

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 23, 2024

Officials Hope to Bring Integrated Reentry and Correctional Support Program to Monroe County

Public invited to learn more during informational meeting to be held on Monday, February 26th.

Monroe County, IN—The public is invited to attend an upcoming informational meeting about the Integrated Reentry and Correctional Support (IRACS) program and the program's potential implementation in Monroe County. The meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Monday, February 26 via online link and in-person in the Nat U. Hill room of the Monroe County Courthouse located at 100 W. Kirkwood Ave.

A collaboration between the Division of Mental Health and Addiction, the Indiana Forensic Services division of Mental Health America - Indiana, and the Indiana Recovery Network, the program provides inmates who have mental health and substance use disorders with wraparound services as well as peer-to-peer support. IRACS was initially piloted in Blackford, Daviess, Dearborn, Delaware, and Scott County jails.

Monroe County Sheriff Ruben Marte in 2023 began considering the benefits of the IRACS program, was in contact with the State of Indiana, and reached out to other Sheriff's for insight specific to bringing this program to the Monroe County Jail. As an initial phase, an on-site assessment of the jail was conducted to determine the viability of the program in the current facility. Assessment results pending.

Now, Sheriff Marte in collaboration with the Board of Commissioners hope to bring this program to our locally incarcerated people. "This is a program that requires the collaboration and support of the court, the bar, local leaders and our recovery community. This is a jail program that reaches beyond the confines of my facility," said Sheriff Marte. "Inmate participation in IRACS is voluntary," says Monroe County Commissioner Lee Jones. "The goal is to help them to reintegrate into society and to avoid recidivism."

Working in groups and in one-on-one sessions, certified peer recovery coaches help incarcerated individuals to plan for their release. What's more, certified peer recovery coaches also work intensely with those individuals for 28 days post-release and are subsequently available as needed.

"Early data from other Indiana counties has been encouraging," says Julie Thomas, president of the Monroe County Board of Commissioners. "Of course, it will take funding and support from various entities in Monroe County to bring the program here and ensure that it succeeds."

"If IRACS *is* successful here, and we are able to reduce recidivism, we can at least partially pay for the program with savings related to the reduced numbers in our jail," Monroe County Board of Commissioners Vice President Penny Githens notes.

For more information about IRACS, visit www.rethinkreentry.org.

Jayne Whitaker, vice president of Forensic Services and director of the IRACS program at Mental Health America of Indiana, will lead the February 26 meeting. To join remotely, visit:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_N2E4YTFmMDAtYjc5Ny00NWE1LTg3ODgtOWExNmQwZmM1YzUy%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2249a60700-4c0c-4ece-b904-fb92c600e553%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22db83725f-c48f-476f-8894-d4bb087d29f8%22%7d

Meeting ID: 283 345 508 801

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