Reintegration through Construction Pathways (RECP)

MASSHIRE

MERRIMACK VALLEY
WORKFORCE BOARD

Stacy Seward & Mike Paglia

Summary of RECP

- Prepared 27 returning citizens in the Lawrence area for employment. Participants were mostly Latinx individuals who have served an average of 5 years in the carceral system.
- Responded to employer demand for construction laborers – especially in horizontal construction and environmental remediation
- Program strategy that relies on collaboration with community partners

LiUNA! Feel the Power

Lawrence Training School Inc. — Partner · Empower · Perform — Est. 1998

Massachusetts AFL-CIO — The Voice of Working People

CAF — Centro de Apoyo Familiar

The Dream Network — "Community, Solidarity, Mobilization, Equity, Change"

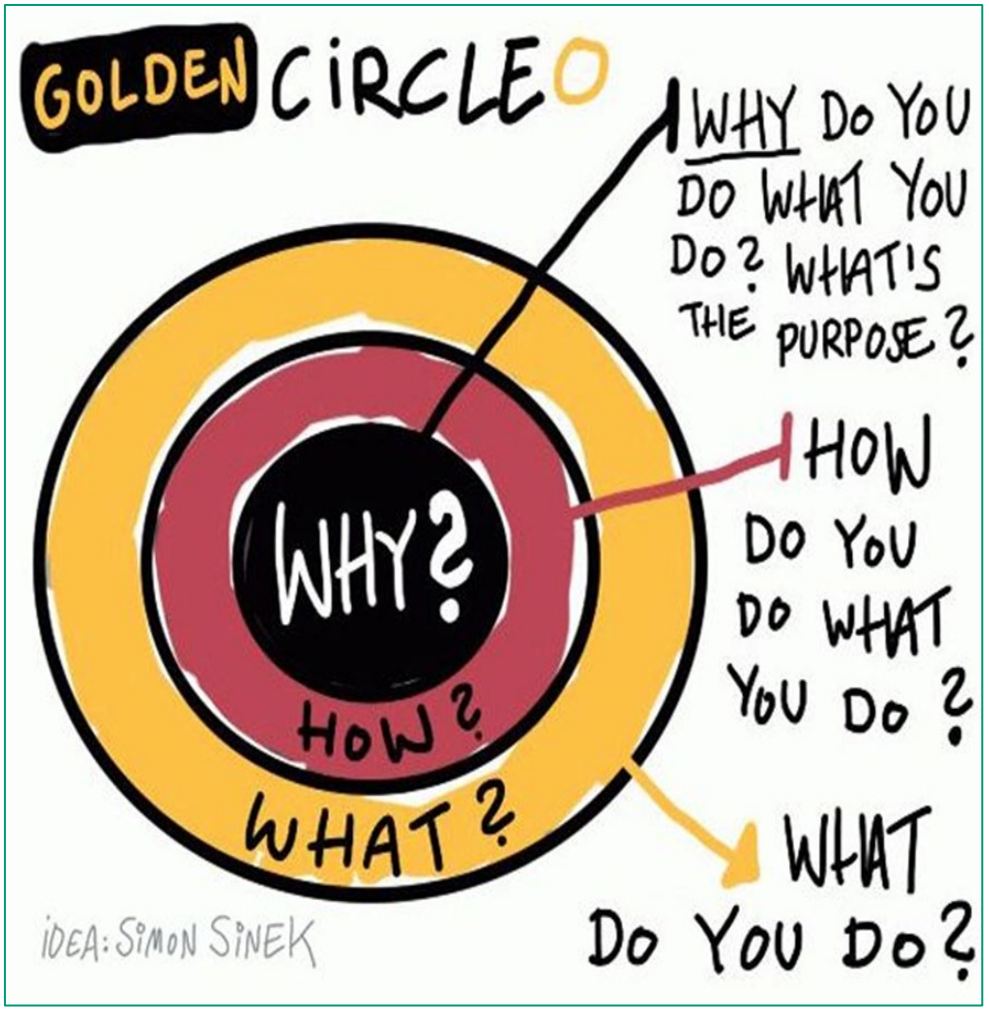
Massachusetts State Parole

GLTS — Greater Lawrence Technical School

MASSHIRE Merrimack Valley Career Center

Vision

Program design that starts with a broader vision



RECP Who: Focused on Equity

In Massachusetts BIPOC individuals make up 56% of incarcerated persons but only make up 20% of the state's population.

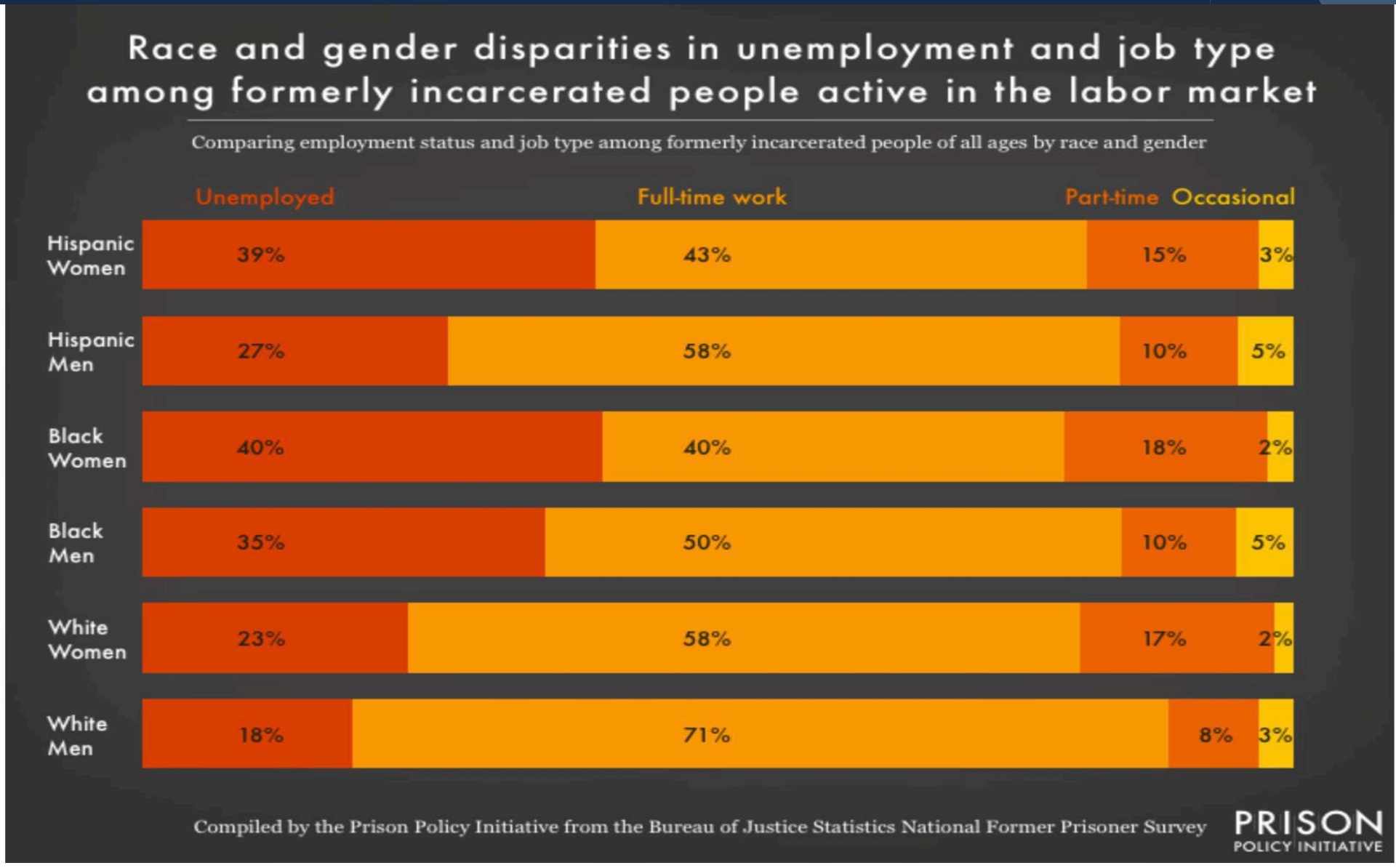
According to the SentencingProject.org, Massachusetts has the highest disparity between incarcerated white and Latinx persons in the country with 4.3 Latinx persons incarcerated for every 1 white individual.

RECP: Focused on Equity

In September of 2020 Harvard Law School released a report citing:

- Racial and ethnic differences in the type and severity of initial charge—accounts for over 70 percent of the disparities in sentence length.
- Black and Latinx people are more likely to have their cases resolved in Superior Court where the available sentences are longer
- Black and Latinx people charged with drug offenses and weapons offenses are more likely to be incarcerated and receive longer incarceration sentences than White people charged with similar offenses.
- Black and Latinx people charged with offenses carrying mandatory minimum sentences are substantially more likely to be incarcerated and receive longer sentences than White people facing charges carrying mandatory minimum incarceration sentences.

RECP: Focused on Equity



RECP: Why?

To create a program that leverages strengths and overcomes barriers of returning citizens to facilitate self-sufficiency and lower recidivism.

RECP: What's our purpose?

To design a program through which returning citizens can become employed at career pathway middle-skilled jobs that offer a living wage.

RECP: Industry “Fit”

Identifying the industry with high labor market demand that has jobs that FIT with the strengths and challenges of the target population.

What? Occupational Skills Training

- LIUNA/ AFL-CIO
  - Line and grade (surveying)
  - Cutting & Burning Steel
  - Concrete Fundamentals & more
  - Math review
  - Career pathways / union membership
- Greater Lawrence Technical School
  - Tool Sense – Hand / Power tools, materials, fasteners
  - Carpentry
- Lawrence Training School
  - OSHA 10 Construction Safety
  - Asbestos Worker
  - Renovation & Repair Lead Paint

What? Mentoring Support

- Lawrence Dream Network
  - Assisting trainees to progress through adversity by inspiring personal agency, encouraging resiliency and resourcefulness

"Community, Solidarity, Mobilization, Equity, Change"

- Lawrence Parole
  - Regular check-ins on status of basic needs

- MVWB Program Manager
  - Building a "developmental relationship" for trainees to cultivate own abilities & plan their future, experience support to reach career goals

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What? Building self-sufficiency

- Job-Seeking Skills
  - Resume and Interview skills
  - Career Center membership & job seeker services

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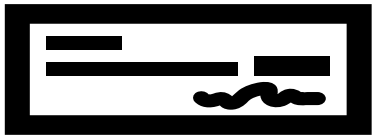
CAREER CENTER

- Financial Literacy
  - Budgeting, saving, needs vs. wants

CAF
CENTRO DE APOYO FAMILIAR

- Stipend
  - Minimum wage stipend for all hours of training



RECP: Building Community

Intentionality

- ❑ Student centered and needs based services
- ❑ Adaptable structure to accommodate student and employer needs
- ❑ Community Anchored Organizations
- ❑ Community Centered/Reflective Employer Partners that provide warm handoffs and personalized job matching

Building Community was a key element in the design and success of the program

What: Employer Engagement

- Field trips to job sites, job fairs, union hall PLUS employer visits to class to foster trainee hires
- Main industry partners:
  - AFL –CIO
  - Laborers' Union
  - Horizontal Construction
    - SPS New England
  - Environmental Remediation
    - LaborOnSite
    - Envirovantage

RECP: High Impact Outcomes

- 27 graduates since March 2018
- Placed with demolition, general contracting, heavy highway, and environmental remediation employers
- Average wage: $30/hour
- Laborers' Union (LiUNA) placements come with full health care, pension, annuity
- Low recidivism
- Life-changing opportunity

Living MassHire

The RECP embodies the MassHire Vision to see a better future for people and businesses through meaningful work and sustainable growth.

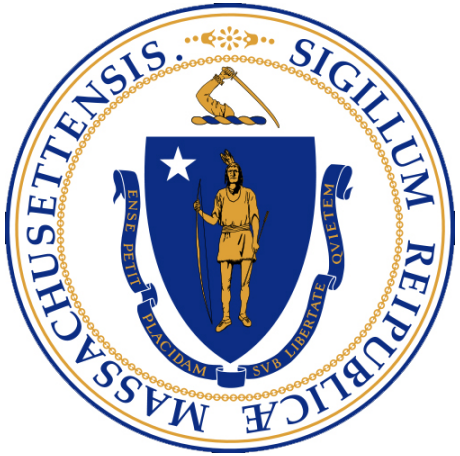
- **Reliability:** A program that would bring together all the components needed to support returning citizens through to success
- **Ingenuity:** Goal was not only employment - but lowering recidivism, strengthening families, and making the community safer
- **Respect:** Designed to facilitate self-sufficiency of returning citizens through a unique occupational skills training that leads to employment in career pathway middle-skill jobs that offer a living wage
- **Collaboration:** Broad partnership of support that meets employer demand

Cohort 1

Cohort 2

Cohort 3

Cohort 4



COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION
Building skills for a strong economy.

City of Lawrence

This project is funded by Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund FY17 & Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program FY19 Appropriation Grants through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and is administered by the Commonwealth Corporation; as well as the City of Lawrence.

Thank you!

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