



Ruby Qazilbash: Hi, I'm Ruby Qazilbash, deputy Director at the Bureau of Justice Assistance with the US Department of Justice. I wanna thank you for taking the time to join us for Second Chance Month. Second Chance Month is an important event to the Bureau of Justice Assistance and to our partners at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Second Chance Month provides an opportunity every year for both agencies to acknowledge the significant number of people returning to communities across the country after a period of incarceration. We take this time to think about and talk about the challenges that these individuals face during reentry and the stigma and legal restrictions that follow them long after release. We are so appreciative of the National Reentry Resource Center for serving as the host of Second Chance Month and our second Chance Training and Technical assistance providers, the American Institutes for Research, the Vera Institute of Justice, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and RTI International. They've developed and put out numerous resources that were shared over the course of the month.

We hope you were able to watch, to listen, and to learn, and I hope you were able to join us for some of the webinars that were offered and I'd love to highlight just some of them that we hosted and bring your attention to them. So for instance, one showcase three of our second chance at grantees and their connections to infrastructure oriented career in tech ed and Career Pathways. The three grantees included were Building Futures in Rhode Island and its building trades pre-apprenticeship, the Oregon Department of Corrections and its big machines Mobile Training Lab and the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education and their job training centers and credential pathways in certified production technicians welding and commercial driver's licenses.

We also had a webinar that reviewed the ways in which states and local corrections agencies can prepare for the reinstatement of eligibility for federal Pell Grants which will take effect on July 1st of this year. That webinar featured some of our federal leaders as well as showcased the ways in which a BJA second chance grantee the Georgia Coalition for Higher Education in prison and the Georgia Department of Corrections are preparing for Pell reinstatement in their state.

We also had a webinar that presented key housing financing strategies and models to expand housing opportunities for people returning home. That webinar focused on helping people understand these concepts and to build meaningful partnerships with the housing sector and featured grantees that have successfully built some of these partnerships and created new housing opportunities for people returning home.



Ruby Qazilbash: Another webinar focused on the role of a forensic peer specialist and how to implement a forensic peer services model in different criminal justice settings for people who have co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders. We also featured a webinar that previewed updates to the collaborative comprehensive case management tool which offers guidance and case studies on integrating critical behavioral health and criminal criminogenic risk and needs information into comprehensive case plans that actively engaged the participant and reflected balanced and collaborative partnership between criminal justice and social service systems.

Rounding us out on webinars was one that showcased why relying only on recidivism to measure reentry program or participant success only tells part of the story. The webinar featured reentry program staff and evaluators in identifying other outcomes to measure and reviewed strategies and resources for capturing them.

I also hope you were able to watch some of the videos. One video celebrated the history and the importance of Second Chance month itself. Another video shared comments from people from all around the country living and working in Second Chance Act grantee communities on why supporting reentry is so important. There was also a video for corrections staff that highlighted the importance of higher ed in prison. This video was designed to be used in staff training as well as cross training between colleges and corrections partners. It features corrections leaders in Oklahoma and Kansas and two experts with lived experience who work on expanding college access for people in prison, improving outcomes for people and making those facilities safer.

A video that shares the results of interviews with Second Chance app grantees to reflect on their experience of using Second Chance funds to help address the behavioral health needs of those who are reentering their communities was also highlighted, and we launched and announced new resources including an informational sheet that reintroduces the National Reentry Resource Centers building second chances reentry Toolkit, and the tools within it that local coalitions can use to advance evidence-based reentry strategies that fit their local needs. It also spotlights the local reentry community of practice, a network of five communities that will be using the toolkit to advance reentry and promote safer communities in their homes and their home communities.

A web-based resource that shares personal experiences was also put out and provides insights from returning people about their transition into the community related to securing housing, getting access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment and recovery support services and what family reunification look like for them. The resource highlights people with lived experiences and their insights and lifts up the importance and



value of engaging people with lived experience and policy and practice reform. Nothing for us without us.

Ruby Qazilbash: There was also an online article *Breaking Down Barriers, lessons Learned from Housing and Justice System Collaborations* that highlights successful cross system partnerships between criminal justice and housing agencies that have reduced barriers to housing with people for people with criminal records and increased reentry housing opportunities. And it has an emphasis on how BJA Second Chance Resources support expansion of promising and model programs and local implementation that makes them work across systems.

If you missed a webinar or haven't viewed or read some of these exciting resources please visit buildsecondchances.org to access all of the second chance month resources including archived recordings for any webinars that you might have missed and continue to visit the National Reentry Resource Center throughout the year to access new reentry related resources and information on reentry related learning events and funding opportunities, including those supported through the Second Chance Act.

The Second Chance Act law, which was passed in 2008 and it was reauthorized more recently in 2018 provides federal grants to support programs that improve reentry outcomes in communities across the country. The second chance suite of grant programs includes opportunities for funding to do things like implement or expand re-entry programs that can include mentoring, coordinated supervision and health services, family services and training for staff on re-entry and victims issues. Funding can be used to enhance or implement clinical services to treat the treatment needs and recovery needs of people with mental health, substance use, or co-occurring disorders that are currently involved in the criminal justice system.

Grants can also be used to strengthen education and employment outcomes for people behind the walls and returning home to their communities after incarceration. And funds can be used to convert or enter into performance based and outcomes based contracts for re-entry and supportive housing services, getting more for the government dollars that we're putting in for these services. Can also use funds to plan, implement or expand effective supervision capacity and develop and test enhanced application of the Swift Certain and Fair principles of intervention to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for people on community supervision. A lot of these funding opportunities are open right now.

As a reminder, BJA's Second Chance at grant programs all come with training and technical assistance, providers that assist our grantees to successfully implement their grant programs. So I encourage you to think about how you might leverage Second Chance funds to support some of



your efforts. In 2023, BJA plans to make available more than 80 million in grants to support state, local and tribal reentry programs, and like I said, many of these solicitations are open now or will be soon.

Ruby Qazilbash: I hope your participation will help you help any family members or individuals that your agency or organization support to be more successful in their reentry efforts. Please feel free to share your thoughts and your experiences by posting with the hashtag #ReentryMatters on Twitter. I would also encourage you to participate in the feedback forms that were sent to webinar participants or are available at buildsecondchances.org. Thank you once again for joining us in Second Chance Month. We so value your engagement and your commitment to this important work