

## Training

Volunteers receive 15 hours\* of professional training from subject matter experts as well as continuous support from DOC staff.

### Topics include:

- Circle Process and Guidelines
- Criminal Justice System Overview
- PTSD Overview
- Traumatic Brain Injury Overview
- Treatment 101: Chemical Dependency
- Boundaries and Self-Care
- Institution Orientation
- Military History
- Suicide Prevention/Crisis Intervention
- Victim Assistance/Restorative Justice Overview
- Survivor Perspective
- Offender Perspective
- Domestic Violence/Healthy Relationships
- Cultural Competency/Trauma Awareness

Training is free and located at the DOC Central Office in St. Paul. Parking is free and the building is located close to transit routes.

\*More training will be provided as needed and/or requested.

## Getting Involved

Prospective volunteers must submit a volunteer application to the OYF volunteer coordinator. Once the application is received and reviewed, an informal interview is scheduled. All volunteers undergo training and background checks prior to admittance to the correctional facility.

### **For more information or to volunteer:**

OYF Volunteer Coordinator  
651-361-7648  
CoSAPrograms.DOC@state.mn.us



**Minnesota Department of Corrections**

1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 200

St. Paul, MN 55108



**A program of the  
Minnesota Department of Corrections  
and the Veteran Justice Corps**

Utilizing the Circles of Support and  
Accountability (CoSA) Model



**Minnesota Department of Corrections**

**VETERAN JUSTICE CORPS** 

## Mission

On Your Feet (OYF) is a program of the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) and AmeriCorps Veteran Justice Corps. The purpose of the program is to assist veterans who are transitioning from prison to the community in an effort to reduce recidivism.

### What is On Your Feet?

OYF consists of a circle—a group of four to six volunteers—who provide pro-social support and accountability to the core member following their release from prison.

Circles work to:

**Collaborate** with the core member during the often difficult transition from prison to the community.

**Encourage** the veteran to live a healthier life while providing the network and support necessary to do so.

**Provide** alternatives to patterns of thinking and acting that contribute to criminal behavior.

**Celebrate** milestones in the journey to healthy integration.

**Partner** in cooperation with police, supervision agents, treatment professionals, social service workers, etc. in support of the core member.

## What to Expect

Each veteran's circle lasts approximately one year with weekly one to two-hour meetings attended by all OYF members, including the core member. An OYF volunteer can anticipate meeting no more than two hours per week.

Participating in a circle setting provides the opportunity to share knowledge and build on the life experiences of others.

All volunteers are welcome, however, prior military service is preferable.

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## Key Terms

**Core member:** A veteran with a criminal history who has volunteered and been selected to participate in OYF.

**Circle member:** A community volunteer who has applied and been trained to participate in OYF.

**Circle:** The meeting format for the core member and circle members. The circle represents a bond of mutual respect, understanding, and ownership in the process.

## History

Originally developed in 1994, Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) was created in Canada to help high-risk sex offenders successfully reintegrate into society.

In 2008, the DOC created Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability (MnCoSA) to serve level 2 sex offenders being released to the community. Launched in 2012, OYF was created using the same program model.

### Measured Success:

Participation in MnCoSA significantly reduced recidivism by:

- 62% for re-arrest
- 72% for technical violation revocation
- 84% for any return to prison

For every dollar spent on MnCoSA, the program has an 82% return on investment.

Source: Duwe, Grant. "Can Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) Work in the United States? Preliminary Results From a Randomized Experiment in Minnesota." *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*. XX(X) (2012): 1-23. doi: 10.1177/1079063212453942