

# Developing an Effective and Comprehensive Job- Training Model

Community Foundation

Collective Impact Fall 2015 Grant Cycle



# Common Agenda

## ► Issue:

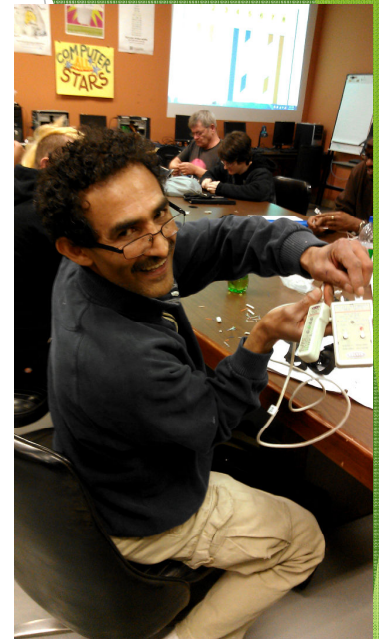
- Too many people in our communities are unemployed and underemployed because of a variety of barriers (incarceration, substance abuse, and structural poverty issues). ReUse has critically examined our ReSET (ReUse Skills and Employment Training) job-training program to adapt it to become a job skills training opportunity for returning citizens.

## ► Solution:

- Local organizations and individuals providing job skills training opportunities need a **comprehensive** set of healthy workplace policies and network of integrated support services to effectively reduce these barriers to employment.

## ► Action:

- Finger Lakes ReUse seeks to more intensively partner with human service agencies, employers, and community members, to develop and pilot an integrated support structure and practices that to make ReSET serve as a reentry placement program and in the long term will be replicable and freely adoptable for other organizations and employers offering job training.



# Collaborators

- ▶ Ultimate Reentry Opportunity at Multicultural Resource Center: an informational resource because of their intensive work in context expert focus groups; network hub for reentry initiative partners; potential referral source and service provider for future trainees via their mentorship program
- ▶ Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources: informational resource as a long-standing service provider in the community; potential referral source and service provider for future trainees
- ▶ Cooperative Extension Prison Reentry Education Program: referral agency and potential service provider for future trainees
- ▶ Tompkins County Department of Probation and Community Justice: referral agency and service provider for current and future trainees
- ▶ Tompkins County Mental Health Department: service provider for current and future trainees
- ▶ Challenge Workforce Solutions: referral agency and service provider for current and future trainees



# Methods of Communication

- ▶ Primary communication with collaborators is through meetings, email, phone calls, and attending collaborator's events.
- ▶ Reading material written by collaborators or notes from their meetings have been very helpful.
  - ▶ Notes from URO focus groups (groups included formerly incarcerated women and family members, formerly incarcerated men, and advocates) conducted over the course of 2014 and 2015.
  - ▶ URO presentations and summaries of data gathering.
  - ▶ The Report of the Jail Alternatives Task Force - July 2014 (As accepted by the Tompkins County Criminal Justice /Alternatives to Incarceration (CJATI) Board).





## Quick Wins

- ▶ Able to participate in a local movement with already established momentum, networks, and meeting structures.
- ▶ Established adaptable job training program.
  - ▶ Reexamined the ReSET structure and determined how it must be changed to suit the needs of returning citizens.
- ▶ Produced draft paper of recommendations from research into best practices of re-entry job training, a shareable document to begin next level of discussion with fellow agencies.
- ▶ Created a plan for reallocating funds in the coming year, adjusted timeline for grant period to create a successful program by the end of 2017.



## Lessons Thus Far

- ▶ Citizens returning from prison require income immediately, as it reduces recidivism and increases long term job retention.

**“Paid training can make all the difference for our clients.”**

~ Kathy Lind, Tompkins County Department of Probation and Community Justice

- ▶ Referring individuals to training programs that are not well matched with their needs and interests have been shown to be a setback for their re-entry and can increase recidivism, as well as take away resources from those who would have been better matched.
  - ▶ Initially, positions that have limited public interactions are often better suited for returning citizens.



## Lessons Thus Far

- ▶ 1 year is recommended length of time for training program.
- ▶ Milestone rewards encourage continued participation in services and job training programs.
- ▶ Returning citizens require extensive community supports and mentorship.
- ▶ ReUse staff would benefit from leadership training to increase their sensitivity and mentorship capabilities with returning citizens.





# Training Resources

- ▶ Multicultural Resource Center: Cultural Competency
- ▶ Gwen, Inc.: Entrepreneurship, Customer Service, Leadership
- ▶ Alcohol and Drug Council: Understanding and Supporting Individuals Suffering from Substance Abuse
- ▶ Planned Parenthood of Ithaca: Gender Privilege
- ▶ Tompkins County Mental Health: Misconceptions on Mental Illness, Motivational Interviewing
- ▶ Southern Tier AIDS Program: LGBTQ Sensitivity and Identity
- ▶ Human Services Coalition: Health and Nutrition, Middle Management Training
- ▶ Finger Lakes Independence Center: Disability Diversity And Sensitivity
- ▶ Nancy Koschmann: Mindfulness at Work





# Shared Measurements

- ▶ Initial and follow-up job readiness assessment.
- ▶ URO working groups are developing shared measurements that we will incorporate.
- ▶ Current practices:
  - ▶ Follow-ups
  - ▶ Data tracking



# Mutually Reinforcing Activities

- ▶ Active attendance in URO working groups to stay in touch with the evolving Common Agenda.
- ▶ Proposed activities:
  - ▶ Supportive Skill Development - ReUse and partners need to develop complementary soft and hard skills training.
  - ▶ Clarify expectations and communication methods between program partners.
  - ▶ Identify and engage support network for trainees (URO mentorship program, Mental Health Services etc.), potentially with office hours at Ithaca ReUse Center.





# Lived Experience Voices

- ▶ Relied heavily on the views and concerns expressed in the URO focus groups by those with lived experience in incarceration.
- ▶ ReUse has observed the challenges and barriers experienced by returning citizens who were previous trainees in the ReSET program.
- ▶ As the program develops will request feedback from URO's think tank of returning citizens, as well as ReUse workers experienced with incarceration.



## Short-term plans

- ▶ Implement a facilitated conversation with collaborating agencies to develop Memorandums of Understanding to provide program services, coordinate shared measurement tools (such as job readiness assessment) and mutually reinforcing activities.
- ▶ Develop paid training in pilot program from day one for returning citizens.
- ▶ Increase the length of training program for returning citizens.
- ▶ Define warehouse activity flow to offer assignments with limited public interaction.
- ▶ Add milestone rewards, such as gift cards to grocery stores, to job training program.
- ▶ Implement a ReUse staff training series to improve leadership skills and mentorship capabilities.





## Long-term plans

- ▶ Collaborative housing project, partnered with TCA and INHS, part of Ithaca ReUse expansion, in feasibility stage (2018).
- ▶ Create a replicable job-training model that can be shared with other communities.
- ▶ The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) frequently cited as a leader in re-entry employment training, provide technical support to communities that wish to develop more comprehensive reentry job training programs. ReUse could partner with other organizations to bring them here.

