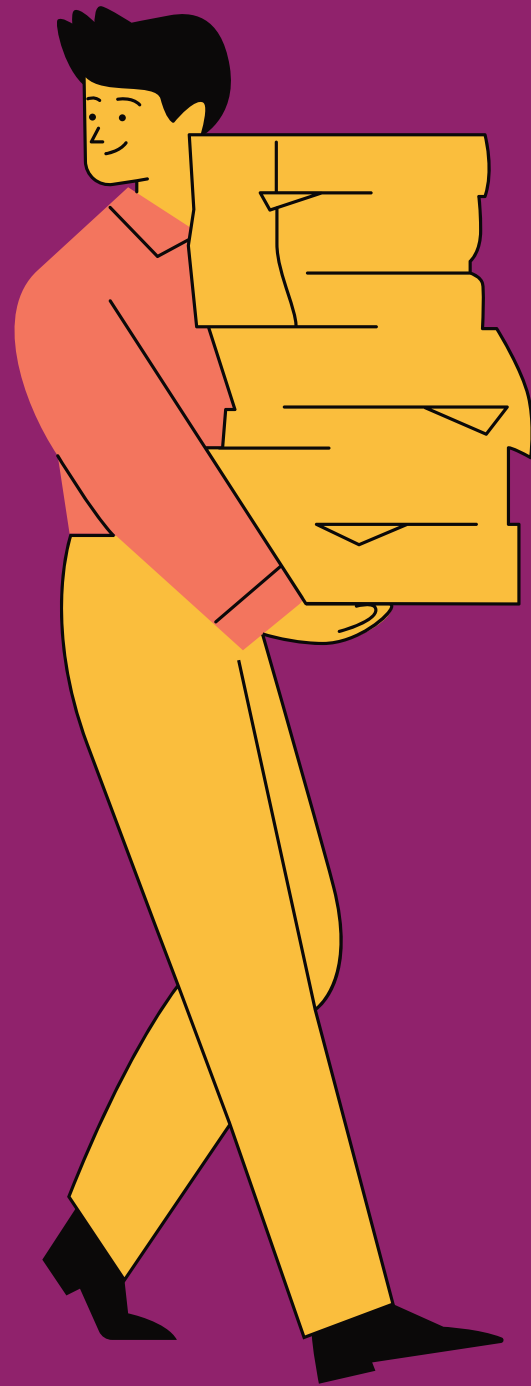


Lived Experience in Action: County Innovations in Peer-Integrated Initiatives

Presenters:
Dr. Jennifer Lerch
Ms. Lauren N. Henderson, MSW



Agenda



Introductions & Objectives

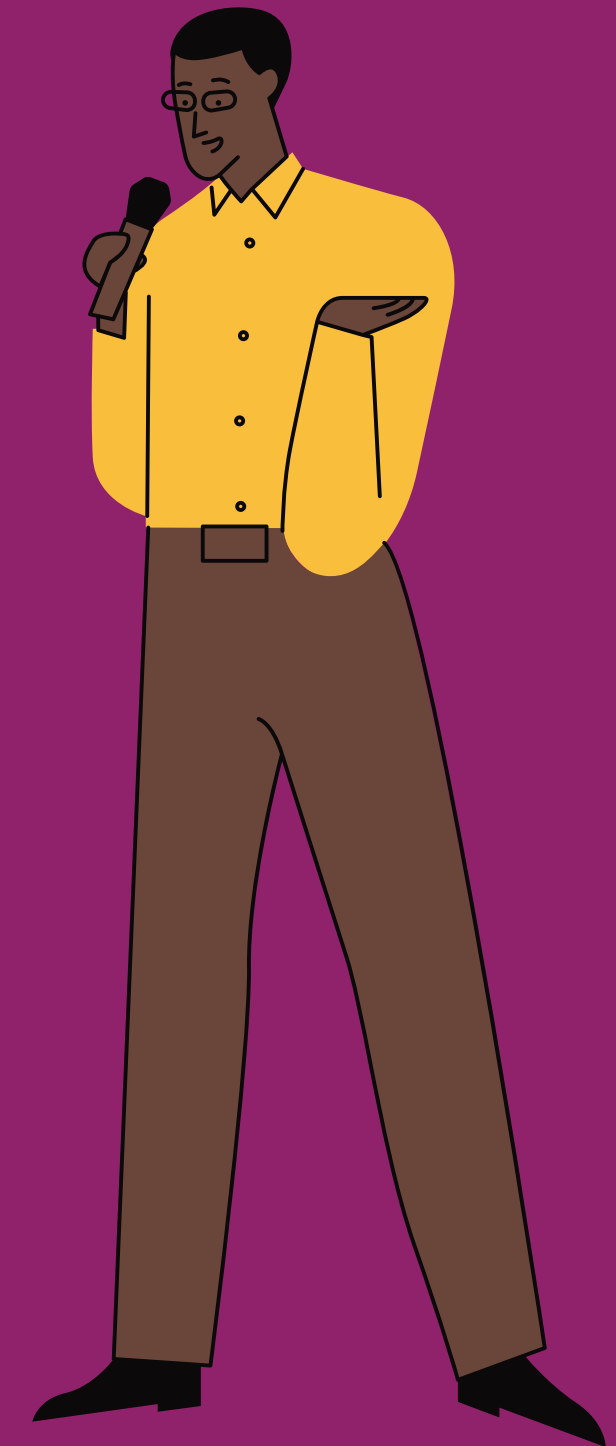
Overview of CAREES

Defining Peers

County Innovations

Activity

Takeaways and Q&A



Meet the JSP COSSUP CAREES Team



Dr. Jennifer Lerch
Project Lead
Senior Associate



Dr. Tameka V. Williams
Project Advisor
Director of Staff Investment & Curiosity



Lauren Henderson
Project Manager
Associate



Dr. Sarah Jensen
Research Associate



Becky Lockner
Subject Matter Expert



Dr. Thom Elmore
Subject Matter Expert



Darrell Boyles
Subject Matter Expert

JSP is a non-profit, multidisciplinary team committed to assisting criminal and juvenile legal systems and community partners with transforming their systems to be more equitable, effective, and humane.

Workshop Objectives

Highlight how counties are embedding peer support in legal settings to improve outcomes during reentry and recovery.

Share insights from PA Counties on what makes peer integration effective, including relationship-building, coordination across systems, and sustainability.

Explore the unique value of lived experience in enhancing engagement, trust, and continuity of care.

Provide practical recommendations and considerations for jurisdictions interested in developing or expanding peer-led approaches within their own systems.



Introduction to COSSUP PROJECT

Goal: reduce overdoses among probation and reentry populations in Pennsylvania (PA).

Funding provided: Up to \$600,000 per COSSUP Site

Through the COSSUP Project, BJA and the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) aim to:

- Advance racial equity
- Increase access to medication-assisted treatment
- Expand evidence-based harm reduction efforts
- Expand access to recovery support services for probation and reentry populations

With a focus on implementing strategies such as:

- Hiring Peer Support Specialists or Certified Recovery Specialists
- Providing trauma-informed care training to internal stakeholders
- Disseminating Naloxone, testing strips, and lock boxes to Black and Brown communities
- Implementing MAT in correctional settings

COSSUP PA Sites

- Allegheny
- Chester
- Dauphin
- Franklin
- York
- Fulton



Introduction to COSSUP CAREES



COSSUP Goals and Objectives

● **Goal 1:** Expand implementation of effective policies and practices designed to reduce overdose among people on probation and those reentering the community.

● **Goal 2:** Reduce the number of people incarcerated for substance-related technical violations and increase availability of non-coercive supports and resources.

● **Goal 3:** Increase access to evidence-based treatment, services, and supports for people under probation supervision, incarcerated individuals, and those returning to the community post-incarceration.

● **Goal 4:** Amplify racial equity principles within substance use-related policies, practices, programming, and services at the local and state levels.

● **Goal 5:** Elevate the voices of people with lived experience within program and policy development and decision-making.

What comes to mind when you hear “peer support”?



Word Cloud Activity

Defining Peer Support



Why Peers Matter in Legal Settings

- Connection with someone who understands
- Having someone you can trust
- Providing hope and encouragement
- Connect individuals to recovery supports
- Improve continuity of care during reentry
- Support treatment engagement

Why Peers Matter in Legal Settings

What Peers Do

Authentic connections

Trust and credibility

Hope, encouragement, and recovery role modeling

Navigating complex systems and services

Guidance during reentry transitions

Non-judgmental support

Bridge communication

Why Peers Matter in Legal Settings

What Becomes Possible:

- Increased engagement with treatment and recovery services
- Stronger connections to harm reduction, recovery, & reentry supports
 - Improved continuity of care after release
- Increased follow-through with appointments and services
- Improved recovery stability and community reentry

County Peer Implementation Strategies

Allegheny County

Certified Recovery Specialist
Project Rehabilitate,
Public Defender's Office

Fulton County

Certified Recovery Specialist,
Fulton County Family Partnership
Reentry Support

York County

Certified Recovery Specialists,
Life Changing Pathways
Reentry Support

What Makes Peer Interaction Work?



Group Activity



Where Could Your County Implement Peer Support?

- Where is support missing in reentry? Where are the “cracks”?
- Where could peers make the biggest difference?
- What partners would be needed?

Resources

COSSUP Storytelling Library

- Hear stories of recovery from individuals working as peers

COSSUP Webinar: The Power of Peers

- Learn how street outreach and legal advocacy can work with peers to improve recovery and reentry outcomes

Poll

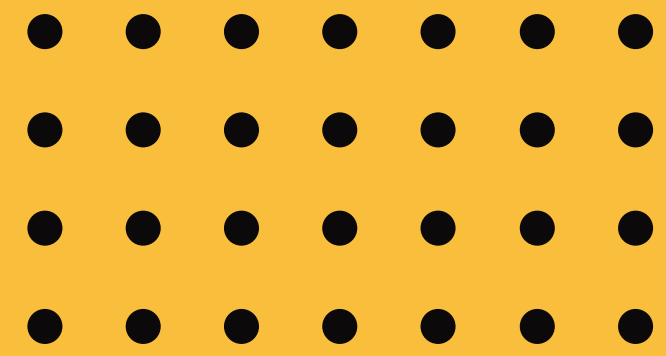
Where Are You in Your
Peer Integration Journey?



Key Takeaways



- Lived experience builds trust in vulnerable settings.
- Peer support strengthens recovery and reentry outcomes.
- Successful models rely on strong partnerships, particularly partnerships with existing peer organizations.
- Counties can start small and expand over time.



Questions?



Connect with us

JSP COSSUP Team



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