

# Supporting Justice-Impacted Students

## Recommendations for Elgin Community College

February 2024





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# Introduction

## Background & Goals

In late 2022, Elgin Community College (ECC) secured funding from the JPMorgan Chase to pilot a task force to develop recommendations and programming for justice-impacted students attending community college. ECC is aware that a number of students have justice records, and many are still juggling the mandates of that prior involvement while pursuing new careers. These students face myriad barriers, including scheduling conflicts, technology access, ineligibility for financial aid, lack of stable transportation, and lack of access to childcare. ECC leadership believes that programs that can serve people in the most complex circumstances can serve anyone.

In securing this funding, ECC demonstrated a cross-departmental commitment to exploring and advocating for college-wide improvements to policies and practices that will promote a more inclusive campus. ECC contracted with Education Systems Center at Northern Illinois University (EdSystems) to support the pilot task force's efforts. EdSystems seeks to shape and strengthen education and workforce systems to advance racial equity and prepare more learners for productive careers and lives in a global economy. Building

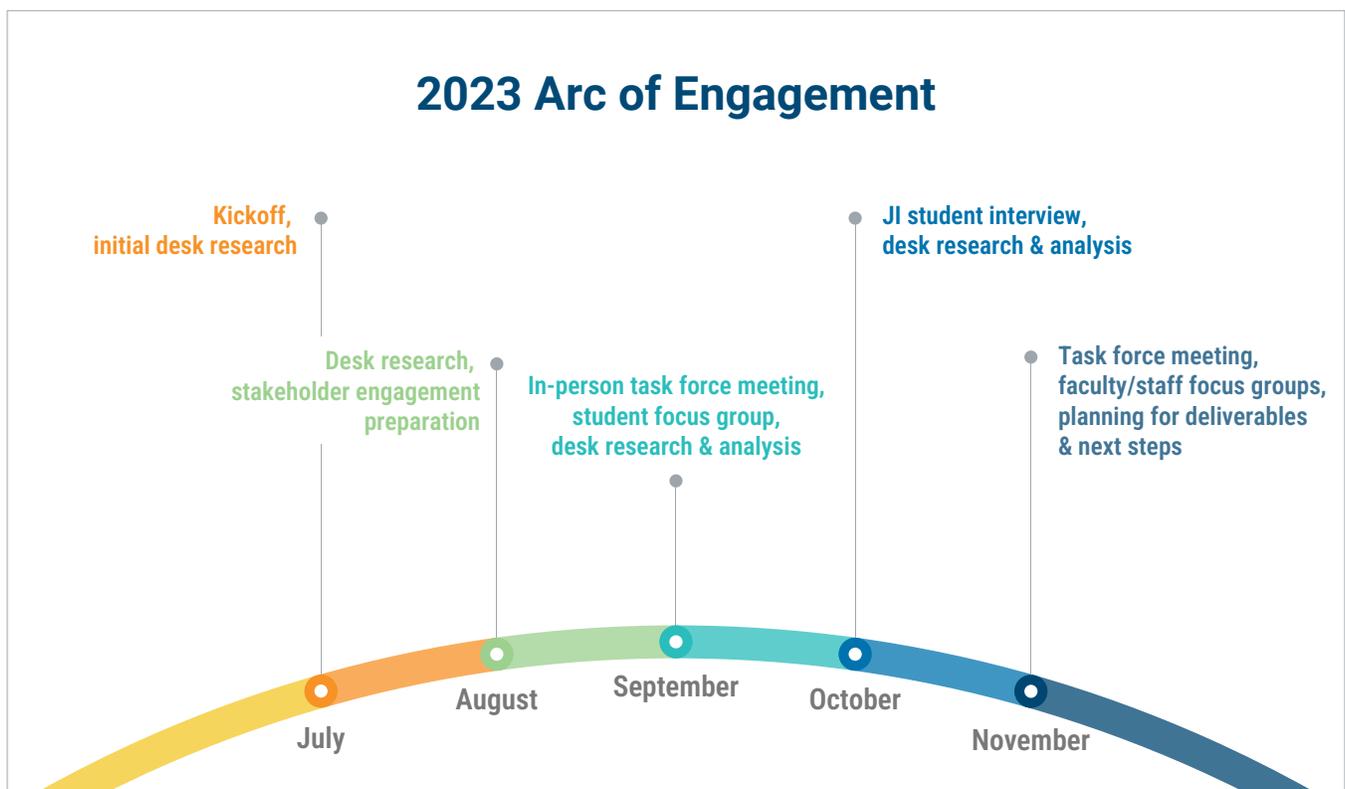
from years of experience in driving and facilitating cross-agency alignment and policy development around college and career pathways, along with recent efforts to assist the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) in better preparing justice-impacted individuals for life and gainful employment beyond incarceration, the EdSystems team applied its experience and knowledge of long-term system building efforts to support the ECC Second Chance task force as it seeks to better serve its students with experiences in the carceral justice system.

Ultimately, the task force seeks to strengthen programming and completion supports, create professional development opportunities, collect data on priority needs among justice-impacted students, and develop targeted recommendations for policy and practice to address these needs.

## Approach to the Work

EdSystems' work was comprised of three key components:

- **DESK RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS** to identify best practice models for engaging students, CBOs, and employers to examine issues facing justice-impacted individuals in particular.





- **ECC STUDENT, FACULTY, AND STAFF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT** to clarify justice-impacted student needs and experiences, professional development needs for faculty and staff, and the current landscape of ECC offerings for this population.
- **TASK FORCE CONVENING AND FACILITATION** to build knowledge and momentum among those who have expressed a commitment to improving the ways ECC serves justice-impacted students.

Taken together, we developed an understanding of the broader field of supporting justice-impacted students in higher education (particularly community colleges), current state efforts around education and workforce access for justice-impacted individuals, and ECC's current landscape and programming for justice-impacted students. As a result of this understanding, we have developed a set of concrete recommendations intended to guide the task force as it moves forward in its efforts to reshape how ECC recruits and serves justice-impacted students to help them achieve success at ECC and beyond.

## Key Recommendations

The following report includes detailed information on our findings throughout the process. Ultimately, we are making eight key recommendations that are described in greater detail in the final section.

1. Build internal buy-in and integrate the work
2. Involve students.
3. Engage external stakeholders.
4. Build awareness of existing resources.
5. Develop a consolidated support system for students.
6. Build internal capacity.
7. Document your work.
8. Recognize that it is an iterative process.

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# Synthesis of Desk Research Findings

EdSystems conducted extensive desk research to understand common challenges justice-impacted students face when engaging in higher education, particularly at community colleges, and best practices to serve this population. Additional detail on the findings described below can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

## Challenges and Best Practices

The challenges hindering justice-impacted students' access and success in postsecondary education are multifaceted. These barriers include difficulties in accessing personal documents upon release, limitations in financial aid services, inadequate housing options, challenges in meeting basic needs, and struggles with career services due to past convictions. Initiatives like streamlining processes for document retrieval upon release, educating students about financial aid resources, providing affordable housing options, addressing basic needs, facilitating career connections, and instituting "Ban the Box" policies are vital. Moreover, gathering data to understand and cater to the specific needs of this student demographic and creating a supportive community on campus through mentorship programs and dedicated spaces are crucial steps toward ensuring equitable opportunities for justice-impacted students in higher education.

## Professional Development

Professional development for faculty and staff engaging with justice-impacted students aims to humanize their experiences through an anti-deficit framework centered on racial equity, access, and dignifying language. Prioritizing student voices in training, including drawing on their experiences through empathy interviews, fosters empathy and understanding. Shifting language to be more respectful and humanizing is crucial, allowing justice-impacted students to transcend their past incarceration. Effective professional development entails educating staff about the challenges these students encounter and providing actionable support, including exceptions and school resources, to aid students facing hurdles. This approach ensures staff are equipped to support justice-impacted students while recognizing their individuality beyond their past experiences.

## Community Models

Several initiatives within and outside Illinois are dedicated to supporting justice-impacted students in their pursuit of higher education.

- The [Education Justice Project](#) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign offers a comprehensive reentry guide covering a wide spectrum of needs, from pre-release preparation to post-release essentials such as familial reunification, identification procurement, basic needs fulfillment, employment opportunities, mental and physical health, and legal guidance. This initiative stands out for its tailored approach, providing essential guidance for justice-impacted individuals navigating life after incarceration.
- The [Education Trust's toolkit](#) focuses on Illinois-specific policies affecting students and proposes strategies to counter their challenges.
- [Reentry Essentials Illinois](#) provides directories and resources aiding post-release success.
- The [Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority](#) focuses on evidence-based practices for employment, housing, behavioral health, and social support.

Beyond Illinois:

- The [Corrections to College California](#) program offers valuable insights and tips for establishing successful programs supporting justice-impacted students on campuses. This initiative provides guidance on staffing considerations, suggested resources, and tips for creating a supportive academic environment.
- The [California Community Colleges Rising Scholars Network](#) emphasizes understanding the unique needs of justice-involved students and provides best practices for successful reentry experiences.
- Notably, the [Best Practices Pathways from Prison to College Program](#), a part of the UCI Lifted Program, advocates for incorporating justice-impacted individuals into diversity, equity, and inclusion curricula.

Together, these initiatives strive to create inclusive environments and provide vital support for justice-impacted students on their educational journey.

## Filling the Gap

While there are many existing examples of general best practices available online, there are not many examples detailing individual school programs. There is a need for more publicly available community models. While community colleges around the country may be engaging with this work, there are very few that are sharing their work and experiences online.

Additionally, existing resources focus on the experience of getting college credit in prison or entering a career after prison and not on re-entering college spaces. Information focused on how to support justice-impacted students **during** college is needed. By embarking on this work and sharing it outwards, ECC may serve as an example for other programs to adopt similar models, as well as for more colleges that are doing this work to engage in public discourse about their initiatives.

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# Synthesis of Stakeholder Engagement Findings

At the outset of the work, the task force expressed a desire to understand the experiences and perspectives of ECC faculty, staff, and justice-impacted students. EdSystems worked with the task force to develop protocols to gather qualitative data from these stakeholders and conducted focus groups and interviews over the course of the project. Additional detail, including protocols and more detailed summaries of student, faculty, and staff input, can be found in the appendix.

EdSystems received support in connecting with justice-impacted students from the Certified Recovery Support Specialists (RSS)/Certified Peer Recovery Specialists (PRS) program to participate in an in-person focus group, held in September 2023. EdSystems team interviewed an additional RSS student over Zoom. While this program is not expressly for justice-impacted students, many students pursuing the RSS or PRS credentials have prior experience with substance abuse, either themselves or within their families, and, as a result, have had interactions with law enforcement or the carceral justice system.

ECC faculty and staff were identified for focus groups through both task force member recommendations and broader recruitment by Dr. Anthony Ramos. EdSystems held two virtual focus groups with faculty and staff and conducted interviews with RSS/PRS program leadership.

## Justice-Impacted Students

The students the EdSystems team encountered were broadly eager to share their experiences in coming to ECC. The EdSystems team asked these justice-impacted students a series of questions to explore how they ended up at ECC, what types of realities and challenges shape their experiences at ECC, and what they most benefit from or would like to see from ECC in support of justice-impacted student success. We will note that given the limited sample of students, namely that all interviewed students came from the RSS/PRS program, there are likely additional insights to be gained about how other justice-impacted students come to and experience ECC.

## How justice-impacted students come to ECC

Many of the students interviewed have come to ECC based on referrals from organizations from which they were receiving support or with whom they have been working in the field. The most commonly mentioned organizations were [The Ecker Center for Behavioral Health](#) and the [National Alliance](#)

[on Mental Illness](#) (NAMI). At least one student mentioned that they had also been encouraged by their parole officer, sponsor, and others to pursue RSS and PRS credentials at ECC.

## Justice-impacted students have a sense of purpose

For many of these students, the RSS/PRS program was a particular draw because they see it as an opportunity to both put their lives on a new path as well as provide support to individuals who are struggling with similar mental health and substance challenges. One student stated, “[I want to] take my dark past and project it into a bright future for others.” Beyond participation in the RSS/PRS program, students see ECC as a place to develop knowledge and work towards a lasting career.

## Justice-impacted students face multifaceted challenges that extend beyond ECC

Students shared a number of barriers to access and success that align with what we learned in our desk research but also shared more about the emotional and psychological experience of being back in a formal education program that extended beyond ECC and what we expected to hear.

Meeting basic needs, including housing, food, and transportation, is a primary challenge for justice-impacted students. One student shared a story about having a suspended license and living far from ECC. In their case, public transportation is not a viable option because it is too time-consuming and not particularly accessible. As a result, they incur high transportation costs in securing private rideshare rides to and from ECC on a regular basis.

Beyond the logistics of participating in programs, students also indicated the emotional challenges surrounding their experience. One student, who is still actively navigating the justice system, shared, “Having to navigate all aspects of the system [court, services, etc.] takes a long time and can be both physically and emotionally exhausting; [it] compounds trauma.” Students working through these processes may find themselves less resourced to grapple with the stressors of the program or environment. They benefit from targeted support and acknowledgment of their overall circumstances.

Further, several students shared that they have to re-learn how to feel comfortable in the environment after past trauma in school or simply re-adjust to the expectations embedded in a school environment.

In some cases, they indicated that building up time management and test-taking skills posed a learning curve at the outset of their experience. Others note that they must re-learn how to be around people in general after learning to isolate due to their experiences. Coming in as a non-traditional student may amplify these challenges and lead to feelings of imposter syndrome.

## Awareness and experience of ECC resources is mixed

The students interviewed expressed mixed views about the ECC resources that currently exist. In some cases, they were not fully aware of the purpose of various centers or resources and expressed difficulty in navigating which resources would be most helpful. Students expressed that they would benefit from more centralized information on these resources and centers, as well as proactive and periodic reminders of what they are and how they can be accessed. Orientation programming emerged as a potential touchpoint for students to learn about these resources, and they expressed an interest in hearing about the resources in different formats (e.g. online, through presentations, direct referrals from trusted faculty/staff, etc.). Students appreciate being directly connected to and helped through receiving the support they need (including academic, social-emotional, and basic support). This seems particularly important for some social-emotional supports, which may be more daunting as it requires vulnerability with staff with whom students may be unfamiliar.

In others, students indicated that how they felt about a particular resource, like the Career Center, may depend on which individual staff they encountered. When students had more negative or less helpful experiences with faculty and staff, they became less motivated to use that particular resource center in the future. By contrast, many students expressed appreciation for some of the same resources (including where they received their student ID, the Career Center, etc.) because they had received attentive and timely support from those individuals.

## Responsiveness and timeliness of support are key

At a number of points in the conversation, various students shared stories that illustrated the importance of timely, responsive support from ECC faculty and staff. One student shared that they were on the verge of leaving ECC because they were struggling to navigate a financial aid challenge, and a prompt response from a Student Success Coach inviting the student to meet immediately made

them stay on-campus that day to work through the challenge. The student credited that quick response with keeping them engaged at ECC overall. Similar experiences were shared by other students, in which just-in-time contact and support kept them engaged at ECC in the longer term. Frustration with navigating another time-consuming, complex system may decrease student motivation to stay engaged.

## Trusting relationships are essential

Across the board, students shared examples of how trusting, non-judgmental relationships with faculty and staff were essential to their ongoing engagement and overall success at ECC. One student shared, "When staff take the time to talk to you and get to know you, that approach is most supportive/helpful." These students want to be seen as the full people they are and benefit from this personal effort from faculty and staff. This relationship-building can build a sense of trust for the students, that they can rely on particular faculty and staff for nonjudgmental support. Further, when faculty, staff, or other students are open about their experiences, it makes students feel more connected, less judged, and more hopeful about their future. Mutual vulnerability breeds connection. In addition to trusting relationships with faculty and staff, students indicated that having a sense of community and support from their peers is important.

Several students expressed a desire to feel like a part of the ECC community, and they said this could be achieved by enhancing some of the orientation processes to be more inclusive of students of a variety of ages and backgrounds. While the RSS/PRS program orientation felt very welcoming, some students indicated that broader new student orientations felt more geared toward younger students who just graduated from high school.

## Strengths of the RSS/PRS program

The students shared many examples of how the RSS/PRS program provides a supportive culture, community, and environment to learn and grow at ECC. This program can serve as a model for how to create the type of learning environment where students experiencing a range of barriers, including justice-impacted students, can be motivated and supported to succeed at ECC.

One of the benefits of the RSS/PRS program is that it is an environment where students feel like they are with peers who have similar experiences: "Because we come with the same experience, we find commonality quicker, we bind together quicker... it's made it easier as students. You don't feel like

you're alone, you know each other...you don't feel so isolated and alone." Having such a cohort of peers can be beneficial to building trust, relationships, and connections that help sustain academic and career success at ECC.

Further, the RSS/PRS program includes robust, holistic, and nonjudgmental support. Faculty and staff running the program demonstrate a proactive effort to get to know their students as people and do whatever they need to meet those students' needs. This may include connecting them directly to supports, offering flexibility in meeting class or program requirements, or simply holding space for the various experiences a student might be having.

## ECC Faculty and Staff

The faculty and staff we connected with demonstrated a strong interest in and commitment to thoughtfully supporting justice-impacted students. We asked the groups various questions about how they identify justice-impacted students, what types of challenges they typically see these students having, their awareness of and comfort in referring to ECC resources, and what they would like to learn more about through professional development opportunities.

## Identifying and understanding justice-impacted students

Virtually all the faculty and staff who participated in our focus groups shared that they primarily knew they had encountered justice-impacted students in their work because those students self-disclosed their experiences. In some cases, the administration comes into contact with these students due to conversations that begin with a particular issue, and ultimately, a range of barriers often tied to a justice system experience come to the surface.

The faculty and staff who shared their experiences also noted a general sense of the range of barriers facing justice-impacted students: from basic needs not being met to transportation challenges or even technology challenges. One participant noted, "These are global issues that affect every student. But [justice-impacted] students are disproportionately impacted by these things."

Many faculty and staff expressed a desire to have a more systemic understanding of how many justice-impacted students are on campus, as well as what their needs are. However, they acknowledged that it can be challenging to seek out this information in a way that does not "other" justice-impacted students.

## Awareness and reach of ECC resources varies

Much like the students, faculty and staff awareness of existing ECC resources varied across those interviewed. Faculty and staff indicated that it would be helpful to have access to information in a centralized way that both lists the resources and provides some explanation of use cases as well as concrete points of contact. One idea shared was to develop a team, similar to the structure for veteran's services, so that students, faculty, and staff know who is adept at providing resources or support.

Participants shared some limitations in existing resources – in particular, they recognized a real need to provide emergency funding to help mitigate acute challenges that can derail a justice-impacted student's career at ECC. However, these types of funds are often limited or intermittently available. Having more sustained sources of funding to defray both standing costs, such as transportation, and emergency costs, such as medical bills, would be beneficial.

## Serving justice-impacted students requires flexibility

Given the range of barriers justice-impacted students experience, adhering to standard timelines or processes may prove difficult. Existing systems can be too rigid, and faculty and staff who are providing support to students may find themselves working around existing processes or using greater flexibility to meet student needs. A number of faculty and staff shared examples of where they have had to take initiative in this way, including flexibility with assignment deadlines or methods for completion, providing personalized support or materials, and more.

While some faculty and staff are already willing and able to lean into where they can provide this flexibility, this is not consistent across campus, which impacts student perceptions of belonging and success: "Some faculty are so rigid that the students and the faculty don't gel, and the student feels they are the failure." Participants shared that there is a need to broadly consider the places where ECC's systems may be most rigid and consider where more flexibility could be built into policies and practices, as well as areas where faculty and staff may need to consider how they can directly build in some flexibility.

## Beliefs about justice-impacted students need to be understood and addressed

Notable among the faculty and staff input was an awareness of and a desire to address attitudes on campus about justice-impacted students. This includes a desire to ensure that ECC is setting a humanizing, inclusive tone overall, as well as working with both students and faculty/staff to build cultural competency and inclusive attitudes. This requires a clear-eyed look at what beliefs and attitudes may currently exist among faculty and staff, as well as fellow students. One participant shared that “[We need to] change the connotation that these students are bad students. I think that’s the elephant in the room, that anytime you hear ‘second chance’...I mean, let’s be honest, the average person is uncomfortable.”

## An expressed need for professional development

Across the board, faculty and staff expressed a need for and interest in professional development to help ECC faculty and staff across campus better identify, understand, and support justice-impacted students. Participants expressed a likely need to differentiate some of these professional development opportunities based on role and how individuals may interact with students. Still, there are some topics that would be cross-cutting regardless of role, such as this comment: “I think that overall, system-wide, becoming a more culturally competent, welcoming organization would benefit these students.” Faculty and staff emphasized that professional development should center on humanizing justice-impacted students, demonstrating the spectrum of what it means to be justice-impacted, and dispelling common myths. Further, faculty and staff expressed an interest in hearing directly from justice-impacted students in these professional development opportunities.

Some select topics that emerged from faculty and staff input for potential professional development included:

- Basic jurisprudence to discuss the broader context, including wrongful convictions, unjust sentences, ties to other systems, etc.
- Humanizing language and non-judgemental practices to engage with students.
- Focus on communication and relationship-building.

## Overlapping Themes

One notable takeaway from all of the stakeholder engagement was that overall both students and faculty/staff share some of the same perspectives on what is important for the task force to consider as it moves forward with this work, as well as concrete areas for enhancing the experience for justice-impacted students.

These overlapping themes include:

- Information on available resources is currently decentralized and uneven in terms of reach. Clarity about and awareness of resources is essential for all the different stakeholders. A centralized location where individuals can find information about the full range of support and services available would help ensure that students receive the best possible assistance. Additionally, it may be helpful to train faculty and staff on using the resources effectively.
- Consistency (of relationships, supports, etc.) makes a big difference in student success. This can help build trust and ensure that students receive the support they need. Additionally, providing consistent supports such as academic counseling, success coaching, and advising services can help students stay on track and achieve their goals.
- ECC must cultivate a sense of belonging for justice-impacted students to ensure their engagement and success. This can be achieved by providing opportunities for students to connect with each other and with faculty and staff, as well as by creating a culture of respect and understanding.
- ECC must make an effort to understand the full breadth and humanity of justice-impacted students. It is important to recognize that justice-impacted students come from diverse backgrounds and have unique experiences. By taking the time to understand these experiences and perspectives, faculty and staff can better support justice-impacted students and help them succeed.
- ECC can be a place where justice-impacted students can learn, grow, and improve their lives. By providing a supportive and inclusive environment, ECC can help justice-impacted students achieve their academic and personal goals. This can have a positive impact on their lives, families, and communities.
- There is a real opportunity to build from existing programs, capacity, and commitment to drive improvements at ECC.



Since July, we have met with the pilot task force four times (July, September, November, and December) to discuss priorities and goals, plan stakeholder engagement, review findings from research and stakeholder engagement, and clarify opportunities for how to continue moving the work forward (meeting materials can be found in [Appendix 6](#)). The task force has demonstrated a thoughtful and deep commitment to exploring the challenges facing justice-impacted students at ECC and taking action to make ECC an institution that is both ready for and friendly towards this population. Over the course of these months, we have worked together to build awareness and momentum toward taking actions both in the short and longer term that will improve how ECC serves its justice-impacted students.

## Grounding in a shared commitment and “why”

In September, each of the members of the pilot task force shared their personal “why” for participating in this effort. While those varied across the group, what stood out to the EdSystems team were the common themes that emerged. Most expressed a deep personal and professional commitment to building community vibrancy and student success, particularly for those who have been most marginalized historically. Several task force members also have prior experience in serving justice-impacted individuals in various carceral settings and expressed the importance of being a part of developing trauma-informed care for these students. Many also expressed a desire for awareness building and ensuring that high-quality pathways are available to justice-impacted students. Ultimately, the task force demonstrated that this should be seen as a core part of ECC’s mission, as part of its broader commitment to the Elgin community and beyond.

## Importance of inclusive shared language

In September, the group considered the terminology they wanted to use moving forward. Instead of using terms such as “second chance,” which may not reflect where individuals may have experienced unjust or wrongful arrests or convictions, the group decided on “justice-impacted” to describe the students they are seeking to better serve. Further, the group also coalesced around ensuring that their consideration of justice-impacted students would be broad and inclusive of students with family-related impacts of the carceral justice system, as well as probation and parole. In this way, the task force expressed a desire to ensure that ECC would

be better able to grapple with the wide-ranging challenges individuals face due to different types of touchpoints with the carceral justice system.

## Resources and quality practices exist, but awareness is lacking

Even among the self-selecting group that comprised the pilot task force, a recurring theme in our discussions was new learning about existing efforts or resources for supporting justice-impacted students. In addition to desiring clarity as a task force, the group agreed that it is important to create accessible and centralized information for both student and faculty and staff audiences.

### *Understanding a justice-impacted student’s journey*

One of the primary areas of interest for the task force was understanding what justice-impacted students experience. In September, we completed a student journey mapping exercise wherein task force members shared examples of potential barriers and existing resources at various touch points of a justice-impacted student’s experience: recruitment/pre-enrollment, application/enrollment, course/program participation, persistence/completion, and post-completion. This activity helped illuminate areas where the group had a shared sense of challenges but also where individual team members knew about existing resources that could be brought to bear to address student barriers to success. For example, many did not realize the extent to which WIOA programs at ECC are well-suited to serve justice-impacted students and that the team managing those programs has a strong understanding of employer partners who are open to working with justice-impacted individuals.

Moving forward, the task force has expressed interest in not only reviewing the input from students engaged by EdSystems but also hearing directly from justice-impacted students where possible to understand their needs better and engage them in solution design processes.

## Desire to continue learning and build awareness and capacity

The task force spent a great deal of time taking in information about best practices nationally, feedback from students and faculty/staff, and ways of thinking about organizing their work moving forward. While much ground was covered in these initial months to build a strong base of information, a few areas emerged as continuing learning edges for the group moving forward.

### *Student transitions/hand-offs*

- Where are there hand-offs of justice-impacted students both within ECC and between ECC and different institutions/organizations (pre-enrollment, after completion, etc)?
- Where can ECC enhance connections to community-based organizations and the legal system to smooth these transition points for justice-impacted students?

### *Identifying and connecting with justice-impacted students*

- How can ECC thoughtfully identify justice-impacted students in a way that is grounded in providing support, without alienating or othering these students?
- How can ECC more systematically and proactively connect with its justice-impacted student population?

### *Professional development*

- How can professional development be designed and targeted to meet the needs of different faculty and staff across campus?
- How can faculty and staff learn from one another about what can best support justice-impacted students?

### *Continuous improvement*

- How will ECC define success for this work?
- How will ECC take action and monitor progress toward our goals?





This task force has the opportunity to drive ECC toward a new approach to serving justice-impacted students. This work will necessitate engagement and collaboration across campus with faculty, staff, and students and must be built on trust among all those involved. Ultimately, the work should also be grounded in and foster optimism in the potential of both ECC and its justice-impacted students. We believe the task force can drive transformation by continuing to center its commitment, curiosity, collaboration, and communication.

While there are many technical or implementation changes that can occur, adaptive changes to mindsets, beliefs, and perceptions of possibility are also essential to ensuring sustainable changes. ECC has a unique opportunity to show its justice-impacted students that they are seen, valued, and capable of great things. This can be achieved by building on the relationships and trust that faculty and staff have established with justice-impacted students on campus. This approach will not only serve the students well but also enhance the reputation of ECC as an institution that cares for all its students.

Our recommendations represent a core set of “building blocks” for the work moving forward. The core is to create a sense of belonging at ECC, which will engender trust and connection for justice-impacted students across campus. To develop that sense of belonging, the task force will need to continue to learn, share those learnings across the campus community, and build capacity in ECC systems and leaders. The recommendations that follow are meant to guide the task force as it builds this work together.

## Key Recommendations

### 1. Build internal buy-in and integrate the work.

- Engage ECC leadership and build buy-in by reflecting on how this initiative connects with the ECC strategic plan and existing DEI work.
- Determine human and monetary resources necessary to carry out the work.
- Engage additional faculty and staff in the planning and implementation processes to build buy-in and to incorporate perspectives that current task force members, who are already informed about and invested in the work, cannot provide.
- Provide a platform for current justice-impacted students to tell their stories. This will help communicate the need for these initiatives more effectively and build buy-in and support among stakeholders.

- Consider integrating this work with other programs, such as the new manufacturing center, to provide additional resources and support for justice-impacted students.

### 2. Involve students.

- Establish a student advisory board for the task force, to ensure that the students' voices are heard and unique needs are addressed, and to increase student buy-in.
- Include some justice-impacted students outside the RSS program to ensure a greater understanding of the spectrum of this population and the diversity of their experiences. Faculty and staff should help to build the board by encouraging students who self-identify as justice-impacted to serve.
- Compensate students who serve on the board for their time and expertise.
- Integrate the advisory board into the task force work, particularly the development of initiatives and their corresponding measurement tools.

### 3. Engage external stakeholders.

- Strengthen existing connections with stakeholders and outside support organizations, such as the Ecker Center and NAMI, who can provide valuable insights and resources to enhance the support provided to justice-impacted students.
  - Document who in ECC has existing relationships and build from those.
  - Develop materials such as a slide presentation to introduce the initiative, explain what you hope to accomplish, make clear how you hope they can help, and emphasize what they can gain from increased engagement with the work.
- Build a wider pool of potential employers for professional development and internship opportunities for justice-impacted students.
  - Start with known employers already working with WIOA and RSS students, document existing employer relationships.
  - Gather employer feedback about the benefits of engaging with this population, any concerns they have including policy or legal issues they have overcome, and suggestions for improvement. Also collect

their suggestions for potential employers in their sector and request personal introductions if possible.

- Produce a presentation or publication for potential employers which outlines the processes for engaging with justice-impacted students through an internship and other avenues, what employers can gain from engaging, and how graduates can fill gaps in the employer's hiring pipeline.

#### 4. Build awareness of existing resources.

- Build a website with information on how justice-impacted students can access resources. It should include at least:
  - Existing programs, including WIOA
  - Legal supports
  - Basic needs support (food, transport, housing, etc.)
  - ECC Supports You website
- Create a physical centralized hub and/or a publication with detailed information about existing resources so students who are less comfortable with technology can access it easily.
- Consider new communication methods, both virtual and non-virtual, to regularly remind students of varying technological capability of available resources.
- Dedicate space on the ECC faculty/staff website (such as in the myElgin portal) to list available resources for justice-impacted students so that faculty and staff can easily refer students. Include training about the site in professional development.

#### 5. Develop a consolidated support system for students.

- Each unit, but especially the financial aid and legal units, should have a dedicated individual trained in justice-impacted-specific needs and structure such that they can help students quickly access resources.
- Identify high-leverage offices such as financial aid where students self-identify and equip those offices with easy access to resources that can assist students.
- Establish a peer support structure for justice-impacted students. Consider dedicating virtual

and physical spaces where students can meet, converse, collaborate, and support each other.

- Consider the model of veteran services as a potential framework for supporting justice-impacted students.

#### 6. Build internal capacity.

- Develop and provide professional development to faculty and staff that humanizes justice-impacted students, highlights their specific needs, and provides considerations for engaging thoughtfully. Our desk research provides focus suggestions.
- Consider two levels of professional development, one integrated into existing DEI training that establishes baseline expectations for engagement and support of justice-impacted students and another for faculty and staff interested in serving in a more consistent and impactful role.
- Encourage justice-impacted students to share their stories as part of faculty and staff professional development.
- Build professional development from existing assets such as WIOA-funded programming, the holistic model used by the RSS program, and existing faculty and staff expertise.

#### 7. Document the work.

- Document the work ECC is doing, including processes, challenges, and lessons, so others can benefit from this initiative and learn from the team's experiences.

#### 8. Recognize that it is an iterative process.

- Recognize that this will be an iterative process requiring sustained focus to overcome challenges and not a one-time effort.

## Process

Below, we outline a detailed process for moving forward based on stakeholder feedback and our experience with similar initiatives. It is meant as a starting point for ECC to iterate.

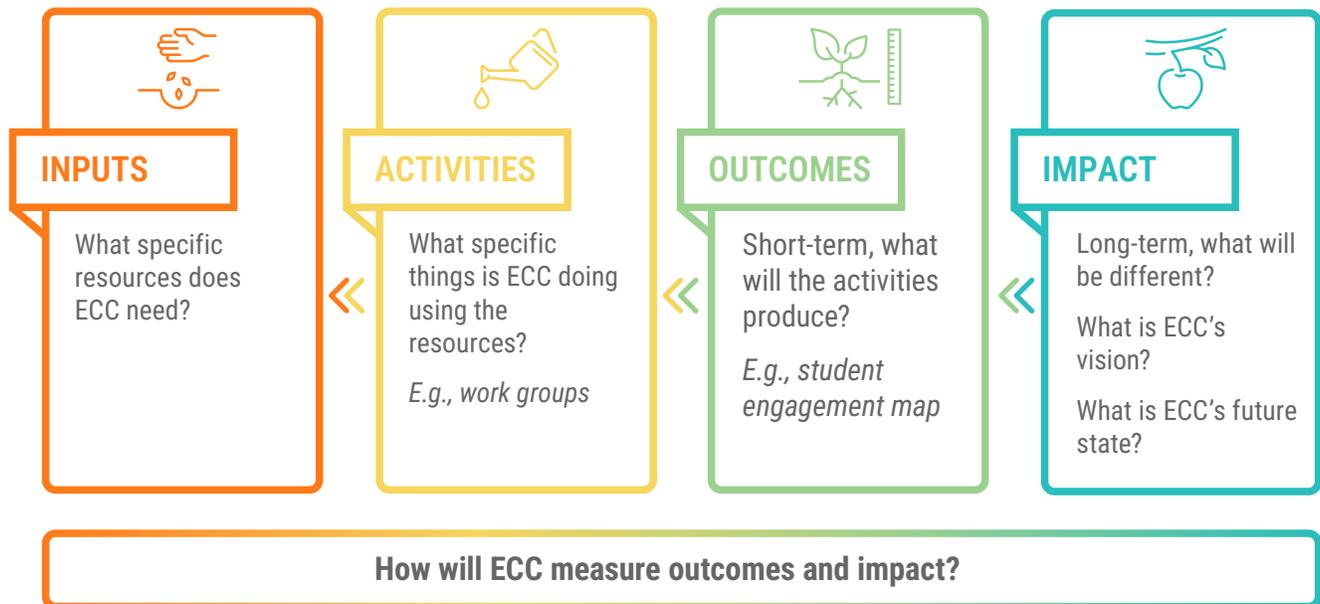
### 1. Schedule a cadence of task force meetings.

- a. Schedule regular task force meetings, perhaps bimonthly at first and then transition to monthly.
- b. Attach running agendas to calendar invitations so all participants can access them easily, add agenda items, and track progress.
- c. Agendas should include work group reports on activities and performance indicators, coordination of work group dependencies, consideration of additional work streams, and monitoring the overarching timeline and performance indicators.

### 2. Develop key indicators.

- a. Agree on an overarching problem statement. The existing draft problem statement is: “ECC needs to be more accessible and supportive of justice-impacted students.”
- b. Develop a theory of change that starts with the end in mind.
- c. Determine key performance indicators to measure the impact of your efforts.

#### Theory of Change



### 3. Establish working groups.

- a. Form work groups based on the activities in the theory of change and identify membership and leadership for each. Include faculty, staff, and students (if appropriate) from outside the task force interested in contributing.
- b. Each work group should develop its own theory of action and timeline of activities, determine who else needs to be involved, and list dependencies (what needs to happen before the work can begin).

#### *Suggested Work Streams and Work Groups*

<b>WORK GROUP</b>	<b>LEAD</b>	<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>RESOURCES/PROGRESS</b>
<p>Website with resources for students who “check the box.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing programs, including WIOA</li> <li>• Legal supports</li> <li>• Basic needs support (food, transport, housing, etc.)</li> <li>• ECC Supports You website</li> </ul>			<a href="#">The Education Justice Project at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Reentry Guide</a>
<p>Website with resources for faculty and staff to support (myElgin portal)</p>			<a href="#">Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority</a>
<p>Gather PD possibilities, especially empathetic skills even at points before faculty contact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two streams? 1. Basic training and expectations for everyone 2. Training with more depth.</li> <li>• Use military vets support as a model?</li> </ul>			<a href="#">From Corrections to College in California</a>
<p>Establish a peer support structure for students.</p>			<a href="#">Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates Network</a>
<p>Determine how each unit can support justice-impacted students, including faculty, then create a plan for awareness and training - start with identifying people who WANT to be involved?</p>			<a href="#">California Community Colleges Rising Scholar Network Program Structure</a>
<p>After CRM update, determine how best to identify WIOA-eligible students and how to engage</p>			<a href="#">The Education Trust Beyond the Ban: A Toolkit</a>
<p>Process for working with employers to ease the transition from college to work.</p>			<a href="#">Minnesota Dept. of Labor: How to Prepare for the Job Interview</a>

#### **4. Create a timeline.**

The task force should develop a two-year timeline based on resource availability and coordination of dependencies of work groups. It should include regular progress reports and engagement with key stakeholders.

#### **5. Develop a continuous improvement plan.**

The plan will ensure the project stays on track and adapts to changing circumstances.



# Desk Research Findings Summary

Justice-impacted students represent a historically underserved population, and as such, the route to supporting these students strongly mimics how other underserved students are approached. This desk research compiles common challenges that justice-impacted students face and highlights best practices that may be used to support these students. Additionally, this document highlights community models and Illinois-specific organizations that are already in place to support justice-impacted students.

## Challenges & Best Practices

The following challenges may act as barriers to justice-impacted students' ability to enroll in or succeed through postsecondary education. Recruiting and supporting justice-impacted students should be done with such barriers in mind.

### *Access of Personal Documents*

**CHALLENGE:** Justice-impacted students may not have access to their state ID, Social Security card, and birth certificate upon time of release.

**BEST PRACTICE:** Implement a streamlined process for students who were formerly incarcerated to retrieve their birth certificate, state ID, and driver's license. A streamlined process does not place an undue burden on students coming out of prison, but rather assists and supports them in preparing for reentry. States should not assume that an individual has access to transportation and/or family support to help them get their birth certificate, state ID, and driver's license ([Beyond the Ban: A Toolkit for Advancing College Opportunity for Justice-Impacted Students](#)).

**COMMUNITY MODEL:** In Tennessee, "each facility has a designated reentry team – consisting of a counselor, an institutional probation parole officer (IPPO), and a career development specialist – to assist individuals in reentry planning. Incarcerated individuals who are within 24 months of release are eligible for reentry services, including the following: help in obtaining a state identification and birth certificate; assistance in applying for benefits, including veterans' benefits, supplemental security income, disability, Social Security, and Medicare or Medicaid; residency planning assistance and help in finding housing; and employment planning assistance. By contrast, Illinois lacked a streamlined process for currently incarcerated students to obtain a state ID until recently; prior to November 2021, currently incarcerated students had to go to a Secretary of State's office with required documents in hand within 30 days of release in order to receive a free ID card. Illinois is now expanding a program that lets students who are currently incarcerated in Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) facilities obtain a state ID at no charge. Currently incarcerated individuals work with Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to gather their required documents. IDOC will then coordinate with the Secretary of State's office to issue a state ID, which will be provided to the individual upon release."

- Beyond the Ban

### *Financial Aid Services and Supports*

**CHALLENGE:** In many states, students that have been justice-impacted do not have access to state financial aid. In Illinois, individuals who were formerly incarcerated can access financial aid services and support, however, many students may have challenges in navigating these applications.

**BEST PRACTICE:** Students should be informed about financial resources, loans, scholarships, application deadlines, and other funding opportunities. Students should be informed of the difference between federal financial aid, state aid, and private lenders, such as private banks.

Financial aid representatives at the school should familiarize themselves with [financial aid barriers for students impacted by the justice system](#) and be trained in supporting students through financial aid applications as individuals who were formerly incarcerated.

### *Housing*

**CHALLENGE:** Many students may not have access to affordable, on or near-campus housing. While justice-impacted students can access housing benefits in the state of Illinois, each public housing authority may have different eligibility rules about admission those with drug-related or violent crime-related convictions.

**BEST PRACTICE:** Provide on-campus housing or form partnerships with nearby housing offices to be able to suggest affordable housing near campus for justice-impacted students.

### *Basic Needs*

**CHALLENGE:** Justice-impacted students may need support in accessing basic needs such as food and healthcare.

**BEST PRACTICE:** Identify which programs for which justice-impacted students qualify. Illinois allows students who were formerly incarcerated to access Medicaid, for example, but they cannot currently access Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs. Having an administrator trained in which supports students can utilize as well as how to apply for such programs will help ease the burden of reentry.

### *Student & Career Services*

**CHALLENGE:** Justice-impacted students may struggle to get internships or jobs due to their past conviction.

**BEST PRACTICE:** Students should be supported in making connections and networking opportunities with potential employers in their career field of interest. Students should be connected to community resources that can provide information about employment and licensing barriers due to conviction and given assistance to obtain legal advice as needed to better assist their career pursuits.

Students should be connected to community resources that can provide information about employment and licensing barriers due to conviction and given assistance to obtain legal advice as needed to better assist their career pursuits.

Illinois bans employers from disqualifying an applicant because of their criminal record. Senate Bill 1480, which became law in March 2021, prohibits employers from using a person's conviction record to deny them employment opportunities unless a job has a "substantial relationship" to the person's conviction. However, justice-impacted students may need support to know their rights, know their options, and gain valuable career skills to get them successfully through future applications and interviews.

Helping students prepare for how to [answer questions about their incarceration](#) as well as brush them up on application and interview best practices may help them.

### *Lack of Data & Special Considerations*

**CHALLENGE:** Sufficient data on who or how many justice-impacted students there are does not exist. Due to the lack of information, [schools often fail](#) to understand and address their specific needs in order to thrive on a college campus.

Most people exiting prisons and entering college are older than the rest of their peers and hold different responsibilities. Sometimes they have children and families to take care of, multiple full-time jobs, travel barriers due to parole, curfews, a parole officer they must respond to at any time, and more. Compared to many of their peers who entered college right out of high school, the responsibilities of students who were formerly incarcerated often go unnoticed by educational institutions, which results in a gap between their needs and the support they are given.

**BEST PRACTICE:** Provide a low-risk way to gather data about your school populations' specific needs and identify ways to support them through that. Consider a campus daycare to support families, opening communication between professors and students about travel barriers, etc.

### *Community*

**CHALLENGE:** Justice-impacted students may feel a lack of community given that their life circumstances may seem very different than that of their peers.

**BEST PRACTICE:** Create an office or space on campus for students to connect with other justice-impacted students and mentors. Consider connecting students to national mentorship organizations such as the [Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates Network](#) or to apprenticeship programs such as the [Restore Justice Future Leaders Apprenticeship Program in Illinois](#).

## “Ban the Box”

**CHALLENGE:** Illinois does not ban higher education institutions from asking about criminal history. Higher education institutions commonly establish policies that make students ineligible for admission or other benefits based on criminal history.

**BEST PRACTICE:** “Ban the Box” initiatives. Community colleges should eliminate exclusionary admissions policies and re-evaluate background check policies to ensure that justice-impacted students have fair opportunities for campus housing and employment.

## Professional Development

Students deserve faculty and staff who have received professional development training led by directly impacted individuals through an anti-deficit framework that centers on racial equity, access, and humanizing language.

An important goal of successful professional development for staff engaging with justice-impacted students is **humanizing** justice-impacted students.

This begins with centering training around the student voice. Place students from your school as the focus of training initiatives and highlight their experiences and stories and share excerpts from empathy interviews you’ve engaged them in. The first step is growing in empathy and understanding towards this historically underserved group.

One important way to humanize justice-impacted students is shifting how we speak about and to people who were formerly incarcerated. Rather than minimizing someone who has been formerly incarcerated to a single identity, use person-first language to address them. For example, if we need to provide greater specificity than “justice-impacted individual” or “returning resident,” other appropriate terms include those such as “people who are (or previously were) incarcerated,” “people who have a prior arrest or conviction,” or “people on parole.” In this way, care should be taken to focus on the person at the center of the description, rather than focus the subject on their prior experiences with the carceral justice system.

By using people-first, humanizing language, we give justice-impacted students human dignity and allow them to self-identify beyond their incarceration status.

As an actionable step to growing empathy towards and humanizing justice-impacted students, professional development should detail barriers that justice-impacted students face and actionable steps that staff can take to support students in need. This includes familiarizing staff with exceptions and supports that can be made should students be facing any of the aforementioned challenges that justice-impacted individuals face and directing students to available school resources in response.

The following table highlights examples of professional development supports built from ECC student voices.

STUDENT INTERVIEW THEME	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOCUS
The system is emotionally draining, time-consuming, and expensive	Student-facing staff should be familiarized with a comprehensive list of resources
Non-judgmental support from faculty and staff valued highly by students	Highlighting student stories during training
Logistical adjustment to being back in school	Reentry accommodations
Emotional/psychological	Mental health first aid training with a focus on justice-impacted students

## Community Models & Illinois Organizations

### Inside Illinois

- **[The Education Justice Project at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign](#)**  
*Highlights: Provides a thorough [reentry guide](#) for students in Illinois. Provides guidance for students before and after their release spanning topics such as preparing for reunification, getting IDs, meeting basic needs, future employment, mental and physical health, legal matters, etc. Highlights information about getting IDs, meeting basic needs, employment, transportation, education, health, finances, legal matters and more for justice-impacted students.*
- **[The Education Trust – Beyond the Ban: A Toolkit for Advancing College Opportunity for Justice-Impacted Students in Illinois](#)**  
*Highlights: Provides information on Illinois-specific policies impacting justice-impacted students and provides recommendations to combat them.*
- **[Reentry Essentials Illinois](#)**  
*Highlights: Spotlights national and Illinois specific programs designed to enhance post-release success for justice-impacted individuals. This includes directories for community based services, financial aid resources, directs students to information about nearby colleges, etc.*
- **[Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority](#)**  
*Highlights: Evidence-based practices and programs for reentry. Focuses on employment, housing, behavioral health, social support.*

### Outside Illinois

- **[California Community Colleges Rising Scholars Network](#)**  
*Highlights: Collects and develops resources to help partners gain deeper understanding of and incorporate the unique needs of justice-impacted students into their programs. Adopted a series of principles to guide colleges as they exercise their local control to serve students who were formerly incarcerated. Created succinct and helpful [best practices](#) on how to structure a program, clarify the path to reentry, and ensure successful experiences for justice-impacted students in postsecondary programs. A part of [Let's Go to College California](#), an initiative supporting justice-impacted students at every level of postsecondary.*
- **[Columbus State University](#)**  
*Highlights: Removed the requirement for applicants seeking enrollment at the College to disclose felony-level criminal backgrounds.*
- **[Corrections to College](#)**  
*Highlights: Tips for creating a successful program to support justice-impacted students on campus including staffing considerations and suggested resources.*
- **[From Corrections to College California](#)**  
*Highlights: Received incredibly positive student responses to the program: "...students described their programs as being a safe space where similar experiences are shared and understood, providing them with a community of reliable and unconditionally supportive peers...The impact of the support that students received was profound. Many students described the transformative power of education, enabling them to first imagine, then create, new futures for themselves." As a part of the Renewing Communities Initiative, this program provides information on assistance onboarding on campus and navigating the academic maze, helping quell feelings of apprehension, providing a "home" on campus, logistics (technology guidance, book vouchers, transportation), and helping students reframe their personal narratives.*
- **[UCI Lifted Program](#)**  
*Highlights: Diversity Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) courses and curriculum on campuses should include justice-impacted individuals. Proposed name: JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion). A part of [California's Best Practices Pathways from Prison to College Program](#).*

## What's Missing and How Can ECC's Work Help?

While there are many existing examples of general best practices available online, there are not many examples detailing individual school programs. There is a need for more publicly available community models. While community colleges around the country may be engaging with this work, there are very few that are sharing about their work and experiences online.

Additionally, existing resources focus on the experience of getting college credit in prison or entering a career after prison, and do not focus heavily on re-entering college spaces. Information focused on how to support justice-impacted students **during** college is needed. Through embarking on this work and sharing it outwards, ECC may serve as a model example for other programs to adopt similar models, as well as for more colleges that are doing this work to engage in public discourse about their initiatives.

# Student Interview Protocol

**Before beginning**, please review the empathy interview norms & best practices, tips for focus groups, and note on considerations for justice-impacted students at the bottom of this document.

## PLAN FOR APPROXIMATELY 45–60 MINUTES PER INTERVIEW

### Introduction Script

[Introduce yourself. Be sure to mention your role and relationship to this project]

Thank you all so much for agreeing to talk with me today. I am a part of the ECC Second Chance Project. Our goal is to learn more about how to create better opportunities for justice-impacted students. We will be interviewing both ECC staff and justice-impacted students on their experiences at the school and will use these data to inform recommendations and programming for justice-impacted students attending ECC. If it's OK with you all, I'd like to record just for my own accuracy & memory, as I don't want to misrepresent what you all say or feel. We are interested in what you say, not who says it, so please feel free to speak freely.

We will not be asking for your names, nor publishing any identifying information with our notes or with any summary of this interview. We'll be looking at responses from interviews with multiple students to see what we can learn and how to improve the experience of students in the future. Is it OK for me to record?

[Pause to wait for OK]

I have a few questions about your experiences as students at ECC. Take as much time as you need before answering and feel free to answer as honestly as you can since this is just for our learning purposes. Please feel comfortable answering any questions with a specific example or story, this may help us better understand your experience.

Additionally, because this is a group interview, we ask that you all respect each others' privacy as well. Consider the information you hear today as confidential. You should not share the information discussed here with others outside of this room, including who is involved in the discussion and what was said.

Please speak one at a time and give everyone a chance to voice their opinion. You are all welcome to share your honest opinions, even if they are not in agreement with other people in the room, as long as respect for everyone's opinion is maintained.

There are no negative consequences to you answering honestly. Any question I ask is voluntary to answer and we can stop at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

### Questions for ECC Justice-Impacted Students

**QUESTION PROMPT 1:** How would you describe your experience as a justice-impacted student at ECC?

**QUESTION PROMPT 2:** Could you give us an overview of your education journey? This may include any traditional schooling or alternative education approaches before, during, and after incarceration.

**Suggested probe:** Why did you choose to come to ECC? What are your goals for your experience at ECC?

**QUESTION PROMPT 3:** Have you faced any challenges in your experience at ECC – both on-campus and in life outside (e.g. housing, employment, etc.)? If yes, please elaborate.

**QUESTION PROMPT 4:** Are the right supports/services available for you at ECC? For example, support in securing state documents needed for schooling, financial aid services, or career planning support. What supports, if any, have been beneficial to you?

**QUESTION PROMPT 5:** What supports or services would benefit you? This can include support before you arrived, such as during the application process, current supports now that you are a student, or supports that would benefit you in the future, such as after graduation.

**QUESTION PROMPT 6:** How do you find out about what types of services/supports are available to you through ECC? Which ways are most effective for you and your peers to learn about school resources?

**QUESTION PROMPT 7:** What is something you wish your school admin, counselors, or teachers knew?

**QUESTION PROMPT 8:** Are there any other ideas you'd like to share for how ECC can make it easier for justice-impacted students to succeed?

**QUESTION PROMPT 9:** Building the capacity to support justice-impacted students first begins with identifying how present the need is. Would you have been comfortable self-identifying that you are justice-impacted when you were applying so that the school could provide resources for you? What would make you feel more comfortable self-identifying?

**OTHER POINTS FROM THE INTERVIEW:** Use this space to note any additional insights you gleaned during the interview, but which do not fit within the questions above.

## Empathy Interview Norms and Best Practices

Adapted from resources created by High Tech High GSE Center for Research on Equity and Innovation and the LUMA Institute.

### Empathy Interview Norms

- Be curious and take a learning stance
- Listen more than you speak
- Be fully present, without distractions
- Don't challenge, correct, or interrupt
- Express gratitude

### Best Practices for Empathy Interviews

- **Direct the conversation but don't "lead the witness"**
- **Ask "why?"** Even when you think you know the answer, ask people why they do or say things. Their answers will sometimes surprise you. A conversation started from one question should continue on as long as it needs to.
- **Encourage stories.** Prompt users to share specific experiences rather than generalization. When people tell stories, they reveal how they think about the world. Avoid binary yes/no questions in favor of questions that draw out experiences.
- **Pay attention to nonverbal cues.** Be aware of body language and emotions.
- **Don't be afraid of silence.** Even if they pause before answering, don't help by suggesting an answer. This can unintentionally get people to say things that agree with your expectations.
- **Be prepared to capture data.** Always interview in pairs. If this is not possible, bring a recording device - it's impossible to properly engage a user and take detailed notes at the same time. Be sure to tell your user that the recording will not be shared and is only for your own purposes to make sure you don't miss any details.

### Reflect

**CONTENT:** What did we hear? What are we learning about the causes that contribute to the problem?

**PROCESS:** How well did we follow the norms for empathy interviews? Were there questions that were particularly fruitful? Are there questions we wish we would have asked?

### Tips for Focus Groups

In group settings, some students may not feel as motivated to speak. It's your role as a facilitator to encourage other participants to speak up, even if one participant has already given a thoughtful answer.

If one person is dominating the conversation, consider probes to get others talking. For example:

- "Thank you for sharing that experience, has anybody else had a similar experience?"
- "Thank you for sharing your thoughts about \_\_\_\_\_, does anybody else want to share what they think about \_\_\_\_\_?"

Feel comfortable pausing after asking a question or inserting a probe. It takes some time for people to feel comfortable speaking up! My general rule is to wait 7 seconds in silence before moving on.

### *Considerations for Justice-Impacted Students*

Conversations with justice-impacted students may be sensitive and it is important to be considerate of interviewee comfort. For this reason, maintaining boundaries and focusing on the students' experience at ECC will be of utmost importance. Feel comfortable giving the student time to respond or asking probing questions as necessary, but if the student is hesitant to respond, move on.

If the student does feel comfortable sharing personal details about their experience, express gratitude and thank them for their comfort in sharing. If students show hesitation or discomfort during the interview, be sure to reassure them about the privacy of the conversation and that while they are not required to answer anything, their answers will only be used for educational purposes.

Additionally, remember that prison and reentry are traumatic, and people may express strong emotions. Be prepared to be present and empathetic, and direct them to resources if needed. If the conversation steers towards sensitive topics that are not relevant to the focus group, be prepared to redirect the conversation.

# Faculty/Staff Focus Group Protocol

## Introduction Script

[Introduce yourself. Be sure to mention your role and relationship to this project.]

Thank you so much for agreeing to talk with us today. We are from Education Systems Center at NIU and are assisting ECC as it works to improve support for justice-impacted students. Our goal today is to get your insights about how to do that. We will be interviewing both ECC faculty and staff on their experiences at the college and will use these data to inform recommendations and programming for justice-impacted students attending ECC. We've also interviewed current ECC students who are justice-impacted for their insights. If it's OK with you, we'd like to record this session for accuracy & memory, so we don't misrepresent what you've said.

We will not be publishing your name with our notes or with any summary of this discussion. We'll be using responses from interviews and focus groups with multiple stakeholders to see what we can learn and how to improve the experience of students in the future. Is it OK for us to record?

[Pause to wait for OK.]

We find that it can be useful for you to take a few minutes to answer questions on your own using this survey, and then we'll come back together to talk.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

## Survey

*The following survey was administered using Google Forms.*

Thank you for joining us! Please use the survey form below to record your answers to the questions.

1. Your Name
2. Email (so we can follow up if we need to)
3. Your Title

## Background and ECC Student Support

4. What are the contexts in which you engage with justice-impacted students at ECC? If you don't engage or don't know if you engage, please just write that.
5. If you engage with justice-impacted students, what kinds of needs do they have?
6. What do you know, if anything, about ECC supports for justice-impacted students? Do you know how to refer students to them?
7. In your view, what are the unmet needs of justice-impacted students?
8. What recommendatinos do you have for ECC to better support justice-impacted students?

## External Support and Data

9. What kinds of professional development would be useful for you and/or others to better support justice-impacted students? Do you have suggestions for providers?
10. What do you know about community-based organizations and/or employers in the community who might be able to support justice-impacted students? What are your suggestions for engaging with them?
11. What data do you have that helps you define and monitor progress/success in working with justice-impacted students? What data would be useful?

## Additional Thoughts

12. What else would you like to share?
13. Are you interested in helping ECC move this work forward? If so, are there particular ways you would like to engage?

