

# *Criminal Justice/Mental Health Mentorship Initiative 2010*

## **Program Description**

ULS DC Jail Advocacy Project is collaborating with NAMI DC's B.R.I.D.G.E.S. program to launch a mentorship program that will match incarcerated men and women who have mental illness with mentors in the community. The program begins behind bars at the DC Jail where trained mentors will facilitate support groups for their peers. The program will encourage mentor-mentee relationships to continue after release so that mentees can be guided through the reentry process and provide advice and support while they connect with community mental health care, employment and housing.

### ***Who can be a mentor?***

All mentors must be in mental health recovery—therefore either current or past consumers of mental health services. In addition, we prefer mentors who also have a personal experience of incarceration and successful reentry. Mentors must also be at least 21 years of age, drug free, and have a stable address. Character references must be provided. Mentors seeking to participate in support groups inside the jail must also pass the DOC background checks.

### ***What do mentors receive?***

All mentors will receive 40 hours of unpaid training by local and nationally recognized experts including presenters from the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and Howie the Harp Peer Advocacy Center in New York. The first and second training modules, Recovery Principles and Resources, and Professional Skill Development are mandatory for all participants. For those participants who wish to support reentry planning or provide peer-based advocacy, we will offer two additional training modules on Advocacy and Organizing. Meals will be provided during the trainings and transportation costs will be covered.

### **Topics covered in the trainings will include:**

#### Module I-Self-Help and Wellness (January 20, 2010)

- Understanding mental health symptoms and treatment
- Reentry planning: How to support someone in the first days after jail
- Introduction to Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP)
- Public Resources in DC

#### Module II-Professional Skill Development (January 21-22, 2010)

- Trauma Informed Care: Presentation and 3 hour Intensive Workshop
- Professional boundaries, roles and responsibilities
- Facilitating Support Groups Behind Bars
- Confidentiality and Other Ethical Obligations
- Motivational Interviewing
- Mentorship Best Practices

Module III-Advocacy (Date pending)

- Navigating DC's Criminal Justice System
- Disability Rights and Complaint Resolution
- Successful models of peer-led advocacy
- Reentry and Redressing the Collateral Consequences of Conviction

Module IV-Organizing (Date pending)

- Finding your own voice
- Problem solving with and presenting to key decision makers
- Developing strategic partnerships

**Confirmed speakers and panelists include:**

Dorothy Adams, Director, Consumer Leadership Forum  
Rashida Alford, Alternative Directions' *Out For Justice*, Baltimore MD  
Betsy Biben, Director, Public Defender Service Rehabilitation Division  
Mercia Bowser, Vice President, NAMI DC B.R.I.D.G.E.S.  
Tonier Cain, National Assoc. of State Mental Health Program Directors  
Dr. Joan Gillece, National Assoc. of State Mental Health Program Directors  
Nike Hamilton, Director of Co-Occurring Treatment, St Elizabeths Hospital  
Ilana Marmon, LICSW, DC Jail Advocacy Project  
Naomi Long, Drug Policy Alliance  
Herman Odom, Director, DC Office on Ex Offender Affairs  
Raymond Ortiz, Howie the Harp Peer Advocacy Center, NYC  
Gretchen Rohr, Attorney, University Legal Services  
Effie Smith, Director, Consumer Action Network  
Vivi Smith, Director, DMH Office on Family and Consumer Affairs  
Gerard Thomas, DMH certified WRAP facilitator

We have also invited representatives from Department of Mental Health, Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration, Department of Employment Services and numerous advocacy groups led by formerly incarcerated men and women.

Mentors will also receive training by the Department of Corrections which is required for volunteers that enter the jail. After completing this training and the Department of Corrections background check, mentors will qualify to facilitate support groups inside the jail. Mentors will be paid for the hours they commit to leading support groups inside the jail. All travel costs will also be covered by the program.

**\* Continuing Educational Activities Offered Quarterly-** NAMI and ULS will offer periodic training and support events for mentors, including guests instructors, and social activities to strengthen the mentor/mentee relationship.

## ***How can someone apply to be a mentor?***

To apply, download the application here [insert link here], or request a copy from Angela Agnew at the address below. Please send a completed application, resume, and list of 3 references to:

Angela Agnew  
University Legal Services DC Jail Advocacy Project  
220 I Street NE, Suite 130, Wash. DC 20002  
PH. 202-547-0198  
Fax: 202-547-2662  
[aagnew@uls-dc.org](mailto:aagnew@uls-dc.org)

### ***ABOUT NAMI DC B.R.I.D.G.E.S.:***

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) DC has served families of persons with mental illness in DC since 1978. They provide education, support and advocacy including offering information on mental illnesses, family support groups and consumer support groups. They aim to not only help families in times of acute crisis, but also to accompany consumers and families through all cycles of recovery. NAMI has a consumer-run recovery initiative entitled B.R.I.D.G.E.S. (Building Recovery of Individual Dreams and Goals through Education & Support). The NAMI BRIDGES program brings together people who share the experience and knowledge of mental illness to empower each other with the tools to build bridges of recovery. BRIDGES is a peer-to-peer class taught by trained individuals who have personal experience with mental illness.

### ***ABOUT ULS DC JAIL ADVOCACY PROJECT:***

University Legal Services (ULS) is a 40 year old nonprofit legal organization appointed by the Mayor in 1996 as the District's protection and advocacy system to advocate on behalf of DC residents with disabilities. In 2007, ULS launched the DC Jail Advocacy Project, a legal advocacy and social service program to promote the safe transition home from jail or prison for youth and adults with psychiatric disabilities. The Project staff of attorneys, social workers and peer advocates meet with individuals inside the DC Jail and at area halfway houses and continue representation for up to 6 months after release to assist with the development of meaningful connections to community supports needed in order to sustain independence and freedom from cycles of hospitalization and incarceration in DC. In 2008, we launched the city's first ever Peer Education initiative that trains and pays previously incarcerated mental health consumers to facilitate "Know Your Rights" workshops across the city. Over 85 individuals have completed the training and 22 graduates have successfully developed and led these educational programs for their peers. In 2010, we look forward to expanding our Peer Education Initiative to train mental health consumers interested in serving as mentors for their peers transitioning out of the DC Jail. For more information about ULS visit our website at [www.uls-dc.org](http://www.uls-dc.org)