

IGNITE INSIGHT





NSA I.G.N.I.T.E. Mission Statement

IGNITE’s dedicated mission is to transform the lives of those incarcerated in county jails by providing education and life skills, as well as instilling hope. We aim to cultivate a positive self-perception and reshape societal views, fostering a mindset shift. Prioritizing measurable results, IGNITE is committed to disrupting the cycle of recidivism and empowering individuals within the system to envision a future of positive societal contribution. Concurrently, our goal is to enhance the safety of jails, communities, and correctional staff by creating an environment conducive to rehabilitation and personal growth.



“Eliminating generational incarceration through education, by restoring value, hope, and purpose to our incarcerated population.”

*Sheriff Christopher R. Swanson, Genesee County, Michigan
Founder of I.G.N.I.T.E.®*

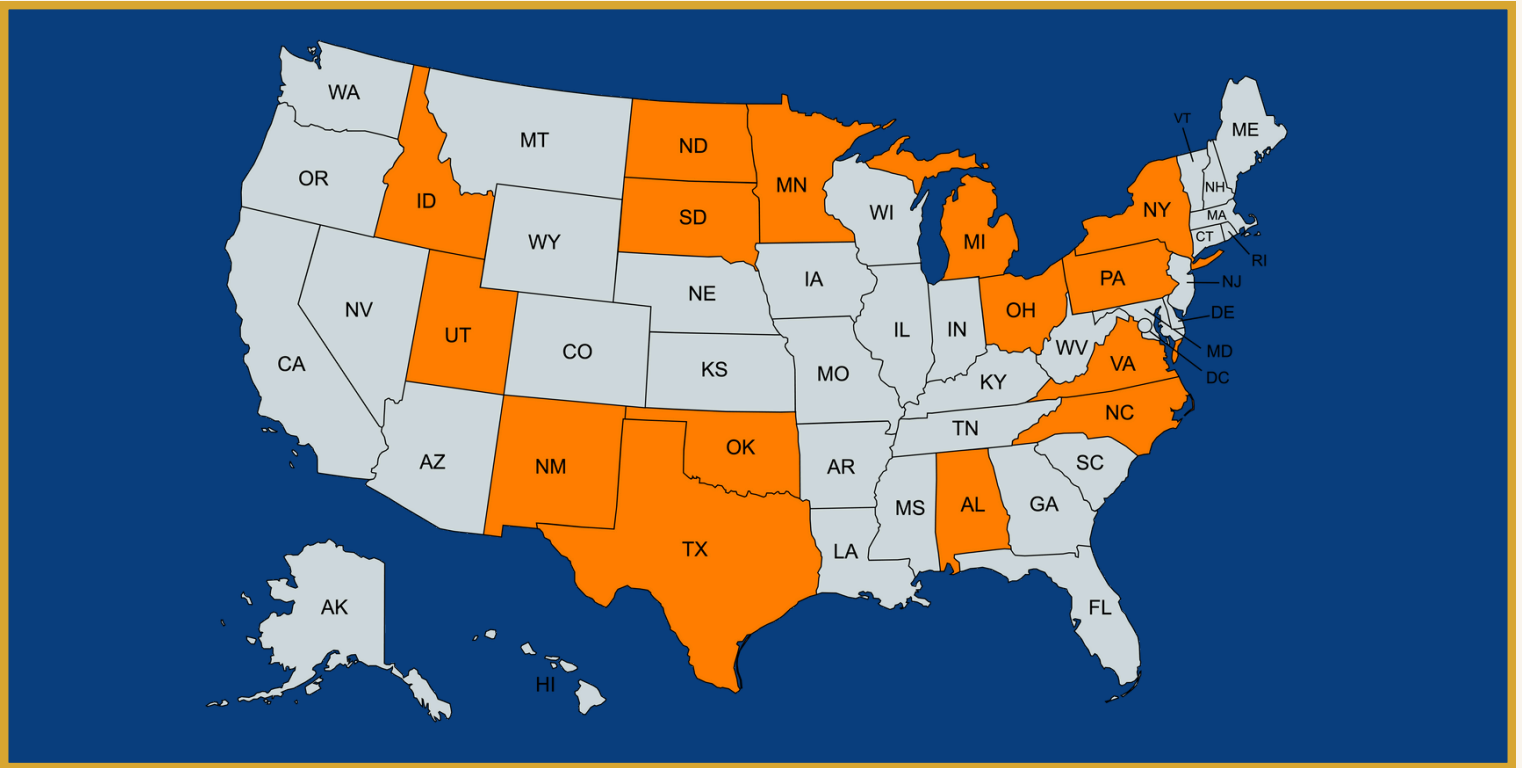


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MEET OUR SITES



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| GENESEE COUNTY, MI
SHERIFF CHRISTOPHER R. SWANSON
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2020 | HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN
SHERIFF DAWANNA WITT
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2021 | CASS COUNTY, ND
SHERIFF JESSE JAHNER
LAUNCHED MAY 2022 | MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC
SHERIFF GARRY MCFADDEN
LAUNCHED JULY 2022 | ROANOKE CITY, VA
SHERIFF ANTONIO HASH
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2022 | COLLIN COUNTY, TX
SHERIFF JIM SKINNER
LAUNCHED APRIL 2023 | PENNINGTON COUNTY, SD
SHERIFF BRIAN MUELLER
LAUNCHED MAY 2023 |
| SANDUSKY COUNTY, OH
SHERIFF CHRIS HILTON
LAUNCHED JULY 2023 | BONNEVILLE COUNTY, ID
SHERIFF SAM HULSE
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2023 | CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NY
SHERIFF JAMES QUATTRONE
LAUNCHED OCTOBER 2023 | ULSTER COUNTY, NY
SHERIFF JUAN FIGUEROA
LAUNCHED DECEMBER 2023 | IRON COUNTY, UT
SHERIFF KEN CARPENTER
LAUNCHED JANUARY 2024 | STEARNS COUNTY, MN
SHERIFF STEVE SOYKA
LAUNCHED MARCH 2024 | FAYETTE COUNTY, PA
SHERIFF JAMES CUSTER
LAUNCHED MARCH 2024 |
| MONTGOMERY COUNTY, AL
SHERIFF DERRICK CUNNINGHAM
LAUNCHED APRIL 2024 | KALAMAZOO COUNTY, MI
SHERIFF RICHARD FULLER III
LAUNCHED APRIL 2024 | BLOUNT COUNTY, AL
SHERIFF MARK MOON
LAUNCHED MAY 2024 | GRAYSON COUNTY, TX
SHERIFF TOM WATT
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2024 | ALPENA COUNTY, MI
SHERIFF ERIK SMITH
LAUNCHED DECEMBER 2024 | EDDY COUNTY, NM
SHERIFF MATTHEW HUTCHINSON
LAUNCHED DECEMBER 2024 | WAYNE COUNTY, PA
SHERIFF CHRIS ROSLER
LAUNCHED JANUARY 2025 |
| WILKIN COUNTY, MN
SHERIFF TONY HARRIS
LAUNCHED JANUARY 2025 | RICHLAND COUNTY, ND
SHERIFF GARY RUHL
LAUNCHED JANUARY 2025 | RUSSELL COUNTY, AL
SHERIFF HEATH TAYLOR
LAUNCHED APRIL 2025 | JEFFERSON COUNTY, AL
SHERIFF MARK PETTWAY
LAUNCHED APRIL 2025 | FAYETTE COUNTY, OH
SHERIFF VERNON STANFORTH
LAUNCHED MAY 2025 | WASHINGTON COUNTY, OH
SHERIFF MARK WARDEN
LAUNCHED MAY 2025 | BUTLER COUNTY, PA
SHERIFF MICHAEL SLOPE
LAUNCHED MAY 2025 |
| SHELBY COUNTY, AL
SHERIFF JOHN SAMANIEGO
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2025 | WOOD COUNTY, OH
SHERIFF MARK WASLYSHYN
LAUNCHED NOVEMBER 2025 | ROGERS COUNTY, OK
SHERIFF SCOTT WALTON
LAUNCHED NOVEMBER 2025 | BINGHAM COUNTY, ID
SHERIFF JEFF GARDNER
LAUNCHED NOVEMBER 2025 | WASHINGTON COUNTY, OK
SHERIFF SCOTT OWEN
LAUNCHED NOVEMBER 2025 | | |



A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

SHELBY COUNTY, AL: SHERIFF SAMANIEGO



Sheriff John Samaniego says the decision to bring the IGNITE program to his facility began with a simple yet urgent observation: the people in his care wanted to grow, but there were too few opportunities to help them do so.

“We recognized that many of our inmates wanted tools to better themselves academically, emotionally, and vocationally,” he said. “IGNITE offered a comprehensive, evidence-informed approach that aligns with our goals of rehabilitation, re-entry preparation, and overall well-being.”

Since implementing IGNITE, the facility has seen a noticeable shift in morale among both staff and students. Participants now have

structured goals, weekly engagement, and a renewed sense of purpose, according to Samaniego. Participants report feeling more motivated and hopeful, and staff say the increased engagement has contributed to a calmer, more cooperative environment.

“Officers and program staff are seeing fewer behavioral issues and more meaningful interactions with participants,” he said. “IGNITE has helped build a culture of growth, respect and accountability.”

For Samaniego, that culture shift extends far beyond the jail’s walls. He hopes the community sees IGNITE as a reflection of the agency’s commitment to rehabilitation and safer neighborhoods.

“This program demonstrates that we are not only managing a jail – we are investing in people,” he said. “Providing education and constructive opportunities for growth shows that we value public safety through prevention and education.”

That connection to the community, he said, is critical to long-term success. Community buy-in not only builds trust in the criminal justice system but also opens doors to the partnerships, employment opportunities, and

support networks returning citizens need to stay on a positive path.

“Successful re-entry does not happen in isolation,” Samaniego said. “When the community understands and supports programs like IGNITE, everyone benefits.”

Looking ahead, he hopes the program will produce measurable reductions in recidivism, improved behavior inside the jail, and stronger transitions home for those returning to the community.

“My vision is for IGNITE to help create safer streets, stronger families, and fewer victims,” he said. “If we can achieve that one participant at a time, then the program will have made a meaningful and lasting difference.”



Left to right: Sheriff John Shearon (Chilton County, AL), Sheriff John Samaniego (Shelby County, AL), Sheriff Billy Murray (St. Clair County, AL), Sheriff Heath Jackson (Escambia County, AL), and Sheriff Derrick Cunningham (Montgomery County, AL)

A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

WOOD COUNTY, OH: SHERIFF MARK WASYLYSHYN



Sheriff Mark Wasylyshyn, who serves on both the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) Board of Directors and its Executive Committee, recently launched IGNITE at the Wood County Jail, making it the fourth site in Ohio to join the initiative. His leadership reflects a growing commitment within the NSA to support programs that strengthen education, skills training, and reentry preparation in jails nationwide. The involvement of board members like Sheriff Wasylyshyn signals that the association is not only supportive but actively investing in the long-term success of IGNITE.

For Sheriff Wasylyshyn, adopting IGNITE was a natural extension of how he runs his agency. "We are always reviewing and looking to see how we can make improvements throughout the office," he said.

His first introduction to the program came when Sheriff Chris

Swanson presented at an NSA conference. "After hearing Sheriff Swanson speak at the NSA Conference a few years ago, I was very inspired to proceed with this program." That interest deepened when he and members of his team visited IGNITE graduations in Genesee County, Michigan, and Sandusky County, Ohio, experiences he described as both motivating and eye-opening.

Planning for the Wood County launch moved quickly. Sheriff Wasylyshyn credits that to a combination of strong local leadership and the structure provided by the national program. "The launch was very smooth thanks to my command staff and all the assistance from NSA. NSA gave us a great template to work with." Community feedback began arriving almost immediately. "Many citizens reach out complimenting our office for IGNITE," he said. The initiative even drew the interest of local businesses. "We also had several businesses we had not thought of approaching reach out to us asking if they can participate."

His goals for the program remain grounded and direct - reduce recidivism and improve the lives of those incarcerated. Sheriff Wasylyshyn sees IGNITE as a continuation of why people choose the profession in the first place.

"Most of us got into this profession to be a servant, help others and make a positive impact on our

communities," he said. "Helping individuals break the cycle of incarceration, he added, "can make a huge difference in the lives of our inmates who want to better themselves."

IGNITE also fits naturally within a jail known for high performance. "We are the only jail in the State of Ohio that has not only passed our annual jail inspection for over 20 years, but we have also received 100% on every inspection," he said. "We always want to raise the bar and do better and better." Implementing IGNITE, in his view, is another way to keep advancing that standard.

Partnership building began early in the process, connecting the jail with trade unions, employers, and the facility's tablet provider, Combined Public Communications. With courses available on the tablets, participants can work at their own pace taking courses they are interested in and getting certificates. These partnerships support a simple philosophy. "As elected Sheriffs, we work for the citizens," Wasylyshyn emphasized.

Looking ahead, Sheriff Wasylyshyn is focused on maintaining momentum. He summed up what IGNITE means to Wood County in a single phrase: "Game changing."

A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

BINGHAM COUNTY, ID: SHERIFF JEFF GARDNER



Getting started with IGNITE satisfied a longstanding career desire for Sheriff Gardner to have an Agency that was doing all it could to reduce recidivism. The sheriff has been in law enforcement since 1995 and had a short tenure in the jail. He's also been on patrol and in Administration. Regardless of his position at any point in his career, one of his biggest wins has always been seeing people come back from their mistakes and become productive, law-abiding members of society. Experiences in which he was able to serve people and help them see a better way are the ones that he'll hold onto forever.

On the flip side, he has seen that there also seems to be a constant cycle for those caught in the system. They seem to lose hope of getting out of it. Some even seem to become comfortable

staying inside of it, because it is just their new normal. He says that you see them go through incarceration or programming in many forms: retained jurisdiction, probation or parole, treatment, and even mental health programs. "Too often, those roads end with them back in our facility to start all over. Initially, you find yourself thinking they just need to get their act together. However, when you look at this issue, how a leader and an Executive Officer of the public's trust should see it, you find yourself thinking, How can we help them break the cycle?" Gardner said.

That is where IGNITE came in. Hearing about it from Sheriff Hulse and his team in Bonneville County, and seeing the instant success, inspired Sheriff Gardner. "In my mind, I knew, Ok, this is it. This will work." Sheriff Gardner said. What stood out most to the sheriff was that IGNITE is merit-based, and he firmly believes that the desire to achieve is innate. "I feel this program will instill an internal reward system for these individuals and help them see the correlation between a goal tied to directed effort leading to a meaningful result. Once that cycle becomes their new normal, they'll have the momentum to break free from the one that's been holding them back," Gardner shared. He liked that in IGNITE, participants will learn critical skills to apply in real-life scenarios and replace old behaviors that landed them in the system in the first place.

Sheriff Gardner's message to anyone considering IGNITE is simple: do it. "Take the leap of faith. The NSA staff have all been extremely helpful, and we've gotten past our own reservations about whether we are capable and have what we need to pull it off. Having a mentor Agency available has also been instrumental, and we can't thank Bonneville County enough for all they've done. We're very much just getting started, and I credit my Administrative Team in the Detention Center that shares a similar vision of 'bringing hope to the hopeless', as Sheriff Hulse says," Gardner shared.

He's also grateful for the community partners that have already come forward. He's pleasantly surprised by how many people have already chosen to take advantage of IGNITE to better themselves.



Left to right: Sheriff Jeff Gardner (Bingham County, ID) and Sheriff Samuel Hulse (Bonneville County, ID)

A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

ROGERS COUNTY, OK: SHERIFF SCOTT WALTON



Sheriff Scott Walton of Rogers County, Oklahoma, has never shied from a hard line on crime. Still, he has become one of the first sheriffs in the state to publicly stake his leadership on a different kind of power: relationships that change lives.

"Make no mistake about it, I have made it my mission to focus every bit of my attention on identifying, arresting, and prosecuting career criminals," he said. "But I'm also compassionate and understanding enough to realize everyone deserves to have opportunities for life-changing circumstances, if and when they are completely ready to do so."

That willingness to hold two truths at once, accountability and possibility, set the stage for Walton to become an early adopter of the IGNITE program in Oklahoma.

He recalls a chance meeting last fall at the Oklahoma Sheriffs' Association Conference, where he heard about the initiative and was immediately inspired to implement it at his own jail facility.

"There wasn't any denying the IGNITE program was something beneficial, made complete business sense, and was undeniably the most appropriate response to reducing the rate of recidivism in our communities," he said. "As Sheriff, I didn't waste any time either."

His decision, he said, was rooted in a belief that sheriffs have a responsibility beyond enforcement. "Our communities are experiencing more and more issues involving repeat offenders," he said. "I think as Sheriffs we have an obligation to reduce recidivism, improve public safety, and provide economic advantages to repeat offenders."

The early outcomes inside his facility have already revealed the program's effect on jail culture. "We have experienced a noticeable decrease in violence and disciplinary concerns throughout our facility," Walton said. "The change," he added, "reflects a shared sense that priorities for improving the conditions, the safety, and the opportunities for inmates, are paramount, and we intend to disrupt negativity at every level of the playing field."

For Walton, the shift is not just

operational — it is personal. "Of all the things I have ever accomplished, knowing that I can have an impact upon the lives of someone who didn't have the same opportunities that I had, humbles me in ways that I can absolutely not express," he said.

He describes jail as "a target-rich environment for changing the lives of inmates." He says the community stands to gain from that transformation. "It's been proven that by reducing recidivism and providing educational programs, a community's crime rate will actually experience a significant reduction," he said. "We will always witness a more substantial return on our educational investment because we offset the costs that would be involved in fighting crime."

Looking ahead, Walton frames IGNITE not just as a program, but as a promise — one he hopes future leaders will carry forward. "I would hope that everything I had imagined for my community in the beginning will have all materialized," he said. "And, I hope there's a sheriff at the helm who shares my vision for furthering the goals and advantages of practicing the IGNITE program."

A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

WASHINGTON COUNTY, OK: SHERIFF SCOTT OWEN



Sheriff Scott Owen is no stranger to innovation, leadership, or community commitment—and now, he’s bringing that same dedication to his newest initiative: launching IGNITE in Washington County, Oklahoma. Sheriff Owen first learned about IGNITE during the IGNITE presentation at the Oklahoma Sheriffs’ Association Conference. The moment he heard the mission, something clicked. He saw how IGNITE could support the goals he had long been working toward: increasing rehabilitative opportunities, strengthening operations inside the detention center, and creating pathways for a safer, more successful reentry. He became determined to bring IGNITE to Washington County—seeing it not as an optional program, but as the next essential step in modernizing the services his facility provides, and in November 2025, Washington County, Oklahoma became the 33rd IGNITE site nationwide.

Sheriff Owen took office in 2019, but his roots in the community run

deep. A lifelong Bartlesville resident, he has spent his career committed to operating a transparent, community-focused agency that delivers high-quality law enforcement services. With 35 years of experience at the City of Bartlesville Police Department, he has served in nearly every capacity imaginable: Field Training Officer, Patrol Sergeant, Lieutenant overseeing patrol, training, and fleet operations, and eventually Captain of the Operations Division.

Since taking office, Sheriff Owen has set clear priorities for the Sheriff’s Office and Detention Center: increase patrol and investigative capacity, expand employee training, modernize policies and facilities, and strengthen collaboration with local, state, federal, and tribal partners. He has also emphasized the importance of staying ahead of changes in law enforcement and detention practices, ensuring that operational guidelines are regularly reviewed and updated.

These goals have already translated into meaningful accomplishments. Sheriff Owen reorganized staff to increase patrol presence, expanded training for both law enforcement and detention personnel, implemented a structured maintenance and replacement plan for aging infrastructure, and introduced consistent reviews of operational procedures to enhance accountability. These improvements have increased

transparency, improved community trust, and ensured that taxpayer dollars are managed responsibly and effectively.

Sheriff Owen’s commitment to rehabilitation is paving the way for more sheriffs in Oklahoma to join the movement. After planning and coordination, his team introduced the program to the detention center with strong support from both staff and community partners and strong support from within the state. Washington County’s first IGNITE cohort has already begun participating in classes, group learning opportunities, and self-improvement activities. Sheriff Owen has made it clear that this is just the beginning—his vision is to expand IGNITE programming to reach more individuals, build out job readiness and education pathways, and strengthen reentry connections to reduce recidivism and improve community safety.



Left to right: Sheriff Chris Hilton (Sandusky County, OH), Sheriff Scott Owen (Washington County, OK), and NSA President Sheriff Chris West (Canadian County, OK)

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION OF STAFF

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, NY: CORRECTIONS OFFICER JOHN CLARK



Officer John Clark didn't always feel the way he does now about the power of rehabilitation in a correctional setting.

"Prior to entering the field of corrections, I had a very sheltered and naïve perspective about my community," he shared. "Being involved in the IGNITE program has enabled me to look at the community and rehabilitation from a more balanced perspective."

Today, Officer Clark is the IGNITE Program Coordinator at the Chautauqua County Jail in New York, where he spends his days working with those incarcerated and creating opportunities for them by building relationships with employers and community partners.

With a background in education, IGNITE is a likely fit for Clark, but the transition hasn't come without challenges.

"The most challenging aspect of maintaining the IGNITE program at its current level and the prospect of expanding is the physical limitations of my facility. Like most facilities, we simply don't have enough space to run the types and sizes of classes I would like to bring to the program," Clark said.

Despite the infrastructure challenges, Clark has seen great success. In 2025, seven incarcerated individuals passed their GED exam. That's the most the jail has seen since before 2020. In addition to the success with GEDs, Clark said the most significant change he's experienced so far is positive behavioral change.

"I have watched a group of six inmates, who in the two months prior to participating in the Introduction to Electrical Skills class had a combined 13 incident reports. Since completing the class eight months ago, they have not received a single incident report," Clark remarked.

Clark loves the opportunities IGNITE has given him.

"The most rewarding part of my job is when I have the opportunity to work with an individual on a one-on-one basis and try to give them the knowledge and motivation to redirect their lives after incarceration," Clark said.

He takes pride in serving his

community and welcomes the opportunity to expand his leadership role at the jail, working not only to improve the lives of those in custody but also to enhance the lives of corrections staff.

He uses the forward-facing IGNITE role to advocate in the community for increased educational and job opportunities for those who are incarcerated. That isn't without challenges.

He has had to be flexible and advocate to help those outside the system understand the needs of the incarcerated population. He knows the success of IGNITE and its participants relies on his ability to form relationships with educational partners, as well as jail staff and administration.

And as he looks ahead, Clark remains focused on building those relationships, knowing the continued success of IGNITE depends on the community's willingness to walk alongside him.

CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS

GRAYSON COUNTY, TX: AMY INGLE



When Amy Ingle joined The Solutions program at the Grayson County Jail, she wasn't sure what to expect. "I was desperate for a change," she said. That decision became the turning point that helped her rebuild her life with hope and direction.

The Solutions, part of Grayson County's IGNITE initiative, is a 12-week addiction recovery and reintegration program designed to help participants build the tools needed for lasting change. The program combines 60 one-hour pre-recorded lessons with optional live Zoom discussions that encourage reflection, accountability, and peer support. Each session focuses on practical strategies for recovery, personal growth, and preparing for reentry into the community.

Rather than following a traditional treatment model, Solutions invites participants to take an active role in their own progress, learning how to set goals, manage challenges, and rebuild confidence from within. For many, it's the first time they've been encouraged to invest in themselves in a meaningful and sustainable way. For many, it's the first time they've been encouraged to invest in themselves in a meaningful way.

For Ingle, that investment has paid off. "I have hope! I know I have a tribe now, and I can achieve my dreams. I know my purpose in life is to carry this message," she said. That sense of community, the "tribe" she refers to, is exactly what Solutions was designed to build. The program encourages participants to support one another, share experiences, and hold each other accountable as they move forward.

Ingle's story reflects the long and difficult road many participants face. "If I could have done this in 2006, my life would have been different," she said. "I know all of the things I went through, triumphs, plateaus, failures, and trauma, led me to this point in my life, uniquely qualified to help others with alcohol and drug addiction."

She speaks openly about how the program has changed not only her outlook but her understanding of herself. "Solutions not only

changed my life, it saved me from myself. I believe in this program."

Graduating from Solutions is more than completing a curriculum—it's a milestone that represents hard work, perseverance, and belief in one's own potential. For Ingle, that belief now drives her forward as she looks toward life beyond the jail walls.

When asked what advice she would give to someone thinking about signing up, Ingle's answer is clear: "What are you waiting for? Do it afraid. Do it unsure. All that will fade."

Her message is one of courage and self-worth—two values at the heart of the Solutions program. Ingle's journey is a powerful reminder of what can happen when someone takes the first step toward change and invests in their own future.



CURRICULUM IN ACTION

STEARNS COUNTY, MN: UNLOCKED: ART & EMOTIONS



A new program inside the Stearns County Jail is helping individuals explore their emotions through creativity. The class, Unlocked: Art & Emotions, is led by one of the jail’s social workers and offers participants a space to process their feelings through art.

The idea for the class came directly from one of the jail’s social workers, who saw firsthand how art can help people express emotions that are difficult to verbalize. When asked about the inspiration behind the program, she explained, “Inspired by my past work in Child Protection, Children/Youth often had a hard time explaining what they were feeling, but clients always did well when presented with the Three Houses activity... Complex emotions can be hard to verbalize, but art is an easier language.” This insight shaped the

foundation of Unlocked: Art & Emotions, making it a truly participant-centered program.

The class is funded through a combination of IGNITE resources, support from Stearns County Human Services, and the CommUNITY Adult Mental Health Initiative (CAMHI) grant. Together, these partnerships allow the jail to provide a structured, therapeutic outlet that costs inmates nothing to participate in.

Students sign up voluntarily and begin each class with a creative prompt meant to encourage emotional expression. They can choose from watercolor paints, markers, oil pastels, colored pencils, pens, or crayons, and create while instrumental music plays in the background. Each session emphasizes process over

product. Participants are encouraged to focus less on how their artwork looks and more on what creating it helps them understand about themselves.

At the end of each session, inmates share their art with the group. For some, this means opening up about personal struggles; for others, it means sharing only a few careful words. Recently, one participant filled their page with bright colors and rainbows, explaining that they felt unexpectedly happy—and even safe—while in jail because it provided “stability and a time to reset” during their struggle with addiction.

The impact has been significant. According to staff, inmates report that the class is a meaningful way to pass time and a helpful emotional outlet. The program has prompted several participants to ask for mental health resources or therapy options, both inside the jail and upon release. As one student put it, “This class was relaxing, and my stress feels lifted.” Jail staff have also seen behavioral benefits; when individuals have a safe space to process emotions, they tend to act out less with staff and others.

Through color, creativity, and conversation, Unlocked: Art & Emotions is proving that even behind bars, healing and hope can take shape.

UTILIZING MERITOCRACY

WASHINGTON COUNTY, OH



In Washington County, Ohio, they are utilizing one of IGNITE’s core principles, a merit-based approach, to keep incarcerated individuals motivated and engaged in their own progress. At the center of the program is a structured meritocracy that rewards effort, accountability, and personal growth through consistency and recognition.

“Within the IGNITE program, meritocracy is defined as a structured system in which participants earn recognition, responsibilities, and incentives based on their demonstrated effort, engagement, and measurable achievements,” said Lieutenant Dustin Timberman, the Director of Inmate Services.

The county’s IGNITE team applies this concept through a clear, positive reinforcement framework. Participants can earn acknowledgment for attending sessions, completing programs such as GED or vocational certifications, demonstrating leadership, or

contributing positively to group activities. Rewards range from certificates and additional privileges to recognition during graduations and other events.

Progress is tracked through attendance logs, completion records, behavioral reports, and staff observations to ensure fairness. “Program facilitators meet periodically to verify progress and address discrepancies or challenges,” Lieutenant Timberman explained. This consistent review helps maintain the system’s credibility and ensures that each participant’s progress is accurately recognized.

Lieutenant Timberman said that the most motivating rewards have been formal recognition at program graduations, opportunities for leadership, and public acknowledgment through social media. “Participants respond strongly to acknowledgment from peers and staff, as well as tangible evidence of their achievements,” he said.

The impact has gone beyond participation rates. Lieutenant Timberman reported that the facility has seen improved behavior, with a 30% reduction in uses of force year-to-date, as participants experience the tangible benefits of consistent effort and positive interactions.

Staff play a key role in supporting the system, serving as mentors and

monitors who guide participants and ensure recognition is applied consistently. “Staff reinforcement helps maintain credibility in the system and encourages participants to strive for their best,” Lieutenant Timberman said.

The results have extended beyond expected program outcomes. “We’ve noticed enhanced peer leadership, stronger community within the facility, and improved self-esteem among participants,” Lieutenant Timberman said. “Some participants take initiative to help others succeed, creating a culture of collaboration and mutual support that extends beyond the program’s formal structure.”

Washington County’s merit-based system demonstrates how structured recognition can sustain motivation and engagement. By rewarding effort and accountability, IGNITE is creating a pathway for incarcerated individuals to invest in their own development, one earned achievement at a time.



SPONSOR FEATURE

ARAMARK: IN2WORK — TURNING PURPOSE INTO POSSIBILITY

Across the country, correctional facilities are discovering that second chances begin with opportunity. Aramark's IN2WORK program—now celebrating its 20th anniversary—embodies that belief by providing individuals in custody with hands-on training, professional certification, and a pathway toward meaningful employment after release.

Since its inception, IN2WORK has equipped more than 19,700 participants, with workforce skills through three distinct career tracks: Food Service, Warehousing, and Culinary Arts. Each track combines classroom learning with practical experience inside correctional kitchens and warehouses, culminating in the nationally recognized ServSafe certification. Graduates leave not only with new credentials, but also with the confidence to build stable, sustainable futures.



The program's impact reaches far beyond the walls of correctional facilities. More than 591 graduates have gone on to employment with Aramark or its partners, 370 have completed internships, and \$208,500+ in scholarships have been awarded to support continued education. Every success story represents a step toward reducing recidivism and strengthening communities through purpose-driven work.

IN2WORK continues to evolve and innovate. The new IN2WORK Diversion Program extends opportunities to justice-involved individuals before incarceration, helping participants build skills and stability earlier in their reentry journey. The program also hosts culinary competitions, celebrating the culinary skills of participants, and IN2WORK Gives Back events, where graduates volunteer in their local communities to pay their success forward.

In 2025, IN2WORK launched IN2WORK.org, a digital platform designed to support graduates after release. The site offers access to exclusive post-release benefits, including scholarships, employment assistance, and continued career development resources. A dedicated Workforce Development Team now partners directly with employers and community organizations to prepare IN2WORK graduates for meaningful reentry into the workforce.



IN2WORK's alignment with IGNITE is clear—both initiatives share a vision of rehabilitation rooted in education, accountability, and hope. Together, they're redefining what correctional programming can achieve by focusing on transformation from the inside out.

"We believe in the power of fair chances," says Nicole McVaugh, Director of IN2WORK. "By helping participants gain skills, structure, and confidence, we're not just preparing them for jobs—we're preparing them for life."

As IGNITE continues to grow nationwide, partnerships like IN2WORK demonstrate the measurable, human impact that comes from investing in people and potential.



IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Bonneville County, ID



Bonneville County has provided 65 incarcerated individuals with the opportunity to earn their GED since its launch in September 2023. They are currently starting a new project with the College of Eastern Idaho to offer trades exploration classes and CPR/First Aid courses. They held their first class, which featured two of their graduates from The Solution. Former students are coming to talk to current IGNITE students about their IGNITE journey and how their lives have changed since becoming sober. Bonneville staff enjoyed seeing how current students responded to the graduates and are humbled to see how much IGNITE is changing lives.

Fayette County, PA

Fayette County is halfway through an IGNITE session and is looking forward to its sixth graduation on December 3. Instructor Lori Hensel of Heartland Fabrication, a large, second-chance employer in Fayette County, is leading a new introductory course on welding. Heartland hopes to employ the released IGNITEES as welders. IGNITE looks forward to using Vehicles for Change's virtual reality for its next class session.



Pennington County, SD

The Pennington County Jail IGNITE initiative offers approximately 26 programs each month. Some programs are offered multiple times a week, some once a week, and others are once a month. The IGNITE Sheriff's Work Program is offered to select sentenced individuals at the Pennington County Jail. The program celebrated its first anniversary in September. Program opportunities include GED, financial literacy, job shadows, certifications, employability skills, soft skills, and case management. Thirty-five individuals participated in the program during the first year, and two-thirds of those who completed it during the first year did not return to the Pennington County Jail six months post-release.



IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Hennepin County, MN

The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office HOPE Program has partnered with the Jail Health Services Opioid Use Care Program to expand support for residents struggling with substance use. This collaboration between Jail Medical and Jail Programs has led to a significant increase in the number of residents receiving education on addiction, clinical assessments, and access to medication-assisted treatment options – such as Suboxone – to promote recovery and reduce withdrawal symptoms. The HOPE program remains committed to providing education and tools that empower residents to continue their recovery journey as they transition from jail back into the community.



Hennepin County, MN

Jefferson County, AL

On September 17, 2025, Sheriff Mark Pettway celebrated the graduation of the second INGITE class. Sheriff Pettway's top priority is public safety, which is directly impacted by his ability to reduce recidivism among individuals leaving Jefferson County detention facilities. Sheriff Pettway is working with state, local, and private-sector partners to bring their workforce development plans and life-skills programs to the Jefferson County detention facilities. The IGNITE curriculum is specifically designed to help student learners build self-worth, acquire marketable job skills, and receive ongoing support—key factors proven to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Graduates of the IGNITE program will leave with recognized credentials, career-readiness certificates, and a diploma or GED – giving them a tangible advantage in the job market and a renewed sense of purpose.



Jefferson County, AL

Chautauqua County, NY

Chautauqua County is preparing to conclude its current Introduction to Electrical Training course. The program was placed on hold for 55 days. Yet, participants have made tremendous progress, excelling across all modules and expressing a strong sense of accomplishment. They have also recently launched a second ServSafe program within the facility and now offer ServSafe Food Manager training to individuals in the Trustee section, as well as ServSafe Food Handler training to IGNITE participants in the general population. Efforts are underway to expand our GED program, and the barbering course resumed in November with more participants. The Sheriff's Office received grant funding to enhance IGNITE services and purchase new equipment.



Chautauqua County, NY

IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Iron County, UT

Iron County has celebrated many successes. They had an Inside Out Dad and a GED Graduation in September! They also had a student, who is now in state custody, earn a high school diploma in October. The Utah Department of Corrections attended his graduation to show him support. Utah State University put on a great class. Their adult education instructor, Le Ila, has been incredible, and they feel lucky to have them contribute to Iron County. They also held their first-ever Smart Steps Graduation, a female parenting class offered by Utah State University, and one of the graduates was pregnant, making it an impactful graduation. Sheriff Carpenter has attended all the graduations and has had many great experiences that he shared from the heart.



Iron County, UT

Grayson County, TX

The Solutions Program recently celebrated two years of operation inside the Grayson County Jail. In that time, 149 people graduated from the program. The Solution Program is a key part of IGNITE, and they are excited to see its continued success. Incarcerated individuals have also completed over 20,000 hours on the EDOVO platform. They currently have a grant pending for an additional program through EDOVO and have recently started a re-entry program with dedicated program staff to support those transitioning back into the community, successfully expanding on the IGNITE initiative.



Grayson County, TX

Shelby County, AL

The Shelby County Sheriff's Office is pleased to announce that IGNITE classes have officially begun at the jail. Participants are now engaging in a variety of educational, vocational, and life skills courses designed to promote personal growth and prepare them for a successful re-entry into the community. These classes mark an important milestone in the ongoing effort to create a more rehabilitative environment within the jail.



Shelby County, AL

IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Roanoke City, VA



Since July, the Unified Reintegration Community Resource Center has continued strong momentum, delivering over 100 hours of programming and engaging nearly 700 participants across employment, re-entry support, behavioral health, and community services.

Inside the facility, residents completed several key programs, including:

- Alpha Program: 16-week intensive substance abuse treatment
- Re-entry Program: Preparing individuals to transition back into the community successfully
- Brain Injury Solutions: Therapeutic Yoga and Tai Chi
- NG50 Entrepreneurship Program: Residents developed and officially registered their own businesses while incarcerated
- Therapeutic Unit Program: Focused support for residents managing mental health challenges

Alpena County, MI

Since the January IGNITE Launch, the Alpena County Jail and IOSCO RESA have provided opportunities for students to prepare themselves to assimilate back into the community. Currently, IOSCO RESA offers Anger Management, Adult Crossroads, Workforce Development (Michigan Works!), Parenting, Financial Literacy (AAACU-local credit union), and Nutrition. IRESA also funds Orijin tablets offering GED, diploma, and secondary classes, such as HVAC, engineering, plumbing, and electrical. In nine months, over 7500 hours of combined instruction and time on tablets have earned students 559 certificates.



Washington County, OH



Since the launch in June, there have been exciting milestones! In September, Washington County held its first graduation ceremony and presented 14 certificates across the GED, ServSafe, Triple P Parenting, and Hydro Blasting Skills Training programs. A recent partnership with the International Union of Painters & Allied Trades enabled students to train and earn a Hydro Blasting certification. In the coming months, the organization will offer week-long training in both commercial and industrial painting. In November, Washington County Jail will celebrate another achievement—its Peer-to-Peer group meetings will have reached 1,000 student engagements this year.

IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Wayne County, PA



Wayne County, PA

The Wayne County Correctional Facility celebrated graduation on September 12, 2025. Deputy Warden John Masco and Lieutenant Justin Rivardo are negotiating to have a secure fence approved for a garden area, where the Penn State Master Gardeners have partnered with work detail inmates. The new secure fence will allow all IGNITE participants to go outside and grow vegetables and fruit for use at the facility. They hope the opportunity to be outside will improve mental health and wellness. Johnson College recently hosted a training certificate course in customer service.

Cass County, ND

They had a GED graduate in October and have 11 individuals in GED classes. As part of the classroom expansion, GED will have its own classroom, allowing for more classes and testing. The classroom will be equipped with everything needed to successfully run the GED program, including the computers required for testing.

Elevate continues to be a successful class, and for the first time, it was offered to the maximum-security population. It went well!

Hip, Hop, and Hope brought in Rap Artist "Dee1" from Georgia for a concert event for maximum-security men. The event had music and pizza for both those incarcerated in that pod and the staff. Hip, Hop, and Hope will also be hosting a holiday cookie extravaganza for the entire population in September. An evening concert for men and women with minimum custody is also planned, with a performer yet to be scheduled.



Cass County, ND

Collin County, TX



Collin County, TX

The Collin County Detention Facility recently celebrated 38 women graduating from Cornbread Hustle, one of their most impactful IGNITE programs. They were especially fortunate to have Cheri Garcia, the founder of Cornbread Hustle, join them in person and speak at the ceremony. Her program combines a unique staffing agency with a 12-week personal-transformation course that supports individuals in recovery or returning from incarceration, focusing on employment, healing, and growth. This graduation honored the courage, resilience, and hard work of each participant.

IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Genesee County, MI

Genesee County celebrated its 38th graduation and third IN2WORK graduation in November. They graduated 50 students who were encouraged by Chris Hanson. They are focusing on partnering with Mott Community College to bring in college courses soon, and the IGNITE team will be meeting with Vehicles for Change to bring in mechanic classes. They also plan to partner with a community volunteer to help bridge the gap between virtual reality and in-person training for mechanics and car painting. The IGNITE team in Genesee County is so excited for the future!



Genesee County, MI



Montgomery County, AL

Montgomery County, AL

On November 4, 2025, Hope Inspired Ministries (Hope/HIM) had a graduation ceremony for two individuals, supporting the incarcerated community through recruitment, training, and employment preparation. On November 7, 2025, Stevens of Church Women United visited the Montgomery County Detention Facility to perform baptisms for nine individuals. These programs demonstrated the facility's ongoing commitment to personal growth, support, and spiritual development.

Stearns County, MN

Stearns County picked up momentum with the ACCI Packets. They currently offer courses in Anger Management, Cognitive Awareness, Employment, Offender Corrections, DUI, and Parenting. In October and November, more than 15 students completed these courses.



Stearns County, MN

Richland County, ND

The partnership with Hustle 2.0 continues to grow stronger every day, and they are thrilled to share that they've officially signed a new contract with Hustle 2.0 that will move toward a paperless learning experience. Hustle 2.0 will now be available on tablets, creating a smoother, more engaging way for participants to learn, grow, and succeed. This step forward means easier access to resources and a more connected learning journey for everyone involved. With so many hardworking participants pushing toward their final certificates, the sheriff's office wanted to find a special way to celebrate their achievements-- those who complete the program will receive a custom T-shirt, provided by Hustle 2.0.

Kalamazoo County, MI

Kalamazoo County is preparing to launch its fifth IGNITE group. They have not run a group since April due to staffing and remodeling issues. They are also finalizing a partnership between KCSO and Urban Alliance.

IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Ulster County, NY

On September 8, 2025, the Ulster County Jail (UCJ) launched the Carpenters Union Local 279 Pre-Apprenticeship Program, allowing participants to build foundational skills and industry connections for future careers in carpentry after release. Additionally, four individuals were recognized for earning their GEDs this fall with a celebration featuring pizza and soft drinks. In partnership with the Ulster County Office of Employment & Training, UCJ introduced the Foundations for Work Program. This five-week course helps participants gain the skills, confidence, and direction needed to re-enter the workforce through individualized coaching and employment readiness training. Plans are also underway to open an IGNITE Housing Unit, reflecting growth and strong engagement among the incarcerated population.

Sandusky County, OH

The Sandusky County Sheriff's Office has strengthened community support and engagement with the individuals participating in IGNITE. Recently, a local retired principal visited the jail and taught a lesson on math basics, spending, saving, and budgeting. These mathematical and financial literacy skills are crucial to ensuring that incarcerated individuals are better prepared for success upon release.

Mecklenburg County, NC

The Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office is proud to celebrate one year of the Post Release Resource Center (PRRC)—a vital bridge helping residents successfully transition back into the community. Over the past year, the PRRC has welcomed 240 residents, providing essential support, including assistance with birth certificates, employment, housing, food stamps, Medicaid, mental health and substance-use services, transportation, transitional housing, and more. Partnerships have grown significantly, expanding the Center's reach and impact. What makes this achievement even more impressive is that the PRRC operates with no dedicated funding. The MCSO Programs Team has managed the Center in addition to their regular duties, demonstrating extraordinary commitment, compassion, and professionalism in supporting returning residents. The first year of the PRRC highlights what's possible when dedication meets purpose.

Fayette County, OH

The Fayette County Sheriff's Office is pleased to report that the various program classes are being well-received by students. Notably, several students have completed 30, 60, or 90 days in the STAND substance abuse program. Completing a program will encourage others to participate and develop tools and skills to use once released.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME TO I.G.N.I.T.E.:

- #30 Wood County, OH
- #31 Rogers County, OK
- #32 Bingham County, ID
- #33 Washington County, OK



*Congratulations to **Amber McCray** of the **Washington County Sheriff's Office (OH)**, who was awarded **WCSO Employee of the Year** at the **Muskingum Valley Beverly Waterford Chamber of Commerce awards dinner!***

EDOVO QUARTERLY REPORT

Edovo, a leading corrections programming application, offers an unmatched reputation and programming catalog, built specifically for incarcerated individuals. Partnering with major tablet providers, Edovo delivers over 25,000 hours of content, directly supporting IGNITE's mission of providing comprehensive education, job certification, and post-incarceration opportunities.

This report showcases Edovo learner engagement data from IGNITE facilities, demonstrating significant progress by incarcerated individuals towards achieving their full potential through active platform participation.

Hours spent learning in Edovo in Q3



- ### IGNITE SITES USING edovo
- Roanoke City, VA
 - Iron County, UT
 - Grayson County, TX
 - Wayne County, PA
 - Fayette County, PA
 - Sandusky County, OH
 - Cass County, ND
 - Chautauqua County, NY
 - Kalamazoo County, MI
 - Genesee County, MI
 - Bonneville County, ID
 - Montgomery County, AL
 - Eddy County, NM
 - Ulster County, NY
 - Collin County, TX
 - Mecklenburg County, NC
 - Washington County, OH
 - Richland County, ND

TOP 10 COURSES

1. Rising Strong: A Substance Use Recovery Course
2. Michael G. Santos: Straight-A Guide
3. Parenting While Incarcerated
4. Preparing for Success After Prison (PSAP) Program
5. The Empath's Survival Guide
6. Thinking for the Future - CBT
7. L.I.F.E. Addiction Recovery
8. Learn Your Strengths from Shining Light
9. Job Seeking with a Criminal Record
10. Mashama Bailey Teaches Southern Cooking

TOTAL NUMBERS

These figures represent the combined efforts of learners across all 18 IGNITE Edovo sites since the program's inception. If you're interested in joining this impactful mission and bringing Edovo's transformative learning opportunities to your facility, we invite you to connect with our technology partner for a conversation.



5,994 K
ACTIVE LEARNERS



20.02 HRS
HOURS PER LEARNER



16,142 K
COURSE COMPLETIONS



128,155 K
TOTAL LEARNING HOURS

“ It is a wonderful and inspiring thing to have people who would think to create a program for incarcerated individuals that is helpful in the area of substance abuse and also offers program-based incentives. It helps us to feel a sense of accomplishment. The biggest incentive of all is learning the skills necessary for maintaining our sobriety. Thank you to all who aid us in our recovery and in thinking outside the box.

Learner (Emmanuel) at Ulster County Jail



MEET IGNITE PARTNERS



The Solution is a robust re-entry program to reintegrate men and women recovering from addiction back into the community. For over 20 years Founder Scott Wisenbaker ran Solutions of North Texas, a nonprofit substance abuse treatment center, accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), licensed as a Chemical Dependency Treatment Center by the State of Texas, and partnered with IGNITE to provide nationwide addiction and reintegration programming. As of 2025, SONTX has provided direction and/or directly worked with over 20,000 individuals.



Vehicles for Change-VR (VFC-VR) was founded with the goal of expanding the success of the Full Circle Auto Repair and Training Center's internship program to a wider audience. This program has helped many individuals facing multiple barriers to employment find jobs in the auto industry. VFC-VR uses virtual reality technology to train individuals on entry-level auto technician basics so they can enter the workforce as tire and lube technicians. By doing so, VFC-VR is helping to create opportunities for individuals who may not have had them otherwise.



America's Credit Union is excited to collaborate with IGNITE to expand to more counties nationwide. As a national partner, we look forward to collaborating with sheriffs and their staff to connect them with credit unions in their local areas to provide financial literacy education as part of IGNITE. The credit union philosophy is "people helping people" and creating financial well-being for all Americans regardless of their background.



The National Association of Counties (NACo) represents the interests of America's counties, serving as a powerful voice in federal policymaking and a vital part of our nation's intergovernmental system. With a membership of thousands of county elected and professional officials, NACo brings together leaders from across the country to shape national policies, share best practices and strengthen counties for a stronger America.

THANK YOU TO OUR IGNITE SPONSORS



We are deeply grateful to the sponsors who make IGNITE possible. As a fully sponsor-funded initiative, every class, site, and success story exists because of their belief in the power of education and rehabilitation.



Law enforcement professionals face unique and relentless challenges that test their mental and emotional resilience. Daily exposure to trauma, tragedy, and stress places officers at a heightened risk for anxiety, depression, and PTSD, yet many still hesitate to seek help due to stigma or fear of being judged.

Peer support continues to be one of the most effective ways to address this challenge. When officers connect with someone who understands the realities of the badge and the demands of the job, it opens the door to honest conversation and healing. Those peer connections help restore trust, build resilience, and remind officers they are not alone.

Keel Mind was created to strengthen that connection. Its platform brings together trained peer supporters, educational tools, and storytelling through features like Keel Reels, allowing officers to find others who have faced similar challenges and overcome them.

The National Peer Support Network, powered by Keel Mind, expands this vision nationwide, linking law enforcement agencies and peer supporters across the country through one secure, technology-driven system. It ensures help is always within reach, regardless of location or shift.

As a law enforcement leader, now is the time to invest in mental wellness and use AI-driven technology to enhance support for your team. Together, we can build a healthier, stronger, and more resilient law enforcement community.

To learn more, visit their site [here](#).

NEWS, WEBINARS, & LINKS

IGNITE IN THE NEWS

- ‘From a correctional facility to an educational facility’ ... [read more](#)
- Jail Joins Nationwide Education And Rehabilitation Initiative ... [read more](#)
- Shelby County Sheriff's Office joins I.G.N.I.T.E. initiative, improves rehabilitation efforts ... [read more](#)
- Washington County (OK) adding new educational and skills program for inmates ... [read more](#)
- Washington County (OH) Jail IGNITE program helps inmates learn and grow ... [read more](#)
- Wood County adopts IGNITE program in partnership between the jail and sheriff's office ... [read more](#)
- Rogers County launches new program to prepare inmates for life. . . [read more](#)

WEBINARS

Aramark is a founding IGNITE sponsor and has a certification program for jails. Aramark's IN2WORK program delivers training, certification, internships, and scholarships to graduates. As a second-chance employer, they are committed to hiring returning citizens and have an employment portal to support graduates on their journey beyond incarceration. Join the IGNITE team and Aramark's IN2WORK team to learn more about this opportunity!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

PARTNER AND SPONSOR LINKS

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[America's Credit Union](#)

[The Solution Program](#)

[National Association of Counties](#)

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[Vehicles for Change](#)