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**RISE**

# **Union County College's Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative**

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**by**

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# RISE

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- **R**eturn
- **I**mprove
- **S**erve
- **E**xcel

# RISE

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- MOU signed in 2007; services launched in 2007;
- Led by UCC's noncredit Division of Economic Development and Continuing Education;
- Funded by a three-year grant from the Nicholson Foundation;
- Other partners:
  - Union County Department of Human Services;
  - NJ State Parole Board.

# RISE Services

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- Direct services to ex-offenders
  - Educational testing, counseling, referrals;
  - Instruction in basic skills, GED test preparation, and other career skills;
  - Job development (career planning, links to employers).
- Leadership and advocacy
  - Coordination of UC Re-Entry Task Force meetings;
  - Advocacy for re-entry services to funders & policy makers.
- Curriculum and professional development
  - Developing special curricula for ex-offenders;
  - Training of UCC staff and others.

## Results to date: Direct service

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Provided basic skills testing to 305 plus clients at Elizabeth Community Resource Center and UCC campuses in Elizabeth and Plainfield.

Provided individualized educational and job development services to 203 plus clients.

Provided 117 five-hour classes in basic skills, career planning, life skills, and computer skills to 149 ex-offenders. (30 received certificates.);

Enrolled 30 individuals in UCC's GED program.

Referred 17 clients for admission to UCC credit programs. (Seven of those clients enrolled in UCC or another college.)

Helped at least 34 individuals obtain employment.

## Results to date: Leadership & Advocacy

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- Hosted 17 meetings of UC Re-Entry Task Force;
- Wrote 12 funding proposals to diversify resources for re-entry services in County;
- Tapped into other existing funds (e.g., adult basic education and workforce development) funds;
- Attended 15 meetings with policy makers;
- Supported creation of Plainfield Re-Entry Task Force;
- Established referral system with UC Parole UC Probation, Kintock, and other agencies.

## Results to date:

### **Curriculum and professional development**

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- Created computer lab at Elizabeth Community Resource Center using donated UCC computers;
- Developed and field-tested special curricula related to career planning, health literacy, and computer skills for ex-offenders;
- Ran 8 professional development workshops to develop re-entry-related expertise of adult educators, workforce development specialists, and correctional educators.

# RISE Next Steps

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In 2009-2010, UCC hopes to:

- Build on the positive network, expertise, curricula, and infrastructure which have been developed in the past 1.5 years;
- Continue the services and leadership now underway;
- Continue to serve diverse populations of ex-offenders at various locations;
- Work more closely with the One Stops and other partners to build a well-coordinated system of re-entry services in Union County.



# For more information . . .

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