

MYTERN PROGRAM & APPLICATION

THE TUFTS UNIVERSITY EDUCATION RE-ENTRY NETWORK (TERN)
OF THE TISCH COLLEGE OF CIVIC LIFE



OVERVIEW

People returning from prisons and jails face many challenges, including **lack of employment** and **educational opportunities**, **psychological trauma**, **poverty**, **social isolation**, and the **lack of self-esteem** that result from having been incarcerated.

As part of the Tufts University Prison Initiative of the Tisch College of Civic Life (TUPIT), the Tufts Educational Re-entry Network (TERN) employs a multi-pronged, trauma-informed approach to re-entry in the new Civic Studies program called **MyTERN** that offers a 4 course, 10-credit certificate in the liberal arts through Tufts University at no cost to its students.

THROUGH CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH MULTIPLE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS THAT WORK WITH PEOPLE RETURNING HOME FROM PRISON, **MyTERN** ...

- ➔ Engages people *holistically* by offering educational opportunities guided by a commitment to individual well-being
- ➔ Facilitates a healthy social network that mitigates the isolation of people directly impacted by the justice system
- ➔ Cultivates social-emotional, intellectual, and practical skills proven to be essential to strengthening one's candidacy for meaningful employment and continuing education
- ➔ Builds the participant's sense of individual purpose, self-efficacy, and self-worth, as well as community belonging and accountability, by fostering relationship-building skills.
- ➔ Measures success not only in decreased recidivism rates but also in the increased health and wellness of people re-entering society after incarceration.

Previous **MyTERN** students and members of TERN with **lived experience of incarceration** serve as **instructor-mentors** for the **MyTERN** re-entry program. **Faculty from Tufts'** college-in-prison program and a cohort of **trained Tufts Medford students** also provide instruction for accredited courses and computer training, as described below.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS PARTICIPATING WITH TUFTS UNIVERSITY

TERN's expertise is in cultivating transformative education and personal growth opportunities. Doing so in a comprehensive program requires resources and collaboration with people and organizations with expertise in each component of re-entry. TERN's established community-partner network has built the foundation for success:

- Boston Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens (ORC)
- Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation
- Eliot Community Human Services
- MassHire Career Centers
- Partakers: College Behind Bars Mentoring Program
- Project Place
- The Petey Greene Program
- InnerCity Weightlifting
- Massachusetts Prison Education Consortium (MPEC)
- Bunker Hill Community College

WHO IS SERVED

MyTERN serves both **men & women** with **various levels of education** who have **returned from incarceration in Massachusetts**. Applicants must have a high school degree or equivalency (HSE). Candidates without this will be referred to our student tutors in **THE PETEY GREENE PROGRAM** who will provide HSE tutoring as preparation for eventual **MyTERN** application.

Referral sources for candidates include:

- ➔ People returning to communities from the Tufts college-in-prison programs at MCI-Concord, Souza Baranowski Correctional Center, or the Suffolk County correctional facilities. This population has the advantage of being people we know well who have a proven record of academic excellence and community commitment. In these cases, MyTERN provides a bridge to possible matriculation and funding at Tufts through the R.E.A.L. program (Resumed Education for Adult Learners) for the completion of the bachelor’s degree and possibly graduate degrees.
- ➔ People returning from facilities where they have participated in Boston University, Emerson College, Boston College, and Mount Wachusett CC college-in-prison programs, via PARTAKERS + MPEC (Mass. Prison Ed. Consortium).
- ➔ People referred by our above-listed organizational partners as potential students.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO CIVIC STUDIES: LITERATURES OF JUSTICE (TUFTS CREDIT-BEARING COURSE)	MODULE 2: COMPUTER PROFICIENCY AND PROFESSIONALIZATION	MODULE 3: INTRODUCTION TO CODING (TUFTS CREDIT-BEARING COURSE)	MODULE 4: FINANCIAL LITERACY AND PROJECT DEVELOPEMENT
<p>All staff & participants trained by specialists in trauma/recovery from THE ELIOT CENTER. Readings on justice from Sociology, Law, and Literature. Utilizes discussions of personal experience toward the development of writing skills, critical thinking, and self-reflection in relation to readings from different historical periods, regions, and cultures about socio-economic and racial justice. One of the two sessions each week directed by formerly incarcerated TERN mentors.</p> <p>Includes Tufts students with MyTERN participants. Centers the value of socialization and learning-in-community across social-cultural differences, promoting successful re-entry outcomes.</p>	<p>Training in Basic Computer Proficiency: Microsoft Office’s Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.</p> <p>Prepares students for certification tests on Chromebooks with the Office Suite.</p> <p>MASSHIRE supports professionalization career center skills: resumes/interviewing/etc.</p> <p>Tufts PETEY GREENE students instructional lead with Program Director.</p>	<p>Introduces participants to STEM field and examines the structures of thought and logic that underlie computer coding.</p> <p>Develops introductory technical knowledge and practical uses of Python Coding through a humanistic framework.</p> <p>Prepares participants for instruction in HTML; enables students to translate visual field into code through personal website development basics.</p>	<p>Builds upon coding module, applies quantitative reasoning to the acquisition of personal and professional financial literacy.</p> <p>Provides foundational knowledge of the basic terms of credit, savings and retirement accounts, and wealth management.</p> <p>Results in the development of an individualized business plan and small business loan application (supported by DORCHESTER BAY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.) All students will participate in PITCH event.</p>
<p>IN-DEVELOPMENT: Internship: 4-week Direct Experiential Learning: OFFICE OF RETURNING CITIZENS, MASSHIRE, INNERCITY WEIGHTLIFTING Opportunities for internships in entrepreneurship, coding and technology, media production and podcasting, physical training, and eventually community health fields. Our network is always expanding and presenting new domains of experience for MyTERN participants.</p>			
<p>Post-Program Graduate Involvement: Further enacting the practice and <i>value</i> of CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, MyTERN participants will be asked to serve as mentor speakers or co-instructors in teaching the next cohort of people returning from prison. Graduates will also be invited to participate as research assistants in program assessment and development.</p>			

LOGISTICS & CREDENTIALS

- NO COST to students for: courses/tuition, laptop, books, transportation.
- Students will have the opportunity to earn 10 transferrable course credits from Tufts University for the full certificate program; training toward proficiency in computers and financial literacy; project development support.
- Class meets 2 times a week for 3 hours, during non-working hours when possible.
- Full program is 9 months plus possible 1-month internship. Participants must commit to the *full duration* and cannot earn credit for partial participation.
- Individual written feedback requested from participants as part of on-going program assessment measures.
- Contact TUPIT at Tufts University, 163 Packard Avenue, Medford MA, 02155 / hilary.binda@tufts.edu