

Daniel Howe:

I didn't have great parental guidance growing up, so I kind of had to make a way for myself, and you know that's not always good choices. I was in and out of trouble, clearly wasn't good at what I was doing, and that started at a young age. I was on probation from nine till I was like 11. Then I got arrested at 15 for gun charges, and so I didn't know what my life was going to look like, ultimately thought it was over.

And then while I was incarcerated, I just started thinking, "This isn't my end-all goal." Right? Well, I got out of prison in 2006, but when you think you get out of prison, you're like, "Oh man, I'm done. I'm free now. I can go live my life." Right? But no, the barriers, that's when the barriers kicked in, got told, "No," for housing. You get told, "No," for employment.

So for me, I was like, "How can I get a career when all I've known is street life?" Or, "The main experience that I've had in education or employment has been in prison?" And then a re-entry coordinator from the federal prison actually gave me an opportunity to go in and speak and tell my story. And for me, that was a light switched in my mind, right? So I was like, "How can I help people avoid some of those roadblocks and hurdles?"

I went through the Pima County One-Stop in Arizona at work as a participant. Again, I got to reap the benefits of that process, right? So I'd say about 2013, I started working for an organization that worked partnership with Pima County One-Stop. And at that point I was like, "Hey, I'm in the halls with some of these people. I'm going to try to apply at one of these positions." So I think it was like 2014 is when I got the job at Pima County One-Stop and then just kind of work my way up in the organization there.

Any barrier that you have, ultimately, Pima County helps eliminate those barriers. So employment training, can help with housing if you need housing, can help you with tools and clothing, even just to get to and from work. If I can connect people to those, I feel that they're going to have a better shot at success. Those are the three things that helped me become successful in what I'm doing today. That's why I'm passionate about the population and what I do on this team.

But I also own transitional homes for people coming out of incarceration, substance abuse issues, and homelessness. So what I see in the future with DES is just growing, continuing to help more people. There's a lot of relationships being built with community partners. So I don't know what the future looks like for DES, but I'm excited to be a part of it and be there for the journey.