



RISE For Success

A Collaborative Program Impacting The Lives Of Returning Probationers

The Omaha Reentry, Integrative Services, and Engagement (RISE) program is a collaborative initiative between the City of Omaha Mayor's Office, Nebraska Probation, the Omaha Police Department, Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership (ENCAP), the Empowerment Network and the Police Research and Policy Group (PRPG) targeting probationers reentering the 68111 zip code.

"The RISE program is a good example of collaborative work that really addresses reentry," said Jami Anders-Kemp, Director of Omaha 360, the violence intervention and prevention arm of the Empowerment Network. "The more we can do to wrap our arms around these gentlemen when they come out, the less likely they are to reoffend."

The RISE program provides targeted, wrap-around services for participants anchored by a 10-week training workshop, facilitated by ENCAP, with participants earning weekly stipends. The workshops will help participating probationers learn how to conduct themselves at work and on job interviews, develop a resume and computer research skills, successfully manage their finances and take care of all aspects of their health needs. For participants currently seeking employment or education, ENCAP will work to assist in identifying these opportunities. "The workshops equip participants with knowledge and tools to become self-sufficient and confident in successfully competing in today's job market," stated Karen Watson, ENCAP's Interim Executive Director.

During the ten-week period, participants will work with the Empowerment Network's Adopt-A-Block initiative twice a week. Adopt-A-Block projects are designed to revitalize the neighborhood and encourage participating probationers to take pride in their community.

"This is a critical link in helping returning probationers," said Willie Barney, President and Facilitator of the Empowerment Network. "Adopt-A-Block allows participants to connect with strong community anchors and build relationships and networks that will help them reach success."

"It is important to note this is a volunteer program, so the participants want to be here," said Abby Kossow, a Community Based Intervention Probation Officer with Nebraska Probation. "They want to be successful."

Omaha RISE is a three-year grant funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, awarded to the City of Omaha, Mayor's Office. Program implementation will begin September 16, 2013 and requires pre and post surveys of a sampling of residents residing in the 68111 area to measure the success of the program. "We support programs like RISE that provide opportunities for young men who are completing their probation. They are making a choice to improve themselves and our community. We are giving them skills to change their futures," said Mayor Jean Stothert.