

GOVERNOR'S RE-ENTRY COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 27, 2007
LABOR AND INDUSTRIES BUILDING

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Council Members: Todd Anderson, Rep. Kevin Cameron, Ron Chase, Robyn Cole (for Bob Jester), Bruce Goldberg, Thomas McClellan, Victor Merced, Jerry Moore, Joe O'Leary, Steven Powers, Camille Preus, Mark Royal, Ross Shepard, Lisa Smith, Laurie Warner, Max Williams

Steering Committee Members: Martin Burrows, Val Conley, Nancy Cozine, Pegge McGuire, Nancy Sellers, Ginger Martin, Cindy Booth, Heidi Steward, Mark Cadotte

Interested Observers: Patty Katz, Paul Solomon, Colette S. Peters, Chane Griggs, Sharon Darcey, Douglas Cooper, Anne O'Malley, Glenna Hay

Max Williams: Welcome and Introductions

Max Williams, Director of the Department of Corrections, thanked everyone for attending and for their work and support of the council's objectives. The council members introduced themselves, as did the steering committee members present and other interested parties.

Review Meeting Minutes:

The minutes from the inaugural meeting were unanimously adopted as submitted.

Correspondence Received by the Council

Max reminded the council that their number one responsibility is to enhance levels of collaboration. He then reviewed the comments, suggestions and feedback received on behalf of the Re-entry Council (see attached handout). Joe O'Leary added that the letters and e-mails from interested persons sent to the governor's office are being forwarded to Ginger Martin for tracking. Max explained that the council has been generating interest across the state and in response an e-mail distribution list has been created for sharing meeting minutes and other documents supporting the work of the council. Max suggested adding members of the Oregon Association of Community Corrections Directors (OACCD), the executive board of the Oregon Juvenile Department Directors Association (OJDDA) to the distribution list, along with other

pertinent groups. Council members approved confirming that meeting minutes, handouts, meeting announcements and agendas be sent to the steering committee and the e-mail distribution list of interested persons. Inquiries pertaining to specific programs will be referred to the steering committee for response.

Salem Police Chief Jerry Moore inquired as to how the council wants to handle offers of assistance and or ideas. Max Williams suggested requests be reviewed for scheduling the council to receive presentations. When appropriate, ideas and suggestions will be referred to the steering committee.

Discussion: Web Presence for the Council

Joe O'Leary, Senior Policy Advisor to Governor Kulongoski, suggested council members share their re-entry related work by publishing short articles in their agency newsletters. It was agreed the council should have a presence on the state web sites. A page will be developed for the Governor's site with links to be added on the web sites of other agencies represented on the council. The model will be developed by the DOC's Public Services Division in collaboration with Ginger Martin. Feature stories will be developed for the web sites, coordinated by Chane Griggs, DOC's Public Affairs and Central Services Administrator.

Victor Merced, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Services, suggested council members discuss the progress, challenges, and opportunities of the council's re-entry work at every opportunity. Max Williams offered the services of the department's Public Services Division for obtaining offender statistical information and other research related data, as needed.

Discussions included the desire to hold council meetings in other parts of the state thereby increasing awareness of its charge and providing opportunities for broader involvement. It was agreed that the next council meeting will be held in another city. The Department of Corrections will coordinate with the Governor's Office regarding the next meeting location.

Camille Preus has invited Max to deliver a presentation on the Re-entry Council to the statewide meeting of the Oregon President's Council on March 20th. Presentations to other groups are encouraged. Joe O'Leary asked that each council representative pass along information in their sphere of influence.

2007 Re-entry Conference Recommendations

Ginger Martin distributed the recommendations developed from the May, 2007 *Community Safety through Successful Offender Re-entry* conference. This conference was attended by staff from the Department of Corrections and partner agencies from around the state specifically invited to participate with re-entry policy development. The conference was funded mainly by a technical assistance grant from the Center for Effective Public Policy, which brought national experts/facilitators to Oregon from

Washington DC and around the country (see attachment). The recommendations are very much in keeping with those recently developed by the council's steering committee, and Mark Royal, Director of Umatilla/Morrow Community Corrections, stated that as a result of this conference, east side DOC institutions and community corrections offices are meeting to continue the work begun in their conference breakout workgroups.

To help address implementation of these recommendations, the department will reconstitute the Transition Advisory Group, as a work group of the council. Lisa Smith stated the council also needs a workgroup to address juvenile justice issues. Robyn Cole and Lisa Smith were asked to develop the juvenile justice advisory group. Heidi Steward, DOC Transition and Release Administrator, will be their point of contact.

Re-entry Steering Committee Recommendations for First Priorities

The top priorities identified by the steering committee are: Improve Post-Prison Employment Rate; Transitional Housing Available to Offenders Leaving Prison; "One-Stop" Sites for Transition Success; Continuity of Medical and Mental Health Care.

Steering committee members presented on each priority.

Martin Burrows, Employment Department, presented the *Improving Post-Prison Employment Rates* priority.

- Stable housing is the foundation for obtaining/retaining employment
- Need dedicated job developers—case managers – to work specifically with former offenders
 - Identify business owners willing to hire
 - Provide work problem-solving services
 - Help former inmates develop soft skills in addition to work ethic
 - Provide/identify motivation and support to stay employed (begin in prison)
- Skills assessment & work readiness certificates (fairly easy to achieve)
- Develop incentives for employers
 - Develop an informational packet for employers
 - Hold employment fairs in prisons (several of DOC's primary releasing facilities offer such)
 - Tax incentives to employers
 - Federal bonding program
 - Commitments from local governments to hire offenders
 - DOC partnership with private employers
 - Model: Welfare-to-Work
 - Identify occupations available for former offenders
 - Obtain experience (Model WPA)
- Resources Centers: WorkSource Oregon has centers statewide
 - Telephones
 - Copy machine
 - Telephone books

- Web page with locations, services, jobs, employer info, etc.
- Message Centers – not many options

Max Williams suggested surveying and identifying state statutes for exclusions based on crime of conviction; useful for training/planning. Recruit organized labor to assist.

ROAR (Re-entry Organizations and Referrals) representative Doug Cooper, offered that “soft skills” can have a greater impact, in some respects, than specific job training. Not having the skills to get to the job on time and consistently makes having great ‘on-the-job’ skills secondary.

Mark Royal cited an Oregon Public Radio program on re-entry that highlighted the importance of an acclimation period to learn or re-learn how to behave appropriately in non-institutional/structured setting.

Ron Chase, Executive Director of Sponsors, Inc. presented the *Transitional Housing Available to Offenders Leaving Prison* priority.

- Stable alcohol and drug-free housing the highest priority
- Need to decide the purpose of transitional housing
 - Serve a large number of people for short periods?
 - Serve a few people for longer periods?
- Staffed transitional housing options—Model: Sponsors, Inc.
 - Time to find employment
 - Time to save money
 - Time and help to find permanent housing
- Exclusionary criteria problematic with private housing options
- Public housing options, e.g. through the sheriff’s offices is expensive and less desirable to offenders—they look at it as continued incarceration.
- Where do offenders go upon release?
 - Home: to spouses, parents, children, grandparents, etc. Requires home visit to ensure option meets their conditions of supervision (no firearms, alcohol, etc.)
 - “Couch surfing,” benches, under bridges, etc.
 - Local missions
 - Drawbacks:
 - return to old behaviors & acquaintances
 - Poor areas without services
- Need more wrap-around services with housing
 - Housing Plus
 - Comprehensive and long-term; not accessible for offenders
 - Designed for high need/special needs population
 - Very expensive
 - “Foster” subsidy home
 - 24-hour staffing
 - Few available for offenders
- Oxford Houses

- Self-managed transition homes-not equipped to address behavior issues
- Finite number of housing options
- Higher rent than transitional housing
- Program duration is long-term
- Do not accept sex offenders
- Populations with special needs
 - Sex offenders
 - Mental health needs
 - Medical/dental issues
 - Geriatric
 - Women
 - Rural areas
- Siting concerns
 - NIMBY (Not in my backyard)
 - Funding/money

Lisa Smith reports the need for a youth-specific conversation for housing for their close custody releases.

Overall, there is a huge population of homeless offenders. Victor Merced said we need to address the issue of establishing the capacity to build and operate transitional housing. The 2009-11 budget process should be targeted to expand the Housing Plus definition to include this re-entry population. We also need to locate transitional housing around state transportation systems.

Ross Shepard, Oregon Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, presented the *One-Stop Sites for Transition Success* priority.

- Recommended DOC contract with a non-profit to operate one-stop centers, or
- DOC match county funds for operating
- Federal Second Chance Act may provide some funding to the states next year.

Bruce Goldberg offered that in regard to this and the other recommendations from the presenters, a complete business analysis needs to be completed to move the discussion from ideas to requests for structure and funding. This effort requires rigorous business case development. Foundations may be interested in helping with this work, including funding.

Sharon Darcy recommended that counties inventory services and collaborations already in place in order to avoid working at cross-purposes and competing for resources.

Ann O'Malley suggested that the Soros Foundation Network and the United Way have dollars and may be willing to fund one-stop centers

Max Williams cited the need for a workgroup to determine the need and best approach to access the federal Second Chance Act funds and/or a foundation funding to pilot a model project to identify resources that are available in Oregon. The product of this workgroup should be a master plan that can be ready to drop into any proposal format.

Ron Chase recommended that demonstration projects be independently evaluated and not use program dollars to fund evaluation.

Representative Cameron would like to see a “Second Chance Act” account for inmates that doesn’t equal real dollars, but rather points for services.

Max Williams said it is clear that the council must determine how to cross data-sharing boundaries between agencies and with university partners.

Sheriff Todd Anderson offered that Tillamook County developed a shared community database with grant monies, which is a smaller example of what is needed.

The council needs to look at re-entry and restitution; the requirements and limits.

Nancy Sellers, Oregon Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision, presented the *Continuity of Medical and Mental Health Care* priority (handout attached).

- RAND Report 2003: Released offenders rely on public sector for health care services at a time of limited, severely strained resources.
- Urban Institute 2008: Former prisoners more likely to have major mental disorders and chronic and infectious disease, but live in areas with poor health care facilities.
- Pie chart of DOC mental health needs: 20% have severe or high need; 7% have moderate need and another 15% will benefit from treatment.
- Inmate Population: 1999—9,200; 2008—13,500; October 2007 forecast for 2017—16,118.
- Nearly all inmates will be released to the community.
 - 700 with serious mental illness released this year
 - 400 of these are at medium to high risk to re-offend.
- Mental illness interferes with offenders’ ability to meet obligations
 - Courts
 - Community corrections programs
 - Results in re-arrest
 - Lengthy procedures to process
 - Very costly
- Many eligible for treatment benefits, few are enrolled at release
 - Decreased use of services
 - Higher arrest rate
- Medication: 30-day supply at release
 - Need evaluation by mental health provider in community prior to refill
 - Many mental health drugs require close monitoring

- Offenders about 15 years ‘medically older’ than chronological age
 - Aging prison population
 - Health issues hinder employment options
 - Increasing percentage of significant health and mental health needs
- Recommendations
 - Reach-in by treatment providers prior to release from custody
 - ID those at greatest risk needing most immediate services
 - Ensure 30-day supply of meds and scheduled appointment with provider prior to release.
 - Reinstate suspended/cancelled Oregon Health Plan coverage prior to release
 - Obtain birth certificate and provide at release to facilitate access to DHS services and SS benefits.
 - Assist contact between veterans and Veterans Affairs services, community college attendees with student services.
 - Develop electronic medical records system; facilitate data sharing
 - Coordinate sharing of info and records among federal, state and local agencies to provide a continuum of care and coverage.
- Dental Health Recommendations:
 - Poor dental hygiene hinders employment and contributes to other health problems.
 - Build relationships with dentists for pro-bono work, offer tax credits.
- Share responsibility
 - Create multi-disciplinary teams to address issues including on-going supervision, compliance, and shared resources.
 - Build on One-Stop model to bring mental health and medical treatment and assistance to high-risk population.
- Possible Workgroup Members:
 - Health and Mental Health Providers
 - Medical and Dental Associations
 - DOC Health Services (including medical records)
 - National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
 - Oregon Advocacy Center
 - Senior Services (state and local)
 - Social Security Administration
 - Veterans Affairs
 - Department of Human Services

Lisa Smith reports that retired dentists provide pro bono services at their county detention (youth) facility. Malpractice insurance is paid for, however the savings are considerable.

Victor Merced said his agency has doctors in a similar program in Eastern Oregon. Northwest Medical Teams was suggested as a resource for study and/or grant development.

Next Steps

Max Williams requested the steering committee bring forward specific items the council can accomplish this year; rule changes, etc. Also need to identify the “big picture” needs. Workgroups will be convened to tackle specific issues and council members will identify people to participate on the workgroups.

Joe O’Leary suggested obtaining an honors extern to work on council issues as a summer support for the council.