



# Cuyahoga County Reentry Review

## SafeNet Program Designed to Serve Gang-Involved Reentrants

By Lisa Casini

The SafeNet program is funded by the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry and is managed and implemented by Community Assessment & Treatment Services, Inc., (CATS) of Cleveland Ohio. The mission of SafeNet is to provide assessment services, therapy, group counseling, and transitional resources along with tools, education, mentoring, and access to employment opportunities for individuals returning to Cuyahoga County who've been identified by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) as having documented involvement in gangs and gang activity.

SafeNet focuses on serving these underrepresented individuals and their families. The ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism and increase the likelihood of sustaining a successful reentry path – away from gang activity and crime and toward a path of renewal by becoming healthy and productive members of their families and our local communities – thereby raising the level of safety and security throughout Cuyahoga County.

The target number of SafeNet participants is 50 individuals per year. Participation is voluntary. Participants must be 18 years old or older, returning to Cuyahoga County and must be identified having gang involvement or activity by the ODRC. Specific objectives include: ensuring that 50% of program participants become engaged in employment, training or education; and ensuring that no more than 20% of the participants reoffend within one year of involvement with the program.

SafeNet's innovative programming and services provide the participant with a needs assessment to determine the areas where the participant requires services to cover his basic needs such as housing, food and clothing as well as health care and dental care needs, etc. SafeNet services also include:

- Employment readiness, resume writing, interviewing skills, job skills development, job training and/or job referrals.
- Counseling about educational options such as high school diploma, GED or continuing education at the college or technical school level.
- Self-assessment, a start-up score card, a personal journaling piece and an agreed-upon action plan to prepare the participant to rejoin the community as a positive member.
- Identification needs such as: State Identification, Social Security Card, voter registration, Driver's License, credit report, birth certificate, prison records and arrest/prosecution reports.
- Educating the participant about the availability of post-release mental health and substance abuse treatment service.
- Assisting the participant in obtaining benefits including Ohio Works First, Prevention, Retention, Contingency Vouchers, Social Security Disability, Supplemental Security Income, Unemployment Compensation, and Veterans' Benefits.
- Legal service referrals for benefits advocacy, divorce, custody and child support issues, predatory lending, income tax disputes, discrimination and unemployment compensation, last wills and testaments.
- Identifying reentry support groups and other community mentoring support persons that will offer personal assistance to the recently released individual.
- Money management, budgeting and debt counseling coaching.

SafeNet is currently partnering with the City of Cleveland Police Department Gang Unit, and the local FBI Gang Task Force, to enhance our interviewing and identification techniques, so that individuals most vulnerable to gang involvement can be identified and guided along a path where supportive services, opportunity and awareness evolve into empowerment, hope and personal strength—and where living a life free of gang activity, crime and incarceration becomes a reality.

*Lisa Casini is the Director of Development for CATS. CATS is a premier treatment facility working with men and women suffering from drug and alcohol addictions. Many of their clients are also involved in the criminal justice system because of their behavior around their addictions. For more information, visit their website at [www.communityassessment.org](http://www.communityassessment.org).*

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### Employer Awareness Workshop – May 11, 2011

By Mary Kelley

The Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry, along with many local non-profit, corporate and legal sponsors, is presenting an Employer Awareness Workshop for employers, human resources professionals and attorneys on May 11, 2011.

Employers can play an important role in reentry by offering employment opportunities to formerly incarcerated individuals. However, employers need to know their basic legal rights and obligations in hiring practices regarding job applicants with criminal backgrounds.

This workshop will cover important current topics about how businesses and their legal counsel can manage the risks and the gain the benefits of hiring people with prior felonies, misdemeanors or other justice system involvement. The morning session will feature an overview discussion of policy issues including employer liability, negligent hiring and supervision, background checks and applicant scoring policies, free bonding and tax incentives, employee assistance programs, and model hiring practices. A working lunch will be provided followed by

an afternoon of facilitated discussions with experts in the fields of human resources and labor law.

Registration for this full-day, information-packed seminar (8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) is free and an application has been made for 6 hours of complimentary continuing education credits for both attorneys and human resources professionals. We hope you will join us for this very valuable workshop.

Register Early – Seating is Limited! To get a registration form or more information about the Employer Awareness Workshop, please email Carolyn Perkins at [cperkins@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:cperkins@cuyahogacounty.us)

***This is NOT a Job or Employment Fair for job seekers!***  
This is an informational workshop for employers, attorneys and human resources professionals.

### ***\*Save the Date\****

April 27th, 2011, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

Following a brief business meeting and the presentations, tours of the recently opened Judge Nancy R. McDonnell Community-Based Correctional Facility will be available.

#### **The Ohio Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition**

Cordially invites you to attend its next quarterly meeting featuring:

**Scott Decker, Diane Williams, and Marilyn Moses**

The Ohio Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition is hosting presentations by Scott Decker, Arizona State University, Marilyn Moses, National Institute of Justice, and Diane Williams, Safer Foundation, on the challenges and barriers ex-offenders confront in seeking and securing employment. This is the second event that is being funded by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). The authors will share research addressing the many issues impacting on ex-offenders who enter or reenter the labor market, including but not limited to, the stigma associated with a felony record, the impact of gender and race, and the collateral consequences associated criminal convictions.

NIJ has selected the Reentry Coalition to serve as a forum for introducing timely criminal justice research directly to policymakers and practitioners who wish to inform and reform their work through data-driven studies, and through engaged conversations involving stakeholders from across all three branches of government. This NIJ-Ohio partnership is unique in offering a "Research for Policy and Practice Learning Laboratory."

The meeting will be held at the newly opened

**Judge Nancy R. McDonnell Community Based Correctional Facility**

**3540 Croton Ave., Cleveland, Ohio 44115**

*The City of Cleveland Presents*

## RE-ENTRY RESOURCE EXPOSITION

April 21, 2011

10:00 a.m. -

2:00p.m.

Public Auditorium  
500 Lakeside Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44114

**For the Formerly Incarcerated,  
Ex-Offender Population**

**Many Resources will be Available -  
Take Advantage, Get Connected!**

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**Agencies representing the following resource  
areas will be present:**

Education  
Child Support Education  
Housing  
Legal Services  
Education  
Medical Services Information  
Job Readiness Opportunities  
Social Services  
& Many More

FOR MORE INFORMATION,

PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL:

Sharyna Cloud

Community Relations Board

216.664.3620

[scloud@city.cleveland.oh.us](mailto:scloud@city.cleveland.oh.us)



**CITY OF CLEVELAND**  
Mayor Frank G. Jackson

## ***\*Save the Date\****

### CATS Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 2nd @ 5:30 pm.

Location: CATS, 8411 Broadway Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44105;

Will be held outdoors on facility grounds, with an exquisite buffet designed and prepared by CATS Kitchen Manager—Chef William Brown and HR Director Tim Tress; \$20/person;

#### **The event is open to the public and will feature:**

- Tours of CATS facility and newly-opened women's center;
- Ceremony Honoring CATS supporters
- Testimonials from graduates of CATS;
- Entertainment: Drum Circle performed by CATS women clients and CATS staff/client choir.

For more information and to order tickets contact Lisa Casini at 216-441-0200 ext. 111  
[lcasini@communityassessment.org](mailto:lcasini@communityassessment.org)

## The Citizen Circles Concept



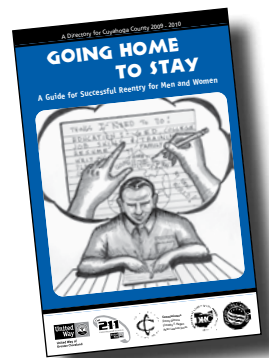
Citizen participation and guidance is essential for correctional practices inside and outside institutions. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has embraced the needs related to offenders returning home from correctional settings and as such one strategy is the implementation of Citizen Circles. i Circle members address risks that contribute to criminal activity by taking ownership of the solution. It is an opportunity for citizens to communicate expectations for successful reentry and help offenders recognize the harm their behavior has caused others. Offenders are able to make amends and demonstrate their value and potential to the community.

## Citizen Circles Locations

**The Euclid Avenue Citizen Circle**  
216.421.0482 ext. 282

**CEOGC**  
**North Star Resource Center**  
216.751.1382

**Mt. Pleasant**  
216.751.1085



To receive a copy of **Going Home to Stay**

contact First Call for Help at 216.436.2000 or go online and download a copy at [www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf](http://www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf)

## GREATER CLEVELAND STRATEGY Cuyahoga County Reentry Review



#### COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS:

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phone: 216.698.2501