

# Dakota County Jail

## Outreach and Programs

The Dakota County Jail in Hastings, Minnesota has an aggressive Outreach Program intended to **BREAK** the Cycle of Crime. Very similar to what is needed to break the cycle of poverty, the jail leadership has made a conscious decision (with the backing of the Dakota County Board and its funding) to serve as an agent of change. Through the implementation of RAP (the Re-entry Assistance Program), the leaders recognize that the on-going causes of a life of crime include: the lack of education, life skills, housing, family support, and self-confidence and, more importantly, the lack of employment. As in the cycle of poverty these missing elements reinforce themselves and cause an almost certain return to jail (recidivism).

We have all experienced in our personal and family lives how a **job** plays a very important role in our sense of self-worth and in the desire to improve our lives. The same process works in the lives of former jail inmates who want to change and need a “hand-up” and not a “hand-out.” The Dakota County Jail offers programming for clients that teach skills including but not limited to anger management, parenting, job interviewing and etiquette – skills that you and I consider basic ways of life. There is even an Employment Readiness course, which takes a holistic approach to developing life skills that impact the ability to be a reliable worker. In addition, the RAP Team counsels inmates who are to be shortly released as to housing, transportation, and medical resources available in the community.

You as an employer can give a hand up by **simply being willing to interview** a former inmate and see if your job needs fit his job and skill history and his willingness to work/train hard for you. The breaking of the cycle of crime can begin with **YOU!**

Please do not hesitate to call the jail if you are trying to fill jobs! We may just have the person who is right for your business.

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