



**“Roots2Reentry helped me develop a bigger tool box. Before when there were problems, I would just fight or lash out. Now I have more tools other than violence”**

—ROOTS2REENTRY PARTICIPANT

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**MISSION:** Our mission is to maximize the recovery, resilience and wellness of all eligible Alameda County residents who are developing or experiencing serious mental health, alcohol or drug concerns.

**VISION:** We envision communities where all individuals and their families can successfully realize their potential and pursue their dreams, and where stigma and discrimination against those with mental health and/or alcohol and drug issues are remnants of the past.

**VALUES:** Access, Consumer & Family Empowerment, Best Practices, Health & Wellness, Culturally Responsive, Socially Inclusive.

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## Asian Prisoner Support Committee

Reducing Recidivism  
Through Cultural Empowerment

## OUR STORY

Founded in 2002, Asian Prisoner Support Committee (APSC) is based in Oakland, CA and works primarily with people incarcerated at San Quentin and Solano State Prisons and with people who are returning to Alameda and San Francisco Counties after incarceration. APSC is one of the only organizations in the nation with a mission to provide culturally competent services and support specifically for currently and formerly incarcerated AAPI people and to raise awareness about the impact of mass incarceration within the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community.



## GRANTEE

### Asian Prisoner Support Committee

Reducing Recidivism Through Cultural Empowerment

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Asian Prisoner Support Committee's (APSC) Roots2Reentry Program provided case management, peer support, and weekly community immersion activities for formerly incarcerated people in Alameda County.

TARGET POPULATION: Formerly incarcerated Asian and Pacific Islanders (APIs) and "Others".

## COLLABORATORS

Asian Health Services, The Spot Youth Center, Red Bay Coffee, Chinese for Affirmative Action

## LEARNING QUESTION

How might participation in cultural activities and community action promote healing and reduce recidivism for the Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander community?

**"I know I can successfully examine a challenge and face it alone or with someone else's help and learn from the situation, which puts me in a situation where I can help others who are facing the same or similar problems."**

—ROOTS2REENTRY PARTICIPANT

## KEY STRATEGIES UTILIZED

Key staff from APSC who work in the Roots2Reentry program are AAPI people who have been incarcerated themselves. The staff includes three formerly incarcerated "juvenile lifers" who have emerged from the prison system and successfully led reentry services and advocacy efforts. Each of these individuals spent over 20 years behind bars and developed extensive leadership skills and experience around reentry services, peer mentoring, group facilitation, and community advocacy. These former "lifers" are in a better position than traditional service providers to engage, train, and mentor currently and formerly incarcerated people to facilitate continued opportunities for leadership and empowerment.

## WHO BENEFITS?

Through a community-based model, this project benefitted formerly incarcerated individuals, local stakeholders, and the broader community. Rather than approaching reentry as an individual issue, APSC works with both formerly incarcerated people and the broader community—engaging local businesses, community-based organizations, immigration attorneys, government agencies, and policymakers—in efforts to create sustainable jobs, community support, and culturally competent health and human services.

## OUTCOME & KEY LEARNINGS

- Inside/Outside Model: Service must be in a continuum that starts in the correctional facility and continues when people come home.
- Ground Program in AAPI Cultural Practices: Building the program to help participants increase their knowledge about AAPI culture, immigration/refugee history, health, and racial justice helps participants to more fully understand not only their own life circumstances but the cultural context that they face on their road to reentry.
- Peer Support Model: People learn and trust more deeply when surrounded and supported by their peer role models. This is especially true for traditionally disempowered communities such as those who have been involved in the criminal justice system.
- It Takes Time to Build Credibility and Trust: Building credibility and trust with incarcerated individuals and within a correctional facility takes time.

