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**NJDOC ENTERS INTO AGREEMENT WITH REENTRY SERVICE PROVIDERS
INCREASING ACCESS TO REINTEGRATION SERVICES ACROSS THE STATE**

December 1, 2021 -Trenton, N.J. - The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding creating agreements with six community-based reentry service providers to offer wraparound services for people within 180 days of release. The inaugural group of community-based partner organizations part of today's agreement include Community In Cooperation, New Jersey Community Research Initiative, New Jersey Reentry Corporation, The Petey Greene Program, Volunteers of America Delaware Valley, and Youth Advocate Programs, Inc., with plans to onboard additional organizations in the near future. The collaboration standardizes the reentry process and increases the network of NJDOC reentry partners and programs across the state in communities where individuals will return. Reentry services provide a continuum of support post-release, removing barriers to housing, employment, and medical access, creating pathways for seamless reintegration into society.

"The Department's Division of Programs and Community Services, in collaboration with our network of community partners, made tremendous strides in connecting the incarcerated to critical resources that support successful reintegration into society based on personalized needs," said NJDOC Acting Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq. "By entering into these agreements, we are leveraging the full force of our resources, allowing for the expansion of services across the state and the streamlining of our efforts that truly helps this population thrive. We sincerely thank our partners for joining us in this effort."

As part of the agreement, the Department will partner with several community-based organizations to provide housing for people leaving prison. During the unprecedented release of 2,000 individuals under the public health emergency credits helping mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in congregate settings, the Department identified the need for increased available partner agencies

offering people returning assistance with post-release housing. Service providers will offer these safe spaces for the recently released to live with funding assistance for first and last month security deposits. The service providers will help continue that process for individuals who could not secure those resources before release due to processing delays or other issues. Other critical resources for those nearing release include access to government assistance and Motor Vehicle state identification. The initiative complements the Department's New Jersey Locally Empowered, Accountable and Determined (NJ LEAD) \$3M grant, funding reentry services provided by community-based organizations in communities to which the released will return.

"As the first-line of support preparing individuals for reentry, we in the Division of Programs and Community Service have an acute awareness of the challenges faced and evolving needs of those being released," said NJDOC Assistant Commissioner Dr. Darcella Sessomes, who oversees the Division. "This awareness combined with the collaboration of our community-based partners allows us to better transition those leaving our system by connecting them to partners with the ability to deliver the necessary post-release wraparound services."

"Communities In Cooperation, Inc. is truly honored for our formal partnership with DOC stepping forward, empowering others in this symphonic movement of human servitude, creating dignity and hope for the justice-involved," said Pamela B. Jones, CEO.

"We are grateful to be here today for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and hope for many more years of collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Corrections," said Brian McGovern, CEO of North Jersey Community Research Initiative. "Under the guidance and leadership of Acting Commissioner Kuhn, we have seen stronger collaboration and support by the department. For over 20 years, NJCRI has been servicing the incarcerated population at Northern State Prison. With the continued support of the Department of Corrections, we hope to continue to help this population transition successfully to the community."

"NJRC is gratified to 'get back into the business' of in-person visits in state prisons to link our participants to critically-needed services outside the wall," said Governor Jim McGreevey. "We all have a vested interest in healthy successful reentry. This MOU is a significant step forward."

"We are delighted to partner with the NJDOC to provide tutoring and college bridge classes as part of its new initiative to offer community-based reentry support services," said Alison Badgett, Executive Director of The Petey Greene Program. "We know from long experience that individualized tutoring is essential in supporting formerly incarcerated learners achieve their educational goals, and we welcome the opportunity to offer our high-quality tutoring services as part of the wraparound supports this reintegration effort will provide."

"Volunteers of America Delaware Valley is thrilled by this expansion of our partnership with NJDOC," said Dan Lombardo, VOA President and CEO.

"The YAP team is honored to have this opportunity using our wraparound model that has served for decades as an alternative to youth incarceration," said Kelly D. Williams, Chief Communications Officer. "This program is especially valuable because all staff are credible messengers who have lived experiences, having served time in New Jersey prisons. So they are now giving back to their communities."



Photographed: NJDOC Acting Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq. joined by reentry partners Community In Cooperation, New Jersey Community Research Initiative, New Jersey Reentry Corporation, The Petey Greene Program, Volunteers of America Delaware Valley, and Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. at the NJDOC Central Office Headquarters.

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