

NEWSLETTER



You serve in several roles: community health worker capacity builder with the United Way of Rutherford County, Voices of Affrilachia Reentry Team lead, and INSPIRE coordinator with the Appalachian Regional Commission. What does your work involve, and how did you create this career pathway for yourself?

Voices of Affrilachia is a state-funded initiative focused on ending the mental health stigma in the Black communities of Western North Carolina. The state offers a certified peer support specialist credential, while various community colleges and state universities offer a community health worker credential, and we've found that people who have these credentials often have the skill sets we need among our staff. We recruit and mentor Black peer support specialists coming into the field, which advances two of our goals beyond supporting reentry generally. First, we aim to diversify the mental health workforce, leveraging the existing credentialing systems to advance a more inclusive group. Second, we want to end the stigma around mental health in the Black communities in Western North Carolina. In my role with the Voices of Affrilachia, I oversee the work of two community health workers who are also peer support specialists who provide reentry support to people leaving North Carolina state prisons.

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Texas Initiative Aims to Reduce the Wait for Inpatient Competency Restoration Services

There has been a dramatic increase in people found incompetent to stand trial in Texas over the past 20 years. On an average day, over 2,000 people found incompetent to stand trial (IST) are waiting in Texas jails to receive inpatient competency restoration services in a state hospital. This can overextend already overburdened county jails, which are not the best environment for people in mental health crisis or with poorly managed mental illnesses.

In 2021, a team from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health (JCMH) set out to reduce the number of people waiting in jails for inpatient competency restoration services through a public outreach and education campaign to the state's many justice stakeholders.

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SAMHSA's GAINS Center's 2022 Individual Trauma Training Awardees

Since 2012, SAMHSA's GAINS Center has provided train-the-trainer (TTT) workshops through its *How Being Trauma-Informed Improves Criminal Justice Responses* curriculum. This 4-hour training was designed by Policy Research Associates, Inc., which operates SAMHSA's GAINS Center. The training aims to increase knowledge of what trauma is and begin building a skillset for trauma-informed responses among criminal justice and behavioral health providers who serve individuals who are system impacted. The 2-day TTT event equips trainers with all the information and materials they will need to deliver this training to their communities effectively. Appropriate community audiences include law enforcement officers, correctional officers, park rangers, behavioral health treatment providers, jail medical staff, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and community corrections officers. Ideal applicants have worked in the criminal justice system or with the criminal justice-involved adult population for a minimum of 3 years, have delivered at least 40 hours of professional or educational training, and have the capacity to facilitate future trainings in their agencies and communities.

[See Full Article](#)

Resource Spotlight

- [Criminal Justice Involvement After Release From Prison Following Exposure to Community Mental Health Services Among People Who Use Illicit Drugs and Have Mental Illness: A Systematic Review](#)
- [Santa Clara County Reentry Resource Center Celebrates 10th Anniversary](#)
- [Guide to Methamphetamine Use, Treatment, and Housing Considerations for People Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Helping Individuals Experiencing Homelessness Obtain Identification Documents](#)
- [Stigma Course for County Executives: Addressing the Stigma Around Substance Use Disorders](#)

Flashback on Competence Restoration

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