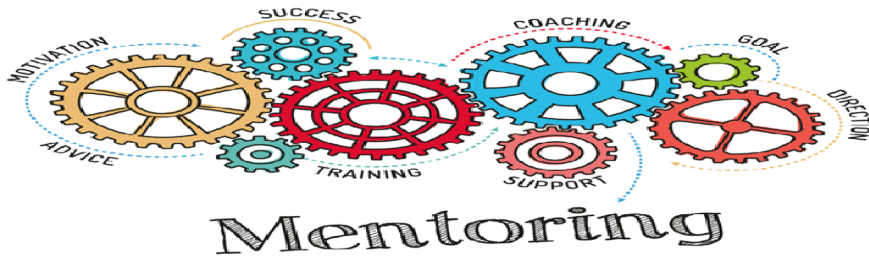




Community Mentor Program



Free2Succeed—What is it?

Free2Succeed is the IDOC Community Mentor Program designed to match community mentors with individuals who are transitioning to communities throughout Idaho. These may be incarcerated individuals preparing for release or those who are currently on supervision but are seeking some additional support. Free2Succeed is focused on community mentoring rather than inside an institution and with the goal to find a mentor for anyone who requests one. It’s a big goal but definitely worth the effort.

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I became a mentor with the Free2Succeed program because I want to help people. I want to be a part of the solution and to give guys hope. Having walked in their shoes and understanding the struggle firsthand, I know how much a welcoming handshake and a hug meant to me, even from a stranger. I have had, and continue to have, great mentors in my life and know the value well. - Mark

How is Free2Succeed Structured?

Free2Succeed is structured to provide mentoring support within the local community wherein a newly released individual plans to reside. Once a mentor in the appropriate area is potentially matched to a mentee (resident), the Mentor Site Coordinator in that district facilitates an initial phone conversation between the mentor and mentee via the facility case manager (or VRC if the case manager is not available) from an IDOC staff phone. This initial contact provides the opportunity for both individuals to introduce themselves to one another, discuss details regarding the Free2Succeed program, the expectations of both the mentor and mentee, and the support and challenges specific to the situation. There may be times when, after that conversation, the mentor may decide not to mentor that particular individual or vice-versa.

Upon the release to the community, the mentee meets with his or her designated mentor, and the probation and parole officer as soon as possible. This “initial meeting” is critical that will help to ensure the PO is aware that the parolee is involved in the Free2Succeed program and to facilitate communication with the mentor. During the mentorship process, the mentor provides periodic reports to the PO regarding the status and well-being of the mentee. This may include the progress of the mentee’s reintegration into the community, his or her attitudes, difficulties and challenges, motivations, desires, and other facets unique to rejoining the community at large after incarceration. It is important to understand that the role of mentors **IS NOT** to be involved in any type of supervision of the offender but more so as another set of “eyes” and “ears” for the PO.



Mentor Training: Initial/Annual and Enhancement

Initial Training and Orientation (ITO): All Free2Succeed mentors are required to attend, initially and on an annual basis, an Initial Training and Orientation (ITO) which sessions are conveniently scheduled throughout the year in each district. Mentors can start mentoring before attending an ITO but must attend the next available training opportunity in their area.

The ITO training covers a wide array of topics such as criminal thinking, risk factors, boundaries, policy and procedures, best practices, suggestions for mentoring, roles of POs and other staff, protective factors, and a lot more. Probation and Parole officers and other staff are always invited and encouraged to attend any session. Our mentors appreciate hearing from POs and seek to learn how they can be of more assistance to them or what concerns there may be regarding the supervision of the mentee. The Mentor ITO schedule can be found on the IDOC website [here](#).

Enhancement Training: Mentor Site Coordinators in each district will seek to provide additional *enhancement* training designed to address specific areas to help mentors be more effective. This may include partnering with local POs and other staff, community organizations and groups, and other subject matter experts. Some examples of enhancement training include general suicide prevention, informal town halls with POs and case managers, and experienced mentor-led discussions regarding community resources.

We try to schedule the trainings at locations in the community and partner with various churches and organizations. We have done them at police stations, libraries, recovery centers, churches, community centers, etc., and probation and parole offices.

When tough situations arose, I knew if I didn't find someone to talk to, I would never be successful on my own. I realized very early on that I wanted to be that person that someone could talk to after they got out. I wanted other people to have the same hope I did.

The Request and Match Process

Training Numbers

Over 800 mentors have attended an Initial Training and Orientation and/or Enhancement Training during 2020 and 2021. Many of these trainings were conducted virtually due to COVID issues.

Requests for Mentors

Free2Succeed has received about 1100 Requests for Mentors since January of 2021.

Breakdown by District:

D1—152	D5—104
D2—53	D6—81
D3—157	D7—128
D4—432	

1. Resident submits a Request for Mentor to their case manager or the facility Volunteer Religious Coordinator (VRC) within 3 months of a release date. These requests can be found on EDOC—Policies—Forms—search for “mentor” or simply click here: [Request for Mentor](#)
2. The request goes to the district Mentor Site Coordinator (MSC) to where the resident will be releasing who will then email the case manager back that they received the request and it is being processed. Scan and send to the email on the bottom of the form.
3. Once a mentor has agreed to mentor the resident, the MSC will schedule an Initial Phone Call with the case manager or VRC. The resident will be provided an opportunity to speak with the mentor from a staff phone regarding the impending mentorship upon release. The mentor is provided with suggested questions and topics to discuss to determine how best to assist.
4. The MSC will also add the mentor to FAMILY/ASSOCIATES in CIS and add a c-note for 2 reasons: to let staff know that the resident has been “officially” matched with an approved Free2Succeed mentor AND to provide contact information for the case manager/PO to reach out to the mentor if needed; which can be very helpful in many situations when developing a release plan.
5. Once the resident is released, an Initial Meeting is scheduled with the mentor, mentee, and PO asap to discuss the salient points of the mentorship. These meetings are often facilitated by the MSC but can be facilitated by the PO. It doesn't matter, the whole point is simply to provide an opportunity to lay the foundation for a successful mentorship and open lines of communication.
6. The mentorship continues and the mentor reports back periodically to the PO about progress, issues, concerns, questions, etc.



A Bit More About The Initial Meeting with the PO

The Initial Meeting is an informal but effective meeting where the PO, mentor, and mentee meet to discuss the mentorship, usually for the first time. It should be scheduled as soon as possible, usually at the PO's office but can also be done remotely via Zoom, Teams, etc, when a mentorship has been created and at the convenience of all involved. This is an opportunity for the PO, mentor and the mentee to meet for about 20-30 minutes, provides the opportunity for questions to be asked, and opens the lines of communication between mentor and PO. These meetings should be facilitated by the Free2Succeed Mentor Site Coordinator (MSC) but the effectiveness (and efficiency) increases when the PO proactively engages the mentor. These meetings are documented in CIS under MENTOR. The PO, as many have done, can also facilitate these meetings by contacting and inviting the mentor. Here are some guidelines as to what should be discussed at these Initial Meetings:

INTRODUCTIONS: Although the mentor and mentee may have talked on the phone, this may be the first time they have met face-to-face. It may also be the first time the PO has met the mentor.

BREAK THE ICE: Help reduce the anxiety for mentor and mentee by asking several "find out" questions such as, why the client requested a mentor, how long have they been out, how are things going, etc. – use the request that the mentee filled out and submitted to help guide the conversation.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Ask the PO how he/she would like the mentor to communicate when necessary – e-mail, phone, etc. PO should provide business card. Emphasize that mentor should not provide PO contact information to client – let the PO do that. Ensure that the mentor and mentee have exchanged contact information.

EXPECTATIONS: Mentorship is all voluntary, not a "gotcha" thing and the mentee should always know what the mentor will be reporting or discussing with PO. Emphasize that there is no confidentiality between the mentor and mentee and that anything can be discussed with the PO. Discuss what the mentee expects from a mentor and vice-versa. PO, mentor, mentee, and other IDOC staff may have reason to end the mentorship but discuss that this is OK and should not be a reason to give up. Explain that some adjustments may need to happen if this is the case and we can find a different mentor. Suggest activities or other things that a mentor could possibly provide a mentee.

BOUNDARIES: Emphasize the need for both the mentee and the mentor to establish boundaries. Provide some example of what those boundaries might look like and solicit input from the PO. Encourage meetings to happen in public spaces until the mentorship grows and trust is established. Use common sense and good judgment.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Focus some discussion on the mentor helping the mentee to hold themselves accountable but then holding them accountable to the PO if they choose not to. Help the mentee understand the necessity of accountability. If appropriate, ask the PO for a copy of the mentee's conditions of supervision for the mentor and explain why it is important for the mentor to have them. If appropriate, ask if there are any other special conditions that the mentor should or can know about that will help.

REPORTING: If possible, show the mentor, mentee, and PO where the link to the mentor report is on the IDOC external website. Open it so they know what to expect. This is covered in mentor training but the mentor may not have attended a training yet. Explain that the information from the Mentor Report is uploaded into CIS.

ROLES: Emphasize the PO's role in the mentorship using language like, "Mentor is not your PO," "PO is first point of contact," "PO must be involved," "mentor must get out of the way when necessary," etc. Hammer the point that a mentor is another set of eyes and ears that supports and guides the client **BUT DOES NOT SUPERVISE**. The PO is **the** point person in all aspects of the mentee's supervision.

MENTOR SPOTLIGHT

Since Molly Smart was released from prison and onto community supervision, she has been actively working on several fronts to better her community and herself. Molly became a mentor December of 2020 and has since mentored a number of individuals. She is studying and working towards a real estate license and hopes to pursue projects involving developing housing for returning citizens. She prides herself on taking full responsibility of her past behaviors and has made significant changes in her circumstances in the areas of material, health, and lifestyle and pays it forward by serving as a mentor and teaching at-risk individuals to understand and practice personal accountability. Her goals include sharing her experiences and strengthen the hopes of those she mentors with "rigorous honesty." Molly continues to work on building and strengthening family relationships that include her parents, an adult son, and 5 grand kids while continuing to meet, and surpass, challenges before her, completing all court-ordered and other required classes and treatment programs, and staying focused on helping others. Molly works as a "Business Development Specialist" independent contractor in the real estate field assisting developers looking to build affordable housing in the Treasure Valley. Thank you Molly for your dedication to helping others and being a Free2Succeed mentor.



Types of Mentors

There are 3 different classifications for mentors:

Active: one who is currently matched or waiting to be matched

Inactive: wants to mentor but for some reason, may need to wait for a bit

Denied: due to staff decision or policy violation, etc., is no longer able to mentor

Mentors Can Help Mentees “Plug In”

Mentors by the District

To date, Free2Succeed has had 968 people apply to be mentors!! (NOTE: not all mentors may be active)

The breakdown by district is:

District 1:	94
District 2:	71
District 3:	124
District 4:	349
District 5:	91
District 6:	84
District 7:	155

Success
isn't just what you
Accomplish
in your life,
it's about
what you
Inspire
others to do

“The impact of mentoring for adults returning to their communities from incarceration is dependent on how well reentry programs structure the mentoring component of the program, which involves collaborating with correctional facilities, thoughtfully selecting and matching mentors and participants, and effectively concluding the mentoring relationship. An integral part of the process also involves the understanding that mentoring should serve as a supplement to services that address other critical reentry needs, such as housing, health care, substance use treatment, and employment.”—*Mentoring as a Component of Reentry: Practical Considerations from the Field*

One of the most significant detriments to a successful reentry after incarceration is lack of support in the community. There are numerous support services available for returning citizens in almost every community, or nearby community, in Idaho but what we are finding in the Free2Succeed program is that although individuals are provided with lists of resources by case managers, POs, reentry specialists, judges, friends, family, etc., it is the lack of knowledge of how to utilize those resources that is an obstacle for many. Mentors can help.

Simply not having a phone or transportation or a valid ID is an issue but mentors can connect them to those resources AND assist them in making phone calls and coaching them on what to say, standing with them in long DMV lines, navigating non-profit assistance, grocery stores, Social

Security Administration, churches and other faith-based organizations, higher education institutions, and the list goes on. Mentors can help.

The protective factor of being knowledgeable isn't just knowing where a resource is, it is developing the skills needed to utilize a particular resource. Mentors can help.



Thoughts from Mentors

“I currently have a mentee who in the beginning was scared, and quite frankly just overwhelmed with the things that he had to do right after being released. I could immediately sense his stress so, I just jumped right in with him, and we took care of everything that he needed to do. About 2 weeks later we were having coffee filling out some of his job applications. Both of our sons were playing in the kids' area when he looked at me and said, “Shawn. Thank you for everything that you've done. I Prayed to God to help me, and He sent you.” The tears welled up in my eyes, and I felt a profound sense of love, and gratitude.

From that moment I knew without a doubt that the Free2Succeed program does make a difference, one mentee at a time. Each one will need different things but, one thing will always remain the same. My desire, and passion to help every mentee that I can.

- *Free2Succeed Mentor, Shawn Taiji*

Protective Factors

Positive influences that can improve all aspects of an individual's life which counteract the risks associated with crime and victimization

Resilience - adapting to changing environments

Social Connections—positive relationships from positive sources

Concrete Support—recognition of need and ability to meet

Knowledge—developing skills and finding the support and resources needed

Social/Emotional—Developing trust and confidence in self and others

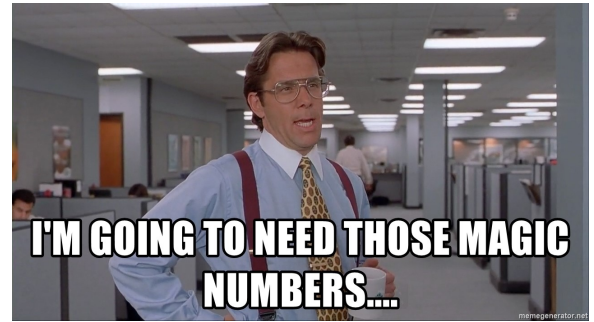


Show Me the Numbers

F2S ALL				Total
N=	2017	2018	2019	1322
recid	145	168	48	361
%	11.0%	12.7%	3.6%	27%

F2S Probation				Total
N=	Year1	Year2	Year3	670
recid	82	69	19	170
%	12.2%	10.3%	2.8%	25.37%

F2S Parole				Total
N=	Year1	Year2	Year3	639
recid	63	97	28	188
%	9.9%	15.2%	4.4%	29.42%



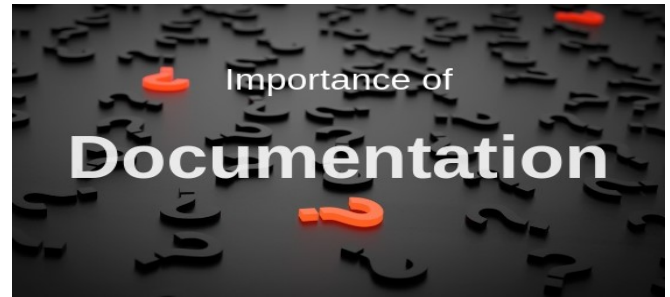
Yes, there are numbers and with a huge thank you to Kari Nussgen for providing these numbers for us. Her analysis of the data is as follows:

“For this project I combined the individuals from the first cohort (provided in 2019) with the individuals provided for 2020. I removed anyone who has not yet been released.

Based on these numbers the Free2succeed program appears to be successful in reducing the likelihood of an individual recidivating.”

Some Other Things...

Positive CIS Entries—many of our mentors are individuals who are currently on supervision when given the “green light” from their supervising officer. Effort should be made to enter positive supervision contact notes for these individuals who are not only working hard to better their lives but those whom they are mentoring. These efforts need to be recognized and documented for judges and POs and other staff to see.



Reaching out to the Mentors—when an individual is matched with a mentor, the mentor’s name and contact information is documented in CIS in FAMILY/ASSOCIATES in addition to a contact or c-note. When someone has been matched with a mentor, the case manager and/or PO should be reaching out to the mentor to see how that mentor may be of assistance. Vice-versa, in the mentor training, the mentors are instructed to reach out to the case manager and PO also so don’t be surprised if you get an email or call from the mentor.

Mentor Site Coordinator (MSC) - each of our districts has an MSC position which is staffed by an AmeriCorps VISTA member. Currently, there is a vacancy in Districts 2 and 5 but we are working to get those filled asap. Their role is to help build capacity and sustainability of the Free2Succeed program. They are focused on the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Match mentors/mentees
- Conduct community presentations
- Conduct informal enhancement training
- Data collection and reporting
- Recruit mentors
- Provide support to mentors



IDOC Mission

Our **MISSION** is to create a model correctional system that provides equitable access to programming and opportunities that reflect a community experience, foster connections and restore victims of crime.

How does mentoring help us realize our mission?

Equitable access: all residents and supervised individuals—probationers and parolees— can request a mentor.

Opportunities that reflect a community experience: A mentor can assist their mentee with the everyday functions of living in the community. They can encourage accountability, trust, and a positive behaviors and relationships.

Foster connections: A mentor can introduce a mentee to pro-social people and groups. Just being a mentor can help foster positive connections, partnerships with staff, faith-based organizations, and other community support groups.

Restore victims of crime: A mentee is often a "victim" of their crime as they work to heal from the consequences of their actions. Mentors are a great resource to help them accept those consequences and work to promote comfort and encouragement through difficult and stressful times, seek positive and edifying activities, and work to develop effective social and problem-solving skills.



The Mentor Report

Mentors are required to keep the probation and parole officers informed of their mentee's progress and other issues and concerns through regular contact. Sometimes this contact occurs via email or text but on a regular basis, a mentor is required to submit a Mentor Report at least monthly. The report is structured with information that supports protective factors and focused supervision efforts that POs are working in conjunction with the mentee. This information and the reports are considered collateral supervision contacts. When a mentor submits the report, the information is directly uploaded into CIS as a contact note so the PO and other staff have immediate access.

Check out what the report looks like and the information provided by our mentors here:

[Mentor Report Form](#)

Protective Factors & the Mentor Report

Here are some various examples of some information taken directly from submitted mentor reports relating to the protective factors in a mentee's life and how the mentors are working with mentees in those areas in conjunction with the conditions of supervision. This information in CIS is beneficial for the PO and other staff:

Resilience (*coping with life changes*)

She [mentee] is facing some very annoying circumstances well. We met with her attorney today and he is finally pledging to figure out how to get her property from _____ County. This property contains her wallet with ID, SS card, food stamp card, bus passes, etc. She is having trouble accessing the funds family have provided for her without sufficient ID. In spite of that she has procured a job, passed her drug test, and goes for orientation tomorrow.

Healthy Social Connections (*friends, family, church, etc.*)

She spent Christmas Eve with my family, Christmas with my church family, and went to a sober party at Peer Wellness on New Year's Eve.

Concrete Support (*employment, housing, material needs met*)

The hassle of the communication with _____ County, the cashier's check lost, the promised solutions that haven't materialized are certainly challenging for her.

Knowledge (*where to go for help, how to do things*)

_____ has been asking a lot of questions, like "can you help me" and "who do I call?" for certain situations.

Social and Emotional Competence (*appropriate behavior, positive outlook*)

She seems to be doing very well. However, she does have some mental health challenges that I hope are being addressed professionally.

Other (*general or overall perspective of the mentee and/or mentorship*)

In the past year I have seen such growth in _____. She has learned how to successfully function in society sober. She is in a healthy relationship. She has a good job and is learning new skills. She is able to spend time with her daughters. She is a great friend. She asks questions when in doubt, rather than making decisions and hoping for the best. We are meeting Sunday to create our 2022 plan for sobriety. It's nice to have an outline on what we want our year to look like. I also want to reflect on 2021 with Jessica so we can share accomplishments, etc.