



MAYOR JOSEPH P. GANIM  
BRIDGEPORT, CT

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-PRESS RELEASE-

## **GANIM TOUTS ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FIRST SIX MONTHS OF MAYOR'S INITIATIVE ON RE-ENTRY AFFAIRS (MIRA)**

**DOZENS OF RETURNING CITIZENS PLACED IN JOBS POST INCARCERATION; NEW  
PARTNERSHIPS LAUNCHED BETWEEN AREA BUSINESSES, SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS,  
AND CONNECTICUT STATE GOVERNMENT TO CREATE REAL 2<sup>ND</sup> CHANCES**

**BRIDGEPORT, CT** – Mayor Joe Ganim today is touting the substantive accomplishments of the Mayor's Initiative on Re-entry Affairs (MIRA), a comprehensive city government program launched by Mayor Ganim in August 2016 to help formerly incarcerated individuals in Bridgeport advance their careers and establish new lives. When the program launched, city officials managing the MIRA program estimated they would reach 50 returning citizens in the first few months. Instead, MIRA has engaged with more than 155 returning citizens from Bridgeport more than doubling this prediction by engaging with 139 returning citizens from the City of Bridgeport, and enrolling more than 120 into the program. MIRA has successfully referred nearly 70 returning citizens for employment, and successfully placed more than 55 individuals in jobs with bona fide employers. In addition, MIRA – under the leadership of program director Louis Reed – has entered into new partnerships with Bridgeport area employers, non profit organizations, and Connecticut state government agencies to provide comprehensive levels of service for returning citizens to put them on the path of permanent employment post-incarceration and provide treatment for any challenges faced such as mental health and/or substance abuse.

“Bridgeport is a second chance city – no one knows that better than I do,” said Mayor Ganim, who is also a successful returned citizen post-incarceration. “What my own story represents is that even if you have made mistakes in your past, it does not have to tar you forever. There are things government can do to connect employers with good, hard working individuals who may have done time but are eager for a second chance and ready to contribute to economic development here in Bridgeport. I am so proud of what this program has accomplished thus far, and I am excited to see where this leads. Bridgeport can be a national model for how to re-integrate the formerly incarcerated back into the workforce. This is a true partnership between the individual who steps forward and wants to put their life back on track, organizations that

believe in second chances, and Bridgeport area businesses who are willing to take a chance on those vetted through the MIRA program.”

The Connecticut Department of Corrections is also providing key information to the MIRA effort, entering an agreement with the city to provide a list of incarcerated citizens returning to Bridgeport and when they are scheduled to be released. This allows MIRA to reach out to Bridgeport returning citizens and engage them pre-release.

MIRA program manager Louis Reed, himself a one-time returning citizen, said, “There are thousands of Bridgeport residents who are formerly incarcerated individuals that are ready and willing to get back into the workforce and move forward with their careers, become productive and taxpaying members of our community. The Mayor’s Initiative on Re-Entry Affairs firmly places the city forward as just as much of a stakeholder - if not leading the way - as our community partners, ensuring that our residents who are part of more than 70,000,000 people across the country living with convictions have a fair chance to recalibrate their lives.”

Anyone interested in finding out more information about the MIRA program should contact Louis Reed at 475-225-4499 or [Louis.reed@bridgeportct.gov](mailto:Louis.reed@bridgeportct.gov)

### **Key Accomplishments of MIRA Program since August 2016:**

- MIRA has outreached and engaged with 155 returning citizens from the City of Bridgeport.  
MIRA has successfully enrolled 120 returning citizens from the City of Bridgeport. The projected number for outreach and engagement was 50.
- MIRA has made employment referrals and job placement for 68 of serviced individuals. 55 job placements. The placements include major retail, construction, landscaping, home health aid companies and customer service contractors, and the list is growing. The targeted placement number for this period of time was 30.
- MIRA has engaged with and connected with 82 community partners, including businesses, service providers, etc.
- MIRA has enrolled approximately 40% of serviced individuals with Connecticut Department of Social Services programs include SNAP Benefits (food stamps) and HUSKY medical coverage.
- MIRA has initiated a fee-waiver for birth certificates for returning citizens from Bridgeport released from custody within 30 days and/or with a supervised release referral. Birth certificates are often required for the DMV non-driver ID.
- MIRA has assisted in the completion of nine State of Connecticut criminal pardons and state certificates of employability applications from the Connecticut State Board of Pardons and Parole.

- MIRA has successfully negotiated scholarships for five individuals to receive credentials for the State of CT Recovery Support Specialist Certification through Advocacy Unlimited. This individual certification for returning citizens allows them to be a recovery support specialist who helps others in recovery for substance abuse. With the certification, these individuals can be employed by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services or one of its contracted non-profit service providers.
- MIRA has successfully referred six individuals for specialized license endorsements through DMV. This opens the door to Commercial Driver's Licenses and other licenses that can be routes to well-compensated employment as a driver.
- MIRA has successfully established referral processes with the Connecticut State Department of Corrections, receiving bi-weekly reports of ex-offenders returning to Bridgeport every two weeks. MIRA has developed a comprehensive file on all returning citizens coming back to Bridgeport.
- MIRA has successfully presented to the United States Department of Justice, District Court(s) and other organizations on current practices.
- MIRA has established a new partnership with Bridgeport based Career Resources, Inc. to pre-screen and assess Women returning citizens to Bridgeport incarcerated in York Correctional Institute in Niantic and refer them to MIRA for services.