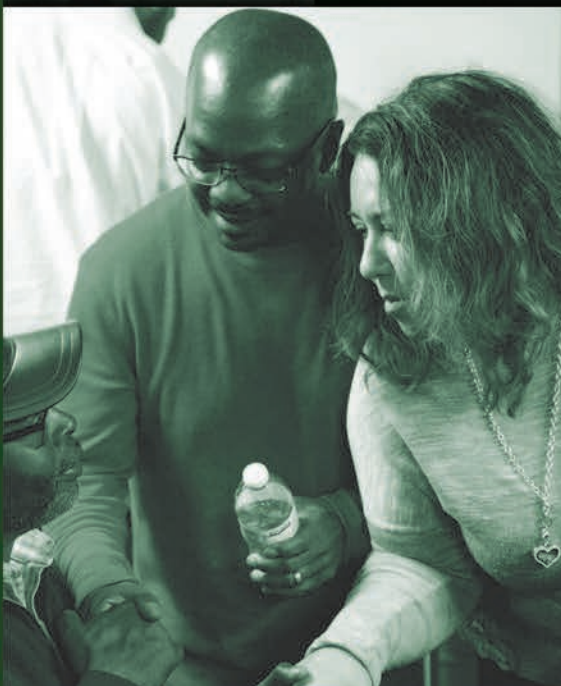
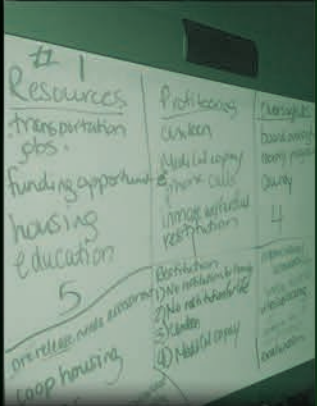




**ROOTS**  
community  
health center

*Reentry Engagement Toolkit*



Toolkit prepared by



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On Behalf of  
Alameda County  
Behavioral Health Care Services Agency

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# Table of Contents

I. Authorship Certification.....	1
II. Acknowledgments.....	1
III. Executive Summary.....	2
IV. Introduction.....	4
V. Section One: Pre-preparation	
<i>Assessing Readiness to Launch a Reentry Engagement Process</i> .....	5
A. Overview .....	5
B. Value Proposition.....	7
C. Focus Population .....	8
D. Self Assessment.....	9
VI. Section Two: Preparation	
<i>Development of the Reentry Engagement Plan</i> .....	12
A. Curriculum Development.....	12
B. Facilitator Selection and Facilitation Skills.....	15
C. Support of the Host Organization .....	17
D. Supportive Services .....	20
VII. Section Three: Implementation	
<i>Launching and Guiding the Reentry Engagement Process</i> .....	22
A. Outreach and Recruitment of Fellows .....	22
B. Implementation and Evolution .....	25
1. REF Kick-off Event.....	25
2. Curriculum and Structure Overview.....	25
3. REF Project Overview .....	25
Phase I: Laying a Foundation .....	27
Phase II: Preparing for Action.....	29
Phase III: Taking Action .....	33
Phase IV: Planning for the Future .....	37
C. Assessment/Evaluation.....	41
1. Overview .....	41
2. Lessons Learned.....	41
VIII. Section Four: Conclusion .....	46
A. Summary .....	46
B. Final Recommendations .....	47
IX. Resources .....	48

## I. Authorship Certification

This report specifically reflects the work and opinions of the authors. All authors of this report confirm that each has contributed substantially to (1) the conception, design, collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data, (2) the drafting, revision, and authentication of report content, and (3) the approval of the final version for publication. The specific contributions of each author are explained below.

**Noha Aboelata, MD** is the Principal Investigator and co-author. Dr. Aboelata led the project design and writing of the report and supervised all aspects of the evaluation: quantitative and qualitative data collection, verification, analysis, and interpretation; literature and document review; and conducted and synthesized interviews and focus groups.

**Lou Ann Lucke** is co-author and primary editor. She also contributed to the best practices and literature review.

**Jessica Travenia** is a contributing author, providing critical input, original ideas, and intellectual content. She also contributed substantially to project design and coordination, curriculum development and adaptation, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, and evaluation.

**Earl Simms** is a contributing author, providing critical input, original ideas, and intellectual content. He also contributed substantially to project design and coordination, curriculum development and adaptation, qualitative data collection, and evaluation.

## II. Acknowledgments

Our deepest gratitude goes to all **Oakland Unified Reentry (OUR) Project Fellows**, who brought meaning to this work, and without whom this publication would not have been possible.

**Marilyn Barnes** contributed significantly to project evolution and coordination, curriculum adaptation, qualitative data collection and evaluation.

**Yusef-Andre Wiley** assisted with project design, facilitator training and support, curriculum development and adaptation.

**Kwanzaa Duviyani** assisted with curriculum adaptation, qualitative data collection and evaluation.

A special thanks to **Sophia Lai** of Alameda Behavioral Health Care Services Agency, and the Innovations In Reentry staff for encouraging and supporting innovations in the field of reentry.

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Sincere gratitude to our **collaborative partners** who provided consultation prior to and during the project: **East Oakland Building Healthy Communities, Oakland Community Organizations, Black Workers Center, and the Ella Baker Center.**

Roots Community Health Center received funding from Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services Agency and has no conflict of interest to report.

### III. Executive Summary

In July 2016, Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services awarded \$1,029,497 to fund seven projects in the second round (Round 2) of their Innovations In Reentry pilot grant program, intended to “spur innovative, creative community-based projects that contribute to reducing adult recidivism in Alameda County.” Innovations In Reentry was designed to serve as “incubation funds for new models that will improve service delivery and strategies in reentry.”[1] The Innovations In Reentry grant program was funded by Assembly Bill (AB) 109 Public Safety Realignment, and Proposition 63 Mental Health Services Act. California’s AB 109 was signed into law in 2011, as the “cornerstone of California’s solution to reduce prison overcrowding, costs, and recidivism.”[2] Roots Community Health Center’s Reentry Engagement Framework (REF) Project was one of two projects funded in the Stakeholder Engagement category, which sought proposals for “effective and implementable models or practices to ensure the ‘voice of stakeholders’ is included in significant decisions impacting the design and effectiveness of programs serving reentry or formerly incarcerated individuals in the community.”

Given the complex and evolving landscape with respect to reentry, and persistently high rates of recidivism, Roots Community Health Center identified a critical need for ongoing participation of formerly incarcerated individuals in the processes that lead to programs and service delivery. We believed that this would require a framework in which reentry clients, providers and decision makers alike could be optimally informed, and we sought to define such a framework.

Roots expanded best reentry practices by involving formerly incarcerated individuals in authentic, ongoing engagement in decision making with policymakers and evaluation of systems, services and funding for reentry individuals, and by shaping this toolkit to help institutions and organizations improve responses to reentry needs in partnership with reentry individuals. The toolkit is intended to assist organizations and agencies considering undertaking the work of reentry engagement, and to serve as a resource to formerly incarcerated individuals engaging in systems change work. It includes key considerations/ recommendations in the following areas:

- *Organizational self-assessment of readiness to launch a reentry engagement process*
- *Development of a reentry engagement plan*
- *Launching and guiding a reentry engagement process*



OUR Project fellows gather with community members after a successful listening session. OUR Project includes everyone in rebuilding a stronger community.

[1] “Innovations in Reentry,” 2017, Retrieved from <http://www.innovationsinreentry.org/About>, [Last accessed 2/24/2017]

[2] “Fact Sheet: 2011 Public Safety Realignment,” 2013. CA Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Retrieved from <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/realignment/docs/realignment-fact-sheet.pdf>, [Last accessed 2/23/2017]

At the conclusion of our six-month project, the host organization (Roots Community Health Center) and the Reentry Group (fellows), co-developed these final recommendations:

1

*The design and implementation of programs and services to assist in reintegration and reduce recidivism for reentry individuals will be more likely to succeed when informed by authentic involvement and recommendations from an independent, self-sustaining group of reentry individuals; authentic engagement is required for systems change and accountability.*

2

*Involvement of reentry individuals is best accomplished through an intentional process in which lived experience, trauma-informed facilitators foster leadership development, ongoing barrier removal and support, mentorship, coaching (case management), and authentic engagement and action planning ideally over nine to twelve months (a minimum of six months).*

3

*Reentry individuals will have the most impact in service and policy recommendations when they are incubated by a host organization whose staff shares their lived experience, builds their individual and collective confidence and capacity to fully engage in the public arena, provides consistent oversight as well as flexibility, and has a track record in ensuring accountability by policy makers regarding the investment of funds for the reentry population. Agencies, systems and CBOs without the expertise or capacity to engage the reentry population should partner with an organization or group that has demonstrated success.*

Key considerations and recommendations contained in this toolkit are based on a review of relevant literature and resources; a distinct understanding of reentry barriers and strategies to overcome them; and an understanding of the local landscape in which organizations, advocates and policymakers/decision makers influence programs and policies that impact formerly incarcerated individuals and the broader community.



Fellows gather to learn and strategize to rebuild OUR community.

## IV. Introduction

Roots facilitated the Reentry Engagement Framework (REF) Project – a pilot project sponsored by Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services Agency’s Innovations in Reentry - in which we involved 15 formerly incarcerated individuals over a six month fellowship to explore and identify best practices for stakeholder engagement with reentry populations. Through a structured group process co-facilitated by four Roots’ employees (three Navigators and one development staff), Roots’ REF fellows participated in leadership development and a series of workshops and meetings, resulting in identification of best practices and co-creation of a training curriculum for formerly incarcerated individuals to engage with stakeholders as advocates regarding best practices and as experts in peer navigation for reentry. Fellows were also offered coaching (case management), barrier removal and medical/behavioral care, throughout and following the project.

Fellows were recruited through an online and hard copy application process, distributed widely via “inreach” to current clients/patients and outreach to community partners. Face-to-face visits with prospective fellows were held, focusing on their interests and willingness to engage in advocacy, readiness to inform best practices for reentry services, and availability to participate for the duration of the project.

Fellows numbered at ten men and five women in various stages of reentry. Their age range spanned from 24 to 68 years old. Two fellows were immigrants to the United States. One fellow identified as a member of the LGBTQ community, three identified as having physical/behavioral health challenges, and one was considered homeless. Together they attended 32 workshops/meetings; prepared for, observed and made public comment at three Alameda County Board of Supervisors meetings; organized, facilitated, and engaged with systems leaders and community members at two listening sessions sponsored by the Office of Supervisor Wilma Chan; and attended a listening session held by the Chief of Probation.

REF fellows began their collective work by identifying what does and does not work for the reentry population, and then developed a preliminary agenda about ways to impact decision making in Alameda County regarding reentry services, support and funding. They took ownership of the group relatively quickly, making an early decision to name themselves OUR (Oakland Unified Reentry) Project. Over six months, they participated in a series of workshops and meetings that were informed by five key characteristics: empowerment, self-direction, preparation to engage in policy arenas, actual participation in those arenas, and evaluation of their work. In the last month, fellows identified recommendations that shaped the framework described herein, which we see as an expansion of strategies that improve the likelihood of effective reentry through empowerment that builds leadership and capacity, individually and collectively. At the close of the project, fellowship graduates decided to continue their work together as a think tank dedicated to reinventing positive and successful reentry into communities.

This toolkit outlines the strategies we implemented, and key considerations and recommendations co-formulated by the fellows and facilitators, during and at the close of the project.

## V. Section One: Pre-preparation

### *Assessing Readiness to Launch a Reentry Engagement Process*

#### **A. Overview**

Roots' Reentry Engagement Framework (REF) Project is built on our success in working with thousands of reentry individuals over the past nine years since our inception, providing them with case management, behavioral and medical care. In the last several years, we have expanded this work to include navigation support by formerly incarcerated staff who receive certification as Community Health Outreach Workers and who are committed to bridging the barriers to successful family and community reintegration for the formerly incarcerated. Within that context, Roots staff discussed the potential to expand on our work by forming a structured reentry panel of participants who would take leadership in assessing current reintegration processes and make recommendations to improve reentry integration and resources. As part of our assessment about undertaking the project we:

- **Identified the value added** for Roots by taking on this work,
- **Defined the focus group** of reentry individuals,
- **Reviewed organizational capacity and readiness**, including staffing, and
- **Formed our initial plan** for a six month reentry engagement project.



*Listening Session participants exchange points, views and resources.*



## Project Overview

Key Project Element	Description	Roots' Reentry Engagement Framework Project
<b>Reentry Group</b>	The group of reentry individuals that is identified/selected/convened to engage in the reentry engagement program	Reentry fellows (selected via outreach and engagement process)
<b>Host Organization</b>	The agency, department or organization that develops and implements the reentry engagement program	Roots Community Health Center
<b>Project Development Team</b>	Host organization staff who develop the project schedule and leadership curriculum	Roots CEO, Roots Regional Director, Roots Navigator, policy and development staff
<b>Facilitators</b>	The incubators of the project who encourage the group to take initiative and develop leadership qualities/skills, keeping the group focused and on task	Four Roots staff impacted by incarceration
<b>Project Champion</b>	A formal representative of the host organization who shares their personal leadership experiences and advises facilitators and participants as needed	Roots Community Health Center physician leader
<b>Sponsor (if applicable)</b>	The funding agency that sponsors the reentry engagement program, when applicable	Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services Agency
<b>Source of Funding (if applicable)</b>	The source of funding (may be private, public, health-related, public protection-related, etc.), when applicable	"Innovations In Reentry": AB109 and Prop 63 Mental Health Services Act
<b>Policymakers/ Decision Makers</b>	The leaders with whom the Reentry Group will most likely engage	County Board of Supervisors, City Council Members, Agency/ Department/Division Directors
<b>Allies or Stakeholders</b>	The constituents, organizations or groups who may provide expertise or share knowledge of ongoing or planned campaigns, activities, actions, movements, etc.	Advocacy organizations, coalition-building organizations, community groups

## B. Value Proposition

Key Roots staff began with a discussion to lift up the business case to incubate a reentry engagement process. We reviewed alignment of the project with values already in place across the organization to identify congruence and potential challenges that could emerge during implementation. This assisted us in building value to gain buy-in of organizational leadership, and helped answer questions about design, scope and duration/sustainability of the project.

**Mission/Vision alignment.** The development of Roots' programs and services has always been informed by the community we serve. This is accomplished not only by hiring from the community, but also through patient/client surveys, interviews and focus groups. We see this input as critical in understanding and responding to new issues and opportunities as they arise, and in ensuring that our services remain responsive to the community we serve. We were interested in proceeding with a reentry engagement process based on our fundamental belief and practice that marginalized individuals must be positioned to respond to and influence the systems that impact them.

*Roots reduces health inequities by providing culturally competent, comprehensive physical/mental healthcare, education, employment and training, and wraparound services based on a whole health model that builds individual self-sufficiency and promotes community empowerment. We target African Americans, men, reentry individuals, homeless, and the most vulnerable in our East Oakland home community.*

**Bridging a gap.** Roots is experienced in engaging with policymakers and the public decision making process. Our observation has been that it is rare for reentry individuals who are not employed by a community-based or government agency to engage in these arenas. We recognized the value that other organizations and agencies could gain from integrative processes that receive and incorporate input from the individuals about whom they are making decisions. We also recognized the challenges inherent in attempting to receive this input:

- *It is difficult to find reentry representatives who have lived experience and do not have real or perceived conflict of interest (i.e., employed by a contractor/potentially contracted organization or government agency)*
- *Formerly incarcerated individuals often must overcome significant barriers in order to participate*
- *Participation in systems work can be triggering for systems-impacted individuals*
- *It can be a challenge to sustain engagement over time due to changing circumstances (unstable housing, secured employment, etc.)*

Recognizing the gap in authentically engaging the formerly incarcerated in public policy settings, and despite the challenges in sustaining their long-term engagement, we made the decision to implement the reentry engagement process because of the strong potential for improvements in reentry policies and practices, and because we possessed the necessary resources and experience for this undertaking (see self-assessment on the following page).

## Key Considerations: Value Proposition

### Questions to consider before beginning a deeper internal assessment:



- *Is this work consistent with the mission/vision of our organization/agency?*
- *Could we be more successful or efficient in delivering our services if informed by an authentically engaged reentry group?*
- *Are there gaps in service delivery or communication with the population we are serving/wanting to serve that can be bridged by involving such a group?*
- *Does involving reentry individuals in program planning meet a requirement (e.g., from oversight agencies or funders) to have input from the formerly incarcerated?*

### From OUR Perspective: The Value of Reentry Engagement

At the close of the project, fellows concluded that the value of an organized, independent reentry group to city, county, and other agencies and organizations who serve the reentry population includes:

- **Direct access** to reentry members of the community: authentic, unbiased engagement
- **Intelligence-gathering:** “on the ground,” real time information directly from the people impacted
- **Ease of process:** no need to develop infrastructure to engage groups that the agency/organization may not be equipped to support
- **No conflict of interest:** participants are not affiliated with agencies/organizations

## C. Focus Population

Roots made the decision to define reentry broadly, in order to surface and represent the diversity of situations and challenges the formerly incarcerated face. Thus we sought participants who were on probation/parole, who were not supervised but still experiencing barriers, who had immigrated to the United States, who live in and/or are from Oakland, or who have mental health and/or substance abuse challenges. We also made an effort to ensure representation of formerly incarcerated women for whom we are attempting to bridge a gap in gender-responsive policies and practices.

## Key Considerations: Focus Population

### Identify the reentry population you intend to engage, considering:



- *Time since release (recent vs. remote release date)*
- *Length and/or number of sentences*
- *Supervised (parole and/or probation) vs. unsupervised*
- *Demographic factors (geographic, socioeconomic, gender/race/age, etc.)*

## D. Self-Assessment

Roots proceeded to examine our capacity more deeply regarding readiness for implementation of a reentry engagement project. We knew we were well-positioned to launch this effort because of our successful work in recruiting, hiring and training formerly incarcerated community members in a variety of positions, including Roots Health Navigators and outreach workers. Roots' strong community presence and links to numerous reentry-serving CBOs also provided a solid foundation for implementation. In addition, our recent acquisition of Timelist Group, an organization founded and staffed by the formerly incarcerated (specifically, "former lifers"), expanded our skill set and resources to include more robust reentry facilitator training and curricula for use in groups.

We also evaluated the relationships Roots holds with key players (agency leaders, politicians, advocacy organizations, etc.) as a determining factor to ensure that the reentry group would have ease in connecting and networking, and the project could call on allies and potential resources as the project unfolded. We considered space, time, staffing, accessibility (e.g., public transportation, parking, access for disabled, etc.), as well as resource and service access. We took into account wraparound services and mentoring support Roots already has in place that would readily transpose into a more structured group process. Our work to hire and provide ongoing training for staff with trauma-aware care skills and cultural competence also was key in our confidence to launch the project.

Ultimately, our history in hiring and working with reentering men and women was the primary factor leading to the decision to tap into the wealth of leadership and advocacy skills we know are present among the formerly incarcerated. In addition, our foundational principle regarding growing the dignity and efficacy of services for reentering individuals and reintegrating them into a welcoming society positioned us well for success. We decided to move to implementation, confident that we had the skill set and resources to support a group of reentry fellows to advance their own agendas, build their skills, and contribute to the knowledge base regarding authentic engagement by formerly incarcerated individuals in systems change.

Following is a comprehensive list of self-assessment questions we recommend considering prior to implementation of a reentry engagement process. These questions are based on our own self-assessment as well as lessons learned during project implementation, and are discussed in greater detail throughout this report.



*Community advocate describes potential solutions to barriers in reentry.*

# Key Considerations: Value Proposition

## Key questions to review in assessing readiness to implement a reentry engagement process:

### 1) How prepared is our organization to build a framework for reentry engagement?

- a. *Are we knowledgeable and/or able to elicit information about community wants and needs (what are current/potential campaigns)?*
- b. *Do we have a good understanding of the local political landscape (flow of resources, policymaking/decision-making processes, etc.)?*
- c. *Do we have relationships with key players (agency leaders, politicians, advocacy organizations, etc.)?*
- d. *Do we employ or engage with formerly incarcerated individuals capable of facilitating the group process?*
- e. *How equipped is our organization to manage anticipated and unanticipated barriers to participation and progress, including conflict (diverse communication styles, triggers, gender and cultural considerations, etc.)?*

### 2) What is our capacity to support the needs of the overall project?

- a. *Does our staff/agency have good rapport, trust and a positive reputation among formerly incarcerated individuals?*
- b. *Does our staff/agency have time, resources, skill sets, operational capacity, etc. necessary for success (space, financial infrastructure, food, dedicated staff, etc.)?*
- c. *Does our organization have staff capacity/resources to provide clients with incentives and supplemental income to support their participation and skill development?*
- d. *Does our team have the ability to coordinate and facilitate leadership development trainings?*

### 3) What is our capacity to support the individual needs of participants?

- a. *Can we provide or refer to needed wraparound services?*
- b. *Do we have navigators, care coordinators, case managers, mentors, life coaches or other staff with lived experience who can assist formerly incarcerated individuals in navigating the complex systems that serve them?*
- c. *Are our services culturally competent and situationally sensitive for our focus population?*
- d. *Does our team have strong relationships with referral agencies? Are we able to refer via a "warm hand off" and subsequently follow up with referrals?*

### 4) What is our capacity to implement an effective project?

- a. *Do we have experience in partnering with reentry individuals in design and implementation of engagement strategies?*
- b. *Have we successfully evaluated similar efforts with reentry populations to surface what works/what doesn't work in group processes? (See IX. Resources)*
- c. *Do we have the knowledge and experience to work with reentry populations to ensure long-term value for them individually and collectively from their participation? Do the curriculum, activities or recommendations lead to engagement or advocacy that adds value to the lives of the participants and to the greater reentry community?*
- d. *Do we have mechanisms in place to measure the effectiveness of the process?*
- e. *How will we know our efforts are creating opportunity or skill-building for participants that could help them sustain campaigns beyond the scope of the program?*
- f. *Do we have facilitation staff who are invested in the success of the group and who can offer guidance without judgment?*

## Key Considerations: Value Proposition (cont'd)

**Key questions to review in assessing readiness to implement a reentry engagement process:**

### 5) Are we equipped to mitigate risks?

- a. Do we have staff capacity/skills to recognize when participants are in crisis, being triggered, or need additional support, and to provide that support?
- b. Does our staff have experience and skill with de-escalation, conflict resolution and maintenance of a safe environment?
- c. Does the organization have boundary-setting mechanisms in place to appropriately monitor and control access to resources such as space (e.g., available vs. off-limits areas), staff (including fiscal/administrative), etc.?

### 6) What is our capacity to facilitate/support the sustainability of the project?

- a. How will the project be funded?
- b. Is there a commitment of staff time or resources to help navigate strategic partnerships for coalition and movement building?
- c. Are there infrastructure or ongoing activities that could help maintain the momentum of movement and skill-building following the project's conclusion?

## From OUR Perspective: organizational assessment to engage the reentry population

At the close of the project, fellows were asked to identify barriers, along with related questions they would ask about an agency that wished to undertake the work of reentry engagement.

- **Skepticism/Lack of Trust** – “What are the agency/CBO motives and objectives? Will we really have an impact or are we just being ‘used’ to say they have input from formerly incarcerated?”
- **Disconnect** – “Many agencies/organizations lack a real understanding of the depth of barriers or the value of our contributions. If it’s not led by formerly incarcerated, will they know what questions to ask or what information to elicit?”
- **Not equipped to be supportive** – “Do the agencies/organizations have the ability to deal with triggers or resolve conflicts? Can they provide referrals to services and other support (transportation assistance, meals, stipends) when needed/appropriate?”
- **Lack of Alignment** – “Are the agencies/organizations just trying to fulfill a requirement or are we working towards the same goal? We do not want to serve someone else’s agenda, especially if it is counter to ours.”

## VI. Section Two: Preparation

### *Development of the Reentry Engagement Plan*

#### **A. Curriculum Development**

Initial program design was accomplished by the **project development team**, which included two members of Roots management: Roots CEO and Roots Regional Director, who is also founding CEO of Timelist Group (an organization founded by and serving the formerly incarcerated, and now part of Roots Community Health Center); as well as a Roots Navigator and policy and development staff. This team sketched out a foundation for the six month group curriculum to guide us as the project was implemented. We assessed our own tools and resources, researched curricula, and incorporated activities to match the needs of our project and population. We also adapted components of the Timelist Group curriculum - particularly for the facilitator training which preceded the fellows' group orientation.

We drew from our success in training reentry and high-risk individuals in our Emancipators Initiative, in which reentry individuals complete a Roots-developed curriculum as they prepare for employment, and our training of reentry individuals as Roots Health Navigators who provide intensive case management for formerly incarcerated Roots clients. Our experience working closely with reentry clients in each setting has given us clarity about the barriers and challenges faced when the formerly incarcerated return to their families and communities, and these lessons were incorporated into curriculum design and group processes.

The signature training program Roots designed for the Emancipators Initiative provides individuals previously shut out of the workforce with on-the-job training in the light manufacturing setting, barrier removal, "soft skills" training, and linkage to permanent employment upon individual readiness, either with outside employers or in our social enterprise, Clean360 ([www.clean360.org](http://www.clean360.org)), in which we train at-risk individuals in our model soap factory. Emancipators learn how to make small batch, handcrafted soaps while they receive stipended on-the-job training, barrier removal assistance, and ongoing support. Participants must master four major learning modules and demonstrate stabilization of psychosocial and legal matters, as determined by competency testing and stability assessment; once this is achieved, suitable employment is pursued. The Emancipators Initiative has confirmed that making progress towards financial stability is key to ongoing engagement and barrier removal, and that economic empowerment itself would need to be addressed through the project. For this reason, we incorporated training and education on models of financial sustainability and various business and employment strategies for returning individuals. We also provided substantial stipends based on time commitment and type of activities, as well as food at meetings to increase stability and support throughout the project.

In addition, our experience recruiting and training formerly incarcerated individuals who complete their Community Health Worker Certificate at SF City College, become Roots Health Navigators, and provide navigation/intensive case management to recently released individuals was also an important backdrop in program design. Roots Health Navigators provide coaching/case management services to recently released Alameda County residents, and develop their skills through training, team meetings, and ongoing coaching and supervision by experienced Roots program and clinical staff. Our model for reentry support includes barrier removal and client stabilization via enrollment in Medi-Cal/CalFresh; assistance with DMV barriers; shelter/housing; clothing; job-seeking support; enrollment in substance abuse facility/sober living; attending to medical/behavioral needs; ongoing mentoring and building healthy relationships with peers and family. From this work, we know the challenges that reentry individuals face as they consider sustained

engagement in projects over time: mistrust, changing circumstances, insecure housing, relapse, or other barriers to stability are often experienced.

Building upon our initial self-assessment and value proposition work, we also determined that the development of an autonomous group of reentry representatives who were unaffiliated with any organization or entity was an important strategy. We drew upon our coalition-building experience through formation of the Community Rooted Provider Coalition (ProCo) and our formative experience building Roots Community Health Center itself. In both environments, we learned how to build momentum in a group through development of a shared commitment to challenge urgent obstacles affecting all group members.

As previously described, curriculum development was informed by five key characteristics: **empowerment, self-direction, preparation to engage in policy arenas, actual participation in those arenas, and evaluation of their work.** Following are components we saw as essential to achieving these key characteristics:

### ***Empowerment and self-direction***

- *Surface and maximize skills and assets within group*
- *Emphasize understanding of communication styles*
- *Build leadership*
- *Emphasize collaboration and coalition-building*

### ***Preparation to engage in policy arenas, and actual participation in those arenas***

- *Develop skills in individual storytelling/“narrative change”*
- *Provide team-building/trust-building activities*
- *Conduct a landscape scan, learn about current campaigns*
- *Develop an action plan*

### ***Evaluation***

- *Integrate self-evaluation and reflection throughout the process*
- *Co-create recommendations emerging from the process*

**Curriculum & Meeting Plan.** Following is a summary of our preliminary curriculum and meeting plan prior to implementation, including goals and corresponding activities, discussions, workshops, presentations, and actions.



*OUR Project fellows explore the collective intelligence they share: organizational and personal asset mapping helped reveal each other's skills and interests, and laid a foundation for strong collective impact.*



## Phase I: Laying Foundation

**Months:** 1 -2

**Goals:** Getting to know each other and building a shared understanding

### Activities, discussions, workshops and presentations:

- Conflict/communication style assessment
- Admirable leaders and leadership qualities
- Race, justice, community systems and mass incarceration
- Group agreements; decision making process
- Stereotypes, strengths and challenges
- Goal-setting re socioeconomic stability and success
- Introduction to organizing
- Choosing issues/campaigns/actions

## Phase II: Preparing for Action

**Months:** 2 -3

**Goals:** Understanding the political landscape; using your experience to make change

### Activities, discussions, workshops and presentations:

- Understanding rules, regulations, policies, practices, and laws to avoid recidivism
- City, county, state government: how policy is made
- Campaign planning: allies, targets, demands
- Story-telling: self, family, community
- Incorporating story-telling into your campaign
- Business and employment strategies for formerly incarcerated
- Models of financial sustainability for groups

## Phase III: Taking Action

**Months:** 3 -4

**Goals:** Action Planning

### Activities and actions

- Refine group structure, revisit group agreements
- Prioritize issue areas
- Identify areas of alignment with current/upcoming campaigns
- Plan campaign, meet with allies
- Engage with policy makers/political process

## Phase IV: Planning for Future

**Month:** 5

**Goals:** Continuing the Campaign

- Transition and/or sustainability planning

“

*In the beginning you were saying ‘no one ever listens,’ then ‘what if no one listens?’ Now you recognize that you have gotten people to listen, and realize the value of what you have to say. You’ve come a long way.*

*-- OUR Project facilitator, addressing fellows at the finale --*

”

## **B. Facilitator Selection and Facilitation Skills**

As we prepared to implement the REF Project, based on our experience outlined above, staff identified critical qualities for facilitators to be successful: they needed to share the lived experience of participants, have support from Roots overall, and have ready access to necessary resources - including timely stipends, meeting space, access to supportive services for participants, and support for the project at all levels of the organization.

The facilitator skill set we prioritized included cultural, gender and situational facilitation skills, and conflict resolution/restorative justice experience. The qualities we sought included flexibility, respect, openness, dependability, confidence and authenticity. We began with four facilitators, all Roots staff members, in an effort to bring a diversity of skills and experience, and to ensure an appropriate level of support for participants (one facilitator to no more than five participants). All four facilitators we selected had been impacted by incarceration: three were formerly incarcerated themselves (one a former lifer who served over 20 years in prison), and one with currently incarcerated family members. Two facilitators were male and two were female, ages ranging from 20's to 50's, all African American. Each staff member was originally hired because of their unique background, skills, and educational background (high school diploma to doctoral student), which made them valuable assets to the organization overall. Their staff roles and professional development paths at Roots further honed their expertise, helpful to Roots as a whole, and to this project specifically: one focuses on program development, one on navigation and advocacy, another on educational attainment, and the fourth on economic empowerment. While we were not initially wedded to the number of facilitators being four, this turned out to be ideal according to participants and facilitators alike. If one facilitator was ill or otherwise unavailable, three were able to manage the workload, and as the project unfolded, facilitators were able to refine and adjust their original roles/division of duties as needed.

**Facilitator Training and Preparation.** Roots leadership and the project development team held a kickoff orientation meeting with project staff to outline the goals and objectives of the REF Project. Roots Regional Director and founder of Timelist Group subsequently held the initial facilitator training. Since the facilitators were already skilled in group work, this training focused on guiding facilitators to support the group while being flexible; and how to use the curriculum as a guide without being rigid. The orientation as well as facilitator training surfaced some questions from facilitators about how they would strike the best balance in providing instruction, group work, and team building that would result in an autonomous group of reentry leaders – all within a six-month period. At that time, leadership and development staff committed to providing ongoing support and oversight in an effort to help answer these questions as implementation was underway.

Roots' experience working with reentry clients has resulted in a range of strategies to identify and reduce the barriers and challenges these individuals face when returning to their families and community. Challenges are heightened when individuals engage in group work, and systems change work often is triggering for systems-impacted individuals. Therefore, we saw it as essential that facilitators hold discussions with fellows about barriers that they were facing, including those that might emerge in the future, to encourage the self-determination to successfully survive challenging moments and even turn them into a platform for advocacy and systems change. Facilitators therefore incorporated "check-ins" at the start of each meeting – and at times at the conclusion of meetings. They also remained available to fellows after and between meetings. While facilitators expressed greater confidence in having a framework and a curriculum to get the group started and to fall back on when needed, they also relied heavily on their prior experience in traditional workshop administration/education, behavior change work, traditional group facilitation, and one-on-one case management. Facilitators also leaned on Roots Health Navigators to case conference or get advice.

As the project evolved, we recognized that we needed a specific point person to act as a resource, mentor and support to project staff. We therefore identified a project champion, discussed in more detail in Section C: Support of the Host Organization, to function in a supportive role when needed. For example, when a facilitator felt over-burdened or triggered themselves, they notified the project champion, and as a group we were able to take a step back, discuss any underlying issues, and adjust duties when needed. Facilitators reflected that while they did challenge themselves to take on roles for the group that were new for them, for the most part they were able to remain in their comfort zone and the majority of the time this worked well for the group process. For instance, one facilitator served as the administrative backbone for the group, managing logistics, stipends, agendas and timekeeping. Another facilitator was particularly skilled in connecting with participants, diffusing tension/de-escalation, and ensuring each fellow was contributing. The third facilitator was very strong in challenging the group, playing “devil’s advocate” and stimulating thought. And the fourth facilitator was strongest in providing resources and introducing new ideas, encouraging fellows to think outside the box. Each facilitator, to varying degrees, also provided one-on-one support to fellows.

Following are key considerations in selecting reentry project facilitators, based on our experience and on project evaluation.

## **Key Considerations: Facilitator Selection and Facilitation Skills**

### **Minimum qualifications of facilitator staff:**

- *Having lived experience or history of incarceration*
- *Understanding of/experience in group facilitation*
- *Able to identify triggers, crises and conflict before they escalate*
- *Experience in conflict resolution/de-escalation*
- *Humility, respect, confidence and flexibility*
- *Encouraging, firm and non-judgmental*
- *Skilled at setting and maintaining boundaries*

### **From OUR Perspective - Role of Facilitators**

**In a wrap-up session gathering feedback from fellows we heard that the facilitators were key in many critical ways:**

- *“Their ‘commitment to the cause’ brought an element that was real. The staff/facilitators could relate to us, it was really easy to understand that this was an issue that was personal and close to home for them too;”*
- *“The facilitators were committed, helpful, giving advice, ‘checking’ us, holding us accountable, passionate about how we advanced, and showed commitment to our success;”*
- *“Facilitators picked up the slack and encouraged the group to stay on track.”*

### **C. Support of the Host Organization**

Central to Roots' mission is our emphasis on self-sufficiency and empowerment of marginalized communities. As a result, we implement multiple strategies to lift up the voices, identify and address needs, and support the goals defined by the people we serve. These strategies include hiring from the community, collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data regarding the needs and goals of our clients/patients, utilizing this data to inform our programs and services, and correlating these interventions to outcomes. We also continuously gather feedback from our lived experience staff and clients alike about venues and experiences in which they feel heard and empowered, and others in which they may not. We have incorporated this feedback over the years in an effort to ensure that community engagement maintains authenticity, and that the people we serve are confident that their feedback is being used in a manner with which they approve and endorse. This approach and knowledge base positioned us well to shape the Reentry Engagement Framework Project.

We did not identify all of the ways we might demonstrate our support in advance of project implementation, rather our approach was to be responsive to needs as they arose – much as we do within Roots overall. This responsiveness is a core Roots value which necessitates participation and buy-in at all levels of the organization in order to identify challenges/successes, design and implement interventions/expansion, and rapidly refine and "course correct" when needed. Our approach was designed and prioritized during the planning phase of Roots Community Health Center itself, based on the recognition that the long-standing problems we seek to address require solutions grounded by a deep understanding that can only be informed by those most impacted, and that solutions must match the depth of need, the burden of chronic disease, and the magnitude of disparities stemming from multi-generational poverty and trauma. As such, we are intentional about continuously refining and integrating our programming into the fabric of our organization, and scaling, replicating and sustaining this programming over the long term.

Our approach is inherently time and resource-intensive and requires leadership involvement to implement and succeed. Given that we were engaging project participants for the first time, and that the project was of short duration and intense in nature, we knew that it would be critical for Roots, as host organization, to quickly establish credibility and trust with the fellows in order for them to be able to form bonds among themselves - utilizing us for support and as a resource – and move on to the work of systems change. Roots' experience and reputation with the reentry population resulted in a solid foundation upon which we could build this credibility and establish support for each participant and the group as a whole. It made a critical difference to reentry fellows that Roots had the skills, experience, resources and commitment to welcome and support them throughout the project, and they cited this as a reason for engaging in the process from the start.

*It helped that Roots is so grounded in the community. It got a lot of the trust issues out of the way early, so people didn't have to feel so skeptical. Then they could start liking each other and form an allegiance.*

-- OUR Project facilitator --

Over the duration of the project, Roots demonstrated support and commitment at multiple levels of the organization, and in a variety of ways. Initially, the project team presented the goals of the project at the orientation session, with transparency regarding funding source and duration, and each entity's interest (Roots, county agencies, etc.) in the project. Executive leadership's presence at the orientation and other important meetings - without imposing a power dynamic in the group - demonstrated to the fellows that they had the support of high level staff. And because Roots began as a volunteer organization, stories from founding members were of particular inspiration and guidance. Once fellows established their own set of priorities and needs, they were able to take the lead in requesting and receiving technical assistance from Roots. When events/meetings were held in the evening, security staff prolonged their stay to keep the group, staff and events well-supported. Roots' finance team was nimble and flexible in turning around stipends for emergency meetings and unplanned workshops and actions.



*I have trust in this agency (Roots). I trust what Roots is doing and I know you are here for the community and want us to be a success.*



*-- OUR Project Fellow --*

In addition to leadership support across the organization, we also recognized that we needed a support person to act as a resource, mentor and sounding board for facilitator staff. We drew upon our experience with other implementation projects such as Electronic Health Records implementation, in which, although a very different kind of work, we identified a project champion: a resource and support person who acted as the “glue” when challenges arose. We also drew on our Navigator model in which lived experience health workers receive support from experienced Community Health Outreach Worker supervisors and licensed clinical staff. This model has been successful in supporting Navigators who are vulnerable to their own triggers while providing services, given the nature of the work. Project champion support proved to be of high value for the REF Project, and we believe it is a critical component of successful reentry engagement project implementation.

The project champion's role will likely vary depending on support needed: they may be called upon to assist when conflict arises between or among facilitators; when individual facilitators experience triggers/ need additional support; when the group encounters internal challenges or conflict; and when boundaries are/could be crossed. Roots' project champion was also a physician leader, and was able to step in when mediation was needed; intervene (or assist facilitators in intervening) when challenges such as client/ facilitator crises or triggers arose; and help facilitators augment the curriculum as needed. Depending on the subject matter, composition of the group, and skill/experience/support of facilitators with lived experience, the champion may need to ideally be a clinician (LCSW, Psychologist, MD, etc.).

## Key Considerations: Support of Host Organization

### **General considerations:**

- *Appropriate meeting space, time, staffing and administrative resources*
- *Commitment to population and project*
- *Availability of wraparound services and mentoring support*
- *After-hours access and security*
- *Financial systems to facilitate timely/accurate distribution of stipends*
- *Availability of a project champion: someone in the organization with experience and capacity to provide support to facilitators and the overall program*

### **Selection of a project champion - characteristics, qualifications, and considerations:**

#### **The project champion should be:**

- *On the host organization's staff, preferably leadership and/or clinical*
- *Preferably not directly involved with the project*
- *Capable of and authorized to help facilitators augment curriculum/programs as needed*
- *Able to intervene and assist facilitators in intervening when unanticipated situations arise, such as client crisis or triggers*
- *Able to help problem solve when tension/conflict arises and/or mediation is needed between facilitators, between participants, or between facilitators and participants*
- *Depending on the subject matter/composition of the group, and skill/experience/support of lived experience facilitators, the champion may need to be a clinician*

### **From Roots' Perspective - Role of a Host Organization**

**At the conclusion of the project, Roots leadership and project staff delineated the roles and responsibilities of a host organization implementing a reentry engagement project:**

- *Continuously identify new issue areas where reentry input is critical*
- *Proactively find ways to lift up the voices of formerly incarcerated individuals*
- *Provide training, technical assistance and support*
- *Act as an incubator*
- *Build the capacity of the formerly incarcerated to address their own issues and advocate on their own behalf*

## **D. Supportive Services**

Our experience working with reentry, including the design of successful models in which reentry individuals are prepared for employment, taught us that there would need to be key support services available to fellows for the REF Project to succeed. We determined that especially for those facing socioeconomic, physical/mental health and legal issues, one-on-one coaching, care management, navigation and support would be critical in building empowerment and self-efficacy, which were necessary for the group to work well together. We knew that developing a trusting relationship in which individuals learn how to ask for – and receive - things they need most, results in building new skills, confidence and capacity for advocacy and systems change work.

**Wraparound services.** Fellows engaged in a number of wraparound services through the whole health model that Roots' clinic offers. Wraparound services accessed by project fellows included benefits enrollment; educational, employment and service navigation through Roots' care management model, which is trauma informed and culturally responsive, including making use of client-centered assessment tools; and access to culturally congruent mental health counseling. Six participants sought regular coaching/case and/or care management for health conditions or social supports with a Health Navigator. Eight came for one-on-ones with a group facilitator to receive additional technical support regarding the curriculum and group path. Six sought services from the Economic Empowerment Coordinator for workforce development needs. Our communications staff worked with all fellows on storytelling, and provided five participants with additional one-on-one support prior to listening sessions with public officials. Six met with our barrier removal coordinator for Clean Slate (felony reduction/expungement) activities. Two received assistance from our onsite medical clinician, and three from our behavioral health clinician. As a result of these accessible, vital services, fellows were more stable to engage in community advocacy and events, and better prepared to actively participate in meetings. Having an open-ended offer to engage in wraparound services also led to strengthened self-efficacy as fellows began to seize opportunities.

**Stipends/support.** Our preliminary work to define the value proposition for this effort lifted up the frequent exclusion of reentry individuals from public processes that result in policy decisions that impact them. We discovered that it is rare to find representatives who have lived experience, are unaffiliated with any organization or agency, and who are likely to remain engaged over the duration of a project. While there are numerous reasons for this discussed elsewhere in this toolkit (e.g. crisis, triggers, instability, etc.), we determined that barriers to participation could be as simple as no transportation or having to make unacceptable tradeoffs (participating could mean missing an opportunity to obtain a meal or income, for example). Therefore, to reduce these barriers we provided stipends to honor the time commitment and participation; offered transportation support, such as bus passes provided by Navigators; and provided food at the meetings (ranging from snacks to meals). Participants earned an average of \$1,600 each in stipends over the project duration. Stipends were paid via organization checks, initiated by check requests from the facilitators. Often, stipends were needed immediately after a meeting or event, requiring finance staff to be present to ensure accuracy and timeliness. All staff remained sensitive to the fact that this was an important, and sometimes the only income source for many participants, and made every effort to make this process seamless and accurate. While we opted not to offer childcare due to the short duration of the project and no established partnerships, we recognize that childcare would have been valuable for both male and female fellows as well as staff, who often stayed after hours for meetings.

## **Key Considerations: Development of the Reentry Engagement Plan**

### **Establish foundational principles:**

- *Identify guiding principles and overall project goals that inform development of the plan*
- *Decide upon timeframe, level of engagement required and composition of the group*
- *Design accordingly (e.g., need for stipends, meals, childcare, availability of resources and ancillary support)*

### **Develop a preliminary curriculum:**

- *Select a project development team to design preliminary curriculum*
- *Dedicate adequate staff time for preliminary design*
- *Develop agreements about responding to modifications/revisions along the way*
- *Anticipate participant barriers and incorporate solutions in curriculum design*

### **Identify ancillary support:**

- *Respond to challenges with systems change work by systems-impacted individuals*
- *Require dedicated individual support/case management and wraparound services (via the host organization or referral), at least for the project duration but preferably as long as needed, to mitigate potential instability, triggers or crises that may interfere with participation and reintegration*
- *If unable to provide dedicated support, collaborate with an organization that provides wraparound services*
- *Ensure a reliable, time-sensitive mechanism for administrative support such as meals and stipends*





## VII. Section Three: Implementation

### *Launching and Guiding the Reentry Engagement Process*

#### **A. Outreach and Recruitment of Fellows**

As described above, Roots identified key factors in selecting reentry participants for the REF Project: we wanted to ensure diverse representation of the reentry population, and engage those who were interested and available to pursue systems change. It was a priority to include individuals of all ages, including those with and without leadership experience who had been incarcerated in multiple types of correctional institutions (juvenile, county, state, and federal facilities, for varying sentence terms); those recently released, and others who had been out for longer periods of time; those under supervision (probation and/or parole), and those who weren't supervised. We prioritized recruitment of participants who were interested in engaging in solution-based discussions and projects whether or not they were pertinent to their own personal barriers.

We announced the fellowship opportunity through e-blasts, our website and social media, the Probation Department's newsletter, and targeted outreach to partner organizations, faith-based leaders and community groups. We employed a short, simple application that:

- *was accessible to all age and literacy ranges (including a statement offering assistance from Root's staff to complete the application, if needed)*
- *was available in hardcopy and online*
- *included basic demographic information and incarceration history*
- *employed the informed consent process*

We held an **onsite information session** for all interested parties in which the REF Project was explained in a group setting. We used this opportunity to also describe other programs and services for which applicants might be eligible or have interest. This introduced attendees to additional, alternative projects and initiatives from which they could benefit, and was also helpful information for those who were not accepted into the project.

We concluded recruitment through **one-on-one follow-up** by project facilitators which included phone interviews to assess:

- *applicant interests and willingness to engage in advocacy*
- *applicant readiness to inform best practices for reentry services*
- *applicant availability to participate for the duration of the project*

We received a total of 69 applications. Sixteen applicants qualified for and were selected to participate in the REF Project. Remaining applicants were made aware of other programs/projects/services at Roots for which they qualified. Out of the sixteen selected, one moved away and therefore was unable to participate.

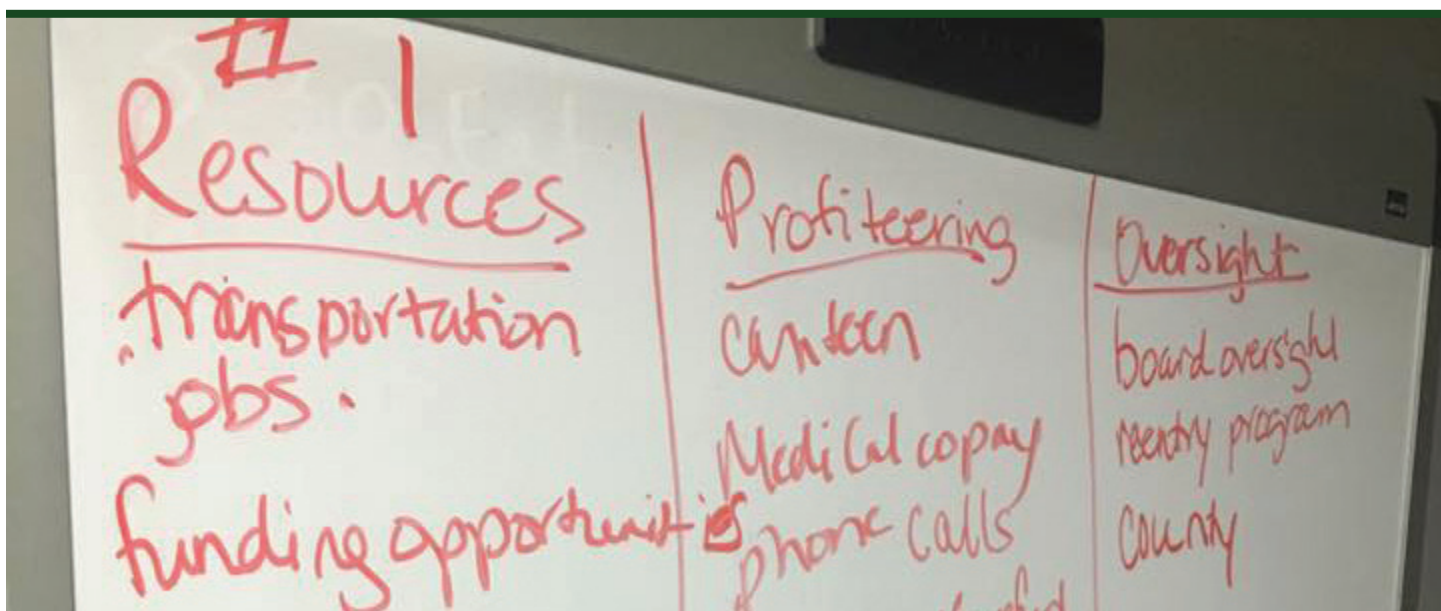
**Demographics.** The cohort of REF Project fellows consisted of ten men and five women in various stages of reentry. The age range spanned from 24 to 68 years old. Two fellows were immigrants, one fellow identified as a member of the LGBTQ community and three identified as having physical/behavioral health challenges. Fellows lived in Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley, San Leandro and Hayward; one lived outside of the county and another person was in a shelter and considered homeless. Fellow self-identified race/ethnicity was:

- *Twelve African/African-American*
- *Two Asian*
- *Two who identified as mixed*
  - *One Black, Latino, and Native American/Indigenous*
  - *One Caucasian and Native American/Indigenous*

## **Key Considerations: Outreach and Recruitment of Fellows**

**Optimize participant selection and engagement in a reentry group, via:**

- *A precise definition of the focus population*
- *Presence and trust working directly with the community*
- *Outreach through strong relationships with other entities/organizations/agencies that serve or interact with the focus population*
- *Outreach and information dissemination that reaches/attracts optimal candidates from the focus population*
- *A simple, non-intrusive, client-centered application*
- *A screening process that identifies best-fit participants (information session, application review, one-on-one interviews, etc.)*



The groups explored some of the top priorities in action teams in order to brainstorm solutions to reentry barriers as well as ways to best strategize solutions in the form of policy change, advocacy and direct service.



Fellow Sandra Johnson

## Fellowship Profile: Sandra Johnson

- Oakland Resident
- Roots Community Health Center REF Fellowship Graduate
- All Of Us Or None
- Bay Area Black Workers Center Member
- Justice Reinvestment Coalition of Alameda County Member

*“People always tell me I don't look like someone who has a criminal record, the reality is, we are just like everyone else. Our stories are basically like many others; however, we just made a bad choice, got caught and did time. We deserve a second chance - a fair shot at earning a living so we can provide for ourselves and our families, like everyone else.*”

*When my oldest son was murdered, I turned to drugs to cope with the pain. I am not sure when I became addicted to drugs, but I did. Then came a drug-related crime and I landed in prison. Coming back into society was a very difficult struggle for me with not only a felony against me but also as a woman of color.*

*I decided to relocate from my hometown in order to start over, but of course, your criminal history always follows you. I joined several organizations which helped me build a community of support. One group was Roots Community Health Center's Leader Fellowship, which helped me to recognize that I had the ability to become a leader in this struggle and to be looked at as equal to everyone else. The fellowship taught me to go after what my vision was for my future. I built much more confidence to take on the challenges that I struggle with in order to overcome the barriers of being a formerly incarcerated woman of color to move towards my goals.*

*Today I am working as Policy Fellow for Legal Services for Prisoners with Children to help change policies to help make it fair for everyone regardless of their backgrounds.”*

“

*Despite the heartbreak of losing her son, and falling victim to self-medication that led to addiction and incarceration, Sandra was gainfully employed after prison and even awarded employee of the year. Due to her background she was dismissed after six years on the job when a new HR department was integrated into her workplace. Although she had experienced yet another setback Sandra remained diligent in her studies and in her work in community. With a passion for health education and a desire to have her story understood by her employers she continues to be an open, mature, independent, dependable woman of her word. Although she still faces barriers, she was one of the most dedicated of the fellows who pushed through to gain skills and education in order to be a credible advocate and enter the reentry field as a leader! We were not surprised when she acquired her most recent position with Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. We wish her luck in her budding career and have no doubt that she will continue to shine her light through on systems change.*

”

-- OUR Project facilitator --

## **B. Implementation and Evolution**

### **1. REF Kick-off Event**

The REF Project kick-off was a dynamic and powerful evening that set the tone for the project. As fellows arrived and signed in, they were asked to complete schedule cards to determine their availability to participate moving forward - this helped alleviate concerns at the outset about ability to participate, and set a tone of self-determination before the evening began. Once everyone arrived, staff gave an informal welcome and invited attendees to eat. Three members of Roots' executive leadership team then provided an official welcome, including background on Roots and the recently merged Timelist Group, with a focus on each organization's history of reentry advocacy. This was followed by participant introductions and an ice breaker. Facilitators, the development team, and Roots' lead Navigator then introduced navigation and other Roots services to the group, encouraging them to avail themselves of any and all services, during and following the fellowship. Facilitators then described the purpose of the project (why we are here; what is the end goal; outline of the curriculum/workshops; and review of stipends and attendance), and responded to participant questions. Facilitators also led the following activities: **"Building Community: Community Agreements"** (deciding upon group rules of engagement), and **"Preliminary Priority Setting"** (what are some of the top issues regarding reentry that we are most interested in exploring or offering solutions to?). Using the scheduling sheets, we solidified the date and time of the next meeting and the general meeting schedule moving forward.

### **2. Curriculum and Structure Overview**

While the preliminary curriculum was developed in advance, we adapted it substantially as the group evolved. Even during sessions where the curriculum was utilized as a foundation for a workshop or activity, the group often took the conversation further, going beyond the original design. For example, fellows were quick to move from defining the problem to finding solutions and identifying opportunities. Following their lead, this meant skipping some parts of the curriculum and augmenting others, even in real time during a session, requiring flexibility, creativity and excellent tracking on the part of the facilitators.

Similar to curriculum evolution, the very structure of the group evolved over time. There was a constant balancing act between maintaining structure and allowing the group to self-direct. Beginning with our premise that the formerly incarcerated are the experts in what is needed in reentry, and that they rarely encounter the opportunity to have their voices heard, we wanted this to be that opportunity. We also understood that at times there would be a need for more guidance and information sharing. Throughout the fellowship, there remained a thin line for facilitators in creating an environment in which fellows were encouraged to chart their own path, while still maintaining enough structure for meeting comfort and progress.

#### **Key elements of curriculum and structure implementation and evolution that unfolded throughout the project included:**

**Participatory Programming.** Fellows' involvement in curriculum evolution was key, and facilitators invited, trained and included the group in all aspects of planning and implementation. This type of empowerment required support, project-specific mentorship and creation of a non-judgmental, inclusive environment. Structured meetings were important to encourage productivity, and added consistency to build a sense of pride and work ethic. At the same time, fellows identified, researched and investigated their priority areas, assessed the landscape, and chose projects able to be completed in the short timeframe of the fellowship. While facilitators provided structure and guidance, fellows took the lead in setting priorities and choosing their own projects and campaigns.

**Planning for flexibility.** Facilitators learned that planning for flexibility was essential – the context of the conversation or needs of the group were likely to change; stakeholders or participants might challenge the purpose of the process; internal considerations and team building might need to occur; questions might come up regarding the scope of the objectives or the methodology; and participants might need more time or information. The main facilitation consideration needed to be developing and retaining meaningful engagement with the fellows despite changing dynamics. This required flexibility and ongoing responsiveness on the part of facilitation staff.

Bringing their shared life experience to this work, facilitators also demonstrated their skill in understanding and sensitivity to fellows' strengths and limitations including time availability, skill sets, operational capacity, etc. In addition to recognition of individual differences in capacity, we saw it as important to maintain a focus on changing conditions that could promote or impede full participation.

“

*Flexibility in the REF group process manifested in numerous ways: in the midst of a meeting or even something that redirected the flow of activities in the program. If a fellow was in crisis or responding to a triggering community event, scheduled meetings would be augmented to have an extended check-in or debrief time to ensure that participants had the peer and staff support they needed emotionally to be present to the goals and objectives of the group.*

”

-- OUR Project facilitator --

**Community Building/Peer Support.** Based on our experience working with groups of reentry individuals at different stages of reintegration, including the Emancipator's Initiative and Roots Health Navigator training, we knew that mentorship and peer support were key to the project's success. Our strategy was to support an organic evolution of peer support/relationships throughout the project rather than anticipating how this would occur. The group's early activities to identify strengths and challenges, communication styles, and conflict resolution styles were instrumental in laying a foundation for trust building and peer-to-peer support. Also, as they formulated their priorities and made decisions, fellows had the opportunity to showcase their skills and voice their needs. Ultimately, facilitators noted that fellows naturally grouped together to work on various projects and tasks – often on the weekend or outside of the larger group. Fellows who needed more support in one area tended to pair up with fellows who could provide that support. While this evolved organically, such a pairing or grouping of fellows could be incorporated in the original design, based upon self-identification or an independent assessment of participant skills, assets, and areas of growth.

**Participant capacity and communication.** As described in the assessment section, we realized that to engage a diverse group of participants, we needed to consider the variety of skill sets and backgrounds in the group. The format and content of communication and publicity materials needed to meet the group where they were at, with language that welcomed them into the discussion. Gaps in information and differences in literacy could make discussions difficult if the information was presented without taking these factors into consideration. For example, many within the reentry population have barriers to technology which vary based on age, background, length/timing of incarceration, etc. Some fellows didn't have regular access to email, post mail or phones. Some of the younger participants were more proficient in social media while others preferred a call or text message. It was important to identify preferred ways to communicate with each fellow, clarify how they would communicate with staff and with each other, and then identify engagement methods best used internally and throughout the reentry community. As a result, facilitators tried multiple forms of communication (phone calls, text, email, Facebook group), and often had to utilize all methods of communication for updates and announcements.

Overall it was a very powerful structure - we would have liked to see leaders of Roots more often, especially in the beginning. We have a lot to learn from you especially since we really respect the organization you are building and we are also trying to build something.

-- OUR Project Fellow --

### 3. REF Project Overview

In further developing the curriculum, we outlined the following four phases, including a meeting schedule with planned activities.

- *Phase I: Laying a Foundation*
- *Phase II: Preparing For Action*
- *Phase III: Taking Action*
- *Phase IV. Planning For the Future*

Ultimately, the group met many more times than planned, and the duration of each phase differed from what we had anticipated. We are sharing the details of meeting evolution as a tool for consideration, though other groups - depending on people involved, campaigns selected, and time duration - will likely show quite different patterns of implementation. Following is a detailed overview of each phase of the Reentry Engagement Framework Project as it unfolded.

#### ***Phase I: Laying the Foundation***

The primary goal for Phase I was to lay a foundation for reentry participants to engage with the systems that serve them. We knew that this would require trust-building engagement, leadership development, and development of the group's identity. Fellows moved very quickly past discussing barriers to action planning, requiring adaptation of the curriculum/schedule to facilitate their rapid pace. This phase encompassed only four meetings over five weeks, although the original plan was for six sessions over eight weeks. While fellows progressed through this phase rapidly as a group, those who needed more support accessed facilitators and one another individually, increasingly as trust developed.

On the following page is a summary of activities undertaken in Phase I.

## PHASE I. LAYING A FOUNDATION

### Summary of engagement/activities

Engagement		Major Questions/Purpose	Activities/Highlights	Participation		
#	Type			Hours	# of Fellows	# of Staff
1	Week #1 Kickoff Meeting	What makes an impactful community leader?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consider knowledge, skills &amp; attitudes of leaders</li> <li>■ Explore shared values</li> <li>■ Create group agreements</li> </ul>	2	13	9
2	Week #2 Workshop	A productive community discussion is a foundation for trust...how do we get there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communication styles self-assessment</li> <li>■ Dialogue on assertive communication</li> </ul>	2	11	6
3	Week #4 Workshop	What are the systems that create barriers for the reentry population? How might these systems create justice or opportunity instead?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identifying opportunities for movement building</li> <li>■ Priority-setting activity</li> </ul>	2	14	4
4	Week #5 Workshop	How do we make group decisions? If people are not thrilled with the outcome of the decision personally, how do we keep them engaged and aligned with the purpose of being an advocate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Delineate group decision making process</li> <li>■ Name selection</li> <li>■ Discussion: Keeping the community at the heart of group activities</li> </ul>	2	11	4

### Laying the Foundation: Key Elements

**Trust building engagement.** Roots set the tone for trust building at the orientation meeting, providing clarity and transparency regarding all aspects of the project, including our funding source, duration of funding, Roots' interest in the project, and the goals and objectives of the funder. Fellows were made aware of the scope of the project, expectations of all parties and proposed outcomes, and were given the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification, or withdraw from the fellowship. We maintained this level of openness throughout, including any new opportunities that emerged. This approach, along with our role in the community, helped lay a foundation for honesty and trust among group members and facilitators.

Activities in the curriculum reinforced trust building engagement. As fellows learned that their opinions were valued, their confidence increased, which led to more sharing and greater trust. For example, one activity focused on sharing each person's skills, which resulted in the entire group feeling proud of each other and honoring their collective intelligence. They were able to identify assets within the group that would contribute to the overall goals, including: powerful speaker, diligent researcher, technology guru, wise diplomat, savvy businessman, legal expert, visionary leader, and skilled persuader. After this activity, fellows reported feeling empowered by the idea that they could use their skills to serve a greater cause. This kind of empowerment, in the context of a safe and therapeutic environment, fosters hope, self-confidence, and helps facilitate trust among group members as their skills of advocacy increase. Fellows clearly brought a wide variety of challenges in trusting others, but their interactions, shared experiences, and shared accomplishments ultimately galvanized the group and increased trust organically.

**Leadership Development.** The REF Project design itself honored reentry individuals as experts in identifying needs and gaps in the field of reentry. This design, while empowering to the fellows from the start, also required a focus on leadership development to build their confidence and skills in translating knowledge and lived experience to the work of systems change. Early in the project, fellows were guided

through activities to identify characteristics of effective leaders, as well as their own leadership qualities. They also engaged in workshops and events that focused on policy-making, movement building and coalition work. These activities provided a foundation for understanding what would be required, and what was already in place, to generate policy movement on key issues.



Understanding the needs of OUR community

*Deciding on the name of OUR Project in and of itself brought about a sense of structure and ownership. Although the group had already made several decisions together, this was the first tangible collective accomplishment of the group and made subsequent collaboration more personal and meaningful.*

in systems relative to their preliminary agenda, (2) hone individual and group skills to effectively advocate, and (3) efficiently make decisions about how to direct their time and efforts. In fact, as this phase was underway, a promising opportunity presented itself, requiring fellows to decide if they wanted to adhere to the curriculum provided, or take advantage of the opportunity. Thus, **Seizing Opportunity: Readiness to Respond**, (described below) was an unexpected addition to this phase. While the original curriculum called for this phase to include seven sessions over eight weeks, seven sessions occurred over only three weeks before moving on to Phase III: Taking Action.

On the following page is a summary of activities undertaken in Phase II.

**Development of a Group Identity.** One of the first group tasks for the fellows was to select a name for their group: they decided upon OUR (Oakland Unified Reentry) Project. This task was postponed twice, but once fellows began the discussion, the process went quickly, and the group agreed upon their name in about 45 minutes. The name, in addition to being a perfect acronym, lent itself to branding – a key objective identified by the group during the naming process. Agreement about the name also laid the foundation for future agreements, such as the mission statement, bylaws and decision-making processes. Of note, fellows postponed creating their mission statement, bylaws and leadership structure, citing that they were still connecting and not ready to make these decisions. Thus, while the curriculum called for these activities to occur in Phase I, they were accomplished later, in Phase III.

### **Phase II: Preparing for Action**

From the beginning, fellows shared an appreciation of what was, in their view, an unprecedented alliance of formerly incarcerated advocates choosing their own agenda and actions to navigate and mitigate systems impact. While fellows brought diverse perspectives, they were able to build upon their group work in Phase I to arrive at some agreements about what was working and not working in reentry, outlining a preliminary agenda about how to impact decision making in Alameda County.

Major components of the curriculum for this phase included **Fellows as Ambassadors** (strategic storytelling) and **Engagement with the Public Process**. This phase was dynamic, requiring fellows to simultaneously:

- (1) keep a finger on the pulse of developments in the community and
  - (2) hone individual and group skills to effectively advocate, and
  - (3) efficiently make decisions about how to direct their time and efforts.
- In fact, as this phase was underway, a promising opportunity presented itself, requiring fellows to decide if they wanted to adhere to the curriculum provided, or take advantage of the opportunity. Thus, **Seizing Opportunity: Readiness to Respond**, (described below) was an unexpected addition to this phase. While the original curriculum called for this phase to include seven sessions over eight weeks, seven sessions occurred over only three weeks before moving on to Phase III: Taking Action.



## PHASE II. PREPARING FOR ACTION

### Summary of engagement/activities

Engagement		Major Questions/ Purpose	Activities/Highlights	Participation		
#	Type			Hours	# of Fellows	# of Staff
5	Week #5 Workshop	Board of Supervisors preparation: observing, engaging and advocating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1400 Jobs Campaign: preparing to mobilize for Board of Supervisors w/Justice Reinvestment Coalition and Black Workers Center</li> <li>Campaign history; legislative visits scheduling with Board of Supervisors and Human Resources regarding community consideration for implementation</li> </ul>	5	14	4
6	Week #5 Community Event	Self-efficacy: utilizing and sharing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prop 47 Resource Fair: legal services and other referrals, including advocacy organizations, free food and backpack giveaway</li> <li>Fellows networked and brought back information on potential collaborative partners, campaigns, etc.</li> <li>Building community around advocacy and shared values as opposed to stigmatizing</li> </ul>	5	2	2
7	Week #6 Workshop	How can I tell my story strategically, to have the most impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board of Supervisors storytelling prep - strategic storytelling: using 3- and 2-minute time markers</li> <li>Connecting the personal to political: "We are qualified! My story shows cracks in our system"</li> <li>Fellows were given an opportunity to receive one-on-one coaching on storytelling</li> </ul>	2	8 (group) 4 (one-on-one)	4
8	Week #6 Workshop	Amplifying movement through conversation: how to have a productive community discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OUR Project finalized the application for Community Listening Sessions sponsored by Supervisor Wilma Chan's office</li> </ul>	2	3	3
9	Week #7 Workshop	Priority setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What issue(s) do you as a group want to focus on for a campaign? Why?</li> <li>What support will you need to implement a campaign together?</li> </ul>	2	11	3
10	Week #7 Decision Maker Meeting	Probation Chief's Listening Session <i>Speak Up, Speak Out</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fellows attended and participated in Probation Chief Wendy Still's Listening Session</li> <li>Fellows considered their experiences with Alameda County Probation: What's working, what isn't working and what can be improved?</li> <li>Members advocated for the larger formerly incarcerated community, listened and weighed in on the new Probation Chief's plan to improve the lives of those impacted by incarceration in Alameda County</li> </ul>	2	8	1
11	Week #7 Workshop	How can we create more agile teams to have the most impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying our passions, skills &amp; gaps</li> <li>Honoring OUR collective intelligence, knowledge &amp; expertise, and learning how to leverage this to accomplish the most as a team</li> </ul>	2	12	4

## Preparing for Action: Key Elements

**Fellows as Ambassadors.** The REF Project design required that systems change work be reentry-led and reentry-centered. Therefore it was critical that fellows not only develop their leadership skills, but that they become ambassadors for change.

*A key component in preparing fellows as ambassadors was work on story-telling: for themselves, for their family, and for their community. This included telling the “story of now”: framing current challenges that could be overcome through responsive policy-making and systems change. Fellows were challenged to identify how their personal interest in this work intersected with the work of the group, and how to bring it back to the overall goal.*

Over the project duration, fellows became more comfortable in telling their personal story and in learning how to relate it to the broader challenges of reentry in general. As they put their work into practice through engagement with community members and policymakers, fellows realized that they were influential and positioned to make an impact.

**Public Process Participation.** About five weeks into the project, fellows began attending and participating in various community forums, including coalition meetings/actions organized by local base-building organizations, listening sessions held by the Alameda County Chief of Probation, and Alameda County Board of Supervisors meetings. Fellows learned to come together and respond quickly in order to participate in active campaigns and actions, and came to appreciate that being well-prepared meant being better able to respond.

Fellows were introduced to local campaigns related to reentry, employment, poverty and homelessness through information sessions held at OUR Project meetings, and at meetings with local base-building and advocacy organizations. Fellows also drew upon their own research on local challenges, gaps and opportunities which helped shape the group’s mission and goals. Fellows interested in doing research volunteered to bring data back to the group on relevant issues such as incarceration and recidivism rates. Fellows, along with facilitators, also conducted a scan to identify groups working on these issues, and facilitators then helped connect fellows to these groups. Fellows chose to focus on the 1400 Jobs campaign, led by the Justice Reinvestment Coalition of Alameda County, a coalition of 15 organizations working to reinvest county resources from incarcerated settings into the community. The goal of the campaign - to provide 1,400 county jobs for individuals impacted by the criminal justice system - was well-aligned with the priorities of OUR Project, and was a campaign that already had some momentum. For these reasons, fellows felt that the 1400 Jobs campaign would be a good place to begin using their skills and to put forward their voice as a group.

Fellows networked with other groups working on the project, gathered information, and prepared their comments for two Board of Supervisors meetings. They also participated in a march and rally that preceded one of the Board of Supervisors meetings at which the campaign was being discussed. Fellows took on diverse roles based on individual readiness and skill sets. For example, fellows who were not yet comfortable providing public comment showed up to support other fellows, and contributed in other ways by doing research and refining talking points. The group planned their strategy to provide public comment in advance, acting on this opportunity to demonstrate their skills of strategic storytelling. The experience helped the group become more cohesive, and successful participation felt like a “quick win” for fellows, giving them greater confidence to take on next challenges.

**Seizing Opportunity: Readiness to Respond.** Fellows demonstrated their desire and ability to respond quickly when facilitators shared an opportunity to apply for a mini-grant from Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan’s “All In” Initiative. This opportunity, which focused on Supervisor Chan’s War on Poverty, would enable the fellows to host listening sessions in which they could facilitate a community dialogue regarding any aspect of poverty.

Because of the timing of this opportunity, the decision to move forward had to be rendered quickly, and agreements had to be made efficiently. One facilitator made this observation: “All In was an exciting opportunity for storytelling, making key observations and recommendations, and engaging with decision makers and leaders. Since some of the major barriers OUR Project identified involved stigma leading to housing and job discrimination, this was a vital moment for the fellows to showcase their emerging advocacy and expertise, and uplift the voices of the reentry population, their families and their communities. The fellows took leadership in deciding whether they wanted to apply and what the aim of their application would be, the purpose of the sessions, their outreach plan, theme and invitees.”

One of the topics considered in Phase I was how to have a productive community discussion as a foundation for trust. Ultimately, fellows concluded that they were now ready to engage and lead a broader dialogue with the community that would showcase the voices of reentering individuals, amplifying movement through conversation. They decided to apply for the grant, proposing to address the connections between reentry, poverty and recidivism. Roots supported the proposal/project development process and served as fiscal sponsor for OUR Project’s application. Their completed application was approved, and fellows received a grant of \$2,000 to hold two listening sessions.

*“It’s the time for the people who are voiceless to be heard. We are often deemed not credible, but even before we made poor choices we were unheard because we were poor in the first place. Employment issues for the formerly incarcerated reflect the greater need for employment opportunities, education and skills training that are impacting low-income communities of color and often influencing the root cause of justice system involvement. There are over 300,000 formerly incarcerated individuals in this county, 30,000 of whom are currently on supervision; 80% are black males and a large portion of them are coming home to East Oakland. Sometimes people are not just unemployed, but underemployed and even over-employed - working several jobs but still unable to sustain themselves and their families. The makeup will span ethnic and geographic groupings, but the needs and issues are heavily concentrated in East Oakland and within the Black Community and other Communities of Color. Formerly incarcerated people include folks of all ages and their homecoming date ranges from newly released to having been home for years in addition to the variation in skills and experience, time served and type of institution. We cannot do anything successfully as a Community Group without the necessary focus of community input.”*

*-- Excerpted from the OUR Project “All In” grant application*

### **Phase III: Taking Action**

During Phase III, OUR Project arrived at their mission statement and formed plans to pursue the priorities they had decided on in Phase II. This was the first phase that was longer than anticipated. While six sessions were planned over six weeks, OUR Project fellows ended up having 14 engagements/activities over 11 weeks. Because they moved through Phases I and II so rapidly, they had more time to dedicate to taking action. During this phase, OUR Project fellows also returned to some of the curriculum activities that were planned for Phases I and II, including development of a mission statement, bylaws, consideration of roles and leadership structure. Some fellows reflected that they wished they had followed the guidance and



*During week 13 of the project, fellows agreed upon their mission statement:*

***Driving social, political and economic empowerment for formerly incarcerated individuals, their families and the communities in which we live.***

put this structure in place early. Others maintained that it was too difficult to undertake these tasks early on because group members did not yet trust one another – or even the process.

They also further refined the framing for their priorities, elevating their desired outcomes to not just surviving, but thriving. The 1400 Jobs campaign and the listening sessions helped to propel this conversation, as they began to identify what they saw as an undercurrent of low expectations for the reentry population. In addition, many of the fellows were beginning to achieve their own successes, whether directly through the fellowship (public speaking, etc.) or personally, including obtaining employment or housing.



*Enough is enough! How long will we be persecuted? Oftentimes available resources are indexed, or our needs and aspirations are described with deliberately ‘down-framing’ language such as ‘affordable,’ ‘adequate,’ and ‘basic.’ No, our basic needs are not being met, no our housing isn’t affordable, and no our employment isn’t adequate. NO, NO and NO.*



*-- OUR Project Fellow --*

The following page is a summary of the activities accomplished in Phase III.

## PHASE III. TAKING ACTION

### Summary of engagement/activities

Engagement		Major Questions/ Purpose	Activities/Highlights	Participation		
#	Type			Hours	# of Fellows	# of Staff
12	Week #8 Decision Maker Meeting	Alameda County Board of Supervisors: 1400 Jobs <i>Let's Get Working!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Kathy Mount, Interim Director of Human Resources Services, presented research on job vacancies in the county and her plan to implement this new jobs program with consideration for a new job worker category</i></li> <li>■ <i>Fellows attended a march and rally, then observed the Board of Supervisors meeting and participated in public comment</i></li> </ul>	2	11	4
13	Week #9 Workshop	Create action teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Board of Supervisors debrief: lessons learned about the process, observations and empowerment of delivering public comment</i></li> <li>■ <i>Small group action teams: reentry resources, reentry funding oversight and accountability, and incarceration and its financial burden on family members</i></li> </ul>	2	12	3
14	Week #12 Working Meeting	Preparation for Listening Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Creation of Community Listening Session work plan</i></li> </ul>	2	11	2
15	Week #12 Planning Meeting	How can we get a commitment to a 'Call for Action' for reentering citizens?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Community Listening Session work plan-planning panel recommendations &amp; observations</i></li> <li>■ <i>How can we make sure our voices aren't drowned out by the negativity? How can we change the conversation?</i></li> </ul>	2	9	4
16	Week #13 Workshop	Preparation for Listening Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>All In Work Plan Workshop #1: Creating an identity of purpose: dropping the stigma</i></li> <li>■ <i>Mission Statement completed &amp; voted into use</i></li> </ul>	2	8	4
17	Week #13 Workshop	Strategic storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>All In Work Plan Workshop #2: How to tell your community's story - why does the community need change?</i></li> <li>■ <i>How to tell the story of now - what are you asking people to do (how can they become a part of the story) to take action for change?</i></li> </ul>	2	9	4
18	Week #13 Workshop	Preparation for Listening Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>All In Work Plan Workshop #3 (finishing touches): Additional work planning for Community Listening Session</i></li> </ul>	2	4	4
19	Week #16 Meeting	How far have we come, and where do we want to go next? Revisiting and solidifying structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Looking backward and forward: devising an action plan, revisiting action teams</i></li> <li>■ <i>Affirming the mission</i></li> <li>■ <i>Conduct / bylaws</i></li> <li>■ <i>Public speaking / speaking to subject matter / condensing testimony</i></li> </ul>	2	8	3

## PHASE III. TAKING ACTION

### Summary of engagement/activities

Engagement		Major Questions/ Purpose	Activities/Highlights	Participation		
#	Type			Hours	# of Fellows	# of Staff
<b>20</b>	Week #16 Workshop	Preparing the panel for Listening Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Panel preparation</li> <li>■ Beyond basic needs: Reframing from surviving to thriving</li> </ul>	2	8	3
<b>21</b>	Week #16 Workshop	Formalizing the approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mock session</li> <li>■ Participants review format led by the master of ceremonies, add priorities and solutions through their own narrative of what barriers they are facing relating to poverty</li> </ul>	2	7	3
<b>22</b>	Week #17 Planning Meeting	Getting the word out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Outreach follow-up: using social media, targeting decision makers and human resource managers, how can we use this platform to recommend solutions and reach a larger crowd?</li> </ul>	2	9	3
<b>23</b>	Week #18 Meeting	All In War on Poverty Community Listening Session #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Persecution After Punishment: in-depth look at challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals; empowerment and actions to revitalize our community</li> </ul>	4	7	3
<b>24</b>	Week #18 Meeting	Listening Session Follow up & Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Listening Session debrief: observations, areas for improvement in preparation for Listening Session #2</li> </ul>	2	5	3
<b>25</b>	Week #18 Meeting	All in War on Poverty Community Listening Session #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Persecution After Punishment: solution panel and action teams work on key priorities, challenges facing returning individuals that the community can respond to with more oversight, efficient resources, cultural responsiveness and peer navigation</li> </ul>	3	8	3

## Taking Action: Key Elements

**1400 Jobs Campaign.** Participating in the 1400 Jobs campaign activities proved to be an empowering experience for OUR Project fellows. Facilitators noted increased confidence and focus among fellows following this work. In a debriefing session, fellows recounted that participating in the campaign provided:

- *an opportunity to network and align with other organizations*
- *a vehicle to propel leadership development*
- *a platform for our voices to be heard*
- *an opportunity to witness the public process as it occurred*
- *a hands-on approach to hone our own skills and expertise*

One fellow recalled “sitting in prison knowing about legislation being passed and not being able to do anything about it...now being at the Board of Supervisors while it’s really happening in front of you...it was really valuable. Hands on experience of talking to these decision-makers and understanding how it happens is powerful. I’d rather be there to see it happen.” – OUR Project fellow

Over the project duration, fellows became more comfortable in telling their personal story and in learning how to relate it to the broader challenges of reentry in general. As they put their work into practice through engagement with community members and policymakers, fellows realized that they were influential and positioned to make an impact.

**All In Listening Sessions.** The sessions offered the fellows real-time experience in event planning, public speaking, community outreach, team building, goal setting and public relations. Together fellows planned the two sessions, including securing space and food, outreaching to participants, planning the agenda, selecting and preparing panelists, and formulating questions to stimulate dialogue.

Outreach was done via OUR Project’s newly developed social media platforms as well as networking and sending information out to their contacts. Roots facilitators also conducted significant outreach on OUR Project’s behalf, reaching city and county leadership, potential funders and community members. Listening session forum invitees were formerly incarcerated individuals and their families; those with lived experience of the impact of incarceration, including family members; those facing barriers to stability, including employment, housing, etc.; those in support of successful reintegration; and those impacted by the lack of employment opportunities and economic resources coming into the community; as well as systems leaders, politicians and their staff. Twenty people attended the first session; forty-five attended the second. Attendees included Alameda County Chief of Probation Wendy Still, Council member Desley Brooks, an Alameda County Sheriff, members of county board offices, county staff and multiple community based organizations.

Listening Sessions included a panel of fellows led by a facilitator (also a fellow), an emcee and a greeter, also fellows. Introductions were led by a facilitator, and community members asked questions. Reentry community members in attendance were invited to give testimony. The emcee fielded questions and facilitated dialogue.

At the conclusion of the project, fellows designed and presented a poster summarizing the Listening Sessions at the All In finale, a symposium attended by Supervisor Chan, Oakland Mayor Schaaf and the news media.

Regarding the Listening Sessions, one OUR Project fellow said, “I couldn’t have imagined it going better.”

#### ***Phase IV: Planning for the Future***

This phase also lasted considerably longer than planned. In fact, because we did not know that fellows would choose to continue working together after the fellowship ended, we only planned for one close-out meeting, to reflect on progress and discuss ideas for moving forward. However, after the Listening Sessions were complete, a core group of nine consistent OUR Project members decided to continue working together after the project close. This necessitated additional meetings to discuss the possibilities, explore opportunities, and make concrete plans for next steps. This phase lasted four weeks and included six engagements intended to illuminate next steps for OUR Project.

On the following page are the activities OUR Project fellows engaged in during Phase IV.





## PHASE IV. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

### Summary of engagement/activities

Engagement		Major Questions/ Purpose	Activities/Highlights	Participation		
#	Type			Hours	# of Fellows	# of Staff
26	Week #19 Meeting	Where do we go from here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reflection and discussion of where to go from here</li> <li>■ Listening session follow up</li> <li>■ Discussion of plans to continue as a group without stipends and become established as an independent body</li> </ul>	2	4	2
27	Week #21 Bidders Conference	Exploration of the contracting process: assessing opportunities for engagement with/oversight of the contracting process	<p>An OUR Project representative attended a bidders conference for bidders interested in the Alameda County Probation Department Direct Service Grants: For Us By Us (Peer Support Services) Request for Proposals to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ gain exposure to the formal contracting processes held by probation</li> <li>■ achieve an understanding of how reentry-serving programs and agencies obtain funding</li> <li>■ obtain a better idea of types of direct service/peer support service the county is looking for</li> </ul>	3	1	2
28	Week #21 Toolkit Working Meeting	How can we ensure that the reentry voice is lifted up to move this peer work forward?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Focus group facilitated by project champion about key findings, participant recommendations, what worked and what could be improved upon as well as key advice and best practice recommendations for organizations that would like to support/implement this work moving forward</li> </ul>	2	5	4
29	Week #21 Decision Maker Meeting	Alameda County Board of Supervisors: 1400 Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Board of Supervisors review the revised implementation plan for the 1400 Jobs campaign</li> <li>■ OUR Project fellows discuss support for the initiative, emphasizing the importance of oversight and accountability</li> </ul>	8	2	3
30	Week #21 Meeting	Next Steps: Moving Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The team explored forging partnerships with other community organizations, looking into public and private funding as well as creating proposals and action teams to implement direct service programming, consulting and other advocacy and leadership in reentry</li> </ul>	2	4	5
31	Week #22	<p><b>Fellowship Finale!</b></p> <p><i>The fellows celebrated completion of the formal fellowship with a communal meal and certificate presentation. The ceremony was followed by exploring and devising next steps and exciting opportunities that lie ahead for the newly formed independent advocacy group.</i></p>				

## Outcomes and Next Steps

During and following Phase IV, OUR Project fellows offered reflections regarding where they had been as individuals and as a group, and developed a roadmap for where they wanted to go next.

## Outcomes

### ***Individual and group achievements identified by OUR Project fellows included:***

- *Heightened awareness and greater commitment to leadership and advocacy for causes beyond themselves*
- *Increased confidence, increased feeling of empowerment, knowing how to have their voices heard, including through individual storytelling*
- *Exposure to an area of work they had not known about*
- *Able to identify and admit to their own barriers, and seek assistance/support*
- *All fellows received service navigation and resume development, did lots of work on personal barriers, and utilized the support network of peers as well as navigators/wraparound services*
- *Four participants who were unemployed obtained full-time work*
- *One fellow made a decision to take this work further - sought and obtained a position doing policy/advocacy work for formerly incarcerated*
- *Two participants who were in transitional housing obtained stable housing*
- *Several participants are now identifying and engaging in policy and advocacy activities (state and county level), including outside OUR Project*
- *Participants - including those with behavioral health issues - have begun addressing challenges with greater confidence*
- *Built camaraderie amongst one another, leveraged support of peers in group*
- *Several participants expressed improved ability to address challenges, resolve conflict, identify triggers, overcome barriers*
- *One participant went back to school as a result of encouragement from facilitators*
- *Reintegrating into community: positive engagement with one another, even outside of regular meetings; willingness to invest time into something outside of themselves*
- *Several family members of fellows participated at various times and were complimentary about the progress made by fellows, acknowledging that barriers were being addressed and that good work was being done*

## Next Steps

After deciding to pursue this work as an independent group, OUR Project fellows identified the top four areas of work that they want to address through four **Action Teams**:

OUR Project graduates identified their immediate next step: to formalize a business structure as an independent entity that can receive public and private funding and earn income. They are also identifying, applying for, and acquiring funding streams for programming and services through grants, contracts, entrepreneurship and strategic partnerships.



A poster used by OUR Project Fellows at a peaceful rally in support of the 1400 Jobs for Freedom campaign.

- **Housing:** Understanding there is a housing crisis for everyone - especially those with barriers - this is a short-term priority and a long term effort. In the short term, fellows want to know the resources available regarding referring those in need, as well as possible monitoring and oversight. Their ultimate goal is to design and implement intentional/communal housing which could be led by peer specialists in reentry (OUR Project graduates and other formerly incarcerated ambassadors) which would be an alternative to hierarchical housing policed by others. The goal is to create a co-housing experience to help reentry individuals' transition to re-socialization and independence. This team will be responsible for program design, researching property acquisition and operational requirements.
- **Peer Mentorship/Youth Coaching:** Building upon their mentorship and group skills, OUR Project graduates seek to achieve Peer Specialist or other relevant certification(s) to be able to more adequately support formerly incarcerated peers with a variety of barriers. This team will research available training/certifications, and explore the development of a 24-hour hotline.
- **Integrated Health Programming:** OUR Project graduates are interested in partnering with mission-aligned health and wellness organizations to develop/co-design community programming that can help reentry individuals eliminate barriers. They will work to define their own value-add to existing programs, and seek partnerships to facilitate curriculum development and implementation.
- **Oversight, Policy & Advocacy:** This team will focus on assessing, prioritizing and participating in initiatives, boards and committees with the goal of providing their expertise, particularly with respect to barriers and considerations of returning individuals and their families. They will also explore opportunities to provide insight and consultation to agencies, organizations and government entities on issues and solutions for formerly incarcerated individuals. Lastly, they will explore opportunities to receive training on/ensure adherence to Results Based Accountability standards in contract oversight.

## C. Assessment/Evaluation

### 1. Overview

Evaluation was embedded in all project activities by the project team and by reentry fellows, who used assessment, observation and evaluation as they defined best/promising practices and recommendations. Skilled facilitation built each individual's capacity to identify promising practices, analyze issues, and evaluate their own and the group's work over the project duration. Process evaluation included assessments about inclusiveness, openness, trust, ability to learn from one another, and the impact of participation on reentry success itself. The project team compiled qualitative information gleaned from surveys, debriefs, and focus groups, which informed the development of this toolkit.

Roots' development team, project facilitators, the project champion, and Roots executive management team engaged to varying degrees in assessment activities. Multiple interviews, debriefs and facilitated discussions were held and documented over the course of the project. Emergent themes and variances were followed up with questions to facilitators and fellows to further surface details. The project champion facilitated five focus groups: two with fellows-only participation, and three with fellows and facilitators. In addition, facilitators and development staff met numerous times to review data, identify themes, and create follow-up questions for fellow and leadership interviews.

Project facilitators provided feedback to the development team regarding original curriculum development, including adaptations along the way. The project champion provided feedback to executive management on the depth of issues encountered and addressed. Facilitator staff provided feedback to administrative and fiscal staff in an ongoing effort to ensure streamlined, efficient processes, given the intensive nature of the project. Executive management convened regarding Roots' role in incubating the reentry leader fellowship, how this work contributed to the organizational mission, and how it translates into other areas where Roots' ability to incubate and support others could increase our impact and service to our mission.

### 2. Lessons Learned: Effective Group Process

**Time Commitment.** Fellows had varying capacity to commit time over the project duration, depending upon their individual barriers and responsibilities. At the first meeting, fellows were surveyed regarding the frequency and timing of meetings. As different projects and activities emerged, and momentum started building, meeting frequency increased. Some fellows commented that they would have liked more frequent meetings, taking into account people's capacity. Some fellows preferred weekly meetings, while others wished for twice weekly. ***By the conclusion of the fellowship, all fellows and staff agreed that six months is the minimum duration for a project like this, and that nine to twelve months would have been preferred to allow enough time for the group to gel and better prepare to advocate with a unified voice.***

**Evolving Dynamics, Evolving Work.** Diverse needs and desires emerged from the group over the course of the fellowship. Some fellows wanted to build more within small groups, while others wanted to get to action steps. Some wanted to outreach more with the community while others were ready to speak directly with decision makers. ***Given the diversity and evolution of priorities, facilitators provided space to pursue multiple aspects of group and systems change work, while building skills of the group, and as much as possible, the skills of individuals within the group. We concluded that while this approach proved time-intensive, it was the optimal way to support the momentum of the group.***

“

*This project was really different. There was lots of flexibility for fellows which turned out to be the best strategy because that's how the bonding happened.*

”

-- OUR Project facilitator --

**Individual support and the impact of crises.** Over the project duration, a number of personal crises transpired among several fellows. When asked how being part of the group impacted these personal crises, participants agreed that the group created space for fellows to check-in, and that during individual crises, group members – fellows and facilitators - pulled in closely to help support the fellow in need. Facilitators and fellows with lived experience were also able to identify when a fellow was in crisis, even if they did not reveal it, and monitor as needed. Roots Navigators and facilitators brought their skill and experience in making meaningful connections, providing service navigation, case management and referrals to this process whenever needed. Overall, the fellowship offered numerous opportunities for healing individually and for the group itself.

One-to-one navigation/case management was offered to fellows from the project inception, but was not required; ultimately six fellows received regular, ongoing case management with a dedicated navigator. Fellows who needed more support (especially those without a dedicated navigator) frequently contacted facilitators outside of the group for additional guidance. While this arrangement was productive, it sometimes detracted from the time facilitators could spend working on development of the group and group activities. ***In our evaluation at the close of the six month group process, we concluded that in the future each fellow should be required to work with a dedicated navigator who is not a facilitator. This would provide additional external support for fellows, while also freeing facilitators from balancing individual with group needs.***

“

*I understood that the level of talent and skill would be varied, but that was only one aspect...the level of need and engagement also varied. As a facilitator I really had to learn how to taper things.”*

”

-- OUR Project facilitator --

**Peer to Peer Support.** Fellows also connected with each other to provide added support, within and outside of the group. Over the course of the project, fellows tended to pair up based on differing strengths/ skills and communication styles. Sometimes pairings/groupings would occur in response to a project they were working on. At other times, fellows met outside of the group to assist each other in getting up to speed on a particular topic, or with particular skills (e.g. effectively using technology). While this grouping of fellows was not planned in advance, it proved to be beneficial and was encouraged by facilitators. ***We concluded that building in peer-to-peer support is an effective way to mitigate the challenges of individuals who are at various stages of readiness to participate, and strengthens the diverse skill sets of the participants.***



*The fact that the Chief came to the listening session on a Sunday, and took notes, and the fact that the Board of Supervisors sponsored the engagement, coupled with other resources that Roots brought to our attention, it made me think more along the lines of the different avenues available. We were left with a list of allies, and it made the next steps feel more tangible.*



*-- OUR Project Fellow --*

**Defining Moments.** Organizing and hosting the All In Listening Sessions was an intensive experience that, in retrospect, was a pivotal, defining moment for the group. In fact, in follow-up discussions, some fellows began referring to “pre-listening session” and “post-listening session” as markers when recalling certain aspects of the fellowship.

Participation in All In was an unplanned activity, and there were differing levels of fellow engagement in putting forward the application and in planning the activities. Facilitators were also challenged to support the fellows in new and unanticipated ways, such as proposal development. Subsequent to the Listening Sessions, composition of the group changed markedly, as discussed below (see Attendance and Retention). ***We concluded that new opportunities should be weighed carefully in relation to the progress of the group, their readiness to incorporate a new work plan, and the capacity of the host organization to support the effort.*** Ultimately, the Listening Sessions were powerful, galvanizing and empowering for OUR Project fellows.

**Attendance and Retention.** After the Listening Sessions, the group reduced to nine fellows who, at that point, made the decision to continue working together after the fellowship ended. When asked “why? what happened?” in two separate focus groups, remaining fellows and facilitators commented:

- *“It was time to roll up sleeves and do the work...time to be accountable and perform. Not everyone was ready.”*
- *“It got real.”*
- *“I was impressed by the number of people who stuck with it!”*

In reviewing sign-in sheets against the ultimate group composition, it was clear that those who left the group following the Listening Sessions were predominantly those with lowest attendance. While facilitators and/or fellows were able to make contact and debrief with some fellows who left the group, their primary focus was ensuring their well-being and connection to any services they may need. And while most fellows and facilitators concluded that the retention rate was better than expected overall, and that the remaining group was stronger and more focused, our evaluation concluded that more information on attrition would have been useful. Some felt that Roots as the host organization could have “laid down the law” and imposed attendance guidelines, while the majority felt that this should have been the role of the fellows themselves. ***Fellows concluded that guidelines about attendance and off-boarding of members, as well as an exit interview process, should be included as part of Community Agreements and group process.***

**Impact of conflict.** Group conflict arose on more than one occasion, most often resulting from differences in opinion and styles of communication. Individual triggers and personal crises surfaced during and after these conflicts, revealing where individual development was needed in order to participate fully in the group process.

Ultimately these conflicts were defining moments for the group, as they:

- *redefined how communication needed to happen (how can we ensure a respectful, productive environment?)*
- *reaffirmed goals of the project, including uplifting one another*
- *built trust so that fellows at various stages of readiness (re: triggers, crises, etc.) would be able to share*
- *increased trust, focus and clarity*
- *gave opportunities for fellows to rise to the occasion and support one another*

Fellows learned to trust and rely on facilitators more as they successfully managed group conflict. During these conflicts, emotions ran high for fellows and facilitators alike, opening up the potential for real or perceived safety concerns. Facilitators remained available to fellows who needed additional support and reassurance following conflicts, and the project champion was consistently available to the facilitators. **We concluded that having facilitators who are skilled in de-escalation and conflict resolution, with the ability to diffuse situations and re-focus attention, was critical to the group's safety and progress.**

**Facilitators' Development.** Facilitators brought their own lived experience to the group, which meant that they were also susceptible to being triggered by this intense work – especially when conflict arose. Facilitators, to varying degrees, consulted with the project champion following these conflicts to seek counsel, obtain strategies for moving forward in a productive way, and receive reassurance regarding the critical work they were doing.

One-on-one interviews with facilitators at the close of the project revealed the ways in which facilitators learned from each other and leaned on one another during the course of the fellowship:

- *“Even though we (facilitators) sometimes had conflict with each other, it turned out to be a really good group. One of us was the most organized, another was the energetic one that empowered people with information, and the other was always practical and calm. Me, I made it push when it got stuck, and helped make progress possible in those moments.”*
- *“We all brought our own trauma that sometimes led to conflict. Trying to balance out all of the facilitators and our own skills and barriers - there were a couple of times when I had to tell someone about themselves. As I facilitator I was used to being by myself. It showed me my own strengths and weaknesses as a facilitator.”*
- *“Real life showed up for me during the project and at times it affected my ability to do all I wanted to do for the group. I really think I could have been more communicative with the other facilitators and maybe debrief more. The more consistent I was, the better I was able to propel the group forward. So my hat really goes off to my fellow facilitators who provided the consistency even when I couldn’t.”*
- *“I’m used to being a lot more structured. I learned a lot from my co-facilitators and learned who to yield to when I was feeling triggered. They helped instill a sense of calm, break up the intensity, get things back on track, or provide some comic relief in a tense moment.”*

Facilitators also expressed increased self-confidence following this six-month process, which surfaced and manifested in various ways:

- *“I feel so different now! This experience helped me grow to the point where now I can go into settings and speak confidently to subject matter better than I ever could. When you have to meet so many people where they’re at, and support them to be advocates, it really helps you with your own ability to communicate with anyone.”*
- *“As formerly incarcerated most of us have had lots of let downs in life. So we don’t want to participate in nothing that’s not gonna amount to nothing...so we really wanted to make it something. And I feel so proud of the outcomes!”*
- *“It wasn’t like other facilitating I have done because it (REF Project) was so innovative. It was like a case study - like a lab where I was witnessing others and how they were empowering themselves...it couldn’t help but grow and empower me as a person.”*
- *“One night early in the project, one of the facilitators led an activity to identify your strengths and talents. It really made us look around and taught us: don’t underestimate who is in the room with you.”*
- *“Even though I was really there as a support, I feel like I was a part of a movement and that has really improved my confidence.”*



## VIII. Section Four: Conclusion



*In the listening session we had with the Chief of Probation there, I answered questions, I was knowledgeable, I was telling my story - that was empowering!*



*-- OUR Project Fellow --*

### **A. Summary**

In June 2016, Roots Community Health Center, with funding from Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services Agency, implemented an innovative Reentry Engagement Framework Project built on over nine years of experience engaging, supporting and employing reentry individuals in Oakland. Roots recruited a diverse group of 15 reentry individuals who participated in a six month process that included workshops, meetings, barrier removal, observation of public entities responsible for setting policy and allocating funding for reentry populations, and evaluation of their work together. Our primary goal was to identify recommendations for improved systems and services that reduce recidivism and facilitate better integration of the formerly incarcerated into the community. This was accomplished by expanding best reentry practices through involvement of formerly incarcerated individuals in authentic, ongoing engagement that strengthened their leadership and removed barriers to successful reintegration; prepared them for discussions and observations in policy arenas and with key public officials; assisted them in evaluation of systems, services and funding for reentry individuals; and led to the creation of a framework to help institutions and community based organizations (CBOs) improve responses to reentry needs in partnership with reentry individuals.

Roots fellows worked with a Roots team including four facilitators, along with participation by the organization's leadership, direct service and support staff. Meetings and workshops were supported by Roots' four facilitators – all of whom have been impacted by incarceration: three are formerly incarcerated (one a former lifer having served over 20 years in prison), and one has currently incarcerated family. These facilitators served as the fellows' primary contact people throughout the duration of the fellowship.

We appreciate the opportunity we were afforded to develop this incubator model in which support, leadership development, mentorship, case management, team building and action planning were achieved, resulting in the fellows creating their own governing principles, pursuing a self-created agenda, and advancing their own priorities.

## B. Final Recommendations

The Reentry Engagement Framework highlights best practices in which impacted community members are supported to convene, organize, and develop their own agenda, and demonstrates an innovative and optimal tool to facilitate reentry individuals to overcome barriers in order to engage directly with the systems that impact them. The Host Organization (Roots) and the Reentry Group (OUR Project fellows) each surfaced valuable lessons learned, promising practices, and key considerations in undertaking this work discussed throughout this document. Roots and OUR Project fellows also co-developed the final recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** The design and implementation of programs and services to assist in reintegration and reduce recidivism for reentry individuals will be more likely to succeed when informed by authentic involvement and recommendations from an independent, self-sustaining group of reentry individuals; this authentic engagement is required for systems change and accountability.

**Recommendation 2:** Involvement of reentry individuals is best accomplished through an intentional process in which lived experience, trauma-informed facilitators foster leadership development, ongoing barrier removal and support, mentorship, case management, and authentic engagement and action planning over a minimum of six months (ideally nine to twelve months).

**Recommendation 3:** Reentry individuals will have the most impact in service and policy recommendations when they are incubated by a host organization with staff that shares their lived experience, builds their individual and collective confidence and capacity to fully engage in the public arena, provides consistent oversight as well as flexibility, and has a track record in ensuring accountability by policy makers regarding the investment of funds for the reentry population. Agencies, systems and CBOs without the expertise or capacity to engage the reentry population should partner with an organization or group that has demonstrated success.



*Ultimately (facilitators) were able to model their own resilience and cohesion as a group: giving each other the benefit of the doubt, drawing upon one another's strengths, and challenging themselves and each other to grow with the process. This is how I think facilitators remained poised and prepared to meet the challenges of group conflict, and help the group move forward, stronger.*



-- Project Champion --

## IX. Resources

*Resources for curriculum development, facilitation and systems change work*

**“Stepping into Power: A Leadership Academy Curriculum for Boys and Men of Color,”** developed by Movement Strategy Center for the Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

**“Leadership Development in Intergroup Relations”**, a program co-sponsored by the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC), Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), and Martin Luther King Dispute Resolution Center (MLKDRC).

[ldir.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/LDIRCatalog\\_series-workshopsx.pdf](http://ldir.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/LDIRCatalog_series-workshopsx.pdf)

**New World Education’s curriculum** by Mandla Kayise

**Timelist curriculum** by Yusef Andre Wiley

**“Health and Ways of Living: The Alameda County Study.”**

Annals of Internal Medicine 102.1 (1985): 146. Web.

Korlaar, Craig Van. **“Guide to Creating Mission & Vision Statements.”** Top Nonprofits. N.p., 07 Jan. 2017. Web. 28 Feb. 2017; <http://www.topnonprofits.com/vision-mission>

**“All of Us or None.”** LSPC. N.p., n.d. Web. 28 Feb. 2017.

<http://www.prisonerswithchildren.org/our-projects/allofus-or-none/>

**‘Leadership and the community organising model’, ‘Public Narrative & Story of Self’, ‘Story of Us’, and ‘Story of Now’** originally adapted from the works of Marshall Ganz of Harvard University.

<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/about/faculty-staff-directory/marshall-ganz>

Visa, Preeti, and Adam Briones. **“Advocate’s Guide to the Community Reinvestment Act - The What, Why, and How of CRA.”** (2009): 1-5. Greenlining Institute. Web. 10 Oct. 2016.

<http://greenlining.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/advocatesguidetocraFINAL.pdf>

**“What Is Policy, Systems and Environmental (PSE) Change?”** Created by The Health Trust, 2012.

[http://healthtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/2012-12-28-Policy\\_Systems\\_and\\_Environmental\\_Change.pdf](http://healthtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/2012-12-28-Policy_Systems_and_Environmental_Change.pdf)

**Vision Issues and Policy Platform 2014; Oakland Rising.**

<http://www.oaklandrising.org/zh-hans/blog/solutions-oakland-vision-issues-and-policy-platform-2014>