



VIRGINIA CARES

The mission of Virginia CARES (Virginia



Virginia CARES

The Commonwealth's Statewide Reentry Solution

Community Action Re-Entry System) is to assist newly released ex-offenders and their families in making a successful transition from prison to their community. It is a charitable mission to help with emergency needs first and to then assist with the client becoming self-sufficient by obtaining employment. The social services Virginia CARES provides are food, clothing, transportation, and shelter, guidance for job interviews and leads, and referrals to other agencies that would further benefit the client's stability in the community.

Virginia CARES is a new program associated with New River Community Action. "Virginia CARES (Community Action Re-Entry System) is a heralded, statewide network of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) formed to address the successful reentry and de-institutionalization of felons in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The agency presently operates pre-release programs in 24 prisons and 9 local jails, as well as post-release programs in 50 Virginia localities, which receive the largest numbers of parolees. Since 1981 Virginia CARES has worked with more than 70,000 felons with a proven record of recidivist reduction."

New River Community Action saw the need for this program in the New River Valley to deal with the multiple problems of ex-offenders returning to Montgomery, Pulaski, Floyd, Giles and Radford. According to the Department of Justice, one in every 155 U.S. residents is in the prison system. In 1980, only 3,582 individuals were released from Virginia prisons. In 2002, 9,960 individuals were released. The vast majority of those released returned to their communities within the state. And the challenges of re-entry are many. More prisoners are returning home having spent longer terms behind bars, exacerbating the already significant challenges of finding employment and reconnecting with family. The CARES program is a proven cost-effective alternative to continuing crime and prison overcrowding. Seventy-six percent of all Virginia CARES participants state wide do not return to prison, saving Virginia taxpayers almost \$38 million annually.

Because Virginia CARES is housed in the New River Community Action site in Christiansburg and Pulaski we are able to partner with other NRCA agencies to enhance services for the ex-offender population. Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program and the New River Family Shelter are two of the NRCA partner agencies that collaborate with Virginia CARES. The Virginia CARES staff has made contacts within the community for employment opportunities, employment tools, housing and general donations. With all agencies working together, the program can focus on the community perspective, to prevent further criminal activity and restore the fabric of the family and community in crisis as a result of imprisonment.

Each case is treated individually, and community resources vary depending on the individual, and their background. VA CARES holds ex-offender monthly groups, and training across the New River Valley. Other assistance include transportation, identification document costs, housing, and GED and education, and food assistance. Providing vouchers for public transportation, paying for identification costs, providing housing referrals, GED class expenses, books and financial assistance for college classes and food, and support are ways to solve the immediate needs of our clients.

DONATE

VA CARES office
(serving New River Valley)



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The Virginia CARES program has been shown to reduce recidivism and save taxpayer dollars. We would appreciate your support in making this program a success in the New River Valley.

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About us

New River Community Action works with our community's most vulnerable residents including the homeless, ex-offenders, the disabled, and struggling young families. NRCA offers a variety of programs to improve the lives of low-income people. Some services address basic needs such as food, shelter, and utilities. Comprehensive early childhood programs promote school readiness, healthy families, and effective parenting. We serve about 12,000 local residents each year.

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