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A PUBLIC SAFETY AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PARTNERSHIP CREATES NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR REENTRY

October 28, 2022 - The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) and the Prince George's County Returning Citizens Division partnered with the Bridge Center at Adams House in Prince George's County to host a groundbreaking reentry event on Tuesday, October 25, 2022. The event served as the first ever multiple-location virtual reentry services fair for individuals who are incarcerated and was attended by 26 individuals who are incarcerated in seven different male and female correctional facilities across the State of Maryland. The landmark event allowed the participants, who are close to returning home to Prince George's County, the opportunity to learn about, and sign up for services before their release.

"We were so excited to partner with the State to host this groundbreaking event," said Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. "We recognize the importance of supporting and assisting our residents who are reentering society and ensuring that they have the necessary resources in place for a successful transition. Our Returning Citizen Affairs Division is committed to not only improving the lives of returning citizens, but also in making Prince George's County a great place for those reentering our community."

Prince George's County is the first County in the State of Maryland to engage with DPSCS in a reentry partnership that provides a virtual connection for returning citizens to their jurisdiction of anticipated residence. Under the leadership of Secretary Robert Green, DPSCS continues to prioritize reentry services.

"This historic night demonstrates DPSCS' strong commitment to helping individuals prepare for life 'on the outside' before they go home," said DPSCS Secretary Green. "This is the first of its kind and also highlights the commitment of Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks and the Returning Citizens Affairs Division to ensure that those returning to the County receive the services needed to successfully transition back into the community. We continue to pursue partnerships with Prince George's County and others that make successful reentry possible. Innovative thinking allows us to create partnerships and utilize technology to drive connections for our returning citizens to reentry services in every community across the state of Maryland. Reentry is essential to Public Safety in all Maryland communities."

The partnership with Prince George's County is a monumental step towards reinforcing the importance, and impact, of community engagement in the lives of DPSCS' returning citizens.

“This was a real showcase for other Maryland counties to join this important re-entry effort,” said Carolyn J. Scruggs, DPSCS Assistant Secretary who oversees reentry. "DPSCS continues to strive to expand these efforts to other Maryland counties as we provide opportunities and transitional services to the some 1,856 returning citizens scheduled to return to Maryland's communities in FY23. We want to ensure that each of them understands that their justice involved background does not have to be a barrier to new horizons."

Soon-to-be-returning citizen “Jackson,” attended the forum from Central Maryland Correctional Facility in Sykesville. He’s set to go home to Prince George’s County next week. “This program may help me get a job and earn a certificate to better myself when I am home,” said Mr. Jackson.

Established in June 2022, the Prince George’s County Returning Citizen Affairs Division within the Office of the County Executive is responsible for affairs relating to, or impacting, citizens who are returning from incarceration to live in Prince George’s County and works to ensure that they have access to necessary resources, supports, and opportunities.

“Through this partnership, it is anticipated that the men and women returning to Prince George’s County from periods of incarceration are aware of the variety of services available to them to assist in their transition home and that they know how to access these services once they return,” stated Prince George’s County Returning Citizens Affairs Division Director Michael Williams.

“This is the beginning of what RCAD has been tasked to do, which is to centralize the resources for Prince George’s County residents who are coming home,” said Returning Citizens Liaison BJ Paige. “It’s a great step forward in our effort to build the division with our State partners.”

The Bridge Center at Adams House’s partnership with DPSCS has been in the works for some time. The Bridge Center at Adam’s House is an inter-agency collaboration between the Prince George’s County Health Department, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Family Services, and other community-based partners to provide holistic assistance to any Prince George’s County residents reentering the community.

“The Bridge Center at Adams House partnership with DPSCS has been in the works for some time,” said Ronald Garrett, Director of the Bridge Center at Adams House. “We are very grateful to the County Executive’s Office for creating this new Division and to RCAD and Secretary Green for making this collaboration a priority. This initiative led to the first virtual reintegration information session for Prince George’s County residents which will be released in the next 30-90 days. This level of access and engagement pre-release allows our staff the opportunity to make a proper assessment of the needs of each resident and prepare an individualized reintegration case plan pre-release, which then allows our team to prepare a plan of action for each returning citizen being released from DPSCS to Prince Georges County. We are excited about the outcome of the first session. These sessions are scheduled to take place monthly, and we look forward to the opportunity to provide additional reintegration programming as this collaboration continues.”

DPSCS is committed to providing re-entry and transition services at its facilities, including hosting large in-person events with employers and service providers, and offering transition seminars to small groups of incarcerated individuals year-round. In addition, the Department is rolling out an expansive tablet program, which allows the incarcerated to access re-entry services and programs in a secure facility online setting.

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