



2016 STATEWIDE RECIDIVISM REDUCTION GRANTEE

# Arizona Department of Corrections Rehabilitation and Reentry

## Success Story

**Arizona Department of Corrections Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR) used a two-pronged approach to improve reentry and reduce recidivism among people involved in the justice system. ADCRR's approach included:**

1. **providing training** to improve officers' capacity to support individuals while incarcerated and under community supervision, and
2. **engaging community-based partners** in strategic planning and coalition building to support reentry.

### Training

ADCRR delivered Motivational Interviewing (MI) training sessions to nearly 1,000 corrections and community corrections officers. MI teaches officers techniques to support individuals to take ownership of their transition into the community and engage in behavioral change.

ADCRR also offered Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) training to community supervision officers. EPICS builds core skills in working with individuals who are under community supervision.

In addition to improving officers skills, the trainings have shifted the culture and beliefs about reentry among ADCRR staff. ADCRR leadership notes that staff are more empathetic and less authoritative in assisting during pre-release planning and supervising individuals after community reentry.

### Partnerships

The results of a needs assessment conducted by ADCRR identified the importance of collaborations with community partners to fill gaps in reentry services across the state. In response, ADCRR collaborated with community reentry stakeholders to foster culture change in Arizona communities. Law enforcement, judicial, community supervision, and community group representatives partnered with 15 coalitions across the state. The partners worked on strategic plans to reduce stigma and minimize the impact of collateral consequences of reentry through grassroots culture change and service provision in the community.

Finally, ADCRR conducted two reentry summits. Coalition service providers attended the summits to discuss and problem-solve reentry challenges and needs specific to their geographic locations. Several coalitions also worked with facilitators from Arizona State University for technical support and help creating formal strategic reentry plans.

Coalition members include government, criminal justice, housing, employment, behavioral health, supportive services, education, medical, faith-based, family reunification, and transportation stakeholders.



## Lessons Learned

**ADCRR found that multi-agency membership increases coalitions' success in serving citizens returning to their communities.** In terms of longevity, the Arizona coalitions found that a mix of types of organizations (e.g., representation from government agencies, other service providers, and non-profits) best served the

needs of individuals reentering their communities. Coalitions with at least two chairpersons from different disciplines were also better in terms of sustainability. For instance, the longest-standing coalition has four co-chairs: two from community agencies, one from a faith-based program, and one from a nonprofit organization.

### What worked?

Key factors that contribute to the program's success are:

- Using virtual meetings and trainings to work toward goals and objectives during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Building on existing relationships with colleagues to develop coalitions.
- Finding the right person to champion the project.
- Assessing the level of acceptance to the coalition concept.

### What did not work?

ADCRR's efforts to develop and engage coalitions during the pandemic were a challenge; not being able to meet face-to-face made bonding and relationship-building among partners difficult. At the same time, virtual sessions made attendance easier for some members.

While ADCRR staff are mandated to attend training and education programs, the IM and EPICS trainings were not mandatory, and some staff were resistant to participating.

Finally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ADCRR had to reduce the number of attendees at the IM and EPICS trainings.

## What's next?

- ADCRR is planning to continue evaluating the training and coalition building components of the project.
- ADCRR plans to continue providing training on Motivational Interviewing every year for all staff.

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