



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

**Welcome New Coordinators**

OPCA would like to welcome four professionals to their new roles as CRTF Coordinators in Broome, Rensselaer, Queens and New York counties. Congratulations! We look forward to working with you!

- Alison McQuade, Southern Tier Aids Program – Broome
- Heidi Renaud, Rensselaer County District Attorney’s Office – Rensselaer
- Harmony McDonough, Fortune Society – Queens
- Lymus Rivera, Fortune Society – New York

**OPCA Hosting CRTF Coordinators Training - Stay Tuned!**

In October of 2023, OPCA will invite all CRTF Coordinators and select program staff to attend a training in Albany on the essentials of the role of CRTF Coordinator. The training will be in-person, interactive, include guest speakers, and provide both new and seasoned CRTF Coordinators with additional skills, resources and information to execute the functions of a CRTF Coordinator. We look forward to this opportunity to meet and greet and share information from across New York State. More information will be shared soon!

**Twenty Professionals Trained as Workforce Development Specialists**

Twenty probation officers, parole officers, community corrections practitioners and re-entry managers graduated from the most recent Workforce Development Specialist (WDS) class and received their certification in the 180-hour challenging training program. This skill-based training constitutes OPCA’s WDS training; graduates will join more than 400 certified specialists who are authorized to lead individuals in groups through the 20-hour **Ready, Set, Work!** Program. Specialists are certified to utilize evidenced-based competencies and related skills to assist individuals with legal histories make informed decisions about jobs and career paths based on knowledge of their interests, skills/abilities, and values; educational and occupational opportunities; and the realities of the work world. The graduates are employed in a broad spectrum of agencies including Niagara County Probation, Oswego County Probation, Schenectady County Probation, County Re-entry Task Forces (Niagara and Onondaga), Oneida Workforce Development Board, SchenectadyConnects, as well as NYS DOCCS and the NYS Department of Labor. Julianna Reilly, Probation Officer from the Schenectady County Probation Department, was the Valedictorian and Stacey Lighthall, Senior Probation Officer from the Oswego County Probation Department, was the Salutatorian. Congratulations to all the graduates! A big thank you to Frank Cangiano, for his continued and inspiring leadership! We would like to also congratulate Frank on his recent promotion to Manager of the Adult Probation Operations Unit at OPCA. Congratulations Frank!

**Program Spotlight – Albany CRTF**

On June 13, Erica Anderson, Albany CRTF Coordinator, was a panelist on a webinar hosted by the NYS Department of Labor titled, “Breaking Barriers for Returning Citizens.” More than 2,500 individuals participated in the hour-long webinar where innovative strategies on ways to engage and support returning citizens getting back to the workplace were discussed. Presenters were from all parts of the country and spoke of re-entry on a national basis, as well as provided an overview of local programs that help prepare justice involved individuals to obtain quality jobs. It was a great opportunity to highlight the CRTF on a national platform. The webinar recording can be found [here](#).

**Program Spotlight – Bronx CRTF**

The Bronx CRTF has participated in exciting community events in recent months. The CRTF participated in both the Bronx District Attorney’s Resource Fair and the DOCCS Friends/Family Event. Felix Gonzalez, Bronx CRTF Coordinator, was the guest speaker at the DOCCS Friends/Family Event which was a huge success. The CRTF is also going to be participating in a new initiative spearheaded by the Bronx District Attorney’s Office called the Bronx Re-Entry Collaborative. More information will be shared on this initiative soon.

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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](#).

Past issues of *New York Re-Entry Today* are available on the [DCJS website](#). Bookmark the link!

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### **Best Practice**

The CRTF model is comprised of seven work plan objectives, including a requirement that new and existing staff complete the Distance Learning Modules located on the Integrated Justice Portal. These modules highlight evidence-based practices and effective interventions to use when working with justice involved individuals. Each CRTF Coordinator and staff are expected to complete the DCJS Distance Learning Modules within 6 months of contract execution or within 6 months of staff hiring date. In addition to the Distance Learning Modules, CRTF staff can access a variety of recorded training webinars either on the DCJS website or the Integrated Justice Portal.

### **OPCA Delivers Final Two Lunch and Learn Webinars of 2023**

On May 24, more than 100 criminal justice professionals participated in the OPCA Lunch and Learn webinar titled, "Impact of Trauma on Justice Involved Individuals." One of the most important lessons learned – from studies of trauma and its impacts – is that people are resilient. People do survive, and often thrive, despite the most challenging life conditions. Professionals can help build resiliency in their clients by encouraging the individual get connected, learn coping skills, remain hopeful, be proactive, and find activities that promote selfcare, stress management and relaxation. The webinar recording is available [here](#).

On June 21, more than 60 individuals participated in a Lunch and Learn webinar titled, "Education/Vocational Resources for Justice Involved Youth (14 & up)." Participants were provided a wealth of information from guest speakers and OPCA presenters on the various education and vocational resources available to the youth population in New York State. The webinar recording is available [here](#).

### **DCJS 15-City Tour Update**

DCJS Commissioner Rossana Rosado and DCJS Executives have embarked on a 15-city tour to meet with local law enforcement agencies, including probation, various community corrections, re-entry, and other community partners to listen and discuss the state's latest public safety and criminal justice initiatives designed to reduce violent crime and make our communities whole. Commissioner Rosado, along with members of her executive team, have been able to listen to success stories, hear about current priorities and learn about opportunities for meeting unaddressed needs. To date, the team has traveled to Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Yonkers, Suffolk, Nassau, Buffalo, Niagara, and Mt. Vernon. The tour will continue through the summer until the middle of September, with stops in Schenectady, Troy, Poughkeepsie, Newburgh, Binghamton and Utica. Each CRTF will be invited to their respective city's meeting closer to the event dates.

### **Two OPCA Staff Graduate from SAMHSA's GAINS Trauma-Informed Training**

In the spring of 2023, OPCA professionals Melinda Vick and Danielle Brendese attended a highly valued training and now join approximately 2,400 fellow trainers throughout the United States. Policy Research Associates, Inc., which operates SAMHSA's GAINS Center, developed a Train the Trainer (TTT) – "How Being Trauma-Informed Improves Criminal Justice Responses." This training provided information on how best to increase knowledge of what trauma is and builds a skillset for trauma-informed responses among criminal justice and behavioral health providers who serve justice involved individuals. Community corrections agencies that utilize trauma informed responses can help professionals avoid re-traumatizing individuals; increase public safety; decrease recidivism; promote and support recovery; and link individuals to trauma-informed services and treatment. Melinda and Danielle will be delivering their first training to CRTFs on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Congratulations Melinda and Danielle on this important achievement!

### **Listen to the Latest NCJA Podcast: An Overview of Restorative Justice Principles**

This episode of the NCJA Podcast examines the ways in which restorative justice practices and models represent a paradigm shift in justice-making. Dr. Lindsey Pointer, an assistant professor at the Vermont Law and Graduate School and the principal investigator of the National Center on Restorative Justice, is the guest speaker. She discusses the benefits and importance of restorative justice practices, the key pillars and principles and how restorative justice models and practices fit into a larger discussion of equity within the criminal justice system. Listen [here](#).

### **Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision Week**

Governor Kathy Hochul recognized the critical work carried out by probation, parole and community supervision officials by declaring July 17 to July 23 Pre-Trial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week. DCJS proudly supports the work of these dedicated public servants who help make our communities safer. DOCCS plays an integral role in the utilization of CRTF services. The orientation video, "[Resources for your Return Home.](#)" was developed to show how helpful the CRTF services can be in a variety of different ways. The proclamation can be read [here](#).