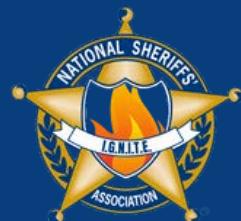


NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

IGNITE INSIGHT



IGNITE INSIGHT AUGUST 2025



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.



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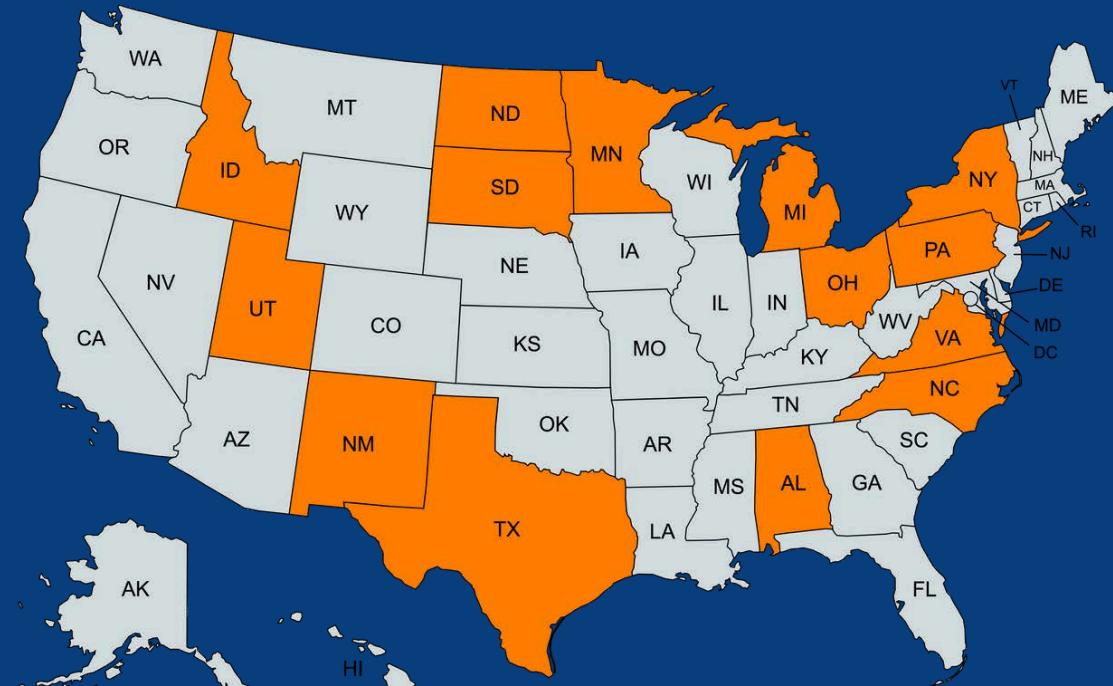
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MEET OUR SITES



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SHERIFF GARRY MCFADDEN
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LAUNCHED MAY 2022

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SHERIFF ANTONIO HASH
LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 2022

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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 SLIPE
LAUNCHED MAY 2025

A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

SHERIFF HEATH TAYLOR: RUSSELL COUNTY, AL



What does a love of music and 38 years in law enforcement have in common? For Sheriff Heath Taylor, it's IGNITE. Sheriff Taylor began IGNITE at the Russell County Jail with guitar lessons. IGNITE students kicked off the launch with a rendition of "Keep Your Hands to Yourself."

The Russell County Jail houses approximately 350 individuals each day, with a total capacity of 540. For Sheriff Taylor, the numbers tell a deeper story. "I have very few first-time offenders," he said. "What sparked my interest in IGNITE was the potential to help reduce recidivism. If we can provide people with purpose and direction while they're here, they're less likely to come back."

Sheriff Taylor's decision to bring the program to Russell County marks the third implementation in Alabama, building on growing momentum across the state to shift from incarceration to rehabilitation.

Getting the program off the ground came with logistical challenges, particularly in identifying a dedicated space that could be set apart for enrolled participants. But the effort is already showing signs of impact. "It's been really nice watching the inmates participate," Sheriff Taylor said. "Watching them be excited about it and looking forward to the classes and things has really been a nice atmosphere to see take place in the facility."

The program's structure is designed not only to educate but also to instill routine, provide constructive use of time, and skills that matter both behind bars and beyond them. "When they are out of the facility and making it on their own," Taylor said. "they need things to take up down or idle time. That way they don't fill that time with drugs or alcohol or other criminal activity."

Sheriff Taylor has long viewed law enforcement as a way to serve the public, and IGNITE is a natural extension of that commitment. "The reason I got into this work was to help people," he said. "This program is another way to do that."

As the first classes prepare to graduate, Sheriff Taylor is focused on outcomes. "I look forward to seeing the lives we help change."

Strong leadership is essential to any successful team. In Russell County, Sheriff Taylor has provided it, creating the conditions for change inside the jail and building a foundation for better lives beyond it.



A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

SHERIFF VERNON STANFORTH: FAYETTE COUNTY, OH



After nearly 30 years as Fayette County Sheriff, Vernon Stanforth is well-acquainted with the realities of modern corrections. From overcrowded facilities to repeat offenders, he has spent decades navigating the challenges of jail operations. This spring, Sheriff Stanforth took a direct step toward addressing those issues: the launch of IGNITE.

Sheriff Stanforth began his law enforcement career in 1981 and was elected sheriff in 1996. At the time, Fayette County's jail had a capacity of just 24 beds and was regularly overcrowded. The facility offered little space or structure for programming. In 2021, a new 120-bed facility opened, creating a better environment for implementing services aimed at rehabilitation.

On May 29, the Fayette County Jail became the 27th site to implement IGNITE. For Sheriff Stanforth, this move was long overdue. He had watched the same individuals cycle through the system, often leaving worse off than when they entered. IGNITE offers a way to interrupt that pattern.

That same year, Sheriff Stanforth served as President of the National Sheriffs' Association. In that role, he helped recognize and promote IGNITE on a national level and saw its impact in other counties. He waited to bring the program to Fayette County until staffing and partnerships were strong enough to support it.

"Too often, we see people come into our jail and leave exactly the same, or worse," Stanforth said. "Our goal is to break that cycle."

Now, Fayette County offers courses focused on education, job training, digital skills, and reentry planning. With support from community partners, the jail is aiming to give individuals the tools they need to succeed after release.

Education is a core part of the program. Sheriff Stanforth sees

"It is the goal of IGNITE to address the needs of the incarcerated so as they assimilate back into the community, they become productive."

Sheriff Vernon Stanforth

it is essential to reducing recidivism and improving long-term public safety. By preparing people for employment and life outside jail, IGNITE helps shift the focus from custody to outcomes. The launch of IGNITE reflects a practical response to long-standing problems and shows that change is possible with the right tools and leadership.



A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

SHERIFF MICHAEL SLUPE: BUTLER COUNTY, PA



Pennsylvania Sheriff Michael Slupe has built a career rooted in public service. Now in his 16th year as Sheriff of Butler County, and running unopposed for a fifth term, he's leading the county into its next phase: implementing IGNITE.

Although Pennsylvania sheriffs do not oversee jail operations directly, Sheriff Slupe has played a central role in jail governance since 2016 as Chairman of the Butler County Prison Board. The county facility houses up to 572 individuals and has become the focus of new efforts to reduce recidivism and improve reentry outcomes.

Sheriff Slupe first learned about

IGNITE in 2025 at the National Sheriffs' Association Winter Conference. It was there, during a reception, that fellow Sheriff Jim Custer, Fayette County, PA, spoke about the program and its positive impact on incarcerated individuals and the broader community. That conversation sparked Sheriff Slupe's interest and led to Butler County's involvement.

"Honestly, it was attending a reception at the NSA Winter Conference in 2025 with Pennsylvania Sheriff Jim Custer, and he told me what a wonderful program this is for the inmates and the community," Slupe shared.

As the program launches, Sheriff Slupe is focused on ensuring that qualified inmates have access to skills and certifications that will support their success after release. "That qualified inmates can learn skills and certificates to help them thrive and work in the community they live in and having community partners be part of the inmates' success," he said when asked what he looks forward to most.

He credits the progress so far to

strong collaboration. "We haven't found a challenge that we couldn't overcome. The prison staff who is working on this project is incredible and are making it happen," Sheriff Slupe noted.

Sheriff Slupe said his focus is on safety and long-term community outcomes. "This is more about hoping to make our communities safer when inmates are released," he explained.



As Butler County continues to roll out IGNITE, Sheriff Slupe remains focused on the long-term goals: reduced recidivism, stronger community partnerships, and better futures for those returning home. "We are hoping the rewards are that we will not see the recidivism of the IGNITE graduates back into our prison and that they get a good job with what they have learned."

A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

SHERIFF MARK PETTWAY: JEFFERSON COUNTY, AL



With more than 1,200 individuals housed across two sites in Birmingham and Bessemer, the Jefferson County Jail is the largest jail operation in Alabama. Sheriff Mark Pettway is using that scale to drive lasting change, not only in how incarceration is approached, but in what it can offer.

Under Sheriff Pettway's leadership, Jefferson County has officially launched IGNITE. This moves places Alabama at the forefront of IGNITE adoption nationwide. But for Pettway, the decision goes beyond program implementation, it reflects a broader commitment to building safer communities through education, opportunity, and accountability.

"We've been investing in education through our Renewed for Re-entry program for years," Sheriff Pettway said. "IGNITE strengthens that effort with national support, structure, and research-driven results."

IGNITE brings a comprehensive model to the jail setting, including academic instruction, digital literacy, vocational certification, and individualized reentry planning. The program is designed not only to provide access to learning, but to give people in custody the tools to succeed after release.

The launch in Jefferson County has been smooth, a reflection of the strong foundation already in place. Sheriff Pettway credits the support of judges, elected officials, community organizations, and jail staff, all working together toward a common goal: reducing recidivism by increasing opportunity.

"The link between employment, financial stability, and reduced recidivism is clear," Pettway said. "When someone turns their life around, it doesn't just help them, it helps their family, their

neighborhood, our whole community."

For Sheriff Pettway, the vision is rooted in more than policy, it's personal. With 34 years in law enforcement, including seven as sheriff, he has seen firsthand the cycle of incarceration and the factors that drive it. He believes in second chances, and he believes local jails can be a place where transformation begins.

"It's satisfying to see someone who was once incarcerated now employed, paying taxes, raising a family, and contributing to the community," he said. "That kind of turnaround doesn't happen without support and opportunity."



A SHERIFF'S JOURNEY

SHERIFF MARK WARDEN: WASHINGTON COUNTY OH



Just months into his first term, Sheriff Mark Warden began delivering on his campaign promise to reform the county jail system. In early 2025, he introduced the IGNITE program at the 124-bed facility. The launch represents a significant shift in Washington County's approach to corrections, moving away from longstanding practices and toward meaningful change.

Elected in 2024, Sheriff Warden, a 38-year veteran of law enforcement, brings a wide-ranging background in corrections, patrol, investigations, narcotics, administration, and education to his role as Washington County Sheriff. This extensive experience has shaped his understanding of the limitations

of traditional incarceration and the urgent need for more effective, rehabilitative approaches.

It wasn't until attending Sheriff School, however, that Warden found the direction that matched his vision. After hearing Sheriff Chris Hilton from Sandusky County, Ohio, describe IGNITE, he knew instantly it was the program he had been looking for.

Now, with IGNITE officially launched, Washington County is entering a new era, one focused on outcomes rather than just custody. The program brings academic instruction, digital literacy, vocational training, and reentry planning to incarcerated individuals, offering them a structured path forward.

Sheriff Warden attributes the program's early progress to a united front of community partners and staff who share the vision for a better future. While he admits the rollout required patience, wanting it to start "yesterday", he says the foundation is strong.

For Sheriff Warden, the success of IGNITE won't be measured in

statistics or awards but in the stories of people who don't return to jail. He believes real change comes when the cycle of incarceration is broken, not just for one person, but for future generations.

His goal is to address the root causes behind incarceration, particularly substance use and unaddressed trauma. By focusing on hope, healing, and personal development, he sees an opportunity to create safer jails and healthier communities. "The only reward we will enjoy," Sheriff Warden said, "will be the success of the program."



RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION OF STAFF

WILKIN COUNTY, MN: LEAD CORRECTIONAL OFFICER/PROGRAMS DIRECTOR CAMDEN SCHWEIGER



In 2024, Camden Schweiger, a Lead Correctional Officer and Programs Manager in the Wilkin County Jail, found himself standing in a jail in Genesee County, Michigan, watching a graduation ceremony that would change the course of his career. Officer Schweiger saw what was possible in a jail and left inspired.

"When I got back home, I began going to local businesses and schools asking for their support," he said. That initiative, entirely self-directed, became the foundation for Wilkin County's IGNITE program.

"Both the Sheriff and Jail Admin gave me free rein to do all the work," Officer Schweiger explained. "I'm extremely

grateful for them trusting me to bring the IGNITE Program to our jail."

Trust, however, didn't mean ease. Launching IGNITE while overseeing jail safety and operations meant giving up personal time.

"I think I spent more time at home and my days off working on IGNITE than I did while I was at work," Officer Schweiger admitted. "It wouldn't've happened if it wasn't for the support from my family and department."

That effort has paid off. Since its launch, IGNITE in Wilkin County has not only delivered educational and workforce opportunities to incarcerated individuals, it has also offered immeasurable benefits like value and hope.

"Every single inmate that has participated in our IGNITE Program has said it's given them hope," Officer Schweiger shared.

"I always see a positive attitude change when an inmate decides to take that step to improve a piece of their life."

One incarcerated individual took that step even further, creating a "self-reflection" component that has since become a signature part of the program. What began as ten weekly questions evolved into a robust curriculum with mock interviews, communication role-playing, and job application exercises. Officer Schweiger embraced it.

"I really let the students design and create what they need, and I provide them with the resources they need to be successful," he said.

Officer Schweiger's belief and passion for IGNITE led him to do something no IGNITE site had done before. He facilitated the launch of a second jail in another state alongside his own. Thanks to his passion and coordination, IGNITE celebrated its first-ever double launch.

Officer Schweiger's leadership is a reminder that IGNITE doesn't have to stop in your own facility; it can be shared with neighboring communities. Meaningful change is possible when someone decides to make it happen.

CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS

ALPENA COUNTY, MI: JUSTIN SLATER



When Justin Slater first encountered IGNITE in the Alpena County Jail, he saw more than just another class. Now, with 13 certifications, a new career trajectory, and renewed confidence, he's proving how education inside can lead to real change outside.

"The IGNITE program has made a huge impact on me and my family," Slater said. Through a combination of tablet-based learning and in-person instruction, he immersed himself in a wide range of subjects, from Workforce Development and Financial Education, to Parenting and Nutrition. Each class, he noted, added something valuable to his understanding of himself and the

future he wanted to build.

"I have learned how to create my own plan for success and achieve my goals thanks to the IGNITE possibilities, my teachers, and The Master Plan," he said. His progress wasn't just academic, it was personal. The confidence he gained from each completed course helped shift his mindset and deepen his commitment to change.

"I can honestly say that I have more skills now and a better understanding of myself"

Justin Slater

One of the most significant milestones came through IGNITE's partnership with Alpena Community College and IOSCO RESA. Slater enrolled in the online IET Residential Builders Course, a 12-week program he completed in just six weeks. With his certificate in hand, he is now eligible to take the State Builder's Exam and pursue his license upon release.

Throughout his time in the program, Slater consistently demonstrated a high level of engagement and drive. He made it a priority to complete classes,

earn certifications, and apply what he learned to his own life and goals. Programs like Crossroads and Parenting gave him new insights into his relationships and responsibilities, reinforcing his determination to return to his family and community with a stronger foundation.

"I believe I will be transformed upon my release. I will be a better man for myself, my family, and my community."

Slater's journey is a clear example of how access to education and opportunity can break cycles and change outcomes. Through IGNITE, he has taken full advantage of the tools available, and he's building a future that looks nothing like his past.

CURRICULUM IN ACTION

SANDUSKY COUNTY, OH: ESCAPE YOUR PRISON



At the Sandusky County Jail, a program called Escape Your Prison is giving incarcerated women the space to reflect on their decisions, identify harmful behavior patterns, and begin preparing for life after jail. The program is led by peer mentor Brianna Lote, who is currently incarcerated and facilitates the group each afternoon for two hours.

Escape Your Prison is a self-paced workbook designed to help individuals examine the choices that led to their incarceration and outline what needs to change before release. Brianna currently leads nine women in the program and has logged more than 60 hours of mentoring and group facilitation. While the curriculum provides a foundation, the program's success comes mainly from Brianna's leadership.

Brianna has taken the time to study the material and connect it to her own life. She then breaks it down in ways that make sense to the women around her. Her lived experience gives her credibility and helps build trust. She is in the same situation they are, which allows her to relate to their challenges and offer real support. This connection is something staff alone often can't provide.

The program creates space for honest reflection. Participants are asked to confront the behaviors and decisions that contributed to their incarceration. They are encouraged to think critically about what it will take to do things differently on the outside. But the program does more than that; it helps them begin to build a sense of self-worth. Through guided discussions and peer support, they are reminded that they are capable of change.

The structure also benefits the jail environment. With women coming together to learn and problem solve, conflict in the female unit has decreased. The group offers a productive alternative to idle time and encourages participants to hold themselves and each other accountable.

Staff believe that the model could be replicated in other facilities without requiring this exact curriculum. What matters most is identifying mentors with the willingness and ability to lead. When people are allowed to take ownership and model positive behavior, the entire unit can benefit, from participants to staff.

Sandusky County's use of Escape Your Prison shows that peer-led programming is possible and effective. By creating a space for reflection and growth, the program helps incarcerated individuals do the hard work of change before returning to their communities.

UTILIZING MERITOCRACY

PENNINGTON COUNTY, SD



In the Pennington County Jail, the reward structure is intentionally designed to reflect the diverse motivations within the incarcerated population. Incentives range from tangible benefits, such as commissary items, trustee status, participation in the Sheriff's Work Program, and "good time" days for sentenced individuals. They also include opportunities for personal development, including GED preparation and testing, I-9 documentation assistance, and completion certificates. Additional privileges, like weekly movie nights and letters of participation for judges, further support engagement. By offering a wide spectrum of rewards, the program remains relevant and accessible to individuals across various classifications, from pre-trial detainees to those working toward early release.

While no single incentive stands out as most effective across the

board, Pennington County staff report consistent positive feedback from participants across the full spectrum of offerings. "The priorities and motivation differ for each person," staff explain. This understanding has informed a flexible structure where success is measured not just in outputs, but in the alignment of individual needs with available rewards.



The meritocracy is funded through a mix of sources: jail funds cover some tangible items, private donors contribute to others, and many of the most impactful offerings, such as personalized letters to judges, require only staff time and coordination.

This mixed-model approach allows the county to offer consistent rewards without placing undue strain on facility resources.

Administrators emphasize that the

merit-based model is more than a motivational tool, it is a cultural lever. "Utilizing meritocracy is a driving force for increased encouragement, productivity, and assists in developing a culture of friendly competition." The result is a facility environment where personal growth and accountability are not only expected but incentivized.

Among all available incentives, commissary items tend to resonate most with pre-trial individuals, while sentenced participants are more focused on good time eligibility and the opportunity to work toward early release. Both reward types reflect an intentional design philosophy: offering meaningful, individualized incentives that directly connect program participation with personal progress.

In Pennington County, IGNITE's meritocracy doesn't just move people through a curriculum, it helps build a system where growth is earned, recognized, and rewarded in real time.

STRONG COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

JEFFERSON COUNTY AND LAWSON STATE



In Alabama, Lawson State Community College and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office are investing in a different kind of infrastructure: one rooted in opportunity, not incarceration.

"We put the 'E' in IGNITE," said Dr. Cynthia T. Anthony, president of Lawson State. "We are the education partners for this program. It's a privilege for us to be able to carry out what is our mission."

That mission—to meet people where they are and help them get to where they want to go—has led Lawson State to a jail classroom, where education and workforce training are now core pillars of reentry preparation.

"When the sheriff came to us over a year ago as we were looking at this, the answer was simply yes," Dr. Anthony said. "Because it is a part of what we do on a regular basis at Lawson State Community College. We change lives. We

change the trajectory of people's lives."

The results speak to the strategic alignment between Lawson State's adult education and workforce development teams. According to White, curriculum decisions are informed by local employer demand and tailored to each student through individual assessments. Instruction includes soft skills essential for reentry success: communication, professionalism, and time management.

Dr. Anthony acknowledged the deep commitment of her staff, including Charlette White, who is the director of adult education, and Terence Tubbs, a Lawson State instructor with a law degree and extensive experience in prison education. Both have been critical to the partnership's success.

The broader goal is to build a career pathway to make sure they have goals and objectives set. She

is already seeing that unfold: some students are expressing interest in HVAC certification or further college enrollment after release. For others still finding their path, "that's perfectly okay," she said. "Part of our mission is to help individuals find their way and discover what they truly want to do and then support them in continuing their education and training."

Collaboration with Jefferson County Sheriff Mark Pettway's office has been central to the program's success. "We have worked together on various boards, projects, and community initiatives for years," said Dr. Anthony. "We share a common goal of improving our community... They have an excellent team that is extremely committed to the success of the program and, more importantly, to the success of the individuals participating in it."

Her advice to others considering similar partnerships is rooted in mutual respect and early planning. "True partnership and collaboration are key. It's crucial to come to the table early and collaboratively define what the partnership needs to look like." When that happens, she said, it becomes "a win-win for both parties."

IGNITE SITE UPDATES



Fayette County, PA

The Fayette County Sheriff's Office remains committed to promoting rehabilitation and educational opportunities through IGNITE. Warden John Lenkey, Deputy Warden Angela Kern, and Captain Heather Eicher delivered a seminar on their experiences with IGNITE during the National Sheriffs' Association Conference, alongside Sheriff James Custer. They spoke to an engaged and enthusiastic audience, sharing the impact of IGNITE at the Fayette County Jail. The trip came just one week after celebrating their fifth IGNITE graduation, which recognized 22 participants. Looking ahead to the fall session, the team is preparing to launch several exciting new initiatives, including partnerships with a local community college, where IGNITEes will have the opportunity to earn college credits, as well as collaborations with Vehicles for Change and other impactful programming.



Ulster County, NY

The Ulster County Sheriff's Office continues to advance rehabilitation through its IGNITE initiative. On June 10, 2025, incarcerated individual Stephen Thompson was recognized for earning his GED with a small celebration. Later that month, the facility partnered with the Unison Art Program to host Voices Unbound, an art exhibit featuring work by incarcerated women at the jail. Held at the Unison Arts Center and led by instructor Marielena Ferrer-Harrington, the event marked the first of its kind in the county. It drew remarks from County Executive Jen Metzger, Sheriff Juan Figueroa, and Assemblywoman Sarahana Shrestha. The artwork explored themes of identity, memory, and transformation, serving as a powerful tool for healing and self-expression. As part of continued efforts to support growth and reentry, the facility is preparing to launch a dedicated IGNITE Housing Unit this fall, with participation and interest continuing to rise.



Roanoke City, VA

The Roanoke City Sheriff's Office has launched a new partnership with local community organizations to establish a Community Resource Center. This center is designed to support former residents of the Roanoke City Adult Detention Center, as well as other justice-involved individuals, in their reentry process. The center will offer job skills training, employment opportunities through community partnerships, job readiness workshops, and life skills education. The goal of the initiative is to reduce recidivism and promote long-term success by providing practical support and preparation for life after incarceration.



IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Collin County, TX

On June 13th, the Collin County Sheriff's Office held its first Programs Open House at the Collin County Detention Facility. The event welcomed state and local representatives, local colleges, volunteers, religious organizations, and other community partners. Through IGNITE, the Sheriff's Office is determined to support inmate rehabilitation through structured programming. These efforts are helping individuals rebuild their lives and reinforcing the value of strong community collaboration within the facility.



Collin County, TX



Wayne County, PA

Since joining IGNITE in January 2025, the Wayne County Correctional Facility, under the leadership of Sheriff Chris Rosler and Deputy Warden John Masco, has implemented the use of Edovo laptops as part of its educational programming. Participation in the program requires individuals to meet specific behavioral standards, monitored by Director of Inmate Services Jennifer Geyer. Selected participants are enrolled in three courses totaling over 80 hours of coursework, which they must complete to graduate. On May 16th, 2025, one of the facility's smaller housing units held a graduation celebration, featuring pizza, certificates signed by Sheriff Rosler and Deputy Warden Masco, and recognition of the students' achievements. The graduates are also members of the facility's inmate monitoring program, which supports their peers through difficult times.

Genesee County, MI

In June, the Genesee County Sheriff's Office celebrated the graduation of its second In2Work class, which included five male and four female participants. Each graduate earned a ServSafe certification and received a new apron and hat. One female participant went a step further by earning her ServSafe instructor certification. She taught the class and will continue to lead future sessions until her release. The Sheriff's Office is also in discussions with a local barber to launch a new barbering program. The goal is to help participants earn state-level certifications and provide apprenticeship opportunities upon release. Additionally, IGNITE deputies are currently training in a new literacy curriculum to begin offering reading and writing classes for individuals in need. These classes are scheduled to begin in August. The Genesee County Sheriff's Office remains committed to strengthening IGNITE and expanding opportunities for personal growth and skill development.



Wayne County, PA

IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Washington County, OH

The Washington County Sheriff's Office has officially launched its first IGNITE class at the Washington County Jail, beginning with foundational courses in Literacy and GED preparation. These initial offerings mark the start of a broader educational program that will soon expand to include life skills, ServeSafe certification, financial literacy, and additional subjects aimed at supporting personal growth and reentry preparation.



Washington County, OH



Iron County, UT

Iron County, UT

The Iron County Sheriff's Office continues to celebrate new milestones! The facility recently launched a Virtual Welding program and has already seen one successful graduating session, with another now underway. The instructors, who are part of a well-established local business that operates nationwide, not only bring their expertise into the jail but also actively encourage participants to apply for jobs with the company upon their release.

Jefferson County, AL

On July 16, 2025, Sheriff Mark Pettway of Jefferson County, Alabama, celebrated the graduation of the county's very first IGNITE class. As the 25th site to launch the IGNITE program nationwide, the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office marked a significant milestone with this inaugural ceremony. Sheriff Pettway's leadership demonstrates a powerful belief in redemption, the possibility of change, and the importance of second chances. Over the course of six weeks, students engaged in a variety of career pathways, including GEDs or GED pretests, certifications, literacy and soft skills development, and other evidence-based programs, all designed to prepare them for successful reentry into the community. Their achievements are substantial and hard-won. IGNITE is not just a series of programs or certificates; it is a movement centered on restoration. It emphasizes discipline, the reclamation of dignity, and the reimagining of what is possible for each student's future. The program works because it fosters hope. As students regain that hope, they change their behavior, reduce their sense of hopelessness, and contribute to rebuilding their communities.



Jefferson County, AL

IGNITE SITE UPDATES



Hennepin County, MN

The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office continues to make strong progress in education and life skills programming. As of June, students have passed a total of 63 individual GED exams, with 9 residents earning their full GED since 2022. Efforts are currently underway to expand GED referral partnerships for individuals transferred to other facilities. The LifeSkills program remains a popular and impactful resource. A total of 2,186 certificates have been awarded for completed workbooks, with 355 residents completing at least one. Impressively, 41 residents have completed all 10 available LifeSkills workbooks.

Sandusky County, OH

The Sandusky County Sheriff's Office is currently supporting individuals in earning their Ohio Certified Peer Support certification. This credential will equip participants with the skills needed for entry-level employment in substance abuse or mental health support, while also empowering them to help others navigate similar challenges. The course will be made available to anyone in the facility who expresses interest, and staff are committed to recognizing those who excel, offering references for individuals who demonstrate both strong performance in the coursework and meaningful behavioral change.



Hennepin County, MN



Butler County, PA

Butler County Prison recently launched IGNITE with strong community support and a special appearance by Pennsylvania Attorney General Dave Sunday. The team is now finalizing the curriculum and awaiting Cypherworx integration on facility tablets. Once complete, they will roll out the application and referral process. Exciting progress is underway for IGNITE in Butler County!

IGNITE SITE UPDATES



Mecklenburg County, NC

Mecklenburg County, NC

The Mecklenburg County Detention Center proudly announced the grand opening of Studio W5HY?, a state-of-the-art soundproof music studio, as part of its groundbreaking new program, "Rhythm & Reflection: A Journey to Reformation". The studio was created in partnership with the Tim Bergling Foundation in honor of the late Swedish artist Avicii (Tim Bergling). This innovative studio space aims to provide incarcerated individuals with tools for healing, self-expression, and lasting change. "Rhythm & Reflection" is a program that merges rhythm - through music, movement, and routine - with reflection, using journaling, meditative practices, and group discussion. Its mission: "A place where rhythm and reflection meet reformation, to explain the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW of YOU! A journey inside of self to methodically release guilt and shame, for restoration and reformation of self". The program encourages residents to explore their past, confront guilt and trauma, and develop the self-awareness and emotional tools necessary for reintegration and renewal. Through this methodical approach, individuals examine their identities, motivations, and choices, with a focus on rebuilding self-worth and developing responsible decision-making strategies.

Bonneville County, ID

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office is proud to share recent milestones in its education and rehabilitation efforts. The facility has now begun conducting all GED testing in-house, significantly streamlining the process for incarcerated individuals. With a dedicated facilitator administering online exams directly within the jail, 52 inmates have now successfully earned their GEDs. In addition, the county recently celebrated its 43rd graduate from The Solution program. According to data from the Stats Deputy, of those 43 graduates, only 7 have reoffended, approximately 16%. Of those, 5 returned on new charges, meaning just 12% were technical re-offenders. The majority of others returned on sentenced charges for offenses committed before entering the program. The average age of GED graduates is 27, with ages ranging from 18 to 45. Notably, 15 of the graduates are over the age of 30, countering the misconception that most participants are just out of high school. Seven graduates, about 15%, were between 18 and 20 years old. Since becoming an official GED testing facility in late April or early May 2024, Bonneville County has seen a significant increase in graduations. In just 3 to 3.5 months, 22 inmates have earned their GEDs, nearly matching the 29 graduates from the entire 15 months prior. The first inmate to complete their GED through the new in-house testing center was Cameron Faulkner, who also recently graduated from The Solution program.



Bonneville County, ID

IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Fayette County, OH

Fayette County is making steady progress toward expanding and enhancing IGNITE programming. Pathways is set to launch parenting classes by mid-August, and coordination with Southern State Community College is underway to begin GED classes in early September. The team is also preparing to kick off the career development re-entry class, with the curriculum currently in progress. Momentum is building for a robust fall of IGNITE programming!



Richland County, ND

The Richland County Sheriff's Office reports continued success in its partnership with Hustle 2.0. Two new participants are now excelling in the program. To recognize their achievement, Hustle 2.0 is providing official program T-shirts to those who have completed the entire curriculum.

Grayson County, TX

Since May, the Grayson County Sheriff's Office has celebrated the graduation of 18 individuals from the Solutions Program. The team is actively exploring opportunities to expand the class to reach even more participants. In addition, the Sheriff's Office is evaluating several new programs to determine which could be brought into the facility to make a meaningful impact on the incarcerated population.

Russell County, AL

The Russell County Sheriff's Office officially launched the IGNITE program in April 2025 and is already off to a strong start. As part of the launch event, a local guitar teacher led a class over several weeks, culminating in a student performance of "Keep Your Hands to Yourself" by The Georgia Satellites. The performance was a highlight of the event and showcased the talent and enthusiasm of the students. Russell County looks forward to building on this momentum and continuing to expand the programming available through IGNITE.

Wilkin County, MN

Program participation has been somewhat slow, as many individuals in custody are awaiting transfer to prison. However, that hasn't stopped them from engaging with several of the programs offered at the facility. One of the most popular offerings has been WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan), which focuses on preparing participants for successful reentry into society. The program has received strong feedback from those involved. The jail continues to receive book donations from the North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS), a contribution that has been greatly appreciated. Staff are also actively exploring additional opportunities to bring career exposure and skill-building programs to the facility.

IGNITE SITE UPDATES

Chautauqua County, NY

In May 2025, Corrections Officer and IGNITE Coordinator John Clark presented on the program's impact at the New York State Association of Incarcerated Education Programs conference, highlighting its adaptability and role in reducing recidivism through education and job training. Chautauqua County Jail is partnering with Jamestown Community College to launch an Industrial Maintenance Technician course in fall 2025. This 10-week program will teach foundational electromechanical skills for industrial settings. In partnership with BOCES, the jail has applied for grant funding to purchase Miller Welding TS20 Augmented Arc Systems to support a new welding program with advanced training tools. The facility is running its third Introduction to Electrical Skills class of the year, focused on basic circuits and power distribution, encouraging further interest in the trade. The fifth barbering class of 2025 recently concluded, with participants learning and practicing haircutting skills during weekly housing unit sessions. In September, the jail will add the ServSafe Food Handler Program to its offerings, complementing the existing ServSafe Manager Program. Both provide three-year certifications upon completion.

Pennington County, SD

The Pennington County Sheriff's Office continues to expand its innovative programming through the IGNITE initiative. Restorative Talking Circles have recently grown through a new partnership with Stephanie Autumn, a nationally recognized expert with 38 years of experience in Indian Country. As a restorative practitioner, facilitator, and circle keeper, she brings culturally grounded services to the jail. A new job shadowing component has also been added to the Sheriff's Work Program (SWP). Participants recently shadowed professionals from a local plumbing, heating, and cooling company at a 180-unit apartment complex under construction, gaining valuable hands-on experience. Additionally, participants completed CPR and AED certification, equipping them with life-saving skills that can be applied in a range of settings, and added to their résumés. To increase community awareness, IGNITE is now regularly featured on social media thanks to Public Information Officer Helene Duhamel. Each monthly segment highlights key programming updates and features guest appearances from volunteers and community partners, offering a quick look into the resources available to those incarcerated at the facility.

IGNITE NEWS

NSA IGNITE is proud to announce that the study conducted by researchers from Harvard University, Brown University, and University of Michigan was published in the Quarterly Journal of Economics.

[Read Study Here](#)

Cass County, ND

The Cass County Sheriff's Office continues to prioritize education, rehabilitation, and reentry support for individuals in custody. The GED program currently has seven active participants. The Elevate program is scheduled to return this fall for both male and female populations. North Dakota Job Service continues to engage with individuals in custody, providing guidance on available employment opportunities and connecting them with the necessary resources to support successful job placement upon release. Additionally, the facility has expanded its volunteer base, now totaling 82 fully onboarded volunteers supporting various programs.

Montgomery County, AL

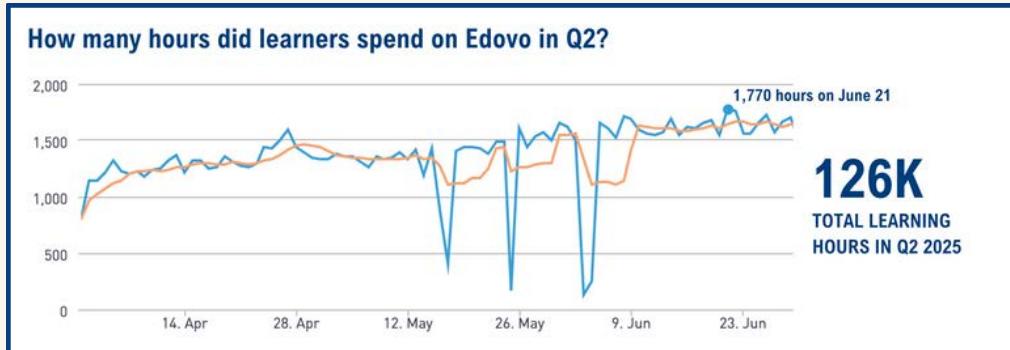
The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office continues to make impactful strides with the IGNITE program. Two different agencies have recently toured the IGNITE dorm, highlighting growing interest in the initiative. One former female participant even reached back out to share that, thanks to the classes she took while incarcerated, she has since secured employment as a Patient Care Technician. Captain Dill and Sergeant Eaves remain committed to identifying and introducing new programs to the facility. Most recently, the Capital Adult Literacy Program launched its schedule, focusing on improving reading skills, a critical need for many students working toward their GED.

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 Q2



IGNITE SITES USING



Bonneville County, ID
Chautauqua County, NY
Collin County, TX
Fayette County, PA
Genesee County, MI
Grayson County, TX
Iron County, UT
Kalamazoo County, MI
Mecklenburg County, NC
Montgomery County, AL
Roanoke City, VA
Ulster County, NY
Eddy County, NM
Wayne County, PA

TOP 10 COURSES

1. Anger Management Job Seeking with a Criminal Record	6. Black History, Black Freedom, and Black Love: Lessons from Influential Black Voices Part 1
2. Math - Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division	7. Parenting While Incarcerated
3. Job Seeking with a Criminal Record	8. The Roadtrip Nation Experience
4. Beyond Prison, Probation, and Parole	9. Thinking for the Future - CBT
5. Rising Strong: A Substance Use Recovery Course	10. Science - Life Science

TOTAL NUMBERS



18.1K
ACTIVE LEARNERS



31.74 HRS
HOURS PER LEARNER



86.3K
COURSE COMPLETIONS



623K
TOTAL LEARNING HOURS



This is an amazing course that taught me so much about the importance of being a parent, and being a great role model to my babies, I am so ready to get out there and be the best father to my babies that I know I can be, and will be!

James from Collin County, TX
Parenting While Incarcerated

IGNITE PAPARAZZI



IGNITE Reception Sponsored by:



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.



Hustle 2.0 offers 175+ hours of self-paced, in-cell rehabilitation through 32 courses covering critical topics such as substance misuse, anger management, victim awareness, and reentry planning. Written in plain English, these evidence-based, trauma-responsive programs are accessible to all. 92% of participants request more after completing a module. Our flexible structure allows facilities to choose the right program "dosage" based on their population's needs.

THANK YOU TO IGNITE SPONSORS

Introducing our Newest Sponsor:



"This isn't just about passing a class. It's about restoring purpose, giving people a reason to keep trying, and equipping them with skills they can use immediately upon release."

Bill Pope
President, NCIC Correctional Services

In a move that signals growing momentum behind second-chance education, NCIC Correctional Services has officially joined the IGNITE initiative as its newest national sponsor. The partnership brings NCIC's groundbreaking Schoolhouse system—and its signature RISE Program (Restoration through Incentives, Skills, and Education)—into alignment with IGNITE's mission of reimagining rehabilitation inside America's jails.

At the center of NCIC's model is a deceptively simple concept: reward people for doing the right thing. Learn2Earn™, the engine behind RISE, offers incarcerated individuals tangible incentives for completing structured, evidence-based educational modules. From parenting and addiction recovery to financial literacy, career preparation, and high school equivalency, the curriculum is designed to address the key barriers to successful reentry and to meet people where they are.

Educators and correctional specialists tailor each course to reflect the realities of life after incarceration. The goal is not only academic achievement, but emotional and psychological growth. With a focus on self-regulation, communication, and job readiness, the platform provides the tools to build a life beyond the jail cell.

"This isn't just about passing a class," said Bill Pope, President at NCIC Correctional Services. "It's about restoring purpose, giving people a reason to keep trying, and equipping them with skills they can use immediately upon release."

IGNITE continues to expand its reach across the country, operating in nearly 30 counties and climbing. The addition of NCIC's Schoolhouse platform adds another powerful tool to the initiative's growing network of reentry services.

Early data from facilities using RISE suggest that the model is working. Participants not only complete more coursework than in traditional settings, but they also demonstrate stronger motivation, improved behavior while incarcerated, and lower recidivism rates post-release.

As this partnership rolls out, more sheriffs across the country will have access to a robust digital infrastructure capable of delivering high-quality, individualized education to people behind the walls. This innovation is a turning point in how we think about justice, opportunity, and the role of jails in shaping the future.

Thank You to Our Sponsors



NEWS AND WEBINARS

IGNITE IN THE NEWS

- “Press Release I.G.N.I.T.E. Program” ... [read more](#)
- “From a correctional facility to an educational facility” ... [read more](#)
- “Former inmate finds new purpose through I.G.N.I.T.E. program at Genesee County Jail” ... [read more](#)
- “Kalamazoo County Jail celebrates 2024 IGNITE program graduates, aims for fresh starts” ... [read more](#)
- “Transforming Jails Through Education, Second Chances” ... [read more](#)
- “IGNITE program launches at Washington County Jail”... [read more](#)
- “How the IGNITE rehabilitation program is changing lives at the Fayette County Jail” ... [read more](#)

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[National Association of Counties](#)

[Edovo](#)

[Vehicles for Change](#)

[Hustle 2.0](#)

COMING SOON:

Keel Mind is demonstrating a powerful new digital tool to staff at IGNITE sites, designed to support both personal growth and wellness. The innovative platform helps track progress, build life skills, and increase mental resilience, all from a phone or tablet. Be among the first to see it in action at our live webinar on

September 2 at 1pm ET: [Click here to REGISTER](#)