



Executive Summary

(updated 03/25/23)

The **GEM (Group/teamwork, Education/training, Mentoring/coaching) Leadership Development Institute (LDI) for Personal and Community Development** will target medium and high-risk individuals with, or at risk of, criminal records in a strength-based*, community-focused, relationship-driven, cognitive-behavioral intervention program. Every individual admitted to the GEM LDI from a correctional facility will be required to complete a 6 – 12-month leadership development curriculum and community development practicum (laboratory) in order to receive a diploma that certifies that they have met all of the classroom and laboratory requirements of the Institute. Upon graduation, each Intern is granted immediate access to: 1) comprehensive case management – a collaborative and coordinated approach to assessing and linking individuals to appropriate human, social, and job readiness service providers to address each person’s criminogenic needs; 2) Peer Coaching – individuals with “lived experience” provide mentoring, advice, encouragement, and support to each “intern” in order to facilitate their long-term success; and 3) customized employment services to move the Intern to economic self-sufficiency in as short a period as possible to ensure the long-term success for themselves and their families.

The GEM LDI shares PowerNet’s mission “to improve the public safety, economic viability, and overall quality of life within underserved communities by facilitating the social, economic, and political reintegration of citizens who are currently, formerly, or at risk of incarceration”. Their vision is “a nation where persons who have paid their debt to society and demonstrated their commitment to active citizenship have full access to the resources and opportunities to become valued contributors to the welfare and prosperity of their community”.

The GEM LDI operates on the idea that the greatest limitation to the successful rehabilitation, reentry, and reintegration of persons formerly incarcerated IS NOT the lack of community-based services and resources; the greatest limitation is a lack of knowledge of what resources exist, where they are located, and how to access them. Therefore, one of the Institute’s primary roles is to bridge this information and accessibility gap for its Interns and their families by continuing to logistically identify, digitally organize and develop user-friendly mechanisms to efficiently access these services and resources. Furthermore, based on research and its experience over the last 20 years, the Institute has adopted the supposition that employment is protective and not curative. This has been clearly seen in the strong correlation between those who did not participate in the rehabilitation and supportive services but only and those who



were re-arrested within three years of their release from prison. Although those in the lowest risk category fared better, those in the medium and highest risk categories tended to be re-arrested at a much higher rate when personal issues, e.g. domestic issues, substance use, criminal activity, etc., led to employment lay-offs that led to more desperate measures which compounded the problems.

The GEM LDI not only improves the quality of life of its Interns but, very importantly, positively impacts their families and community. This is accomplished by administering validated risk assessments, providing criminogenic-need responsive programs, and economic self-sufficiency services to targeted groups of juveniles or adults. As GEM LDI Interns participate in a series of leadership development, life skills, success planning, and community development activities, they will change their perception of themselves, their vision for the future, and their identity in their community as they move along the socio-economic continuum from being “part of the problem” to being “part of the solution”.

* Wanamaker, Kayla & Brown, Shelley. (2021). Assessing Dynamic Risk and Dynamic Strength Change Patterns and the Relationship to Reoffending Among Women on Community Supervision. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*.