

**For immediate release**

**March 19, 2024**

**Contact information:**

My Way Out contact: Ruben Gaona | [rgaona@twout.org](mailto:rgaona@twout.org) | 414-628-6397

UW-Madison Extension contact: Mia Ljung | [mia.ljung@wisc.edu](mailto:mia.ljung@wisc.edu) | 920-470-4645

**'Mistakes Do Not Define Who You Are' video discussion on challenges after incarceration**

My Way Out is partnering with UW-Madison Extension on screening of a short video "Mistakes Do Not Define Who You Are" funded by a grant from Wisconsin Humanities with the National Endowment from the Arts and the State of Wisconsin. Audience members will have a chance to reflect and provide feedback on the content with representatives from Extension, a UW-Madison program bringing education and learning opportunities to all areas of the state, and My Way Out, a nonprofit organization resolving barriers to reentry that empower and enrich the lives of justice-impacted individuals through access to housing, job-readiness training, employment, peer support, and supportive services for up to 3 years.

"We hope this provides a unique opportunity for discussion and understanding about those involved in the justice system, unconscious biases we may hold, and how and why community support is vital for reentry success," said Ruben Gaona, Executive Director of My Way Out, Inc., and expands on the recidivism data: "We know that 95% of incarcerated individuals will return to their community. In 2023, over 6,600 Wisconsin area residents came home—5,900 men and 712 women. 54.3% were white; 38% were individuals of color; 80.2% male and 10.8% women."

"This type of collaboration speaks to the power of Extension in how we can mobilize a multi-county collaboration relatively quickly while amplifying a community organization with aligned programs and values," said Mia Ljung, Community Development Extension Educator for Outagamie and Winnebago counties.

**Who should come?** This event is designed for community members who want to learn more about the challenges faced after incarceration; workforce development organizations or businesses interested in making their workplaces more reentry-friendly; and justice-impacted individuals seeking further reentry resources and programs.

Registration and event details: [go.wisc.edu/mywayout](https://go.wisc.edu/mywayout)

*Registration is required*

**Event schedule:**

- Madison: April 11, 6:00-7:30 pm
- Milwaukee: April 13, 1:00-2:30 pm
- Green Bay: April 20, 1:00-2:30 pm

- Oshkosh: April 21, 1:00-2:30 pm
- Appleton: April 25, 6:00-7:30 pm

**Background:**

April is Second Chance Month and was established in 2023. In the words of the National Reentry Resource Center, it is highlighted to recognize the importance of helping individuals, communities, and agencies across the country appreciate their role in supporting the safe and successful reentry of millions of people returning from incarceration each year. My Way Out (MWO) and UW-Madison Extension have partnered to raise community awareness about life after incarceration. The events will provide information about reentry-based resources, volunteer opportunities, and entrepreneurship training.

**Learn more and register:** [go.wisc.edu/mywayout](https://go.wisc.edu/mywayout)

Learn more about Extension here: <https://extension.wisc.edu>

Learn more about My Way Out here: <https://www.mwout.org>



SPONSORED BY  
Brown County  
Dane County  
Milwaukee County  
Outagamie County  
Winnebago County