Thorough assessments tailored to each individual's needs, challenges, and strengths optimize the effectiveness of support services.
- Consistent and continued follow-ups play a pivotal role in maintaining progress and addressing evolving needs over time.
- Building strong relationships and networks is crucial, highlighting the importance of connections with supportive individuals, community organizations, and employers to enhance opportunities for successful reentry.
- Educating employers further on fair chance hiring practices is necessary to promote inclusive workplaces and equal employment opportunities for returning citizens.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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