

***Beyond Bars* Program Overview**

What

The *Beyond Bars* program seeks to help Vermonters who have been incarcerated help overcome mental health and substance use challenges, get and keep good jobs, and meet their other goals.

How

Participants will be connected to *Peer Mentors* with lived experience of having been incarcerated and overcoming mental health and substance use challenges who are now doing well in the community and can serve as an example of hope and resilience.

Peer Mentors will provide the following supports:

- Mental Health Peer Support as needed.
- Concrete assistance with rent, food, transportation, childcare, and other needs.
- Representation in case management meetings to facilitate “warm hand offs” to help navigate complex systems and access services desired by participants.
- Connection to programs and organizations providing desired mental health and substance use supports and services.
- Connection to programs and organizations providing help accessing supported employment and progressive employment opportunities.
- On-the-job support at participant’s places of employment.
- Connection to education and training opportunities for career advancement.

Eligibility

In its pilot year *Beyond Bars* can serve up to 15 people. We are initially focusing on serving the Northeastern Region of Vermont including the Newport, St. Johnsbury, Morrisville, and Barre AHS Districts.

To be eligible, participants must:

- Want to be in the program.
- Have a goal of employment and working to move from an entry level position to a “dream job” over time.
- Have been incarcerated anywhere in Vermont, ideally within the past 90 days of the referral to the program
- Referrals are welcome from any source, including DOC facility, P&P or Central Office Staff, community-partners or self referrals.
- All referrals should be made to Will Eberle at director@recoveryvermont or 802-279-9069 and provide a brief description of the potential participant’s background and interest in the program.

Goals

- Reduce overdoses and overdose-related fatalities.
- Reduce death by suicide and other self harm.
- Reduce recidivism.
- Get and maintain employment.
- Utilization of education and training opportunities that lead to better paying, more rewarding employment positions over time.
- Shifts in job roles that increase pay and improve job satisfaction over time.
- Increased utilization of programs and services that help with substance use challenges.
- Increase utilization of programs and services that help with mental health challenges.
- Identification and positive movement towards other goals participants set for themselves.