

# Re-entry & Disability: Improving the Employment and Financial Outcomes of Formerly Incarcerated People with Disabilities

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# Financial Access Inclusion & Resources (FAIR) Summary

- FAIR works to improve the employment and financial outcomes of formerly incarcerated people with disabilities by providing holistic financial coaching and case management services.
- FAIR's two-year pilot was primarily funded by the Kessler Foundation. The next three years of the FAIR program are being funded by Baptist Community Ministries, the RosaMary Foundation, Greater New Orleans Foundation, and JPMorgan Chase & Co.

# People with Disabilities in Incarceration

- Nationally, 40% of state prisoners and 29% of federal prisoners report having at least one disability (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2016) .
- Over 50% of people live at or below the poverty level prior to entering the criminal justice system (Ella Baker Center, 2015).
- The unemployment and poverty rates of working-age Louisianans with disabilities are twice than their non-disabled peers' (Cornell, 2012).
- After incarceration, people are five-times more likely to be unemployed and face an average legal debt of \$13,607 (NAACP, 2018; Ella Baker Center, 2015).

# Who FAIR Serves

## FAIR Client Eligibility

FAIR Clients Must:

- ▶ Have a disability;
- ▶ Have been incarcerated in the last 10 years;
- ▶ Live in Orleans or Jefferson Parish;
- ▶ Want to work; and
- ▶ Be between 18 and 70 years old.

## FAIR Client Demographics

- ▶ 85% of clients have co-occurring disabilities
- ▶ 89% of clients are African American
- ▶ 80% of clients are male
- ▶ 67% had been incarcerated for over two years
- ▶ 66% of clients contacted FAIR within their first year of release
- ▶ 49% had less than a GED

# FAIR's Process & The Coaching Approach

1. Identify the client's unique financial goals, employment goals, and barriers to those goals.
2. The client prioritizes their needs or short-term goals. We help them create an action plan around those short-term goals, establishing individual responsibilities and target dates.
3. We continue this process as long as the client remains eligible for services, and until all barriers that could be feasibly removed within a reasonable timeframe are removed.

# Employment, Financial & Reentry Barriers

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Barrier	FAIR's Approach
Unstable Housing	Referrals to emergency shelter & transitional housing; help with apartment searches, applications, and budgeting
Limited income for basic necessities	Help with benefit applications, benefits counseling, and resolving benefits issues
Limited Healthcare & Health Concerns	Help understanding, applying for or enrolling in health insurance plans; referrals to healthcare services
Debt, credit, banking	Help with debt prioritization, addressing court fines and fees, Pulling, understanding, and addressing errors on their credit reports, finding banking products.
Legal concerns	Research, information, and referrals
Limited employment experience	Referrals to vocational programs; resume and cover letter building; job application assistance.

# Trends in Client Priorities

## **Of active FAIR clients during our two-year pilot:**

- ▶ 62% applied for income supports
- ▶ 58% accessed health insurance or healthcare services
- ▶ 53% created resumes, cover letters, and submitted job applications
- ▶ 49% accessed legal assistance
- ▶ 48% located, applied for, and/or budgeted for housing

## Trends in Client Priorities (continued)

### **Of active FAIR clients during our two-year pilot:**

- ▶ 43% created spending plans and received benefits counseling services
- ▶ 37% enrolled in vocational programs
- ▶ 21% filed taxes
- ▶ 11% pulled and reviewed their credit reports
- ▶ 10% received help with opening bank accounts



# FAIR's Outcomes

## June 2019 – October 2021

### Employment Outcomes:

- ▶ 51% of active participants achieved employment.
  - ▶ 76% held these jobs for over 90 days.

### Financial Outcomes:

- ▶ 62% of clients have increased income by a program total of \$65,163 per month.
- ▶ 55% of clients have reduced their debt, with a total documented reduction of \$62,646.

# References

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