

# KOSCIUSKO RE-ENTRY SIMULATION



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## Executive Summary

**The Problem:** Often times, individuals spend years in jail or prison and when released, they are left to pick up the pieces or risk finding themselves re-incarcerated. Kosciusko County Re-Entry Simulation aims to bring awareness around the complexities one faces after re-entry into society. One of the many challenges faced by recent parolees is society barriers that make it increasingly difficult for individuals to meet the **SIX** basic life needs. Those needs include having meaningful employment, a secure and safe home, family and friendships, health, criminal justice compliance, and social connections.

**A Solution:** The Re-entry After Incarceration Simulation is a powerful tool designed to educate and sensitize community members about the challenges faced by individuals transitioning from prison back into society. The purpose of the project seeks to introduce this simulation for Kosciusko County Leadership Academy, with the aim of fostering empathy, understanding, and actionable strategies to support re-entry efforts within the community.

**County Wide Impact and Partners:** The Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) defines recidivism as a return to incarceration within three years of release. The latest report indicates the recidivism rate for adults released in 2020 was around 38% and for juveniles, the recidivism rate was around 33%. In 2018, Kosciusko County released 110 inmates and of those released, 20 inmates or 18.2% reoffended within three years of being released. By implementing the Kosciusko County Re-Entry Simulation, the end goal is to promote collaboration within local re-entry programs, correctional facilities, and advocacy organizations to generate actionable recommendations for local policymakers, services providers, and community leaders.

**Sustainability:** The project expense totaled \$2,010.81 which included: pencils, cardstock, light breakfast, beverages, a catered lunch, and venue. LITE (Living in Transition Effectively) will be taking on the project after KLA ends. LITE plans to host The Re-Entry After Incarceration Simulation twice a year.

**Northern Award:** If this project wins the Northerner Award, the funds will be used in the following ways. Marketing the event to the community, renting a venue, providing lunch and drinks, and purchasing/replacing needed supplies.

## **Introduction**

The Kosciusko County Re-Entry Simulation is a pivotal initiative aimed at enhancing the reintegration experience for individuals returning from incarceration. Hosting an annual community event will be a pivotal cornerstone for raising awareness, fostering empathy, and dismantling barriers that individuals recently released from incarceration face upon re-entering society.

## **The Problem**

According to the *Harvard Political Review*, over 600,000 individuals are released from incarceration annually in the United States. Of these, approximately two-thirds are reincarcerated within three years, highlighting a persistent challenge within the criminal justice system. This national trend is reflected at the local level in Kosciusko County, Indiana, where recidivism remains a significant concern. Among the 110 individuals released from the county jail in 2018, 18 percent reoffended and were reincarcerated within a three-year period. The extent to which individuals successfully reacclimate to society is often measured by six fundamental life needs: meaningful employment, secure housing, family and social connections, health, criminal justice compliance, and a supportive social network. In the absence of these critical components, the likelihood of reoffending increases significantly, underscoring the importance of comprehensive reintegration support.

## **The Solution**

The Kosciusko County Re-Entry Simulation, an annual event organized by LITE (Living in Transition Effectively), seeks to foster a more inclusive and empathetic community. This interactive experience allows participants to engage in scenarios that reflect the real-life challenges faced by individuals transitioning from incarceration back into society. Throughout the event, participants will navigate various stations that simulate key aspects of reintegration, such as securing employment, finding housing, accessing healthcare, fulfilling legal obligations, and more. Volunteers at each station will offer guidance and support, helping to illustrate the complexities and obstacles encountered during re-entry. This hands-

on approach not only educates participants but also promotes a deeper understanding and empathy among community members.

## **County Wide Impact and Partners**

The impact of the simulation reaches far beyond the event itself. By raising awareness of the challenges faced by individuals re-entering society, the simulation inspires community-wide support for policies and programs that promote successful reintegration. In Kosciusko County, this has led to stronger collaboration among social services, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and other key sectors to create coordinated strategies that assist in reintegration. These continued and enhanced collective efforts have contributed to a reduction in recidivism, as individuals are better equipped with the resources and support necessary to rebuild their lives.

## **Community Benefits**

**Reduced Recidivism:** The Kosciusko County Re-entry Simulation (KCRS) is designed to interrupt the cycle of reoffending by providing returning individuals with the necessary skills and support. This initiative helps decrease the chances of re-incarceration.

**Safer Communities:** Successful reintegration leads to more secure neighborhoods. When individuals reintegrate effectively, they contribute positively to the community, enhancing overall public safety and reducing crime rates.

**Human Dignity:** Each successful re-entry signifies a restoration of dignity and hope, not just for the individuals involved but also for their families. The KCRS emphasizes the importance of treating all participants with respect, recognizing their potential to contribute positively to society, and supporting them in their journey towards a productive and fulfilling life.

## **Sustainability**

After the conclusion of KLA, LITE (Living in Transition Effectively) will continue to organize the annual event. LITE will explore potential funding opportunities, including event sponsorships, fundraisers, and grants, to support future events.

## **The Northerner Award**

Should this project win the Northerner Award, the funds will be allocated to sustain the annual event. Bowen Health generously sponsored the catered lunch, Cardinal Services provided the venue, and the KLA Mini Grant covered the cost of a light breakfast, beverages, and office supplies. The total cost of the event was approximately \$2,010.

## **Conclusion**

While data clearly highlights the importance of the re-entry simulation, there remains ample opportunity for further refinement and growth of the program. Statewide initiatives have demonstrated that comprehensive support systems can effectively reduce recidivism, improving both public safety and community cohesion. By raising awareness and deepening understanding, the simulation helps dismantle the obstacles that hinder successful reintegration. Its continued impact is seen in the collaborative efforts to address recidivism and assist individuals in their transition back into society. As Kosciusko County builds on this initiative, it sets an example for other communities, showcasing the power of education, empathy, and collective action in creating a more resilient and supportive environment for all.

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