



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

WHITTLESEY ROAD

PO Box 863

TRENTON NJ 08625-0863

PHILIP D. MURPHY

Governor

SHEILA Y. OLIVER

Lt. Governor

VICTORIA L. KUHN, ESQ.

Commissioner

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Contact:

Amy Z. Quinn

Amy.Z.Quinn@doc.nj.gov

NJDOC ANNOUNCES AWARDEES OF 2nd ROUND OF NJLEAD REINTEGRATION GRANTS

TRENTON, N.J. – The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) has announced the 28 awardees of the second year of its innovative New Jersey Locally Empowered, Accountable, and Determined (NJLEAD) grants. This year, the groundbreaking program will provide \$6 million in grants to continue supporting the growth of reentry programs across the state.

“Reentry programs are an essential tool in our efforts to reduce recidivism rates in our state and increase public safety,” said Governor Murphy. “The funding going towards these reentry programs from the NJLEAD initiative will give incarcerated persons the skills and support they need to successfully reintegrate into society.”

In its first year, the NJLEAD grants supported 17 community reentry organizations statewide to develop and enhance critical wraparound services for individuals exiting state custody, in the communities to which they will return.

“The NJLEAD initiative is a cooperative program between the New Jersey Department of Corrections, local municipalities, and non-profit community-based corporations from across the state and in urban communities, aimed at reducing recidivism and facilitating

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the successful return of individuals into the community,” Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn said. “We are encouraged seeing this transformational effort continue and expand. Our community partners are the vital threads that help people returning from incarceration weave the fabric of their new lives.”

“The success we achieved during our pilot year is shared with our 17 first-year community partners,” said Dr. Darcella Sessomes, Chief of Programs and Reintegration Services. “It began by rebuilding trust with the community and both sides being open to coming together in a meaningful way to set the national standard for how corrections and the community can work together.”

Funding categories and award winners include:

Reintegration Service Coordination in Urban Communities

This category supports a Municipal Reintegration Service Coordinator who will serve as the lead convener of interagency interdisciplinary service coordination for the Mayor’s Office and the Chief liaison to the New Jersey Department of Corrections, Office of Community Engagement and Reentry Initiatives.

1. City of Orange (COORA)	\$100,000
2. City of Newark (COEWR)	\$119,000

Reentry Supportive Services in New Jersey

This category supports nonprofit community-based corporations or associations by providing comprehensive post-release case management and wraparound supportive services for people returning home from incarceration.

3. Greater Bergen Community Action	\$350,000 target area: Bergen and Passaic counties
4. Habakkuk Vision Charitable Ministries	\$150,000 target area: Union and Essex counties
5. Isaiah House	\$350,000 target area: East Orange and Greater Newark
6. Mid-Atlantic States Career and Education Center	\$200,000 target area: Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem counties
7. Most Excellent Way Life Center	\$150,000 target area: Hudson County area

8. New Beginnings Behavioral Health	\$350,000 target area: Camden County
9. NJ Association on Correction – Pathways	\$300,000 target area: Middlesex and Somerset counties
10. NJ Reentry Corporation	\$269,000 target area: State of New Jersey
11. Reformed Church of Highland Park – Affordable Housing Corporation	\$655,000
12. Salvation and Social Justice	\$300,000 target area: Greater Trenton
13. SCORES Reentry	\$200,000 target area: State of New Jersey
14. Transition Professionals	\$126,757 target area: Bergen County and Northern New Jersey
15. YWCA of Northern New Jersey	\$200,000 target area: Bergen Essex, Morris, Hudson and Passaic counties
16. Kommunity Kares	\$200,000 target area: Camden County

Innovative Reentry Career and Entrepreneurial Initiatives

This category will support nonprofit community-based corporations or associations by providing Innovative Reentry Initiatives that will increase and improve the ability of formerly incarcerated persons to achieve economic stability.

17. NJ Small Business Development Center at Rutgers	\$100,000 target area: State of New Jersey
18. African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey	\$200,000 target area: State of New Jersey
19. City of Trenton	\$100,000 target area: Trenton
20. EM-POWER ME of Monmouth County	\$55,874 target area: Monmouth County

21. Ideal Institute of Technology	\$200,000 target area: Southern New Jersey
22. Mid-Atlantic States Career and Education Center	\$100,000 target area: Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem counties
23. New Beginnings Behavioral Health	\$100,000 target area: Camden County
24. Urban League of Essex County	\$199,980 target area: City of Orange, Essex County
25. Women's Center for Entrepreneurship	\$100,000 target area: State of New Jersey
26. The Work Well Partnership	\$150,000 target area: Trenton/Mercer County
27. 11. The WOW Center	\$175,000 target area: Camden County and southern New Jersey
28. 12. NJ Reentry Corporation	\$199,540 Paterson

“I am grateful and encouraged by the Department of Corrections taking the necessary step to fund community-led reentry models for all of our people returning home,” said Dr. Charles F. Boyer of Salvation and Social Justice, Trenton. “The pandemic releases created an unprecedented demand for services that only those with strong community ties could provide. Salvation and Social Justice is honored to be a part of this work and look forward to using a restorative framework to help people coming back to Trenton access housing, food security, and employment.”

"Re-entering citizens face the tremendous challenges of qualifying for housing in a competitive and expensive market like all other New Jerseyans do. Having no pay stubs, no credit history and facing the rejection of landlords who, even with the prohibitions on criminal-record discrimination under the Fair Chance in Housing Act, have their concerns about how someone 'looks on paper' can be a devastating form of rejection for those trying to start over, post release,” said Seth Capler-Dale, CEO, Reformed Church of Highland Park, a new grant awardee this year.

The group plans to use its \$650,000 grant to expand a lease/sublease program used to help people leaving incarceration find places to live. “Thank you, NJLEAD, for believing in our model,” Capler-Dale said.

Helen Archontou, CEO of the YWCA of Northern New Jersey, expressed gratitude for what she called transformational funding. The group will receive a \$200,000 grant to serve those in several North Jersey counties.

“We are grateful to be welcomed into the innovative network of support created by the NJDOC's NJLEAD Program,” Archontou said. “The transformational funding provided to YWCA Northern New Jersey's Circle of Care program will allow for significant expansion of our trauma informed clinical care -- now to be delivered pre and post release with critical wrap-around services.”

The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) mission is advancing public safety and promoting successful reintegration in a dignified, safe, secure, rehabilitative, and gender-informed environment, supported by a professional, trained, and diverse workforce, enhanced by community engagement.