

IPS Learning Community Annual Meeting

April 28-29, 2026

Discussion group notes: Supporting Employment for Individuals Impacted by the Justice System

Facilitators: Tim Kautz and Grayce Gadson

How to engage individuals who have been impacted by the justice system?

Work with mental health court/ all specialized dockets/ integrate with mental health team, opportunities for storytelling.

Hire forensic peer supports

TT1 Grant = Medicaid—allowed for hiring peers; functioned as a liaison to IPS

Vocational rehabilitation counselor completes intakes before person leaves jail

Expungement clinics—education on what charges can be expunged/encourage advocacy

Focus on care manager services needed, for example, access to a doctor

Apply for Medicaid prior to release

Form relationship with re-entry specialist

Educate on IPS program

Find ways to reduce other barriers

Community based work—being more involved

Collaborate with parole and probation officers (get release of information)

Educate groups for individuals with substance use disorders about IPS

Develop relationship relationships with employers

Reach out to previously vetted support people

Job development: find employers willing to hire people

Work with local jails

Work with crisis teams, and homeless shelters

Utilize success stories to inspire people and help them stay motivated/hopeful

Use media to market IPS program

Share resources while person is still incarcerated

Attend court/ events for resource information sharing

Highlight benefits of working

Work with partners who can provide incentives

Share success stories with participants and engage peer support

Find mandatory meetings and co-locate

What is the first thing you might do someone out of prison to find work?

Ask what they would like to do

Identify barriers to work

Identify obligations/ constraints on time

Set expectations

Understand strength and dreams—build rapport

Understand limitations related to charges (Post release conditions)

Plan and practice disclosure of background to potential employers

Discuss transferable skills obtained during incarceration

Focus on strengths, especially from past experiences

Hold a guided discussion about past experiences to lead to positive change

Quickly connect the person to peer supports for natural supports that are positive

Dig into the possible pros and cons of using disclosure

Learn about past job experiences

Learn about jobs in jail

Involve natural supports

Career exploration

Continued education/ update certifications

Connect with benefits planner

Learn about financial responsibilities

What do you do to reduce stigma, especially with additional stigma from mental health challenges?

Educate employers

Normalize mental health challenges—they can happen to anyone

Believe that people can/ have changed—have hope

Help participants understand how to frame justice, involvement by sharing how it helped them grow and use a positive mindset with employers

Work with a parole/ probation office to reduce stigma that they show to employers

Let participant know that there are employers who will hire them

Build confidence/ sense of self-worth to help with conversations with employers

Peer support, lived experience experts

Wellness practices

Use data to show prevalence of mental health challenges

Practice for disclosure

Set expectations with employers

Use employers as credible messengers. Collect stories.

Adapt existing equity tools

Disability etiquette training

Build resilience

Develop tools to help IPS specialists talk to employers

Team debriefs about job development experiences

Highlights strengths of jobseekers to employers

VR in Ohio has specific division that educates Emf not just about a semi or SUV but also about different areas. They give employers information about programs, ensuring needs employers are not just education about justice involvement

Ask employer, if certain charges are acceptable or negotiable

How are you teaching people to discuss their justice involvement?

Iowa has a class specifically designed to help participants develop a script for potential employers

Develop a relationship with chambers of commerce—employers often hear better from other employers

Ban the box

Sex offender registry—educate employers that there are different levels of sex offenses

Expect to take time—a person may start out with a job and then need to change jobs

Could take 18 months to get a career/ job that is a good match

May need to take a job that will pay the bills until they can improve their situation

People need supports around them to be a good employee

What are eye-opener from today? What suggestions stand out to you?

Hearing from VR counselors about being in different settings to offer a one stop shop for these individuals

Community based services

Annual wellness fairs—not just to educate employers

Difference working with individuals who have justice involvement versus SMI

- The role that IPS specialist can play

Recidivism is correlated with justice involvement in the early stages of recovery

Provide hope and adequate resources to pull people out of despair

People may come to IPS and already have a job but need supports

People with justice, involvement, and substance use disorders may be resourceful and adaptive in getting jobs but still need help to maintain jobs

Time management

Skills building

Priority question—” where do you see yourself in five years?” career advancement, what are long-term goals and how IPS can help you with education/ job training, even with employers

Start small, get the job but then advance