

Center for
**COMMUNITY
ALTERNATIVES**



2025

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Leadership

David C. Condliffe, Esq.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tanya Linn Albrigtsen-Frable
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Josefina Bastidas, Esq.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Ron Boxx
DIRECTOR OF UPSTATE WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT

Randi Bregman
DIRECTOR OF TRAINING AND STAFF
DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Tammy Butler
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Tammar Cancer
ASSISTANT TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

Tonza Meusa Cunningham, SHRM-CP
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Kelly Gonzalez
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Karen Jones
DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Nancy Mortell
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT – GRANTS

Mira Nathanson
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT –
INDIVIDUAL GIVING

Michael Pasquale
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT

Richard Rivera
ASSISTANT TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR
SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Rhamgurav Robinson
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Glenn Rodriguez
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Katie Schaffer
DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY AND ORGANIZING

Sarah Townsend
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Board of Directors

Daniel Arshack, Esq.
PRESIDENT

Dean Horace E. Anderson, Jr., Esq
Jennifer Ashton, PhD
Ryan C. Benz
Alex Blau
Lawrence S. Brown, Jr., MD, MPH, FACP, DFASAM
Robert Brown, Esq.
Libby Byrne Funicello
Leonard J. Campolieta
Steve Case
Catherine Cerulli, PhD, Esq.
Steven Corsello
Alejandro H. Cruz
Irving Dela Cruz, CPA (NJ/VA), CGMA, CIA®
Clare Degnan
Timothy J. Dollinger
Alex Duran
Carole Eady-Porcher
Peter Eikenberry, Esq.
Kathryn Erbe
Justice Favor
Jan Fisher
Matthew Funicello
Kerry Gant
Jon P. Getz, Esq.
David Gómez, Ed.D
Betsy Gotbaum
Gail Gray, Esq.
Trent Griffin-Braaf
Martin A. Hewitt, Esq.
Stephanie Holmes, Esq.
Julia Iyasere, MD MBA
Elizabeth Jarit, Esq.
Loen Kelley
Telemaque Lavidas
Stanley Litow
Vincent Love
William Lynch III
Reverend Edith R. Mayfield
Rachel A. Negron
Aliya J. Nelson, Esq.
Wade Norwood
JoAnne Page, Esq.
David L. Pieterse, Esq.
Danielle Ponder, Esq.
Richard Raysman, Esq.
Jennifer Richardson, Esq.
Richard Rosenthal
David M. Schraver, Esq.
David Schwartz
Stephen Schwarz, Esq.
William J. Simmons, Esq.
Shaun E. Smith, Esq.
Corey Stoughton, Esq.
Kimberly Townsend, Esq., CPA
Dr. Joseph Williams, DSW, LCSW
Alan Charlie Wittenberg, MD
Bryan Young

Contents

Letter from David C. Condliffe, Esq. and Daniel Arshack, Esq.....4

Healing, Not Punishment: CCA Establishes Brooklyn-Based Trauma Recovery Center.....5

CCA Supports NYC Youth with Career Training & Restorative Justice Initiatives.....7

Reintegration Services Connects Participants to Promising Careers.....10

CCA’s Wellness Center Strengthens Education and Outreach Efforts.....12

Advocacy and Organizing Pushes for Sentencing Reform.....15

Youth in Upstate NY Receive Critical Peer Support and Leadership Skills.....19

Reentry Advocacy Helps New Yorkers Overcome Barriers to Employment.....21

CCA Delivers Mitigation Services Across New York State.....23

Freedom Commons Provides Housing Support in the Syracuse Community.....24

CUSE and CORE Centers Expand Services, Provide Enhanced Support for Youth.....26

CCA Lays the Groundwork for Expanding ATI Services Across New York State.....28

Financial Information.....29



Dear CCA Community,

Real community safety depends on healing, not punishment.

This past year has been a moment of reckoning for all of us. The murders of Robert Brooks and Messiah Nantwi have cast a critical spotlight on the ongoing brutality of New York's carceral system, and the cycles of trauma and harm it perpetuates. CCA is proud to be at the forefront of efforts to transform the system through advocacy and organizing work, expansion of ATI and reentry services across the state, and leadership in conversations about a new path forward.

On the ground, we have piloted critical new initiatives to redress the harms of our current system. As we invest in communities, CCA disrupts cycles of trauma and works toward actual community safety.

To name just a few important highlights of that work this year:

We launched our brand new Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) in downtown Brooklyn. Leveraging a National Trauma Recovery Center model developed by UC San Francisco, the TRC offers trauma-informed care to adults impacted by violence, substance use, incarceration, and systemic harm, especially those excluded from traditional systems of support. CCA's TRC is the first in the nation to tailor services to individuals with criminal legal involvement, drawing on our recognition that real public safety begins with healing, not punishment. This new center will interrupt cycles of harm and lay the groundwork for individual and communal healing.

Our Seeds to Roots Youth Action Center piloted transformational youth-led work to promote restorative justice in Brownsville, Brooklyn. We trained youth participants in best practices around Restorative Justice, priming them to act as Restorative Justice Ambassadors. Our youth ambassadors promoted peaceful conflict resolution strategies among local youth and community stakeholders through outreach, town halls, and community events. Their efforts have spread restorative justice to over 370 youth in the community and contributed to a decrease in violence, demonstrating what is possible when we invest in real community safety.

Our Advocacy & Organizing team led efforts to ensure justice for Robert Brooks, Messiah Nantwi, and others harmed by the criminal legal system. We conducted an emergency rally and vigil outside Monroe County Jail mere days after the release of body camera footage showing the fatal beating of Robert Brooks at Marcy Correctional Facility, and we have continued to fight for change and show up for our community since. Our leadership to enact the Second Look Act, the Earned Time Act, and the Marvin Mayfield Act is critical to ending draconian sentencing laws and forging a pathway to safety for all New Yorkers.

Of course, these highlights are just a brief snapshot of the progress and momentum we have seen this year. Our work across the state includes support for young people, support for people who have been arrested or incarcerated, support for people in treatment and recovery, and support for people returning from incarceration through housing, employment, and reentry services. Our advocacy and organizing efforts contribute to a safer New York as we build power and change laws.

We are proud of the work we are doing to build a safer New York for all. We could not do that work without the support of all our partners. Thank you for joining us to build a world where everyone has what they need to thrive.

Sincerely,
Dan Arshack, Esq. + David Condliffe, Esq.
Board President *Executive Director*

Healing, Not Punishment, Builds Real Community Safety: CCA Establishes Brooklyn-Based Trauma Recovery Center

At the Center for Community Alternatives, we believe all people deserve access to the support and resources they need to heal.

This year we launched a brand new Trauma Recovery Center (TRC) in Downtown Brooklyn to offer comprehensive trauma-informed services for people impacted by violence, incarceration, and systemic harm.

Building off a National Trauma Recovery Center developed at UC San Francisco, and founded with support from the NYC Council and NYS Office of Victim Services, CCA's TRC is the first in the nation to target individuals impacted by the criminal legal system.

Resources include free counseling, trauma-informed therapy, psychiatric care, legal advocacy, care coordination, and referrals to housing, food, and healthcare. Our team includes clinicians, peers, and advocates who partner with individuals to stabilize and pursue their goals.

Healing justice is the foundation of this work. We recognize that trauma is often the result of structural violence, including poverty, racism, and gender-based harm, and that healing happens through relationships, access to resources, and collective care. As people heal, reconnect, and rebuild, cycles of harm begin to break and cycles of healing take root.

Community partners celebrate a successful collaborative meeting





TRAUMA-INFORMED SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

This year we supported young people impacted by criminalization, substance use, and co-occurring disorders as a coordinating partner in the Partnership for Early Diversion in Youth (PEDY) with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). The program provides trauma-informed services tailored to participants' unique strengths and needs.

This year we expanded our outreach to community stakeholders and enrolled youth in the program. We also hosted an on-site

collaborative meeting at our Seeds to Roots Youth Action Center, where DOHMH staff and community-based partners learned more about Brownsville youth services, shared insights, and caught up on the latest developments of the program.

The meeting fostered open communication and collective learning, providing an opportunity for all stakeholders to align on goals, exchange best practices, and explore new strategies to support our communities. By regularly convening in this collaborative environment, we will maximize the coordination, responsiveness, and impact of the program.

CCA Supports NYC Youth with Career Training & Restorative Justice Initiatives

“I came to CCA in September 2024 while struggling with homelessness and navigating the professional workforce. Through the Employment Career Training program, I gained valuable skills, but the most meaningful aspect was the unwavering support [I received] from my mentors. They helped me secure temporary, and ultimately, permanent, housing in July 2025. Along the way, I earned my construction license and re-enrolled in GED classes. Without their help, I honestly don’t know where I’d be today.”

– Jordan Wright, CCA Youth Services Participant

At CCA, we know that young people grow, heal, and succeed through caring relationships and community spaces that support them to thrive.

Our flagship Seeds to Roots Youth Action Center, located in Brownsville, Brooklyn, offers a community-building space to deepen connections between young people and their communities and provide long-term support to young people, including those affected by the criminal legal system.

Seeds to Roots youth participants engage in a holistic array of programming in areas such as:

- Leadership Development
- Workforce Training & Career Readiness
- Restorative Justice
- The Arts

In the past year we have successfully placed more than 100 youth participants in internships and supported more than 75 young people to obtain career credentials, enroll in high school and college-level academic programs, and secure employment.

SEEDS TO ROOTS BUILDS YOUTH INVESTMENT IN THE WELL-BEING OF THEIR COMMUNITIES:

Participants in our Youth Action Leadership Council (YALC) develop foundational skills in civic engagement, leadership, communication, and advocacy and put them into practice by planning and implementing service-learning projects. This year's YALC participants focused their efforts on addressing cyberbullying. They developed a multi-pronged campaign including a town hall and cyberbully awareness trainings. The project culminated with a youth debate over the proposition "Social Media Does More Harm Than Good." Central to the goals of their

campaign, the debate concluded with a nuanced conversation where participants on either side came together in search of solutions, as they collectively envisioned a safer social media for all.

Participants in our Community Carpenters program conduct community mapping, gathering quantitative and qualitative data from community residents to inform projects to benefit the neighborhood. Based on their findings, this year's participants designed and implemented a Brownsville cleanup project where they successfully mobilized the community to remove over 500 pounds of garbage in the neighborhood.



CCA Community Carpenters participants organized a neighborhood cleanup that transformed blocks from Sutter to Rockaway

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY HEALING: YOUTH-LED RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Much of our youth programming this year focused on adopting restorative justice practices:

CCA coordinates all afterschool educational and enrichment programming for youth detained in secure and nonsecure detention facilities (Crossroads and Horizon Juvenile Centers and Belmont Passages Academy). This year we used the River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding curriculum to train youth participants in principles and practices of restorative justice. Participants studied the history of restorative justice, and learned to conduct and facilitate restorative justice circles. We certified over 70 youth at Crossroads and Horizon in restorative justice practices, successfully equipping them with the skills to address interpersonal conflicts.

At Seeds to Roots we trained our Community Carpenters participants to become "Restorative Justice Ambassadors," promoting restorative practices throughout Brownsville. Ambassadors conducted outreach, and spread youth-curated tips for conflict resolution across the community. They also planned a number of community events to foster dialogue on restorative practices:

- Our youth-led Restorative Justice Anti-Violence Town Hall Meeting introduced restorative justice practices to over 70 community stakeholders and youth.
- Staff experts facilitated a Restorative Justice Conflict Workshop where over 40 youth and community members discussed conflict resolution and decision making and brainstormed steps for building a safer community.
- Our culminating youth-led Restorative Justice Symposium featured workshops and giveaways opportunities for Restorative Justice practitioners across the city to share insights.



Youth and community members engage in a conflict resolution workshop at CCA's Seeds to Roots Youth Action Center

Reintegration Services Supports the Local Economy, Connects Participants to Promising Careers

CCA's Reintegration Services program successfully supports people returning home from incarceration to secure and maintain meaningful employment in Syracuse. We offer a holistic array of services—including work readiness training, occupational training, job placement, cognitive behavioral interventions, housing, and recovery support—designed to help people impacted by the criminal legal system break down barriers to employment.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

We also partner with local employers to develop and implement occupational training programs designed to meet local needs for in-demand jobs. This year we expanded our employer partners to connect participants to career opportunities in a variety of industries, including healthcare, advanced manufacturing,

construction, and the restaurant industry. Our close partnerships with employers enable us to align career planning, training, and job placement to sector best practices, ensuring we meet the needs of participants and the local economy.

CCA's Line Cook Training program, for example, prepares participants for long-term employment in the restaurant industry. The program kicks off with a two-week work readiness training, followed by four weeks of hands-on training with Chef Joseph Bilecki at our test kitchen in Brady Market. Participants get to put their skills to use in a week-long internship with Salt City Market. Graduates come away with nationally recognized ServSafe Food Handler and Manager credentials, setting them up for successful careers in the restaurant industry.



CCA Line Cook Alumni prepared and served a full barbecue meal for 180 guests at Peace Inc's rooftop fundraiser

IMPACT IN ACTION: AW'S EXPERIENCE WITH CCA

When AW joined CCA, he faced many barriers to securing employment, including a past felony conviction. Despite limited experience with the culinary arts, AW was interested in pursuing a career as a line cook and signed up for our Line Cook Training program.

Training began with a 30-hour work readiness class where AW and other line cook participants honed skills in conflict resolution, professionalism, and interview preparation. He advanced to a five-week hands-on intensive in knife skills, ingredient preparation, portion control, and large group cooking.

Upon completion of the program, AW received nationally recognized ServSafe Food Handling

and Food Manager certifications. He also met with a St. Joseph's Health HR Representative, who introduced him to potential employment opportunities cooking in medical facilities.

While preparing for his job search, AW considered how his conviction record was affecting his job placement options. He engaged with CCA's Reentry Advocacy team, who discovered a clerical error on his RAP sheet. They worked with him to have the error corrected, which bolstered his confidence in seeking a job cooking at a hospital.

AW now works full-time in a kitchen providing meals for area hospital patients. He has a steady paycheck, belongs to a union, and loves the work!

INTERACTIVE JOURNALING

This year our reintegration team partnered with the Division of Criminal Justice Services, Onondaga County Sheriff's Office, and Onondaga County Probation to provide Interactive Journaling courses to over 180 participants in jail and community settings alike. Interactive Journaling is an experiential writing process that guides participants to reflect on a specific issue (including related experiences, thoughts, and feelings), explore potential solutions, and develop an action plan. Rooted in evidence-based practices like motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioral therapy, and the Transtheoretical Model of Change, Interactive Journaling guides and motivates participants towards positive life change and prepares them for successful reentry.



CCA's Wellness Center Strengthens Education and Outreach Efforts

“This is the best program I've ever, ever been to. The first time I came here I thought I was in the wrong place. I thought, 'This can't be a methadone clinic'...It's very personalized...They treat us like family. They make sure to meet our needs...In twenty years navigating addiction, this is the best I've ever had.”

– Kerry, CCA Wellness Center Participant

CCA's Wellness Center is an OASAS-licensed comprehensive outpatient services program, located in Downtown Brooklyn, offering peace, comfort, and support for people in treatment and recovery. Services include medications for opioid use disorder, mental health counseling, court advocacy, health education, employment services, substance use counseling, and peer support.

Wellness Center staff conduct outreach in local streets, hospitals, and shelters to share resources and spread awareness of our life-changing services. We also provide free Narcan to staff and participants. New York saw a significant decrease in overdose deaths this past year, and CCA is proud to be part of the effort to save lives through our outreach efforts and outpatient services.

The Wellness Center also convenes a monthly Participant Ambassador committee where participants build their leadership skills and help drive outreach, recruitment, and engagement efforts to further our work.

AMPLIFYING OUR WORK

In June, Wellness Center staff hosted a Community Partner Luncheon for partners to celebrate CCA's impact in the community and hear directly from participants. Guests heard from Kerry and JM, two leaders of our participant Ambassador Committee.

Kerry highlighted the warm welcome she received on day one and the unique care and encouragement from CCA staff:

Through their experience at CCA's Wellness Center, including their leadership on the Ambassador Committee, Kerry and JM found inspiration to continue pursuing their dreams and help others. Today, Kerry is a Certified Recovery Peer Advocate and is pursuing her Master of Social Work, leveraging her experience and expertise to support her peers.



Filmmaker Jahmil Eady addresses the audience at the screening of her award-winning film, *The Bond*

“This is the best program I've ever, ever been to. The first time I came here I thought I was in the wrong place. I thought, 'This can't be a methadone clinic'...It's very personalized...They treat us like family. They make sure to meet our needs...In twenty years navigating addiction, this is the best I've ever had.”

– Kerry, CCA Wellness Center Participant

This year the Wellness Center team was proud to join the panel discussion at CCA's screening of Jahmil Eady's *The Bond*, an award-winning film depicting the story of an incarcerated pregnant woman fighting for her most precious connection against a system designed to isolate her. Our team highlighted the importance of comprehensive recovery services that meet participants where they are at and support them in transforming their lives on their own terms.

“With guidance and encouragement from CCA, I offer free haircuts for a confidence boost or job interview...this is something that really helped me with my anxiety...[CCA] encouraged it and helped me really accomplish my goals. I'm very proud of it.”

– JM, CCA Wellness Center Participant

JM, a licensed cosmetologist and barber, started Haircuts for the Homeless, offering free haircuts to people experiencing homelessness.

CCA's Wellness Center supports people like Kerry and JM as they transform their lives on their own terms, creating a lasting, positive impact in the community.



Kerry and JM, CCA Wellness Center Ambassadors

Advocacy and Organizing Pushes for Sentencing Reform and Confronts Carceral Violence

CCA's Advocacy and Organizing team continued to lead the fight to end mass incarceration and criminalization this year.

CCA members and advocates organized rallies exposing the deteriorating conditions and increasing violence in prisons and jails across the state, held press conferences calling for sentencing reform to address the crisis, and testified to the New York legislature in support of legislation that will end unjust sentencing laws and promote public safety, healing, and accountability.

RESPONSE TO CARCERAL VIOLENCE

In December 2024, days after body camera footage showing the fatal beating of Robert Brooks at Marcy Correctional Facility by prison staff was released, CCA organized an emergency rally outside Monroe County Jail to call for an end to the systemic violence perpetrated in New York prisons.

Robert's family spoke at the rally and called for reforms to prevent such senseless violence in the future. In mid-February 2025, following the indictment of officers involved in the killing of Robert Brooks, corrections officers across New York initiated a coordinated, multi-week illegal work stoppage. Facilities went into lockdown, and incarcerated people reported escalating harm: missed medications, canceled family visits, suspended legal access, denied meals, and plummeting temperatures. CCA was the first organization to publicly name the crisis for what it was:

"This was not a staffing crisis—it was a work stoppage in protest of accountability for murder."

We successfully expanded the conversation from staff safety to the brutalization of incarcerated people and the need for safety for everyone inside and out.

Emergency rally in Albany following the death of Messiah Nantwi



Tragically, during the work stoppage, corrections officers fatally beat Messiah Nantwi at Mid-State Correctional Facility, less than a mile away from where Robert Brooks was murdered. In response, CCA organized an emergency rally at the New York State Capitol, bringing together lawmakers, advocates, and loved ones to demand immediate action on sentencing reform. Messiah Ramkissoon, Deputy Director at CCA partner organization Youth Justice Network, and Nantwi's longtime mentor, spoke about his personal loss and the systemic violence that made it possible. The rally exposed the ongoing humanitarian crisis in New York prisons while deepening public understanding of the need for sentencing reform as a pathway to real safety.

REFORMING SENTENCING LAW

Amid the backdrop of carceral violence, CCA members and organizers continued to push for the passage of the Second Look Act, Earned Time Act, and Marvin Mayfield Act—bills that will bring an end to unjust, outdated sentencing laws.

In May 2025, CCA Organizer Thomas Gant testified in favor of the bills at a historic legislative hearing on the "Safety of Persons in Custody, Transparency, and Accountability within State Correctional Facilities." CCA also submitted written testimony from currently incarcerated members across New York State, ensuring that the lived experiences of those inside were not erased.



CCA Community Organizer Thomas Gant addresses the press prior to testifying in the NY Senate and Assembly

MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE GREW OVER THE COURSE OF THE YEAR:

- Chief Administrative Judge Joseph A. Zayas publicly endorsed the Second Look Act, becoming one of the most prominent judicial figures to advocate for sentencing reform.
- In a historic shift, NYS Chief Judge Rowan Wilson used his State of the Judiciary address to directly name mass incarceration and systemic racism as urgent crises—and publicly endorse the Second Look Act.
- Brian Fischer, former Commissioner of the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, issued a powerful public call for lawmakers to pass the Second Look Act, Earned Time Act, and Marvin Mayfield Act. His statement marked a rare and significant intervention from someone who once ran the prison system.
- Labor unions across New York expanded their support to include the Second Look Act and the Earned Time Act.
- Eleven survivor justice and victim services organizations also came together to demand that lawmakers pass the Second Look Act, Earned Time Act, and Marvin Mayfield Act.

As the legislative session neared its end, the Second Look Act and Earned Time Act had historic levels of support in the NY Senate and Assembly.

Ultimately, the legislature passed an omnibus prison oversight bill to create new rules for video disclosure, expand surveillance cameras,

mandate death notifications, and require studies and investigations into in-custody deaths in New York prisons and jails. While it includes important transparency and oversight measures, it does not address the root drivers of prison deaths nor offer sentencing reforms that would safely reduce the prison population.

JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY: SAVING NEW YORKERS THOUSANDS OF YEARS OF INCARCERATION

CCA continued to push for judicial accountability by launching a new campaign focusing on trial court judges, who oversee every arraignment, hearing, and trial and who have historically been rubber-stamped to new terms with no scrutiny.

We announced our new campaign with an article in The New York Times, demanding that everyone involved with judicial selection meaningfully evaluate judges' records before giving them new terms—and only grant new terms to judges who had earned more time on the bench.

We drew special attention to Judge Vincent Del Giudice—whose 22-year career had established him as the most carceral judge in all of New York City and its suburbs, and whose most recent term had expired. Less than three weeks after we rolled out our campaign and amid the public pressure we created, Judge Del Giudice announced his retirement.

By forcing Judge Vincent Del Giudice to retire, we saved New Yorkers a combined 2,850 years of incarceration.

In May, we replicated our success with another long-seated judge. Judge M. William Boller of Buffalo repeatedly allowed unconstitutional conduct in his courtroom—including racial discrimination in jury selection—imposed numerous sentences later reduced or overturned for being excessive, and was reversed over a dozen times by appellate courts for imposing illegal sentences.

CCA won this campaign even faster: Less than 48 hours after we launched our public campaign, Justice Boller announced his retirement.

By forcing Judge Boller to retire, we saved New Yorkers over 1,000 years of combined incarceration.

Each of these campaigns was powered by our members, many of whom have personal experiences with punitive and abusive judges. They have also spurred more and deeper organizing among members and their loved ones, who are still incarcerated as a result of these judges.

As the next legislative session begins, we look forward to building upon the momentum we generated over the past year and keeping up the fight to create life-saving pathways home.



Mother's Day Rally in Albany attended by CCA Staff, Communities Not Cages members, and CCA's After School Alternatives students

Youth in Upstate NY Receive Critical Peer Support and Develop Leadership Skills

CCA continues to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline in Syracuse and Rochester and provide young people with the support they need to grow, heal, and thrive.

Over the past year, CCA Transition Advocates supported over 400 students facing disciplinary hearings and/or returning to school from long-term suspension.

Many students and their families were unfamiliar with their rights and responsibilities. CCA's Transition Advocates explained the disciplinary process, served as liaisons between students, parents/guardians, and school officials, and ensured that students have access to supportive community resources.

In Syracuse, CCA's Youth Violence Prevention and Peer Leadership Program trains middle and high school-aged students to become ambassadors of nonviolence in their community. Using the evidence-based curriculum "Too Good for Violence," young people develop the tools they need to prevent and deescalate violent situations. Strategies include identifying personal triggers and changing attitudes and behaviors that lead to violence. Aspiring Peer Leaders receive additional training to facilitate Violence Prevention Trainings in their communities.



CORE Center youth participants celebrate their completion of CCA's Violence Prevention Training



CCA also provides an After School Alternatives (ASA) program for students attending PSLA@Fowler High School in Syracuse. ASA allows students to discover and develop their interests and talents while developing the skills they need to transition to adulthood. Offerings include academic support, enrichment activities, career exploration, and workshops in art, poetry, music, health, and wellness. In February, ASA participants took part in our Communities Not Cages Advocacy Day at the NY State Capitol where they met with state legislators and learned the ins and outs of advocating for new legislation.

Through CCA's Rochester Peer Navigator Program credible adult mentors provide personalized support and systems navigation for young people involved in the criminal and/or family legal systems. Mentors help participants obtain legal documents and medical resources (including treatment for substance use) and connect participants to educational programming and job training.

Our Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is a group of 10 – 15 young people who have been involved in the legal system. YAB members design programs and enrichment activities for youth services participants (including our Peer Navigator Program). The program builds leadership and organizing skills, which participants use in pursuit of their personal and professional goals.

YAB ALUM SPOTLIGHT

Three YAB alumni recently shared exciting updates on their educational and career paths:

- Tim has officially graduated from high school and is pursuing his passion full-time as a barber. His dedication and drive are truly inspiring, and we are excited to see him thrive in his career.

- Mya is entering her second year of college and balancing her academic journey with employment. Her commitment to growth and excellence continues to shine through all she does.
- Exavier is still in high school and already making a big impact in his summer job as a dietary aid at a nursing home. His work ethic and compassion are commendable.

We are incredibly proud of Tim, Mya, and Exavier for their achievements and grateful for their contributions to the YAB. Their leadership and insight have left a lasting impact on their peers, and we wish them continued success in all their endeavors.



YAB members visit the Stone of Hope at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in Washington, DC

Reentry Advocacy Helps New Yorkers Overcome Barriers to Employment and Education

“It is only because of Reentry Advocacy that I got [my] job. I had already given up but [CCA] kept working on it and made it happen.”

– BD, Reentry Advocacy Participant

CCA's Reentry Advocacy program removes barriers to employment, housing, licensure and higher education for people with arrest and conviction histories—a critical effort in reducing perpetual punishment. This year, CCA's Reentry Advocacy team launched a two-year partnership with the Reentry Association of Western New York to expand civic restoration services in Monroe County. We also remain active in the Coalition of Reentry Advocates, a statewide alliance dedicated to reentry reform and equity.

The newly enacted Clean Slate Act automatically seals records for certain convictions, reducing barriers to employment, housing, and education for many New Yorkers. There is a persistent need for individualized legal support across New York State, however, and comprehensive civic restoration remains critically important. People impacted by the criminal legal system continue to need assistance with arrest and prosecution record corrections, discretionary sealing, obtaining Certificates of Relief and Good Conduct,

and legal guidance with employers, state agencies, and educational institutions.

BY THE NUMBERS THIS YEAR:

- 111 participants received Reentry Advocacy and “know your rights” services — 73 cases are ongoing
- 25 participants received support identifying and correcting errors in their records
- 1 participant got their record fully sealed
- 4 participants received a professional license or state agency clearance
- 1 participant obtained a Certificate of Rehabilitation
- More than 250 people benefited from over 22 “know your rights” community presentations in Syracuse and Rochester



IMPACT IN ACTION: BD'S STORY

After learning that his conviction record denied him from employment, 'BD' sought CCA's help. BD received a Certificate of Rehabilitation on his release from prison in 2011, and has had no contact with the criminal legal system since. Last year, he applied for a seasonal labor job with the City of Rochester, only to be subjected to a background check and ultimately denied employment.

CCA intervened to request a copy of the background check, and learned that the check only revealed information on BD's conviction, with no context regarding his progress since. CCA Reentry Advocates added important context to BD's history since his release, emphasizing his progress in the last 14 years. With this context in mind, the City reconsidered its initial determination and hired BD.

Speaking of his experience collaborating with CCA, BD shared:

"It is only because of Reentry Advocacy that I got this job. I had already given up but [CCA] kept working on it and made it happen."

True public safety is only possible through investment in civic restoration and reentry services across the state. Outside of New York City, there are fewer than 12 providers (including CCA) who offer these critical services. There are entire regions of the state without a single provider, leaving countless individuals unsupported as they navigate complex obstacles to successful reentry. The need for these services is clear, and there is a powerful opportunity to help millions of New Yorkers like BD transform their lives.

CCA Delivers Mitigation Services Across New York State

“Since the beginning of the year, Upstate Mitigation has driven 19,814 miles, or roughly the circumference of the Earth as measured at the equator, providing mitigation services. Every one of those miles was in service of saving somebody from years of incarceration. Every journey was undertaken with compassion, empathy and the determination to help. And every journey was just one step in the arduous, often months long effort of ensuring that no judge will sentence a client of ours without hearing the full story of who they are.”

– Dr. Robert Smith, Director of Court Services

CCA's Mitigation Services program supports New Yorkers facing criminal charges. We provide critical background and context on participants' unique circumstances, enabling defense counsels to argue for alternatives to incarceration or reduced sentences. This year, several counties made referrals to our upstate mitigation services, including Chemung, Tompkins, Ulster, Dutchess, and Chataqua. This expanded interest in our services is a true testament to the importance of the mitigation reports we provide.

CCA also plays a critical role building safer communities through our involvement in the Onondaga County Domestic Violence Young Adult Court Case Management program. We have supported over 100 participants there by addressing housing, employment, nutrition, childcare and education needs. These services help participants transform their lives and provide essential support for their families, reducing intimate partner violence.

Freedom Commons Provides Housing Support in the Syracuse Community

CCA's Freedom Commons has served as a vital housing initiative in Syracuse since 2019. We provide affordable permanent supportive housing, transitional-to-rapid re-housing, and emergency shelter.

The project was designed to support individuals and families facing systemic barriers to stability, including individuals from working-class and poor communities, and people returning from incarceration. In addition to housing, Freedom Commons provides individualized wraparound support services to address the interconnected challenges of substance use, unemployment, and access to healthcare.

Participants benefit from a range of on-site and community-based services, including:

- Health education and medical care
- Referrals to community organizations
- An independent living plan co-developed with a case manager
- Comprehensive case management
- Financial literacy and employment readiness workshops
- Opportunities for peer mentorship

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Weekly Wednesday night community meetings are a cornerstone of the program, creating space for participants to share advice, celebrate accomplishments, discuss challenges, and strengthen life skills in a supportive community environment. Community partners also join

to provide information and classes on health and wellness, financial literacy, technology literacy, soft skills, and essential life skills to support successful transitions back to their communities.



Freedom Commons programs include:

FREEDOM COMMONS' PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (PSH)

Provides long-term, affordable housing for individuals and families impacted by homelessness, disability, and criminal legal involvement. PSH is designed to ensure stability and independence through a housing-first approach. Participants also receive case management and support services including access to medical and behavioral health care, substance use treatment, and workforce development opportunities. The program's structure emphasizes sustained housing stability and self-sufficiency. Staff collaborate closely with participants to build independent living skills and address immediate and long-term needs.

FREEDOM COMMONS ACADEMY (FCA)

Provides emergency and reentry shelter for individuals returning to the community from incarceration. Academy participants often face steep challenges, including criminal record stigma, which limits access to housing and employment. Other barriers include lack of technological competency and lack of financial infrastructure (including checking and savings accounts and credit). These barriers pose serious risks to successful reintegration. FCA responds by offering safe, temporary housing, reentry support, and case management. We support participants with job searches, and legal and financial challenges, and support them to build the skills they need to gain long-term stability. The Academy also provides structured peer support in a community environment, where we encourage accountability, resilience, and collective problem-solving.

FREEDOM COMMONS' TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Enhances our ability to support justice-impacted individuals living in emergency shelters. Through HUD's Continuum of Care, eligible participants reside at the Freedom Commons Academy for up to two years. This extended housing opportunity (launched in 2024) provides participants with the time and stability they need to focus on personal growth and long-term planning. During their stay, participants receive case management, individualized planning, and supportive services within Freedom Commons and the broader community. Services include substance use treatment, health and wellness care, employment readiness training, and financial literacy workshops designed to promote independence and reduce the risk of returning homelessness.

FREEDOM COMMONS' RAPID RE-HOUSING

Provides short-term financial and case management support to participants as they transition from emergency shelter to permanent residences. Once a participant identifies suitable housing, they receive financial assistance, including help with utility bills, security deposits, and up to five months of rental support. Case management continues throughout this period and for three months after to ensure that participants remain stable and are equipped to maintain their housing long-term.

Together, these programs create a comprehensive housing model that meets the full spectrum of needs for individuals recently released from incarceration and others with reentry backgrounds. Freedom Commons is not just a place to live; it is a supportive community committed to helping participants rebuild their lives, break through systemic barriers, and achieve lasting success.

CUSE and CORE Centers Expand Services, Provide Enhanced Support for Youth in Recovery

CCA's CUSE and CORE Centers provide peer-led recovery support services for youth and adults in Syracuse and Rochester impacted by the criminal legal system. These community-driven programs support participants' employment, education, and personal goals as they navigate recovery. This year we provided support to over 600 people in Syracuse and Rochester through support groups, community meals, and community-building events.

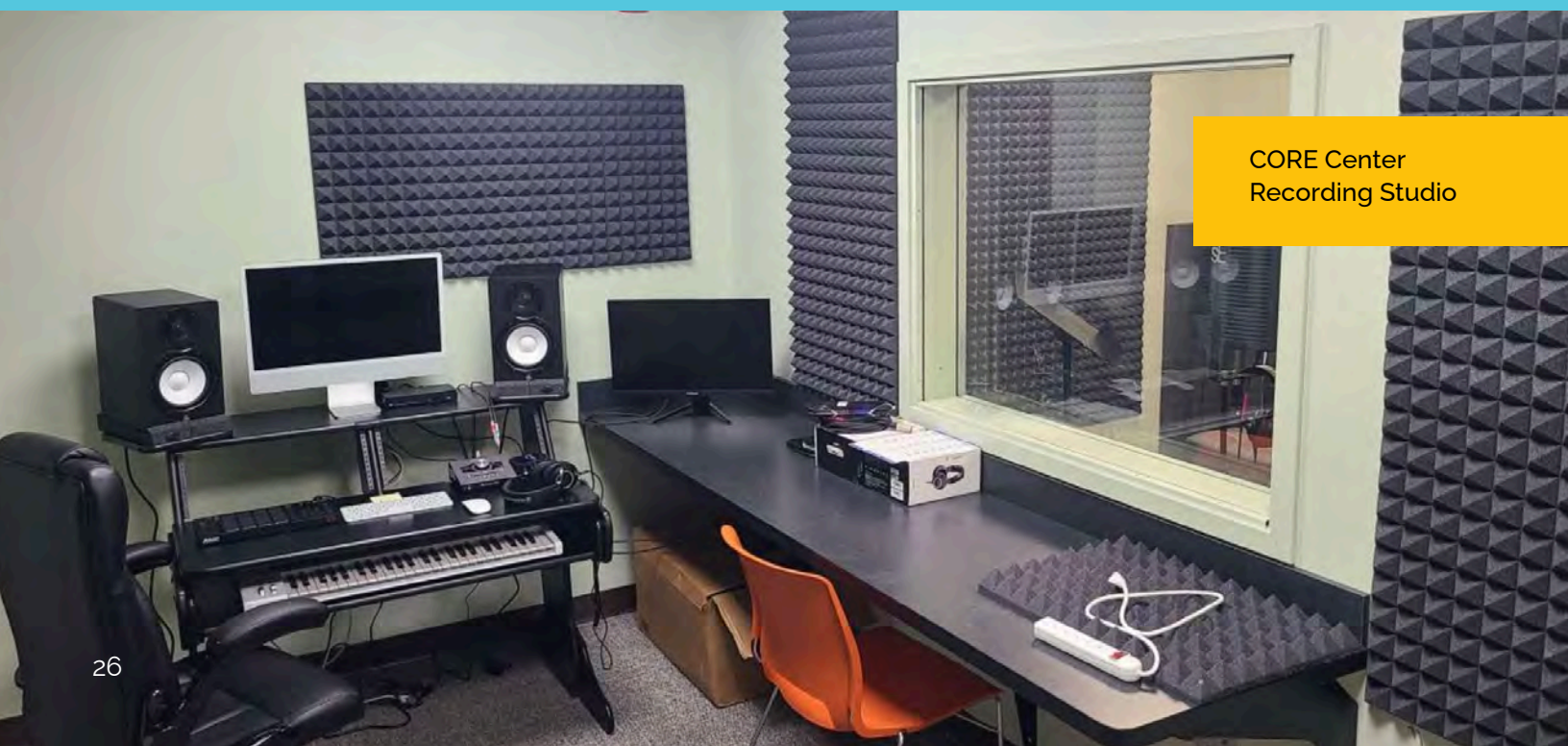
ON THE MIC: HEALING THROUGH MUSIC EDUCATION

With support from New York State's SOR4 initiative, CUSE and CORE build on our peer recovery support model to engage young people in clubhouse activities that promote strong, supportive connections to peers and trusted mentors. Our in-house sound engineering studios offer participants the

chance to explore their passion for music. With guidance from a professional sound engineer, youth participants hone skills such as tracking, mixing, beat-making, rapping, and editing. In the studio, young people discover their talents, express themselves creatively, and heal and transform through the arts.

ADULT PEER SUPPORT

CCA's CUSE and CORE Centers continue to serve as peer support hubs for adults in recovery and/or impacted by the criminal legal system. The Centers provide essential services, including meals, clothing, and bus passes, to address immediate needs. We also provide ongoing recovery and life skills support groups, sober social and recreational activities, and civic restoration services.



CORE Center
Recording Studio

CCA was honored to welcome OASAS Commissioner Chinazo Cunningham to our Syracuse Recovery Center in the spring. L-R: Henry Rosen, Shevanie Clark, Commissioner Cunningham, David Condliffe, Kelly Gonzalez, Alexi Mikaelson, Dr. Tammy Butler



RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING: PROBLEM GAMBLING

As part of our commitment to providing community-driven services, the CUSE and CORE Centers seek to respond to emerging needs in Onondaga and Monroe Counties. This year, the CORE Center signed a partnership contract with the New York Council on Problem Gambling to introduce new problem gambling

support services, including groups, peer support, and screening practices. We look forward to expanding our support networks in Syracuse and Rochester as we continue to provide a space where people connect, grow, and help one another navigate the path of recovery.

CCA Lays the Groundwork for Expanding ATI Services Across New York State

Over the past few decades, community organizations in New York State have made great strides in developing critical alternative-to-incarceration (ATI) programs and reentry services. These programs are disproportionately concentrated in New York City, leaving formerly incarcerated people in the rest of New York State with inadequate access to ATI and reentry services.

CCA is working to redress this disparity by developing a new model for how counties might assess existing services and increase access. Under the guidance of Dean Horace Anderson, (CCA Board Member and dean of the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University), we launched The Westchester County ATI/Reentry Planning Collaborative to bring together three groups in the area: county officials, local ATI/reentry service providers, and participants of local ATI/reentry programs.

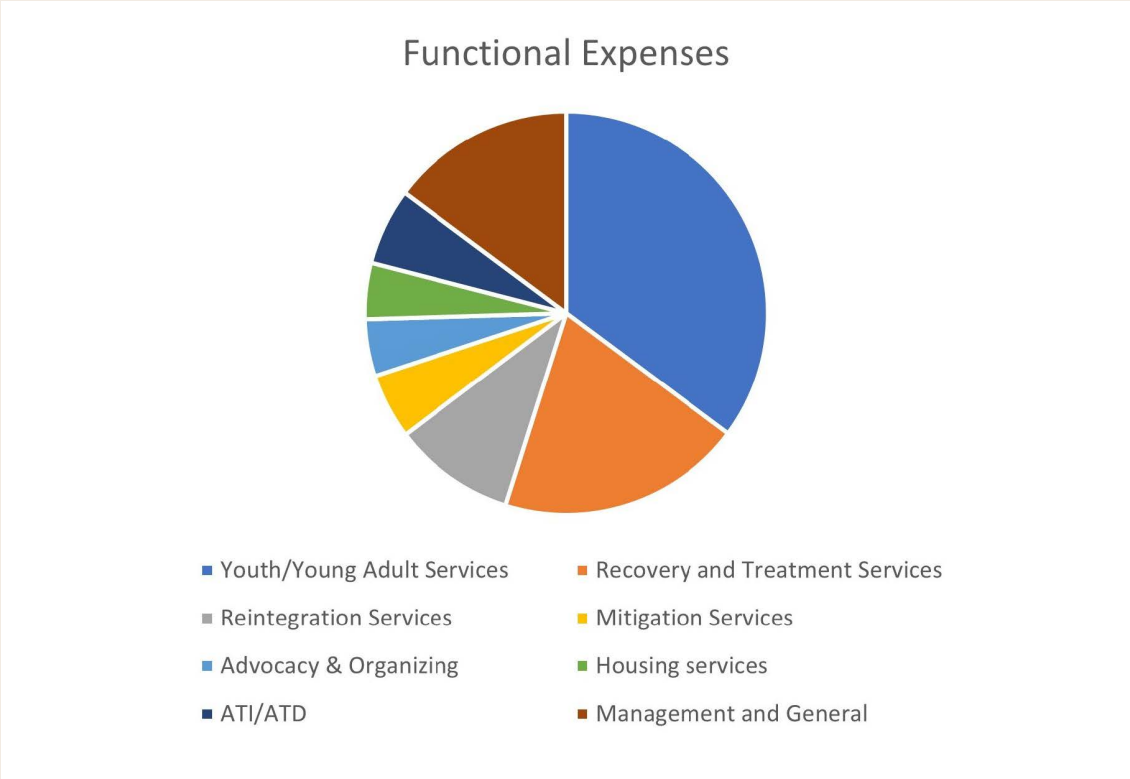
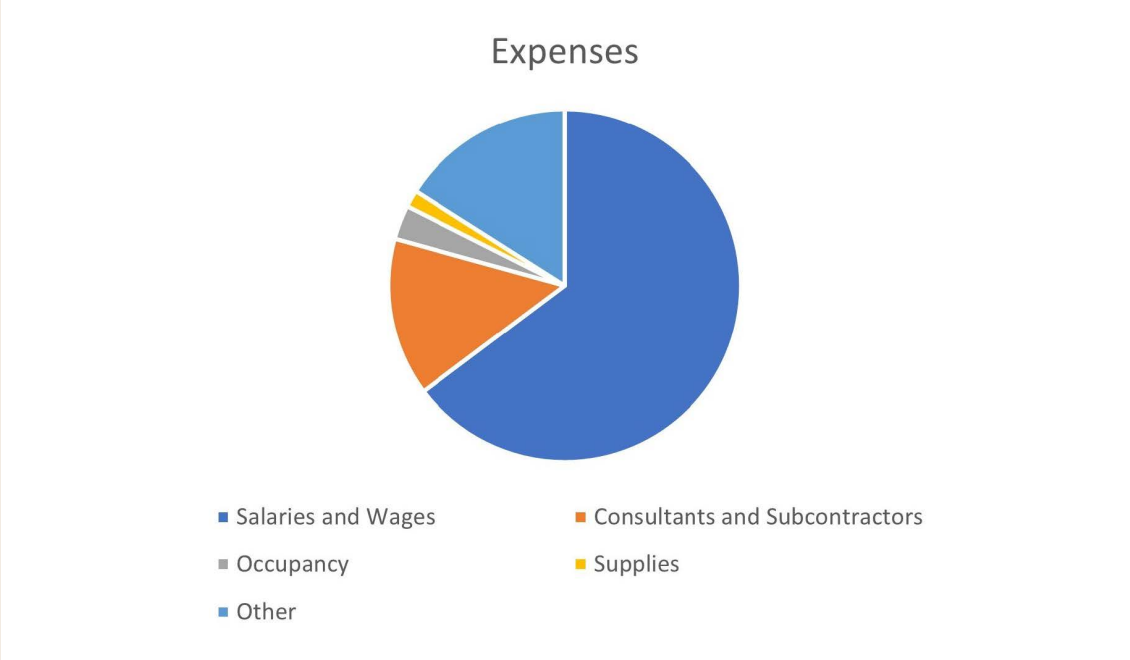
With support from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, the Planning Collaborative has assessed the existing ATI/reentry landscape in Westchester, identified strengths in existing services, and uncovered gaps and obstacles to successful ATI/reentry in the region.

CCA and Pace have worked collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders, including local leaders like the County Executive and the District Attorney, and nonprofits like the Legal Aid Society of Westchester. People directly impacted by the criminal legal system have shared their personal experiences navigating local ATI/reentry services, including successes and challenges.

WHAT'S NEXT: A MODEL FOR EXPANSION

Based on our findings, the Planning Collaborative will develop a strategic action plan to expand and strengthen ATI/reentry services in Westchester County. We hope this project will improve services in Westchester County and provide a model to scale ATI/reentry programs in every region across the state.

Operating Revenues and Expenses



SUPPORT AND REVENUE	2024	2023
Government Grants and Contracts	\$15,977,694	\$16,148,289
Contributions and Other Revenue	\$2,645,492	\$2,770,332
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$18,623,186	\$18,918,621

EXPENSES BY COST CATEGORY	2024	2023
Salaries and Wages	\$12,291,032	\$11,239,308
Consultants and Subcontractors	\$2,757,482	\$3,016,900
Occupancy	\$594,609	\$832,158
Supplies	\$299,846	\$342,239
Other	\$3,036,500	\$2,745,435
TOTAL	\$18,979,469	\$18,176,040

EXPENSES BY PROGRAM AREA	2024	2023
Youth/Young Adult Services	\$6,676,908	\$7,006,487
Recovery and Treatment services	\$3,737,907	\$2,726,949
Reintegration Services	\$1,864,518	\$1,751,932
Mitigation Services	\$995,112	\$900,363
Advocacy & Organizing	\$869,251	\$795,649
Housing Services	\$854,447	\$646,264
ATI/ATD	\$1,170,215	\$1,284,081
Management and General	\$2,811,111	\$3,064,315
TOTAL	\$18,979,469	\$18,176,040



CORE Center participants and staff pose in new CCA hoodies



CUSE participants took a trip to the zoo



Center for Community Alternatives (CCA) supports and builds power with people across New York State who have been affected by mass incarceration, criminalization and community disinvestment.

Through a statewide network of direct services, advocacy and organizing, and by supporting the leadership of directly-impacted people, we advance civil and human rights for all New Yorkers.

CCA works to build a world where everyone has what they need to thrive.



NEW YORK CITY

25 Chapel Street
Suite 701
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-858-9658

SYRACUSE

115 E. Jefferson Street
Suite 200
Syracuse, NY 13202
315-422-5638

ROCHESTER

130 Andrews Street
Rochester, NY 14604
585-328-8230

 CCA@CommunityAlternatives.org

 [@CCAAlternatives](https://www.instagram.com/CCAAlternatives)

 [@CCA_NY](https://twitter.com/CCA_NY)

 [CommunityAlternatives](https://www.facebook.com/CommunityAlternatives)

CommunityAlternatives.org