

Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee (CJPS)
Orientation February 1, 2021

Maine Prisoner Re-Entry Network (MPRN)

Overview

- **MPRN- The Network:** MPRN's network is 100's of individuals and organizations, statewide, who are ready to support folks re-entering our communities from prison, jail, rehab, psychiatric centers, and/or recovery. The network is made up of disparate individuals & organizations; (MDOC, mental health & substance use professionals, workforce specialists, recovery residences, recovery advocates, faith based, financial coaches, County Jails, harm reduction, family, formerly & currently incarcerated peers with lived experience, and more) offering a wide variety of essential re-entry resources. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, MPRN hosted dozens of monthly community meetings across the state; Lewiston-Auburn, Augusta, Bangor, Rockland, Maine State Prison, So. Portland, Westbrook, Somerset County Jail, Kennebec Sheriff's Office, and Aroostook County. In May 2020, over 100 individuals and organizations joined MPRN's statewide convening. Currently MPRN holds 90-minute weekly, virtual, statewide check-in meetings. These meetings serve as a connector within and across communities, creating a community team approach to re-entry.
- **MPRN- Peer Support:** Thanks to a strong relationship with MDOC, MPRN Peer Supports meet with residents living in all MDOC facilities, prior to release. Trusted relationships are formed many months or even years before individuals re-enter the community. MPRN Peers coordinate with facility Caseworkers, scheduling introductions to community supports & resources, ahead of release. Together, the caseworker, individual, MPRN and the community prepare for re-entry with MPRN acting as the community team and peer support coordinator. Ultimately though, the individual is the manager of the team, and they choose the resources that best suit their needs and preferences. MPRN also relies upon peers who are currently incarcerated to start the re-entry intake process. Currently, Maine State Prison employs an MPRN liaison who develops trusted relationships prior to connecting individuals with the outside Team.
COVID-19 has made it possible to meet with many more individuals via zoom and the ability to introduce community resources has been immeasurably increased.
- **MPRN- Peer Support Numbers:**
 1. **(January 2019-February 2020)** MPRN met with over 130 incarcerated individuals inside Maine's prisons. Average of 1-2 meetings per person prior to release.
 2. **(April 2020-January 2021: COVID-19)** MPRN met with 118 individuals(virtually) in over 300 zoom meetings. Most individuals meet with MPRN and community resource reps between 3 and 6 times, prior to release.
 - a. **3 dozen Smart phones** and monthly data were provided to re-entrants who could not afford a phone. Critical to connection during the pandemic. Additionally, 6 laptops were provided to individuals who released and were enrolled in college or vocational school.
 - b. **14 Rides** were provided to individuals with transportation challenges in getting to their chosen destination right after being released. 2 gentlemen received a ride to Boston. We offered this as a service to MDOC considering the challenges presented by COVID-19.
- **MPRN- Other Highlights**
 1. **Kennebec County Peer Support Pilot-** Funded by Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) MPRN offers Peer support, recovery coaches, and community connection to individuals entering Kennebec County Jail and in pre-trial courts. Partners; Maine Pretrial Services, Kennebec County Sheriff, District Attorney, Maine General, The LINC Center, Good Grid, Americorp. Goal; to prove peer support and resource connection in jail settings promotes harm reduction, recovery, reduced jail populations, and ultimately contributing citizens.
 2. **Peer Re-Entry Support Training-** Since 2019 MPRN has trained 160 individuals incorporating a unique mix of prison & jail staff, mental health & substance use pros, restorative justice, housing & employment experts, and peers with lived experience of substance use and incarceration.
 3. **Rose's Room:** Rose's Room is a support group for family and loved ones of those who are or have been incarcerated. 12 Chapters statewide prior to COVID-19 and currently a monthly virtual meeting.