

Facility Reentry Programming

Introduction to Reentry Services

The Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) offers a range of transitional programming to incarcerated people during confinement and after release. These resources and services are organized through the DOC Reentry Services Unit, in collaboration with facility services, field services, various state and county agencies, faith-based groups, community organizations and private citizens. The combined effort meets the complex needs of people as they transition from prison to community. Resources have been developed through identifying “best practice” models in preparing people to return to their communities.

Staffing

All correctional facilities have transitions coordinators responsible for the delivery of reentry programming and supervision of resource centers. To provide accurate and efficient child support information, the DOC has established a child support staff position. This staff’s primary focus is newly committed justice-involved people but is available to provide information and assistance to staff and incarcerated people at all DOC facilities and at all stages of confinement. This position is supported by the DOC Reentry Services Unit in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Resource Centers and Resource Fairs

Each DOC facility maintains a transition center that is host to many different resources. These include community resources, job search assistance, housing information, higher education searches, veterans’ resources, etc. Access to these centers is available to all incarcerated people. Transition resource fairs are held annually at most facilities. Community resource organizations and agencies from around the state are invited to participate as exhibitors. Exhibitors typically are government agencies, trade unions, faith-based groups, community nonprofits, and volunteer groups. They represent resources in a variety of offender need areas such as housing, employment, family support, personal finance, and mental health. Staff and incarcerated people are invited to attend and meet with exhibitors throughout the day.

Reentry Classes

DOC provides a person-centered approach to transition services by offering a wide array of transition topics designed to help people prepare for release and connect with services and supports. There are opportunities to explore housing for release, prepare for employment, acquire personal identification documents, and more. These opportunities range from self-help resources through targeted services for those with greatest need.

Families and Friends

To encourage active, positive support of incarcerated people by family and friends, the DOC created a “how to” book, *Staying Connected and Staying Strong*. This digital handbook is located on our website at: mn.gov/doc/family-visitor

Personal ID Documents

Possession of personal ID documents is critical to every newly-released person. Many justice-involved people do not have these documents when they are admitted to the DOC. It is a priority for the department to assure that every person is released with some form of identification. DOC staff work with offenders to apply for three critical ID documents, as needed – a birth certificate, duplicate social security card and Minnesota State Identification Card. Identification needs are assessed annually, as part of individual release planning and pre-release classes. The DOC and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) have partnered to provide photo ID equipment at most DOC facilities, allowing people to secure state photo ID cards or driver license renewals close to their release date. Staff from various local DPS driver services offices come to the facilities as needed and provide this service. All personal identification is mailed to the facility for retention in a secure file until the incarcerated person’s release.

Health Services Discharge Planning

The DOC, in addition to standard facility reentry programming, offers specialized release planning services for people with the following treatment needs: sexual offending, substance use disorders, medical, mental health, opioid use disorder, and/ or brain injury. Specialized release planners provide assistance related to the following community-based services and programs: applying for health insurance and Social Security disability benefits, housing, substance use recovery and support, arranging medical services, mental health services and dental care, employment, education, transportation, leisure activities, veterans’ services, and personal need resources, such as clothing and food.

The DOC provides services for juvenile males and females. State-committed juvenile females are housed at a contract facility and juvenile males are housed at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing. The DOC is vested in juvenile reentry to enhance positive and pro-social transition into adulthood. The Red Wing facility provides treatment, education, and transition services for serious and chronic male juvenile youth. Through early assessment, transition risks and needs are identified during the resident’s first 30 days. Reentry needs are then addressed with the advancement and progression of the resident’s individualized treatment plan. Residents are assessed through standardized tools such as the Youth Level of Service Inventory, and given various evaluations to measure their knowledge of independent life skills. Components of pre-release include support team staffing, furloughs, life skills, employment, and interventions designed to address substance use and mental health issues, including exposure to traumatic events. MCF-Red Wing provides residents experiencing mental health issues access to a release planner who specializes in accessing support in the community. Youth who have successfully completed programming will be supervised on a 90-day extended furlough. Juvenile Reentry Services staff utilize and establish collaborations with various agencies and community stakeholders to remove barriers to employment, education, health and mental health care.

Health Care Coverage

Many justice-involved people do not have health care coverage in the community for themselves or their families. Incarcerated people are highly encouraged to apply for health coverage prior to release. Staff assist them in completing the necessary forms and submitting them to the appropriate entities.