

Reentry Mentor **Volunteer Job Description**

Major Role of Mentor

To provide companionship and encouragement to reentry residents to help them:

(1) identify and reduce risk factors for re-incarceration, and (2) engage in pro-social activities that foster successful re-integration into community life.

Mentor's Responsibility to Mentee. *Every volunteer mentor is expected to:*

- Meet with your mentee once a week for an hour, and occasionally more when the need arises.
- Commit to maintaining the mentoring relationship for 6 to 18 months.
- Respect mentee's time, opinions, feelings, and choices.
- Contact mentee in a timely manner about any schedule changes.
- Engage in open, honest dialogue that balances active, respectful listening with information about alternative perspectives and choices.
- Provide connections to healthy pro-social community activities, people, and resources.
- Maintain interpersonal boundaries that establish clarity about your role as a mentor and ensure safety for all parties involved.
- Uphold and practice the philosophy and principles of restorative justice, including the beliefs and practices of the Grounding Philosophy of RJP, found in the Mentor Resource Guide.

Mentor's Responsibility to RJP Staff and Team. *Every volunteer mentor is expected to:*

- Work as part of a team with fellow mentors, RJP staff, Reentry Center staff, mentee's family, and, when necessary, the mentee's probation officer, counselors, and community agencies/organizations to help the mentee become accountable and to understand the impact of his or her behavior on the community.
- Complete reports about contacts with the mentee and submit these to RJP program staff monthly (these take about 10-15 minutes to complete).
- Check in with RJP staff when pressing concerns arise about the mentee's mental, emotional, or physical health.
- Attend at least 3 RJP workshops/trainings a year, including monthly mentor sessions and special events for ongoing professional development.
- Discuss openly with RJP staff any feelings of dissatisfaction, confusion, or uncertainty in working with mentee.

Location of Volunteer Activities: Primarily Waldo, Knox, and Hancock Counties, in public places in the community.

Training Required: Five 2.5-hour sessions, or equivalent

Reports to: Reentry Coordinator

Qualifications

- Be at least 21 years of age
- Submit an application, 3 references, and copies of a photo ID and auto insurance card
- Be willing to undergo RJP's routine criminal background check and discuss any concerns that arise
- Be mature, reliable, trustworthy, and emotionally stable
- Not abuse drugs or alcohol
- Be caring and compassionate
- Have sufficient free time available to meet program requirements
- Complete a successful interview for mentoring

OTHER QUALITIES AND SKILLS OF EFFECTIVE MENTORS:

Demonstrate relationship-building skills

- Posses a capacity for empathy, compassion, optimism, humor, and self-reflection.
- Demonstrate pro-social skills, including comfort and experience with active participation in community life.
- Listen and build rapport in appropriate ways.
- Model the willingness to have difficult conversations.
- Have effective communication skills, with some background education or training in current recommended best practices, e.g., NVC, Motivational Interviewing.

Understand the mentor role

- See the mentee as a separate person with his or her own needs and goals, and be comfortable with those differences.
- Set reasonable standards of performance and build realistic expectations.
- Be sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of mentees.
- Remember that a mentor is not a professional counselor, a social worker, or a financier.

Possess life-experience, knowledge, and desire for learning

- Be familiar with or interested in gaining further fluency in restorative justice practice and in mentoring.
- Possess life-experience related to poverty, incarceration, or substance abuse.
- Understand substance abuse and mental health issues and/or have a willingness to receive ongoing training, support, and resources in these areas.

(Revised July 2016)