



# SPOTLIGHT

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LOSFA 2.0 IN ACTION

# PAVING PATHS AND FORGING FUTURES: LOSFA's 2024 JUSTICE-IMPACTED SUPPORT

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## PARTNERSHIPS

LOSFA teamed up with partners at the national, state, and local levels to expand equity in college access for justice-impacted communities. Through targeted outreach, comprehensive advising, and strategic partnerships, we provide navigational tools, support, and resources necessary for educational and career advancement.



# PAVING PATHS AND FORGING FUTURES: LOSFA's 2024 JUSTICE-IMPACTED SUPPORT

## JUSTICE-IMPACTED COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS (EXAMPLES)



### COMMUNITY

- o St. Landry-Evangeline Prisoner Reentry Coalition
- o CAPRI – Capital Area Prisoner Reentry Initiative
- o Goodwill Industries of Southeast Louisiana
- o Goodwill Industries of North Louisiana
- o Louisiana Parole Project
- o United Way of Southwest Louisiana
- o United Way of St. Landry-Evangeline
- o Justice and Accountability Center for Louisiana



### PRISON/REENTRY PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

- Raymond Laborde Correctional Facility
- GEO Reentry Services/Day Reporting Centers
  - Lafayette Day Reporting Center
  - Harvey GEO Reentry
  - Lake Charles Probation and Parole Office
  - Covington Day Reporting Center
  - Baton Rouge Day Reporting Center
  - Lafourche Day Reporting Center
  - Thibodaux Day Reporting Center



### BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

- LWC Reentry Employer Outreach and Specialists



### POSTSECONDARY

- Loyola Jesuit Institute of Research
- LCTCS



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## PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



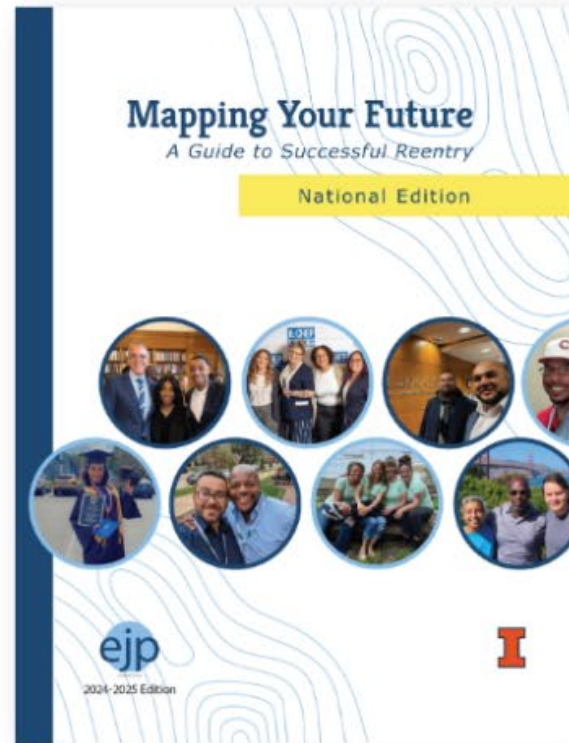
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## PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



### A REENTRY GUIDE PROJECT

Scheduled for publication in March 2026



#### Finding a Peer Support Group

If you are struggling with drug or alcohol use, join a support group to get help and encouragement from others.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are the largest peer recovery organizations and have chapters throughout the country. Visit aa.org or na.org to find a meeting or online group. AA and NA use a religious approach, though they are not tied to a specific religion. Their 12-step process begins by asking members to admit that they no longer have control over their drug or alcohol use. Members are asked to turn themselves over to a higher power to find the strength to change.

There are non-religious support group options, too. These options focus on helping people find motivation within themselves. Here are a few popular options, with in-person and online meetings throughout the U.S.

- **Self Management and Recovery Training (SMART)** peer support groups help participants resolve problems with any addiction. Go to [smartrecovery.org](http://smartrecovery.org) or call (480) 955-5357 to find a meeting or online community. If nobody answers, there is an option to leave a voicemail message and get a callback.
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI facilitates peer support groups and education programs for people with addiction and other mental health concerns. Call 1-800-950-NAMI (6264), text "HelpLine" to 62640, or email [help@nami.org](mailto:help@nami.org).
- **Living Secular Recovery** is an abstinence-based organization of people who share practical experiences and sobriety support. They focus on empowering you to overcome your addiction. Go to [living.org](http://living.org) or call (800) 871-4142 to find a meeting. If in Louisiana, there are no in-person meetings available as of the creation of this guide, but there are online Zoom options and chat group options. This organization also offers online gender-based groups.

You can get recommendations or referrals from your primary care provider, the SAMHSA hotline, or by calling 211. See page 6 for more information on finding a primary care provider. Many community centers and churches also sponsor support groups or can direct you to others.

“People stood up and shared their stories. . . . I rose, took a deep breath. “Look what drugs and alcohol have done to me,” I said, my voice quivering. My hands were shaking so much the styrofoam cup of coffee I held was wobbling on me. But no one seemed to judge my pitiful condition. The immediate compassion, the empathy, the love that rolled off these strangers was enough to put a sizable dent in my pain, my shame, my guilt, and all that sorrow. In that room, I found hope.”

—Susan Burton, author of *Becoming Ms. Burton: From Prison to Recovery to Leading the Fight for Incarcerated Women*, describing her first Alcoholics Anonymous group meeting

Approach your first meeting with an open mind and try to find out as much as you can. You may need to attend several meetings before you feel things are “clicking.” If you don’t feel you have found your group, keep trying. Chapters can be very different and members come and go. Look for:

- Regularly scheduled meetings
- Warmth and friendliness
- Some focus and structure to meetings
- Some time to mingle informally

#### Reflect

What treatments (medication, therapy, peer support groups) have you tried in the past?

How have these treatments helped you? What worked and what didn't work?

What kinds of treatment would you like to try?

Where can you go for help?

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## NCAN ASCENDIUM FELLOWSHIP WEBINAR

On December 17, 2024, April Bergens (CASC) was a panelist during NCAN's Supporting Justice-Impacted Students webinar. NCAN showcased its newly launched resource center to support community, state, and national partnerships and increase accessibility to pathways for these partnerships to flourish. The NCAN Ascendium Fellowship Program panel discussed partnership strategies to support justice-impacted students. NCAN's Supporting Justice-Impacted Students webinar officially launched the [College Access and Success for Justice-Impacted Students Resource Page](#).

## Supporting Justice-Impacted Students



**Kessiah Meeks**  
Success Coach  
Earn to Learn



**Latiqua Washington**  
Deputy Director &  
Director of  
Postsecondary Access  
and Success Counseling  
Goddard Riverside  
Options Center



**April Bergens**  
Outreach Coordinator for  
Adult Learners and  
Nontraditional Students  
Louisiana Office of  
Student Financial  
Assistance



**Patrick Rodriguez**  
Co-Executive Director  
Georgia Coalition for  
Higher Education in  
Prison

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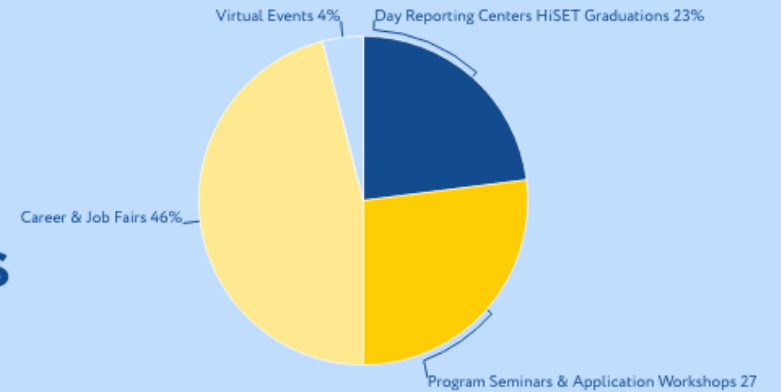
## OUTREACH SERVICES

LOSFA has provided professional development and training to over 423 professionals working within the justice-impacted communities through in-person events and virtual webinars. (United Way, Goodwill Industries, NCAN, DOC, etc.)

LOSFA has served 2,809 members within Louisiana's justice-impacted communities through job and resource fairs, reentry HiSET graduation ceremonies, reentry coalition meetings, and more.

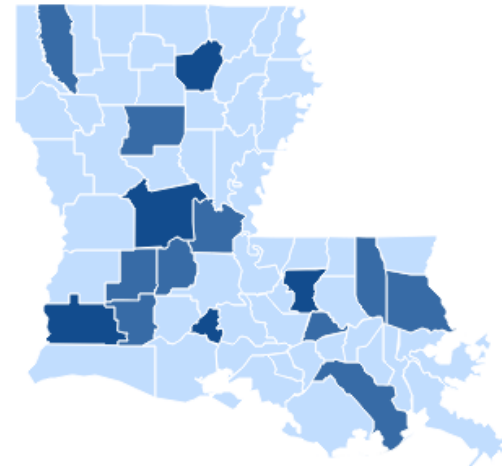


## EVENT TYPES



## TOP 3 PARISHES

- Lafayette - 4
- Calcasieu - 3
- East Baton Rouge - 3



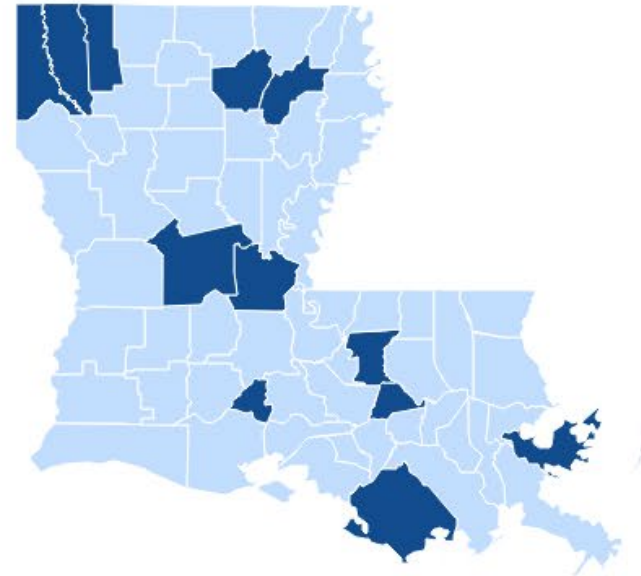
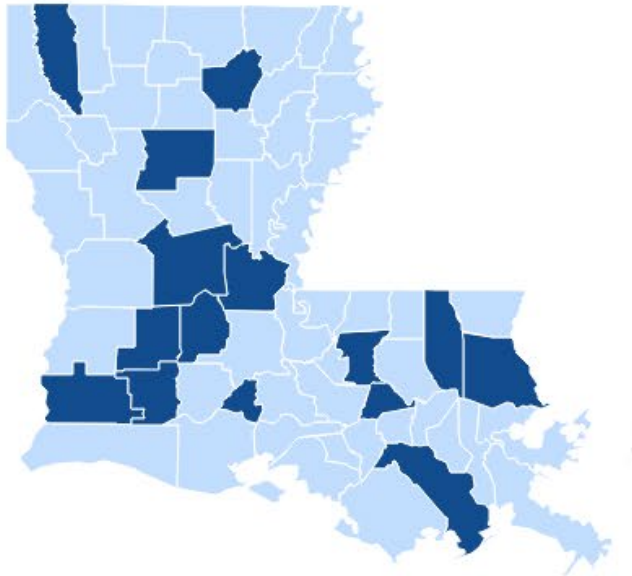
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## PARISHES SERVED THROUGH OUTREACH EVENTS

Calcasieu	Avoyelles
Jefferson Davis	Ouachita
Lafayette	Winn
Rapides	Bossier
East Baton Rouge	St. Tammany
Tangipahoa	Ascension
Lafourche	Evangeline
Allen	

## PARISHES SERVED THROUGH JUSTICE- IMPACTED COMPREHENSIVE ADVISING

Ascension	Ouachita
Avoyelles	Rapides
Bossier	Richland
Caddo	St. Bernard
East Baton Rouge	Terrebonne
Lafayette	Webster
Orleans	



# PAVING PATHS AND FORGING FUTURES: LOSFA's 2024 JUSTICE-IMPACTED SUPPORT



## COMPREHENSIVE ADVISING

Since June 2024, LOSFA's comprehensive advisors have assisted 32 self-identified justice-impacted prospective students with college access and wraparound services.

### DEMOGRAPHICS



YOUNGEST AGE

19



OLDEST AGE

55



AVERAGE AGE

37



FEMALE

7



MALE

25

### REFERRAL TYPE

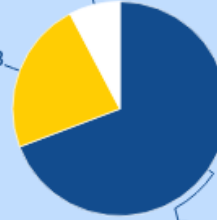


DIRECT REFERRALS

13

Louisiana Parole Project 1

Met at Job Fairs 3



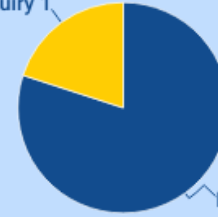
Day Reporting Center 9



MAIL  
CORRESPONDENCE  
REFERRALS

5

Out of State Inquiry 1



Financial Aid Seminar 4



REQUEST FORM

14

College referral 4

Family referral 1



Self-referral 9

# CROSS-DIVISION AND PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION



Through strategic partnerships, targeted outreach initiatives that promote LOSFA programs and services, and a holistic approach to comprehensive advising, LOSFA tailored its support to meet this student population's unique needs and aspirations.

# CASE STUDY #1

## JOHNNY'S PATH TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE READINESS



### BACKGROUND AND INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

- 48-year-old male
- July 2024: Connected with LOSFA at an LWC reentry job fair during his incarceration
- August 2024: During a follow-up with LOSFA, Johnny expressed interest in maritime classes at SLCC and was assigned to a Comprehensive Advising Officer (CAO).



### PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVED

- Lafayette Public Library System
- Lafayette Regional American Job Center (WIOA Office)
- South Louisiana Community College (SOLACC)
  - Student Affairs
  - Workforce Division
- Louisiana Workforce Commission Reentry Division
- LA Department of Public Safety and Corrections (LA DPS&C)
- Colby Martin, Independent Healthcare Consultant



### ENROLLMENT AND RESOURCE ASSISTANCE

- Johnny met his CAO, Chelsey at the Lafayette Library to complete key applications, including the FAFSA®, SOLACC admissions, SNAP, and M.J. Foster Promise.
- A follow-up meeting addressed his school application status and Medicare issues while assisting with his WIOA application and job search at the Louisiana Workforce Office.



# CASE STUDY #1

## JOHNNY'S PATH TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE READINESS

### CONTINUED SUPPORT AMIDST CHALLENGES

- November 2024: Johnny had to leave town due to a family emergency but remained in contact with LOFSA.
- January 2025: His CAO met him at another reentry job fair, where he was notified that his WIOA application had been approved.
- February 2025: Johnny missed the start of classes due to transportation issues and incomplete paperwork. He was also at risk of homelessness along with his 16-year-old daughter. He was connected with SOLACC for resources, but no immediate solutions were available. Housing options continued to be researched.
- Johnny eventually got his bicycle repaired, met with the CAO for additional job application assistance, and confirmed his decision to pursue SOLACC's machinery program starting in April. He was required to resubmit his WIOA application, so the CAO assisted him with reapplying for services.



### TAKEAWAYS

Johnny's journey illustrates the challenges and successes of supporting justice-impacted individuals in education and workforce integration. Early engagement, strategic partnerships, and holistic advising are critical in overcoming barriers. Persistence ensures that individuals like Johnny remain on the path to success despite setbacks.

# CASE STUDY #2

## TREY'S JOURNEY: FROM HISET TO HVAC SUCCESS



### BACKGROUND AND INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

- 22-year-old male
- August 2024: Referred to LOSFA by Robbie Quick, the Probation and Parole Technology Coordinator for LA DPS&C during a HiSET graduation ceremony. He was assigned to a CAO to discuss postsecondary options.



### PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVED

- Lafourche Day Reporting Center
- Fletcher Technical Community College
  - Financial Aid Office
  - Student Affairs Specialist
- LA Department of Public Safety and Corrections (LA DPS&C)



### ENROLLMENT AND RESOURCE ASSISTANCE

- December 2024: LOSFA facilitated an in-person workshop at the Day Reporting Center to assist their students, including Trey, with completing the FAFSA® form, College Match and Fit Advising, and College Admission Applications.
- A combination of virtual and in-person meetings addressed his school application status and Medicare issues while assisting with his WIOA application and job search at the Louisiana Workforce Office.



# CASE STUDY #2

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## TREY'S JOURNEY: FROM HISET TO HVAC SUCCESS

### CONTINUED SUPPORT AMIDST CHALLENGES

- Through phone calls and virtual meetings via Zoom, LOSFA continued to support Trey in navigating various challenges, including admissions issues, FAFSA® corrections, and completing the M.J. Foster Promise application. Trey then enrolled in college and started looking for a job.
- February 2025: April met Trey at Fletcher because he was nervous about going to campus. They met with an academic advisor, who helped him schedule two general education courses for the spring semester. April also double-checked his financial aid to ensure his classes were secure and worked with Fletcher to fix issues with his LOLA Refund Choice setup.



### TAKEAWAY

Through college and career advising, Trey chose to pursue an associate's degree in HVAC and will begin those classes in the fall. As the father of two children, this degree will provide an opportunity for a stable income while he pursues his long-term goal of obtaining a bachelor's degree. Through his probation and parole program, Trey secured a part-time job as an HVAC helper. LOSFA will assist him with credit for prior learning opportunities as he approaches the start of his program in the fall.

# CASE STUDY #3

## AMBER: COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUPPORT SERVICES



### BACKGROUND AND INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

- 30-year-old female with disabilities
- July 2024: Referred to LOSFA through the HiSET Program at the Day Reporting Center in Monroe. She expressed an interest in an online medical billing program and was assigned to a CAO to help navigate the process to apply for state services.



### PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVED

- Monroe Day Reporting Center
- Louisiana Delta Community College
- Carolyn McFarland MPA, Assistant Director of Workforce Education



### ENROLLMENT AND RESOURCE ASSISTANCE

- April initially helped Amber fill out the M.J. Foster Promise application.
- During their first Zoom meeting, LaConga, her CAO, assisted her with applying for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS).
- They also discussed college match and fit, other available resources, and the LA ABLE program.



# CASE STUDY #3

## AMBER: COLLEGE ACCESS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

### CONTINUED SUPPORT AMIDST CHALLENGES

- August 2024: The CAO assisted Amber with obtaining verification documents to recover her FSA ID.
- September 2024: Amber was able to successfully submit her FAFSA® after recovering her FSA ID. With her CAO's help, Amber enrolled in the Medical Billing and Coding Program at Louisiana Delta Community College (LDCC).
- October 2024: Amber contacted her CAO for help with a class assignment issue. The CAO assisted her in obtaining her professor's contact information at LDCC. She was also facing challenges with her M.J. Foster Promise award. During a follow-up Zoom meeting, Amber confirmed that her M.J. Foster Promise grant had been posted, and she had successfully resolved her academic concerns after speaking with her professor.
- Amber asked for help with her SSI application but has not been in touch since December 2024. Continued efforts to reach her are being made to ensure she gets the support she needs.



### TAKEAWAY

Amber's case highlights the importance of consistent engagement and individualized support in navigating educational and state service applications for justice-impacted students with disabilities.

# CASE STUDY #4

## SHAD'S JOURNEY TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT THROUGH CDL TRAINING AND SUPPORT



### BACKGROUND AND INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

- 49-year-old male
- September 2024: Shad visited LOSFA's office after hearing about our services at a job fair. He earned an associate's degree in IT over 15 years ago, before his incarceration. He was uncomfortable pursuing a career in IT and expressed interest in earning his CDL license to gain new skills. He was assigned a CAO to provide follow-up support.



### PARTNERSHIPS INVOLVED

- Employ BR
- Coastal Truck Driving School



### ENROLLMENT AND RESOURCE ASSISTANCE

- Shad received assistance completing his FAFSA® form and was connected to the local American Job Center, Employ BR.
- Trudy, his CAO, successfully connected with Shad and helped him secure funding through Employ BR.
- She also assisted Shad by providing a letter of character to support his TWIC license processing, which is currently awaiting approval.



# CASE STUDY #4

## SHAD'S JOURNEY TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT THROUGH CDL TRAINING AND SUPPORT

### CONTINUED SUPPORT AMIDST CHALLENGES

- An obstacle arose when a pre-hire letter was required to release the funding. Employ BR provided a list of recommended companies, and the CAO helped Shad reach out.
- November 2024: Shad obtained a pre-hire letter and began classes at Coastal Truck Driving School. The choice of school was based on the availability of funding and class schedules.
- December 2024: Shad completed his CDL license. He was offered a job driving an airport shuttle but could not accept the offer due to restrictions at his halfway house. Shad worked full-time as a tree trimmer in a tree removal service. With his CDL, he could also offer driving services for the company, increasing his opportunities.



### TAKEAWAY

Shad's journey highlights the importance of connection, persistence, and support in overcoming barriers to career advancement. With LOSFA's and Employ BR's help, Shad was able to secure the necessary resources to pursue his CDL license, gain valuable skills, and access better job opportunities. His success demonstrates the critical role of wraparound services in helping justice-impacted individuals rebuild their careers.