



Baton Rouge DRC Update



OCTOBER 2020

WELCOME



While normalcy has been disrupted for many during the pandemic, the Baton Rouge DRC has made great strides in continuing our services for participants so they can continue their reentry journeys with as few interruptions as possible. We have also been doing whatever we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19: for example, to keep our building safe, we're staggering our class schedules so there are fewer people in the building at any given time. Also, to keep some services remote, we are also mailing our participants some of their assignments, including HiSET practice sheets and MRT worksheets. In addition, to keep our participants connected to services from local community organizations, we have also been reaching out to local temporary employment agencies to have them teach our participants interviewing skills. To better meet participants' needs, we also recently brought on a new Client Services Specialist, Donyelle Butler, and a new Case Manager, Jonay Brown. Going forward, as we prepare to implement more in-person services, we will continue to provide the highest level of service to participants while following guidelines from the CDC and local officials. Thanks for reading our October update, and please stay safe!

Torrey Williams
Program Manager

SPOTLIGHT ON... CASE MANAGER ANTONIO FINLEY

In January, Antonio Finley was proud to be promoted to his current position as Case Manager, having started at GEO Reentry in 2019 as a Client Services Specialist. As a Case Manager, he summarizes the Baton Rouge DRC program during the intake process and meets with participants each week to discuss how they are doing on their treatment plan goals. Finley also runs the DRC's Thinking for Change group. "I always felt like this field was something I could get into," said Finley, who majored in criminal justice at Southern University. "It was an area I could see myself excelling in and eventually helping others." Finley said the best part of his job is having that opportunity to make a difference, by helping people who feel taken advantage of by the system. The objective, he said, is to give them the tools to think differently. "We use prosocial modeling as far as dressing the part, addressing them by Mr. and Mrs., showing them that we respect them," Finley said. "We want them to know we do feel like there is a second chance for people out there who have made mistakes."



Antonio Finley
Case Manager

DID YOU KNOW?



GEO Reentry Services' **Community Connections** program links parolees with representatives from social services, governmental agencies, faith-based organizations, community groups and businesses. These valuable local service providers offer participants useful information about employment, vocational training, education, family services, food, clothing, housing, mental health, identification, substance abuse, support groups, mentoring and legal assistance. During the pandemic, staff at GEO Reentry centers nationwide took initiative to develop additional programming so that participants could access such essential resources while centers' in-person services were modified or suspended. Efforts included bringing in representatives from the state workforce commission to help participants fill out job applications, connecting with nearby community colleges to offer remote and in-person GED tutoring and building relationships with local retailers and restaurants to donate food and hygiene items, which program staff delivered to participants' homes. Through compassion and innovation, GEO Reentry staff helped program participants hold onto progress made prior to the pandemic and continue their reentry journeys without interruption.

By Wendy Dressler, GEO Care Research Analyst