



# FRESH START @ YOUR LIBRARY

*#MyFreshStart #MyJourney #MyLibrary*



## Fact Sheet

1. Overview – Fresh Start @ Your Library enables participating libraries to provide reentry support and services to citizens returning to their home communities after being paroled or after completing their prison terms.
2. Goal – Fresh Start @ Your Library will provide public libraries with a model to help them build capacity to serve the significant number of returning citizens residing in communities nationwide. The project aims to position public libraries as key collaborators in strengthening the work of government agencies and nonprofit organizations that help returning citizens find jobs, acquire stable housing and complete other essential tasks. The project will develop a model of process and a toolkit of best practices for libraries to actively assist in the reentry process and meet the needs of this sizeable target population in communities across the United States.
3. Approach – Participating libraries will serve as Reconnection Centers, in partnership with the New Jersey State Parole Board, and will provide the following services to returning citizens:
  - Community resource fairs featuring social service organizations, local nonprofit organizations and government agencies.
  - On-site social workers who will perform assessments and provide referrals to employment opportunities, occupational skills training and other classes offered at the participating libraries.
  - The grant provides funding for 50 people at each participating library to take the GED exam. GED prep programs and training software will be available for those preparing to take the exam.
  - The grant program will culminate in a statewide job fair for returning citizens.
4. Background – In 2009, the Long Branch Public Library created Fresh Start as a service to meet the needs of its community and to break the cycles of recidivism. In June 2019, the Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded the New Jersey State Library with a National Leadership Grant, totaling \$628,774. The New Jersey State Library, the New Jersey State Parole Board and the New Jersey Department of Labor & Workforce Development adopted the Fresh Start @ Your Library reentry



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program, and expanded it to include six participating libraries in New Jersey. The program will introduce the Free Library of Philadelphia in September 2020.

5. The New Jersey State Library is the grant administrator. Grant funds enabled the hiring of a full-time program manager and two part-time social workers.
6. Project Term – Sept. 1, 2019 through Aug. 31, 2021.
7. Project Partners:
  - New Jersey State Library
  - New Jersey State Parole Board
  - New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development
  - Long Branch Free Public Library
  - Free Library of Philadelphia
8. Advisory Committee includes librarians and social workers from:
  - San Francisco Public Library
  - Denver Public Library
  - District of Columbia Public Library
  - Monmouth University
9. Participating Libraries
  - Atlantic City Free Public Library
  - Cumberland County Library
  - Long Branch Free Public Library
  - The Newark Public Library
  - Paterson Free Public Library
  - Trenton Free Public Library
  - Free Library of Philadelphia (will join in year two)



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