

Reentry Association of WNY, Inc. - Ann Graham

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Organization Profile

Organization Name	Mail Address
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Mission/Vision Our Mission

RAWNY is dedicated to serving our community by supporting the men and women who have experienced incarceration, and the agencies that serve them, to ensure anyone reentering has access to needed resources and support.

Our Vision

We envision a community that is willing and able to welcome back people who have experienced incarceration and are ready to make a change, by providing opportunities for work, training, health care, housing and support, creating a safer community for everyone and strengthening individuals and families who have gone through incarceration.

Receive County Funds? no

Div. of Corp. N/A? no

Proposal Information

Project Name Reentry One-Stop

Summary The Reentry Association of WNY, Inc. (RAWNY) is seeking funding for a program to create a single point of access system for anyone returning to Monroe County after incarceration, to reduce violence and recidivism and increase public safety, while providing the best possible opportunities for persons reentering to build a productive, law-abiding life in the community for themselves and their families. This project is grounded in collaboration between RAWNY member agencies and other community agencies working together to enact service standards, create a certified paid justice mentor program, create reentry housing and employment options, provide operational and technical assistance to smaller organizations providing reentry services, maintain an on-line resource guide, use funding to fill existing service gaps and provide direct assistance to clients, offer case management, complete a comprehensive report on reentry in partnership with Roberts Wesleyan College, and work with government and our delegation to create solutions to systemic problems. The Reentry One-Stop can transform the process of reintegrating into the community through a dramatic and thorough approach, with emphasis on a collaborative vision that will influence, encourage, and implement change.

RAWNY's One-Stop concept can revolutionize the reentry process from what it has been-- a fragmented and often inaccessible mix of uncoordinated programs--to a robust collaborative system of services and support, available to any person leaving incarceration and returning to our community.

Workforce/Economic?	Health/Safety?	Infrastructure/Sustainability?
no	yes	no

Description The single point of access Reentry One-Stop will advance the Bring Monroe Back goals by implementing a long-term project addressing public safety, community wellness, and mental health. The transformational scope and breadth of the project would not be possible without ARPA funding. The program proposed will provide a designated phone number, physical location, and website that will be well publicized, increasing accessibility and eliminating barriers.

Annually, 2000 people are released from county, state, and federal incarceration to Monroe County with access to limited resources. Although there are a number of programs providing reentry services in Monroe County, the services are fragmented and inaccessible to the majority, and there are significant gaps in service. There are no agreed-upon standards regarding the type and quality of services provided. Furthermore, outcomes are not shared across programs and metrics vary depending on definitions established by individual programs, and their funding sources. Systemic issues that have been repeatedly identified have been slow to resolve, and most importantly, there is no clear path for any person leaving incarceration to access services.

Reduced recidivism and increased public safety are RAWNY's overarching goals, yet these can be difficult to measure accurately. We know that living wage employment, stable housing, family reunification, engagement in the community, mentoring, ability to meet child support, obtaining personal documents (ID, birth certificate, etc.), engaging in school or vocational training, and engaging in behavioral health treatment, if needed, are the characteristics of successful reintegration that we will measure. RAWNY has partnered with Roberts Wesleyan College to create a comprehensive report on the existing state of reentry services in Monroe County. This will provide a complete picture of existing programs, creating a map of where resources are and where there is an unmet need.

The COVID pandemic exacerbated an already fractured system and shined light on the disconnect between systems. De-incarceration was accelerated during the pandemic resulting in release without preparation or planning—community supervision agencies and inmates were often not informed until the day of release. Individuals were released with no access to services. The bulk of state and federal agencies were closed or had limited access resulting in significant delays in mental health and substance abuse services, medical care, social services, access to obtaining ID, housing and employment.

"J," a mentally ill federal probationer, was released with no ID, access to the Federal Building, internet, or telephone. It took the J weeks or months to access social services, mental health services, and obtain a phone, all causing stress and exacerbating his already unstable mental health.

Public safety is enhanced when people are able to meet basic needs without resorting to criminal activity. RAWNY will systematically address barriers to reentry by providing direct assistance and a platform for service providers to collaborate and connect men and women in reentry to needed services. Case management services will be available on site through RAWNY and through referrals to our collaborative partners. RAWNY's Coordinator will assess needs and with the participant, create a map of resources to meet those needs. Through direct assistance and collaboration with our partner agencies, RAWNY will use ARPA funds to meet the following client needs: temporary and permanent housing, case management, civil legal assistance, employment, training, financial supports, health care, and certified, paid justice peer mentors.

"Q", a joint client at Pathstone and the Landscape Technician Program, had a pending charge in Fishkill, NY, and had to appear in court. He had no money or transportation. RAWNY was contacted and provided \$325 to Pathstone, for a train ticket, a motel room, and incidentals. Q attended his court date as scheduled. Without the collaboration between these agencies and RAWNY, he likely would have missed his court date, resulting in a bench warrant and possibly incarceration.

Through the 360 Collaborative Network, and United Way's My Way Finder programs, we will have access to hundreds of programs utilizing a standardized platform. This system allows for real-time referral and case updates are automatically tracked. The shared technology eliminates duplicative intake questions between community partners and providers can confirm the referral reaches resolution.

RAWNY is committed to excellence in service delivery and to evidence-based practice, such as the National Institute of Corrections "Transition from Prison to Community" model. "Reentry," unlike substance abuse, mental health, or housing, is not overseen by any regulating agency, other than a particular funder, leading to uneven service delivery. RAWNY is drawing on the experience and skills of seasoned providers, formerly incarcerated citizens, and criminal justice partners to create an agreed-upon standard of reentry case management, grounded in evidence-based and promising practices, and including cultural competence and trauma-informed methods. This standard will help ensure reentry participants will consistently receive high-quality services from any member agency.

In addition to these direct services, RAWNY will work with legislators to address systemic problems that have been identified by program staff but remain unresolved. For example, men and women in reentry often stay longer in expensive emergency housing because of the difficulty finding affordable permanent housing and landlords that will accept Dept. of Human Services' landlord/tenant agreement in lieu of a cash security deposit.

To ensure that all our partner agencies can meet service standards, RAWNY will provide operational and technical assistance to smaller neighborhood and faith-based initiatives which all bring value and credibility. Many of these programs do not have the resources or staff to track participants and outcomes or provide training to staff. RAWNY will provide consultation and hands-on assistance to strengthen these programs. We will also maintain a continually updated reentry resource guide on our website, which may be printed.

We are confident that the results produced over four years will support obtaining additional funding to sustain the project. It is our hope that the project can become a permanent part of the criminal justice/human services continuum, similar to Pre-Trial Services, so that it may maintain a neutral position, rather than be subject to the conditions of individual grants that will require specific activities and prohibit others.

Company Strengths The Reentry Association of WNY, Inc. (RAWNY) is a 501c3 focused on reducing recidivism increasing public safety, and strengthening individuals, families, and communities affected by incarceration. RAWNY was started as SMART-Safer Monroe Area Reentry Team, a volunteer/member organization comprised of individuals and agencies who were concerned about the lack of services available to people leaving incarceration. SMART provided a reentry resource guide that was widely distributed. In late 2018, SMART's principal organizers moved on to other interests. At the end of 2020, Ann Graham was asked to rebuild the organization. As Executive Director, Ms. Graham and a new Board have rebuilt the organization with an emphasis on defined activities and collaboration to bring together and strengthen existing reentry programs and make services available to the currently underserved reentry population. RAWNY has a new website that will soon contain a continuously updated reentry resource guide. RAWNY's Board members (list included in proposal package) come from the criminal justice system, human services, and the formerly incarcerated. Together, they represent a broad network of resources to the reentry population. In September of 2021, RAWNY gathered reentry partners at a meeting where former DCJS Commissioner Denise O'Donnell spoke to the group in support of the Reentry One-Stop. As a component of RAWNY's research partnership with Roberts Wesleyan College, RAWNY and Roberts hosted a symposium attended by reentry stakeholders where Sheriff Todd Baxter was the keynote speaker. RAWNY's current members include the Judicial Process Commission, the Center for Community Alternatives, Legal Assistance of WNY, Spiritus Christi Prison Outreach, Monroe County Family Coalition, Huther Doyle, Delphi Rise, the Monroe County Reentry Task Force, Dr. Diane Morse, The Coffee Connection, Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry, Spectrum Health and Human Services, Ticket to Ride, the Urban League, Pathstone, Career Start, Opportunity ROCS, and several others.

Community Resources HOUSING. Elite Housing, owned by Lena Catalano (applying for MWBE) owns 180 units of SRO and studio apartments and recently formed at 501c3 to provide more assistance with basic needs of tenants. RAWNY will provide rent subsidies for up to four months, resulting in permanent housing and increased stability. RAWNY is also collaborating with House of Mercy and Grace House for temporary housing.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING. A 2011 study found that employment was the single most important factor in decreasing recidivism.

Imprintable Solutions, a certified MWBE, provides training in the printing industry and jobs at its shop, as well as childcare, three meals a day, and transportation, focused on at-risk youth with criminal histories and gang involvement.

HOPE Initiatives, a 501c3, provides workforce development including training, life skills, and job placement through Hope Woodworks, Hope Moving and Storage, and Hope Handyman Services.

Broccolo Tree and Lawn Care, a certified MWBE, provides a program combining training and entrepreneurship to prepare participants to work in the landscape industry or start their own landscaping businesses.

Opportunity ROCS works with clients with obstacles to competitive employment. Owned/operated by Shana Baker, (applying for MWBE certification) who has experience in mental health and employment services through Rochester Rehabilitation, NYS OMH, and ACCESS-VR.

Career Start, LLC. has successfully partnered with RAWNY's Executive Director for over ten years. Career Start has expanded to a multi-faceted organization that employs 4.5% of the City's workforce with full-time permanent jobs in healthcare, manufacturing, food service, environmental service, warehousing, and hospitality.

The Landscape Technicians Training serves adults who seek employment in the horticulture field, placing approximately 85% of its graduates in a job, many who have made this a career choice.

Local 150 Painters and Plasterer's Union will partner with RAWNY to place individuals in a paid apprenticeship program which will lead to permanent high paid union jobs.

MENTAL HEALTH

Spiritus Christi Mental Health Services will provide mental health counseling for clients without insurance.

CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES. Legal Assistance of WNY, Center for Community Alternatives, and the Judicial Process Commission provide representation in obtaining state licensure, Certificates of Relief, expungement, child support modifications, employment discrimination, and other civil legal issues confronting people in reentry.

CERTIFIED PAID JUSTICE PEER MENTORS. RAWNY will create a justice mentor program in collaboration with Exercise Express, Judicial Process Commission, Dr. Diane Morse, Center for Community Alternatives, and Compeer, all of whom have mentoring programs. These funds will allow us to train, certify, and employ four peer mentors who provide guidance and coping skills.

RAWNY is applying for funds from ESL, the City of Rochester, and the Episcopal Dioceses. RAWNY will work with the following that don't require funding : These programs will provide services to RAWNY clients free of charge: Local 150 Painters Union and other construction unions, SUNY EOC, MCC, Exercise Express, the WISH Program, Matthews Closet, Rapid Rehousing.

Audience RAWNY's Reentry-One Stop will serve some of the most vulnerable and underserved residents of Monroe County. The majority of persons in reentry return to zip codes 14605, 14621, 14609, 14615, 14519, 14611, 14613, and 14608—the neighborhoods with the highest rates of poverty. While there are several programs in Monroe County that provide some type of reentry service, there are large gaps in services, especially in funding for stabilization, a necessary first step in successful reintegration. According to The Sentencing Project's 2021 report, Black Americans are incarcerated in state prisons at nearly 5 times the rate of white Americans, Nationally, one in 81 Black adults in the U.S. is serving time in state prison. In Monroe County you could walk down any street and approximately every 5th house would include someone involved in the criminal justice system; that number is much higher in many City neighborhoods.

The Harvard Business Review in 2020 said "Today, as many as one in three Americans have a criminal record. Research shows that 17% of white Americans with a criminal record get called back after a job interview, compared to 5% of Black Americans with the same history. Imagine the devastation this causes: Not only do Black people face incalculable injustices within the criminal justice system, but those injustices continue long after a prison sentence. A father who can't get a job because of his criminal record can't support his family. His children grow up in poverty and receive unequal access to education and job opportunities. The cycle of inequity continues, and the community suffers."

There is no cost to clients receiving these services.

<i>Cost 1st Year</i>	<i>Cost All Years</i>	<i>Residents 1st Year</i>	<i>Residents All Years</i>	<i>FT Employees</i>	<i>PT Employees</i>
\$1,257,970.00	\$5,117,843.00	600	2,400	5	1

Volunteers

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Staffing RAWNY is staffed by Executive Director Ann Graham, and will hire a Coordinator, two case managers, a program assistant, and a finance manager. Ms. Graham has an established reputation as an expert in reentry services. In 2006, she was named as Monroe County's first Coordinator of the Monroe County Reentry Task Force and authored the County's first strategic plan on reentry. She was a co-founder of the Reentry Association of New York and was appointed to the Commissioner-level NYS Interagency Task for on Reentry. Ms. Graham expanded the County's reentry services beyond the initial DCJS funding with evidence-based programs, including Rochester Safe & Sound, the Orleans Project, David's Place, and the Department of Labor Employment Connection, the Office of Mental Health's Forensic Housing Program, and the Home Safe program. She is an adjunct professor at MCC, teaching "Working with Clients Post-Incarceration" and "Beginning Helping Skills." Board President Mike Iacucci served as a parole officer and as parole's Reentry Liaison. After retiring, he worked with Ms. Graham at Delphi Rise, as the program manager of the Supported Forensic Housing Program. Board Vice-President Dale Sedgwick is the President and CEO of Hope Initiatives, a community agency providing work skills training to persons in reentry. Board Treasurer Cathy Buckert retired from her career as a Federal Probation Officer, where she was instrumental in forming the first federal reentry court. She is a certified Offender Workforce Development Specialist, and a SAMHSA Certified Train the Trainer on Trauma Informed Responses.