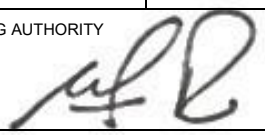
NEW YORK STATE Department of Corrections and Community Supervision **DIRECTIVE**	TITLE **Credible Messenger Use and Releasee Orientation**		NO. 9815 DATE 02/09/2026
SUPERSEDES DIR #9815 Dtd. 04/25/25	DISTRIBUTION A B	PAGES PAGE 1 OF 3	DATE LAST REVISED
REFERENCES (Include but are not limited to) 7NYCRR Chapter V	APPROVING AUTHORITY 		

I. PURPOSE: This directive provides guidance on the creation and implementation of releasee orientations to be held statewide at the various Area Offices, Sub-Offices, and remote report stations. Additionally, the directive outlines the role, responsibilities, and selection process of credible messengers as they pertain to Community Supervision.

II. POLICY: It is the policy of the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) to provide appropriate supervision of releasees by following evidence-based practices in order to help ensure public safety, reduce further victimization, decrease recidivism, and facilitate the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals back to society. Releasee orientations will assist DOCCS in achieving these goals by sharing relevant information and providing support to releasees, thereby laying a strong foundation for the beginning of their supervision in the community. Additionally, the utilization of credible messengers who can effectively communicate with the releasee population will play a part in the orientation process.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Credible Messenger: A formerly incarcerated individual or releasee who has experienced the various barriers and obstacles individuals often face when returning to the community (i.e., establishing a stable residence, obtaining employment, refraining from illicit substance abuse, etc.) and who can also attest to the many advantages incurred while under Community Supervision (i.e., having an assigned Parole Officer to help guide the releasee, positive social support, effective treatment providers, etc.). The credible messenger is someone who can communicate effectively with the releasee population in various forums while also gaining their trust and buy-in from Community Supervision Staff and managers.

B. Releasee Orientation: A forum for newly released incarcerated individuals used to acclimate them to the expectations of Community Supervision, provide support and services, and have open dialogue in a group setting.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Releasee Orientation: By participating in the orientation, releasees will be able to better understand the reintegration process back into the community while also gaining increased awareness of community-based services and benefits from the collaborative support between community-based organizations and DOCCS.

The following general guidelines will be followed at all Community Supervision locations:

1. Orientations will be held on a monthly (or as needed) basis depending on the specifics of the location (i.e., frequency and number of new releasees, availability of presenters, etc.).
2. Orientations will be held on a day of the week that will not interfere with scheduled report days to have more available space in the waiting room.
3. Orientations should last for approximately one hour, and the start time should take into consideration the time needed for releasees to travel to the office as well as time to set up the event.
4. Orientations will occur at Area Offices, Sub-Offices, and remote report stations (where logistically feasible).
5. Orientations will be managed and organized by the Bureau Chief with the support and assistance of the Reentry Manager or their designee.
6. Orientations should include in attendance a sample of field and reentry staff. Staff should remain until the conclusion of the orientation.
7. Orientations will include the following agenda/program format:
    a. Orientation welcome by the Bureau Chief or designee.
    b. Introduction of DOCCS staff that are present.
    c. The Bureau Chief or designee will review Community Supervision procedures and expectations and other topics relevant to supervision to include Earned Time credit, Merit Discharge, etc.
    d. Discussion on obtaining identification documents.
    e. Reentry staff will discuss the County Reentry Task Force (CRTF); Ready, Set, Work!; etc.
    f. Credible messenger will speak with releasees.
    g. Question/Answer period (questions should be general, not specific to an individual releasee).
    h. Community-based organization presenters.
    i. Informal networking between releasees, community providers, and Community Supervision staff.

B. Credible Messenger: Community Supervision will select and utilize credible messengers to speak at various forums, such as the releasee orientations and Friends and Family events. Credible messengers can be individuals under supervision, or who have completed their sentence. The following criteria are required for the selection process:

1. For individuals not currently under supervision, the DOCCS Enemies Screen and Facility Disciplinary Record are to be reviewed.
2. Individuals must have completed a minimum of six months of supervision or have been successfully discharged from supervision.
3. Candidates cannot be in the parole violation process nor have any open arrests.

4. Candidates must not have a criminal history involving any sex offense.
5. Candidates must not have a criminal history involving any crimes committed against minors unless the candidate was also a minor at the time of the offense.
6. Candidates must be in compliance with all of their conditions of release.
7. Recommendations of credible messenger candidates will be forwarded by the Bureau Chief and/or Reentry Manager to the Regional Director, who will give final approval.

NOTE: Credible messenger opportunities will be highlighted and promoted at releasee orientations, local CRTF meetings, during the Arrival Report, and at Friends and Family events. Additionally, recommendations of potential credible messenger candidates can be forwarded by staff through the chain of command.