Topics in Community Corrections

Promising Strategies in Transition from Prison

National Institute of Corrections

Morris L. Thigpen
Director

George Keiser
Chief
Community Corrections Division

U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Corrections
Community Corrections Division
320 First Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20534
(800) 995-6423
(202) 307-3106

NIC Information Center
791 North Chambers Rd.
Aurora, CO 80011
(800) 877-1461
(303) 365-4450
asknicic@nicic.org

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http://www.nicic.org

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2007 FOCUS:
Promising Strategies in Transition from Prison

Foreword

As we release this issue of *Topics in Community Corrections*—focusing on transition from prison to the community—the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is already preparing to launch a second round of state-level technical assistance in this area. In moving forward, NIC will build on the successes of the eight states that have engaged thus far with NIC and its project partners.

NIC's work in transition got under way in 2001 with the development of a theoretical approach to reentry based on system-wide justice system thinking and coordination, the Transition from Prison to the Community (TPC) Initiative. TPC has supported states in making fundamental and far-reaching changes in their own operations and interagency relationships, as well as in their approaches to offender management. Within the experiences of these states, there are many lessons about effective ways for justice agencies to do business.

NIC's approach to TPC was carefully planned, but ultimately it is the successful experiences of the states that have engaged in it that proves its worth. Essentially, the eight TPC states began with a theoretical framework and built on it to create new, tangible realities of coordination, cooperation, and shared vision. While their successes have validated the theory behind the basic approach, their specific experiences are refining the practices and taking them to an operational level. In each state the specific challenges have been unique, and their work represents an evolution that is still under way. The ongoing challenge is to continue to improve programs and collaborations, as well as to generate multi-year outcome data that will quantify the benefits these states have earned. Their progress has been very promising and exciting.

Because of what we have learned, NIC is now engaged in a project with the Urban Institute that will extend knowledge of reentry issues to local jails and communities. The newer Transition from Jail to the Community (TJC) initiative will have some of the same elements as the state-level approach, and certainly will have some unique elements as well.

NIC's forthcoming *TPC Reentry Handbook* is another direct offshoot of the TPC initiative. Including useful guidance and state-generated examples, this 400-page document will be released before the June 2008 conference of the American Probation and Parole Association. NIC also is going online in early 2008 with an e-learning program on transition from prison to the community, accessible via the NIC web site. Both of these resources can help inform managers about how the paradigm shift in linking state and local justice agencies and communities can have profound effects on public safety and improved offender outcomes.

This issue of *Topics in Community Corrections* is another outcome of knowledge-sharing about TPC. Several of the articles presented here give a direct, hands-on account of the issues and challenges confronting agencies as they seek to make a real difference in the ability of ex-offenders to stay out of the criminal justice system. Most speak specifically from their experiences as participants in NIC's TPC initiative. NIC has used "transition" as a term to communicate a thoughtful and carefully considered release process that spans admission to prison through termination of corrections authority in the community. "Reentry" is the other commonly used term, and it has sometimes been understood to imply a shorter-term or specific program focus on release preparation. The perspectives shared in these articles have applicability for either interest and thus should offer value to any reader.

Since NIC began its work in reentry and transition, these concepts have become a critical issue in the corrections field and beyond. Receptivity for new ideas is growing, and agencies across the country are taking up the elements and beginning to see the possibilities for their own systems. Professionals everywhere are now talking the language of transition/reentry, and this reflects a cultural shift that is underway in corrections and in communities.

Jurisdictions engaged in this work are far from the finish line. These changes in philosophy and practice take time and consistent focus to reach fruition. We are looking forward to seeing the fruits of this work in lower recidivism figures, fewer revocations to prison, and reductions in prison crowding—and in better, long-lasting working relationships between corrections agencies, their service partners, and their stakeholders at the state and community levels.

NIC will conclude its assistance to the original eight TPC states this year. Our intention is to serve several more states through another round of TPC assistance that will extend across a period of roughly 3 years. We look forward to working with a new group of committed, forward-thinking correctional administrators and community leaders. We expect that by summer 2009 a competitive application process for states will be announced, which will include a prominent posting on the NIC web site.

Kermit Humphries
Correctional Program Specialist
U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Corrections
Washington, D.C.

An Overview of NIC's Transition from Prison to the Community Initiative

by
Peggy B. Burke,
Principal,
Center for Effective
Public Policy,
Silver Spring,
Maryland

During the first years of the 21st century, the field of corrections has been facing challenges unlike anything experienced before. Almost 700,000 prisoners were released from federal and state prisons in 2005, and the annual number of releases continues to grow. These individuals transition to communities all across the nation. Most are still under correctional supervision. A high percentage of them are rearrested in short order, and roughly two-thirds return to prison within 3 years—as a result of either new convictions or parole revocations. At the same time, many states are facing considerable budget short-falls, prison populations continue to grow, and communities and policy-makers alike are asking how this cycle of failure and escalating costs can be interrupted.

In response to these concerns, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) launched its Transition from Prison to the Community (TPC) Initiative in 2001. The initiative was conceived from the beginning as an effort to draw together and synthesize the best thinking in the field—from practitioners and from researchers—on how to revamp correctional efforts to encourage the safe return of offenders to the community. Over 18 months during 2001 and 2002, NIC assembled working groups of practitioners, scholars, and policy advisers who met periodically to debate the lessons emerging from the field and from research that could help reshape practice.

The TPC Initiative has generated a number of outcomes. They include:

♦ **The TPC Model**, which outlines the elements of practice that, if fully implemented, represent the best thinking and evidence about how to manage transition and reentry successfully.

♦ **The TPC implementation strategy**, which outlines the sequence of tasks and decisions and the management approach needed to implement the model.

♦ **The accomplishments of eight states** that have embraced the TPC Model, and have—through their efforts—both transformed practice in their own states and provided significant lessons that will encourage and guide other jurisdictions interested in improving reentry practices. (The states are Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, and Rhode Island.)

♦ **A body of information and experience** that constitute a resource for states beyond the original eight participating TPC sites.

The NIC effort distinguishes itself in a number of ways. It is at once very specific but also far-reaching.

- ♦ On an agency-specific level, the TPC Initiative has provided hands-on guidance to the participating jurisdictions to support on-the-ground improvements in operating agencies, from which demonstrable results are already emerging. Participating jurisdictions received technical assistance from NIC, had opportunities to exchange information and experiences with other jurisdictions participating in the Initiative, and had occasion to participate in a number of cross-site workshops.

- ♦ The TPC Initiative is also far-reaching, because it has produced a model and an implementation strategy that other jurisdictions can draw upon, adapt, and use to guide change in their own unique circumstances.

TPC also is an approach that does not require significant additional resources to initiate. At its heart, the TPC Model is about system change and redeploying resources to accomplish desired outcomes. However, because of their work on TPC, a number of the participating states have been able to secure additional resources from their own state legislatures and from federal and private foundation funding.

Core Principles

It is said that the greatest insights are often the most simple. The TPC Model is, at its heart, very simple. It poses three major tenets.

- ♦ First, the goal is successful offender reentry to enhance public safety—no new crimes; no new victims; safer, stronger communities.

- ♦ Second, reentry is an issue that requires collaboration both within the often fragmented correctional arena and also across traditional boundaries—to include human service agencies, community organizations, and citizens. No one can do this alone, least of all corrections agencies.

- ♦ Third, we must base practice on evidence and do what we know works—and stop doing what we know doesn't work.

Though simple in concept, endeavors to truly enhance and support successful reentry are of course challenging and complex. For many years, corrections as a profession has focused more upon custody, control, and surveillance as a way to incapacitate offenders and thus protect community safety. The acknowledgement that virtually all offenders do return to the community, however, requires an expanded focus that includes a goal of behavior change for community safety. This is a significant shift for much of the corrections field. Collaboration—while ultimately sensible—also is a relatively new mode of doing business and flies in the face of the silos that characterize much of public policy. And basing practice on evidence, particularly in a field that only a few decades ago asserted that there

was no evidence that behavior could be changed, further requires a significant shift in outlook.

The jurisdictions that have participated to date in the TPC Initiative have recognized and taken on these complex challenges. They have demonstrated the essential soundness of the model, reshaped and improved it, and made it their own. Their efforts within the context of the TPC Model have generated significant change and improvements in how correctional systems operate, how they engage a wide range of stakeholders, and how they support more positive offender outcomes.

Sharing the Knowledge

A new *TPC Reentry Handbook* that explains the model, its implementation strategy, and the experiences of the eight participating states is slated for publication in 2008. The *Handbook* will include:

♦ Suggestions on how to organize a transition effort—whom to involve and how to organize participants into steering, implementation, and task groups;

♦ A step-by-step set of suggested activities that assist jurisdictions in stating their own vision and goals, collecting information to better define the transition challenges and strengths that are unique to their own situation, and identifying their targets of change;

♦ Examples of innovations that participating sites found to be important and helpful in revamping transition practices;

♦ Information describing how the principles of evidence-based practice can strengthen reentry efforts;

♦ An outline of a new approach to case management that supports transition and reentry; and

♦ A performance management strategy that is designed to measure progress.

In essence, the TPC Model is a framework that can assist jurisdictions to undertake system change that is designed to:

♦ Reduce recidivism among transitioning offenders,

♦ Reduce future victimization,

♦ Enhance public safety, and

♦ Improve the lives of community members, victims, and offenders.

Distinctive Elements of the TPC Model

The TPC Model is a framework that can assist jurisdictions in undertaking system change designed to improve offender transition. It outlines who should be involved and what steps to take in order to move from fragmented, ineffective practices to a collaborative, coherent process for transition. It outlines methods for working together to prepare offenders to reintegrate into the community safely, without reoffending.

Process and decision points are a seamless process. The TPC Model, depicted graphically in Figure 1, is conceived of as an integrated, continuous, and coherent process that bridges the components of the criminal justice system.

Figure 1. The Transition from Prison to the Community (TPC) Model
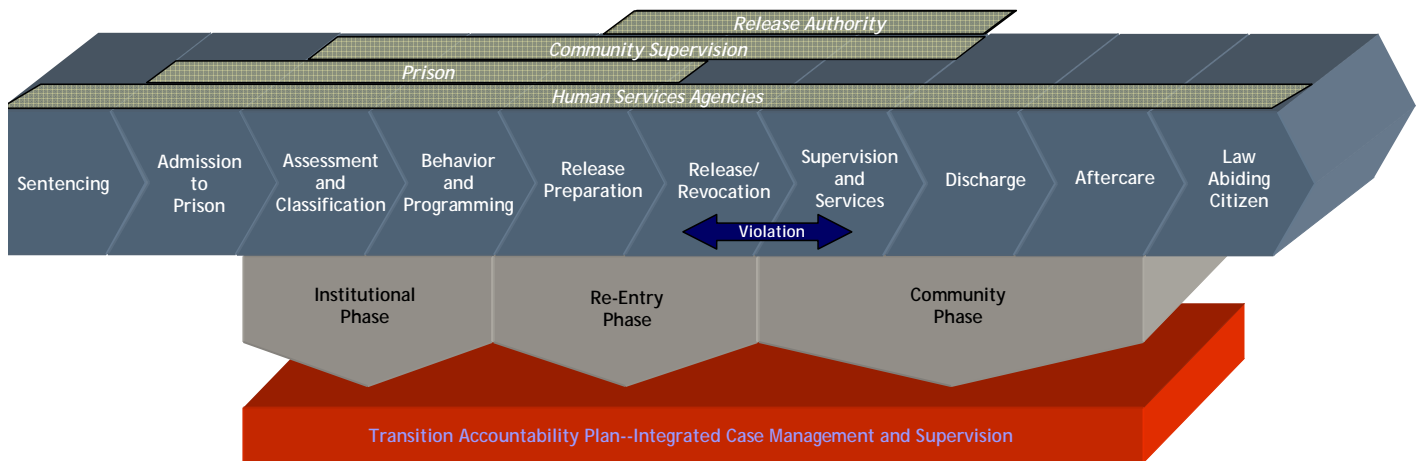
The TPC Model identifies the following key steps, seven of which (in bold) are also key decision points for corrections agencies.

- Sentencing
- Admission to prison
- **Assessment and classification**
- **Behavior and programming**
- **Release preparation**

- **Release decision-making**
- **Supervision and services**
- **Responses to violations**
- **Discharge**
- Aftercare

The process has an enormous impact on public safety, effective use of scarce public resources, and restoration of victims. As such, the community as well as public and private agencies have a stake in how well this process functions to support successful offender transition. The image of the TPC Model in Figure 1 highlights the different stakeholders across the top of the graphic, depicting overlapping periods of jurisdiction and concern. It also shows that the process rests, importantly, upon a foundation of sound transition accountability planning and integrated case management and supervision.

Community safety is attained through offender success. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the TPC Model is that it refocuses correctional practices on the goal of public safety through offender success, viewing virtually every aspect of correctional operations as an element in that overall strategy. This is a departure from corrections' recent emphasis on a risk management and surveillance strategy—based on using security levels and levels of supervision to target control by level of risk in both incarcerative and post-release settings. The TPC Model, alternatively, incorporates both risk management AND risk reduction as key interests.

Reentry is not considered as solely a corrections issue. Another aspect of the TPC Model is that it specifically defines reentry as an issue of importance to both correctional and non-correctional stakeholders. This perspective grows out of several key insights provided by those who developed the model.

♦ Because offenders who are transitioning have significant deficits and needs for services that are typically funded and/or provided by non-correctional agencies, those stakeholders must be part of developing a reentry strategy if offenders' needs are to be addressed.

♦ Agencies outside of corrections have mandates—from legislative funders, from their executive leadership, and from their communities—to serve certain populations. These populations often overlap significantly with the correctional population. As outside agencies become aware of the overlap, they are likely to identify key interests of their own that can be served by coming to the table to plan a collaborative strategy regarding reentry.

♦ This collaborative advantage can be a powerful incentive that brings partners to the table and engages them in mutually reinforcing efforts.

In sum, the TPC Model seeks to move correctional practice:

From—	*To*—
Focusing primarily on custody and monitoring . . .	Also including recidivism reduction through behavior change as a major focus.
Allowing management and information silos to fragment the transition process . . .	Redesigning efforts into a coherent process.
Defining transition as a corrections problem . . .	Defining transition as a public policy issue in which many stakeholders have an interest.
Using unproven methods . . .	Using practices based on evidence.
Measuring inputs . . .	Measuring outcomes.

Major Components of Implementation

The model itself defines the destination where we would like to arrive in order for transition and reentry efforts to be successful. The implementation process is akin to the "journey" we need to complete in order to arrive at that destination.

Jurisdictions using the TPC Model will be guided through a series of implementation steps.

♦ Mobilizing interdisciplinary, collaborative leadership teams, convened by corrections agencies, to guide reentry efforts at the state and local levels.

♦ Engaging in a rational planning process that includes a careful definition of goals as well as the development of a clear understanding of the current reentering offender population and their rates of recidivism, and a thoughtful review of existing policies, procedures, and resources for reentry.

♦ Deliberately involving non-correctional stakeholders—public, private, and community agencies that can provide services and support as reentry initiatives are planned and implemented.

♦ Implementing validated offender assessments at various stages of the offender's movement through the system.

♦ Developing the capacity to create a Transition Accountability Plan (TAP) for each offender to guide case management and program interventions that span from the time of admission to prison until the time of discharge from supervision in the community.

♦ Targeting effective interventions—as demonstrated by good research—to individual offenders on the basis of risk and criminogenic needs that are identified by validated assessments.

♦ Ensuring that all transitioning offenders are equipped with basic survival resources, such as identification, housing, appropriate medications, and linkages to community services and informal networks of support before, while, and after they are released and move into the community.

♦ Expanding the traditional roles of correctional staff beyond custody, security, accountability, and monitoring to include a responsibility for offender management that uses an integrated approach to engage offenders in a process of change.

♦ Developing the capacity to measure the progress—of both individual agencies and the overall system—toward specific outcomes, to continually track such progress, and to use this information to achieve further improvements.

Over the course of working with the eight states that have been implementing the TPC Model, NIC and its cooperative agreement partner, the Center for Effective Public Policy, have participated in national and statewide conferences, have posted information on the NIC web site, and are developing an e-learning module that will be available on the NIC e-learning site in early 2008. NIC also has collaborated in federal efforts to develop resources for a broad audience—most notably a forthcoming handbook that is emerging from the Serious and Violent Offender Rehabilitation Initiative (SVORI) efforts of BJA.

These efforts are adding to the store of knowledge and experience that are shaping improved transition and reentry practices nationwide. The efforts reported in this issue of *Topics in Community Corrections* are one indication of the changes occurring in the field—changes that have been supported and mirrored by the TPC Initiative. ♦

For more information:

Peggy B. Burke
Principal
Center for Effective
Public Policy
8403 Colesville Road
Suite 720
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Phone: (301) 589-9383
pburke@cepp.com

Resources

♦ NIC's home page for information and resources on the TPC Initiative is *http://www.nicic.org/TPCI*

♦ To enroll in NIC's web-based training on reentry (available in early 2008), go to *http://nic.learn.com/*

♦ See page 74 for more sources for information on transition/reentry.

Rising to the Challenge of Applying Evidence-Based Practices Across the Spectrum of a State Parole System

L ike many states, Pennsylvania faces both unprecedented growth in its prison and parole populations and stubbornly high recidivism rates. Our state prison population has grown 21% already this decade, from 36,810 in 2000 to 44,365 in 2006. A large majority of these offenders will be released into communities across the state, and among them 75% will be released to the authority of the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (the Board).

As the prison population increases, so do our parole numbers—our caseload has grown 23% since 2002 and is projected to be over 30,000 offenders by the end of fiscal year 2007–2008. Many of these released offenders will fail in the community and return to prison. Almost half—approximately 47%—of released inmates return to prison at least once within 3 years of their release.

According to a 2006 analysis by the Council of State Governments, these trends are largely the result of criminal justice system policies and practices in Pennsylvania; they are not caused by state population growth or increases in crime rates. Recognizing the impact of these numbers on community safety and the state's limited fiscal resources, the challenge for the Board is to address the state parole policies and practices that contribute to these trends.

The agency has risen to this challenge by embarking on an aggressive agenda to apply evidence-based practices at each critical point along the continuum of our system—from the time an offender enters prison, to release decision-making, to field supervision. By doing so we intend to improve the effectiveness of our parole system and reduce the likelihood that released offenders will commit further crimes.

In 2004, the Governor's Reentry Task Force convened all state agencies that have a role in reentry to examine systemically each agency's specific role and to identify gaps and needs. Building upon the work of the task force, the hundreds of recommendations of the Report of the Reentry Policy Council, and the volume of empirical research findings that are now available about "what works," the Board has accomplished much within our own agency.

So far, we have:

♦ Refined our release decisional instrument;

♦ Created an effective Bureau of Offender Reentry;

by
Sherry Tate,
Director,
Office of Policy,
Legislative Affairs and
Communications,
and
Catherine C. McVey,
Chairman,
Pennsylvania Board of
Probation and Parole,
Harrisburg,
Pennsylvania

- Significantly reduced the number of technical parole violators returned to prison;

- Implemented statewide and local performance measures; and

- Convincingly demonstrated the need for additional budget resources.

We still have much work to do—important work that will affect both the prison population as well as the safety of our communities in positive ways.

Releasing the Right Offender at the Right Time

Pennsylvania is fortunate to be one of the states that has maintained a system of discretionary parole. The Board thus has the ability, in cooperation with the Department of Corrections (DOC), to provide offenders some incentive for good in-prison behavior, program participation, and post-release planning while they are still in prison. Incentives are important, of course, but the cornerstone of any good system is a valid and reliable risk and need assessment instrument to determine which offenders to release and when. Our agency has a long history of using a decisional instrument that incorporates the Level of Service Inventory–Revised (LSI-R) to facilitate release decisions and ensure consistency in those decisions.

However, our current challenge is to move from this traditional instrument to one that both incorporates evidence-based practices and relevant case history information about the offender and also ties in directly with field supervision practices. To accomplish this, the Board is completing a 1-year study to ensure that the instrument comprehensively reflects and weighs factors correlated with the risk of future offending. As part of that effort, the instrument will be modified to better align it with the risk principle, which calls for minimal interventions for low-risk offenders and the targeting of resources to the most critical needs that contribute to a life of crime for mid- to high-risk offenders.

The Board and the DOC have adopted a strategy of providing lower-risk offenders with lower levels of treatment and supervision. The instrument now will adequately reflect this. At the other end of the scale, the highest risk and needs domains from the LSI-R will be pulled into the decisional instrument to establish parole conditions that target interventions toward dynamic characteristics that contribute to criminal behavior. These conditions will interface with the overall reentry plan to eliminate any potential disconnect between the established conditions of parole and the post-release reentry plan for case management purposes.

As we have worked on this project, we've uncovered a major concern of certain stakeholders—such as judges, defense attorneys, and prosecutors—that they lack a clear understanding of the decisional instrument and the decision-making process as a whole. In response, we are creating an advisory committee to the Board that will provide input into future refinements of the instrument. We recognize that it is inherently vital for key stakeholders to have a voice in the parole decisional process, because the Board's decisions significantly affect the prison

population and ultimately affect public safety by determining which offenders to release.

Shifting to a Case Management Model for Reentry

Making our communities safer and helping to contain growth in the prison population require that each offender who is released to parole supervision be provided with the support and services he or she needs to successfully complete parole. To end the fragmented, stovepipe approach to reentry that has hampered our best efforts to improve our recidivism outcomes, we have created a Bureau of Offender Reentry. One of the Bureau's main responsibilities is to facilitate the agency's shift to a new approach to offender supervision that balances supervision and case management.

The foundation for effective case management is our new Transitional Accountability Plan (TAP). The TAP is a comprehensive analysis of an offender's education, employment, medical, financial, family, emotional, criminal history, substance abuse, housing, and other needs and issues. This information enables us to build upon and complement the treatment that the offender received during incarceration.

Once parole is granted, the institutional parole agent and the offender jointly develop the TAP to ensure offenders are linked to appropriate programs and are motivated to participate. Offenders undergo myriad assessments while still in prison that will shape future supervision strategies on parole.

Essentially, the TAP procedure backs up the process of parole supervision planning into the institution, before the offender is released, rather than this planning being initiated in the field as it had been done previously. As an active participant in this process, the offender begins to understand and accept what he or she needs to do to increase the chances of success on parole and thereafter. Importantly for offenders with medical and mental health needs, the TAP documents the date and time of any scheduled appointments and the amount of medication provided to the offender upon release.

Offenders' difficulty obtaining proper identification to apply for jobs and to access social services has been one of the most significant barriers to successful transition. The DOC has substantially assisted our reentry efforts in this area. After verifying the inmate's identity, the DOC can process an application for an inmate to receive a duplicate Social Security card.

Also, the DOC now can assist offenders with an application for a new or renewed non-driver's license photo identification prior to their release. During the TAP process, the institutional parole agent checks for these documents, and if they have not been obtained already, the agent will work with the offender to get them.

Cultural change through training—and retraining. The shift to case management and a focus on problem solving does not happen without training that helps agents develop the necessary skills and competencies. To meet this challenge, we have initiated a massive training effort that integrates the lessons of research into offender management. Sixteen training sessions have been scheduled in an 18-month period, based on several mutually supportive components.

♦ The Board developed a curriculum that reflects the eight principles of effective intervention (National Institute of Corrections, 2004) to educate agents on best practices in the provision of treatment and case management that have been shown to reduce recidivism.

♦ Agency leaders participated in the program, Community Safety through Successful Offender Reentry: An Agencywide Training, through the Center for Effective Public Policy. This 3-day policy and skill-building training focused on issues pertinent to Pennsylvania as developed from a strategic planning session. As an outcome of this program, agents, supervisors, and managers will play an active role in developing recommendations on how to move our reentry system forward.

♦ Certain staff have obtained certification as facilitators in the National Curriculum Training Institute's Cognitive Life Skills program. This program addresses an offender's thinking patterns, negative attitudes, antisocial values, and beliefs and the decisions that have led them to this point in their lives. The Bureau will launch pilot programs this year in two districts to incorporate these strategies into the overall offender management structure.

♦ Agents are also receiving training by Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare (DPW) on skills for working effectively with individuals who have mental illnesses. The training covers how to collaborate with county mental health programs, focusing on locating and accessing community mental health services.

♦ Parole agents are also being trained in motivational interviewing techniques, through which they can carry out positive, collaborative interactions with offenders to get them thinking about making changes in their lives.

Outreach to community partners and informal networks. Overcoming barriers to reentry requires the participation of many partners and agencies if programs are to succeed. The Board is enhancing its relationships with key state and local agencies and community and faith-based organizations.

♦ The DPW and state Department of Health (DOH) have implemented a reentry pilot project for seriously mentally ill offenders to provide continuity of care for this population. These agencies also have created a workgroup to examine the issues faced by all offenders with mental illness or co-occurring disorders who are leaving prison.

- Pennsylvania has 67 counties. We are reaching out to county commissioners, judges, probation and parole chiefs, and mental health and substance abuse treatment providers at the county level to share the message that state parole needs and wants to work with local partners to address the needs of returning offenders.

- We also are actively seeking partnerships with faith-based groups, such as Prison Fellowship, Justice and Mercy, and Yokefellows.

- Informed families, as well, can act as a parole support system and positive influence to newly released offenders. Last year the Board implemented Family Parole Education classes in all of its districts statewide to help offenders' family members learn about the parole process. Topics include the home plan investigation process, conditions of parole, field and office contact requirements, agents' authority to search the residence and property without a warrant, and how family members can best support successful reentry.

Designing a New Technical Parole Violator Management Program

Parolees who do not comply with their conditions of release and return to prison on a technical violation are more likely to later recidivate than those who are able to maintain ties in the community. Knowing this, we were disturbed that prison admissions of parole violators had increased 37% from 2000 to 2006. Recognizing the inherent inefficiency of returning technical parole violators (TPV) to prison, we implemented a TPV management process designed to maintain parolees in treatment programs in the community if it can be done safely and effectively.

Incarceration of TPVs is considered a last resort and is used only in circumstances warranting imprisonment. Examples include violations with a new criminal arrest, situations in which violators are a serious threat to themselves or others, or cases where the offender is unmanageable and has a protracted and escalating history of violations.

The results of this updated strategy are impressive. Last fiscal year we diverted 600 TPVs from Pennsylvania state prisons, and we anticipate that this year we will divert 1,000 cases. From February 2006 to June 2007, the monthly number of offenders with technical parole violations declined 20%, and there was an accompanying 3% decrease in violators charged with a new crime. The overall impact on the prison population was a 13% decline in the average number of weekly admissions to prison of parole-violation pending cases.

Review of violations options. As part of our effort to increase successful parole completions, we've identified the need for better responses to violations. In conjunction with the TPV management program, the Board is involved in a research project that will analyze alternative sanctions imposed on parolees,

measure their success, and develop a guide for greater uniformity statewide in the use of sanctions. This research will provide us with ongoing statistical analysis of the field agents' use of intermediate sanctions and whether the sanctions being imposed are proportional, progressive, and corrective relative to the violation behavior.

The analysis also will enable management to guide agent responses to violations and provide agents with broader sanctioning alternatives.

♦ For example, the Board is developing internal programmatic capacity in the field offices to provide the behavioral interventions needed to respond to certain violation behaviors. This will enhance the agents' ability to safely and effectively extend community supervision of parolees who have exhibited those violation behaviors.

♦ We are also seeking additional community-based interventions, services, and supports. One especially important tool for diverting offenders from recommitment to prison is the use of the DOC's community correctional center beds. TPVs typically are placed in these residential centers for up to 90 days to address seriously noncompliant behavior on parole.

In conjunction with our analysis of sanctioning options, the Board is also developing an improved violation recommitment assessment process. A new decisional instrument will identify the factors decision-makers are expected to apply consistently when determining whether to recommit parole violators to prison.

Development of Statewide and Local Performance Measures

The enormous undertaking of applying evidence-based practices across the entire spectrum of the parole system would be for naught without proper feedback through performance measures. For that reason, we have developed performance measures across all of our programmatic and production areas.

Current program measurements, a total of 45 in all, analyze a wide realm of processes and outcomes within major categories of our operations and services:

1. Parole business processes, including release consideration and reentry planning;

2. State supervision processes, including reentry case management, risk reduction, and community protection;

3. State supervision fee collection, including job retention and financial accountability; and

4. Program areas, including victim services and sex offender assessment.

We have identified the top four most important performance measures as successful parole completions, employment rate, TPV reduction, and supervision fee collections. (In addition to reflecting compliance with conditions of parole, supervision fees generate funds that can be reinvested in agent training.)

To extend more local accountability into each of its district offices, the Board in January 2007 launched the Board Excellence Accountability and Measurement (BEAM) System. Agency and district managers develop the fiscal and operational data and benchmarks they need to effectively manage their areas of responsibility. In addition to monthly reporting, managers hold a quarterly review for feedback and make adjustments as necessary. Managers are held accountable for their decisions and will be evaluated and promoted based on their overall success. This is an important step forward, because performance measures and local accountability directly affect our success in requesting additional resources.

Building a Case for Additional Budget Resources

The changes the Board has implemented to this point have occurred at a time when there has been no budget increase for 4 years and no new staff. Our initial progress with reentry has been accomplished by staff who retained their prior, non-reentry duties and also assumed responsibility for the new reentry efforts. Institutional and field staff learned new policies and procedures, attended trainings on evidence-based practices, and implemented the new TPV management strategies—all without a decrease in workload or caseloads as the population continued to increase.

After 4 years of budget-tightening and implementation of operational efficiencies, we recognized that full implementation of comprehensive reentry practices would be possible only with significant additional resources. The parole budget for the fiscal year that began in July 2007 reflected the agency's proposed full implementation of recidivism-reducing strategies. For the first time, the Board calculated the anticipated reduction in recidivism that would result from our new programmatic enhancements and projected the fiscal impact over 4 years.

Based on this forecasting, our budget submission requested funding for new staff positions and comprehensive agent training in evidenced-based practices.

New positions. The budget included funding for two new categories of agent positions to focus specifically on reducing recidivism.

♦ **Transitional Coordinators** (TCs) will provide intensive transitional case support during the first 3 months of parole, when parolees are most likely to recidivate. Their responsibilities include reviewing each offender's final reentry plan, addressing prior to release any needs related to continuing the care and treatment that has been provided in the institution, making necessary appointments, ensuring all necessary personal identification is available, submitting paperwork to community providers, and assisting with especially hard-to-place offenders seeking housing arrangements. After parolees are

successfully stabilized in the community, they will transition to a general supervision caseload.

♦ **Assessment, Sanctioning and Community Resource Agents** (ASCRAs) will provide technical assistance to parole agents by providing case review for offenders who have not responded positively to sanctions for parole violations and are therefore in jeopardy of recommitment to prison. These positions, to be located in the district and sub-offices, will provide much-needed, day-to-day guidance to our more than 400 field agents. Their involvement will help ensure the effective and consistent use of sanctions for technical violators to target behavior change; provide offender reintegration programming, such as cognitive-behavioral programming; develop and expand various community resources (such as housing, employment, and support services); extend referral support to needy family members; and assist agents in the review, interpretation, and selection of effective management responses to parolee assessments.

New training. The myriad changes occurring throughout our system cannot be accomplished and sustained without adequate funding for training. The skills and competencies required in a system focused solely on supervision are different from those required in a system that focuses on both supervision and case management. We have developed a full training plan to achieve this goal, and we successfully conveyed the importance of this training need in our budget request as part of the calculations for reducing recidivism. Without this transformation in our agency culture, our goal of making Pennsylvania's communities safer will not become a reality.

For more information:

Sherry Tate
Director
Office of Policy, Legislative Affairs and Communications
Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole
1101 S. Front St.
Suite 5100
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17104
(717) 787-6208
shtate@state.pa.us

History has demonstrated that tougher sentencing and incapacitation alone will not reduce the risk of new crimes or new victims. Further, research has demonstrated that supervision and monitoring alone are not as effective as a balance of supervision and effective, problem-solving case management in creating successful parole outcomes. As we move forward in this new era of research that holds promise for reducing the number of offenders who fail upon reentry, the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole will continue to step up to the challenge of defining our role in reentry.

We're excited about the progress we have made so far, but we also recognize that this is just the beginning. Through our performance data, we will be able to measure the effectiveness of our effort to apply evidence-based practices and research across the continuum of our parole system. We look forward to publishing these results in a future edition of *Topics in Community Corrections*. ♦

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Collaboration and Partnership in the Community: Advancing the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative

*by
Le'Ann Duran,
Manager,
Office of Offender ReEntry,
Michigan Department of
Corrections,
Lansing, Michigan*

"With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed."
Abraham Lincoln, August 21, 1858

U nderstanding how to use partnerships and collaboration is critical for any agency that seeks to advance its efforts toward prisoner reentry. By using community partnerships effectively, prisoner reentry efforts can transform corrections systems and communities to better protect neighborhoods and inter-rupt the costly cycle of crime.

Collaboration has been defined as joining together to make possible that which cannot be accomplished alone (Center for Effective Public Policy, 2007). This article examines five key attributes of partnership and collaboration deemed essential as the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) developed the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI).

1. **"Systems thinking"** is the lens for understanding why partnerships are important to prisoner reentry efforts. Based on the help of some of the nation's best thinkers, and grounded in a systems perspective, the MPRI Model makes the connection between transforming the corrections system into an evidence-based system and reducing crime. If public stakeholders do not understand this linkage, they may not value the work toward system change that is essential to prisoner reentry initiatives, which may impede these efforts.

2. **Fostering unified commitment** is the first step to building sustainable reentry partnerships. In Michigan, we first cultivated unified commitment by engaging hundreds of stakeholders in the development of MPRI's vision, mission, and policy recommendations.

3. **Organizing and structuring partnerships** is an important aspect of imple-menting innovative ways to conduct the business of corrections under the MPRI Model. For partnerships to be effective, their power must be harnessed through strong operational structures.

4. **Catalyzing change** is essential for mobilizing prisoner reentry partnerships. The MPRI relies heavily on a cadre of highly qualified and trained Community Coordinators in local districts to catalyze communities' invest-ment in transforming the corrections system.

5. Mutual capacity building is achieved when partnerships are effective. Through mutual capacity building, permanent system change is made possible.
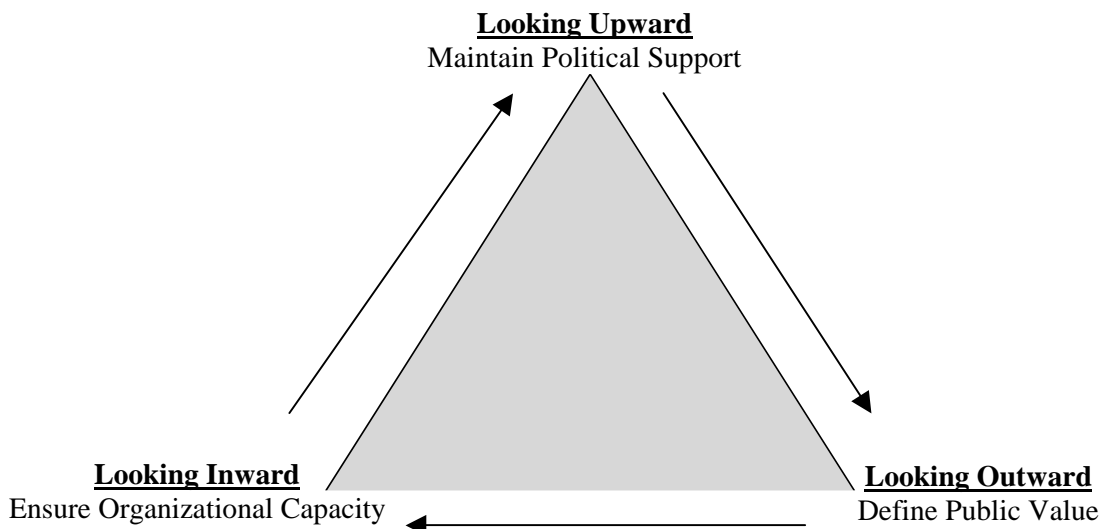
Systems Thinking

"Systems thinking" is a concept explained by Dot Faust, Elise Clawson, and Lore Joplin in NIC's 2004 document, *Implementing Evidence-based Principles in Community Corrections: Leading Organizational Change and Development.* The authors state that collaboration and partnership-building with stakeholders are necessary to ensure that those entities understand and support the organization's vision and incremental efforts.

Mark Moore provides a framework for system change known as the Strategic Management Triangle. (See Figure 1, below.) His idea is rooted in the assertion that creating public value is the first responsibility of public leaders. By defining public value, building the internal and external organizational support that aligns with that value, and establishing the capacity to achieve it, systems can be transformed.

Any effort—such as the MPRI—that is focused on changing a publicly managed system must have value to key stakeholders. Unless policymakers, funders, and the public at large recognize the value of the effort, they won't support it.

Figure 1. The Strategic Management Triangle

Looking Upward
Maintain Political Support

Looking Inward
Ensure Organizational Capacity

Looking Outward
Define Public Value

Adapted from Moore, Mark, *Strategic Management in Government*, Harvard University Press, October 1995.
As referenced by the National Institute of Corrections publication, *Implementing Evidence-based Principles in Community Corrections: Leading Organizational Change and Development.*

Essentially, reentry efforts must build political will. Reentry implementation strategies must incorporate the often incongruous perspectives of many stakeholders. The systems perspective of the MPRI Model was founded on the assumption that our reentry initiative could not succeed without the support of community leaders. These necessary partnerships were formed during the initial planning of the MPRI Model and have been sustained during its implementation over the last 3 years.

Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative Model: Safer Neighborhoods, Better Citizens

Michigan's focus on prisoner reentry represents a convergence of three major schools of thought on how to develop and fully implement a comprehensive system for prisoner transition planning. In this way, the MPRI provides a synergistic model for prisoner reentry that is deeply influenced by the nation's best thinkers on how to improve former prisoners' success.

Development of the MPRI Model was launched in 2003. The specific elements of the model are presented in Figure 2, below. The model begins with the three-phase reentry approach of the U.S. Department of Justice's Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI). It further delineates the transition process by adding the seven decision points of the Transition from Prison to Community (TPC) Model promulgated by the National Institute of Corrections. Also incorpo-

Figure 2. The Three-Phase, Seven-Decision-Point MPRI Model

The MPRI Model involves improved decision-making at seven critical decision points in the three phases of the custody, release, and community supervision/discharge process.

PHASE ONE—GETTING READY
The institutional phase describes the details of events and responsibilities which occur during the offender's imprisonment from admission until the point of the parole decision.
Phase One involves the first two major decision points:
1. **Assessment and classification:** Measuring the offender's risks, needs, and strengths.
2. **Prisoner programming:** Assignments to reduce risk, address need, and build on strengths.

PHASE TWO—GOING HOME
The transition to the community, or reentry, phase begins approximately 6 months before the offender's target release date. In this phase, highly specific reentry plans are organized that address housing, employment, and services to address addiction and mental illness.
Phase Two involves the next two major decision points:
3. **Prisoner release preparation:** Developing a strong, public-safety-conscious parole plan.
4. **Release decision making:** Improving parole release guidelines.

PHASE THREE—STAYING HOME
The community and discharge phase begins when the prisoner is released from prison and continues until discharge from community parole supervision. In this phase, it is the responsibility of the former prisoner, human services providers, and the offender's network of community supports and mentors to assure continued success.
Phase Three involves the final three major decision points of the transition process:
5. **Supervision and services:** Providing flexible and firm supervision and services.
6. **Revocation decision making:** Using graduated sanctions to respond to behavior.
7. **Discharge and aftercare:** Determining community responsibility to "take over" the case.

rated into its approach are the policy statements and recommendations from the Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council, a project coordinated by the Council of State Governments.

Michigan had the tremendous benefit of support for this work from the National Governors' Association (NGA) and the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), each of which provided substantial resources for consultation, research, training, and technical assistance. Through the grant from NGA, the MPRI is also using ZIP-code-based mapping of parolees in Michigan, conducted by the Urban Institute, as part of our intensive strategic-planning process. The knowledge base being created by the MPRI is unprecedented.

Unified Commitment

With support from NIC and the JEHT Foundation, MDOC engaged Public Policy Associates, Inc., and the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency to convene hundreds of stakeholders to define the vision and mission of the MPRI.

♦ **The *vision* of the MPRI** is for every prisoner released into the community to have the tools needed to succeed.

♦ **The *mission* of the MPRI** is to reduce crime by implementing a seamless system of services and supervision developed with each prisoner—delivered through state and local collaboration—from the time of their entry into prison, through their transition, reintegration, and aftercare in the community.

We used a carefully thought-out process to ground these concepts into a Michigan-specific model. The stakeholders were brought together, organized into seven workgroups to correspond with NIC's seven TPC decision points, and given the task of reviewing the report of the Re-Entry Policy Council. Through this process, the workgroups customized the recommendations and policy statements specifically for use in Michigan.

This process of engaging stakeholders to develop the MPRI Model lasted almost a full year. It resulted in unprecedented, unified commitment to design a comprehensive strategy for combatting crime and recidivism in the State of Michigan.

Organizing and Structuring Partnerships

Michigan is poised for success through a combination of a strong mandate from Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and Corrections Director Patricia L. Caruso, a powerful policy framework, and strong community buy-in. The challenge now is statewide implementation at a scale of 13,000 prisoners per year transitioning successfully from prison. Strong and sustained local capacity is the single most critical aspect of the MPRI implementation process. Without resilient local part-nerships, successful prisoner reentry simply is not possible.

Statewide implementation of the MPRI Model has taken place over a 3-year period. The implementation effort began with eight pilot sites in fiscal year (FY) 2006, which ended in September 2006. During FY 2007, another seven sites incorporated the lessons learned from the initial pilot sites, bringing us to a total of 15 fully operational jurisdictions covering 75% of the state. In FY 2008, implementation will be completed in the rest of the state.

A standard operational structure at each site enables the statewide plan to be realized by local agency and community actors. Three key groups perform essential roles in completing the range of activities needed for full implementation of the MPRI Model.

♦ **Local rentry advisory councils.** These groups advise, inform, and support the implementation process along the same lines as the statewide MPRI Advisory Council. The councils are created to build support for local implementation of the MPRI Model and to educate the community on how the initiative will create safer neighborhoods and better citizens. Each advisory council may have as many as 150 members.

♦ **Steering teams.** Steering teams develop, oversee, and monitor the local implementation process and coordinate local community involvement in the overall statewide MPRI development process. Each steering team includes members from MPRI partner agencies that provide services necessary for successful reentry, such as homelessness prevention organizations, workforce development boards, and substance abuse treatment providers. These representatives are active on their steering teams because of the strong mandate from Governor Granholm for multi-agency collaboration and participation and because MDOC leaders encourage and empower their involvement.

Each local steering team is led by four co-chairs:

– The warden of the area prison from which prisoners are released to the community site;

– A parole supervision representative from the local Michigan DOC Field Operations Administration office; and

– Two community representatives drawn from the large number of local faith, human service, and planning organizations that are critical to local reentry efforts.

The co-chairs may work out of the local parole office. They work directly with their site's Community Coordinator, a vital and specialized position that essentially "staffs" the steering team under the guidance of the four co-chairs. The specific responsibilities of the Community Coordinator are described in the next section.

♦ **Transition teams.** These teams support offenders in the transition planning process and guide them from the institution back into the community through a case-management approach. Teams include key local service providers and are drawn from the membership of the steering teams. Their main responsibility is to provide essential input for developing and implementing Transition Accountability Plans (TAPs) for offenders in the reentry, community supervision, and discharge phases of the MPRI Model.

Each transition team is led by the Field Operations Administration parole representative, who, as noted, also serves as a co-chair of the steering team. This reflects the function of the parole agent in working toward parolee success under a case management model. (Our case management work in the future will be more directly guided by evidence-based practices.)

The Coordinator's Role in Catalyzing Change

Michigan's MPRI communities have become dedicated champions of improved offender reentry, and their determined and specific preparation for prisoners who will transition back to their communities is already resulting in less crime. Building the capacity for system reform, however, requires guidance and support for local efforts toward education, training, planning, and implementation. This is the role of the local Community Coordinator—to help the community effectively prepare for prisoner reentry while MDOC is better preparing prisoners for release.

The MPRI Model requires convening, organizing, and eliciting buy-in and investment from the community; planning for sustainability; and ensuring quality results throughout the transition process. The Community Coordinators who do this work receive training and technical support from the Michigan Council and Crime and Delinquency and Public Policy Associates, Inc., on how to manage these processes based on the MPRI Model.

Necessary qualities. Community Coordinators provide four key ingredients for successful community organizing. As adapted from the James Irvine Foundation's publication, *Community Catalyst*, they are:

♦ **Capacity.** Each Community Coordinator must have the capacity to work on prisoner reentry. Indicators of adequate capacity include experience, resources to apply to the work, and relationships with key stakeholders.

♦ **Commitment.** Each Community Coordinator must demonstrate a dedicated commitment to prisoner reentry and be able to foster the development of this commitment within the local community.

♦ **Credibility**. The Community Coordinator must demonstrate credibility within the community.

♦ **Knowledge.** The Community Coordinator must understand prisoner reentry and its implications to effectively mobilize change within the community.

Essential skills. Implementing the MPRI Model for reentry requires a precise and extensive set of skills that are the hallmarks of the Community Coordinators who staff the local development process throughout the state.

- ♦ **Communication.** The Community Coordinators must have excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, to facilitate connectedness among all the stakeholders in the implementation. Communication must be facilitated in both directions between the local communities and the statewide MPRI managers.

- ♦ **Community convening.** The Community Coordinators must be able to bring diverse stakeholders together, build consensus around prisoner reentry issues, and catalyze action and leadership within their communities toward transition planning.

- ♦ **Community organization.** The coordinator's role in organizing within communities involves training Steering Team and Transition Team members, facilitating ReEntry Advisory Council meetings, and building partnerships among key stakeholder groups.

- ♦ **Brokering.** Community Coordinators frequently act as a broker within communities. They need the ability to maintain a degree of neutrality so that they can negotiate effectively through community conflict. Extensive skills in brokering and fostering neutrality are central requirements of a Community Coordinator.

- ♦ **Coordination.** The implementation planning associated with MPRI presents quite a challenge. Community Coordinators need to work hard to maintain connectedness with and among community stakeholders, providers, and related activities.

- ♦ **Systems building.** Building systems and shepherding change across systems requires a complex set of skills and much hands-on experience. The Community Coordinator must have experience in building and managing systemwide change.

Core responsibilities. The involvement of Michigan's communities in the MPRI revolves around three main focus areas. Within each area, specific tasks fall to the MPRI Community Coordinators.

FOCUS AREA ONE: Community Involvement in the MPRI Process. Essential to the MPRI Model is hands-on involvement to ensure that each of the seven primary decision points in reentry is deeply influenced by the perspectives and input of the local community. The iterative process of refining the model requires open communication and effective coordination to ensure that community input is captured, the community has an accurate understanding of the model, and expectations for implementation are clearly defined.

Each of the major decision points for improved prisoner reentry under the MPRI Model must involve community input and collaboration. Without local community involvement, the process would be viewed as "top-down" and would undoubtedly miss the opportunities for local expertise and experience at the ground level where service delivery must be focused. The community role in each of the seven decision points begins at the first meeting of the MPRI Advisory Council, and it continues to be one of the hallmarks of the design and implementation process in Michigan.

The seven decision points affect the policies and practices that apply to the offender transition process—each of which must be adapted as a result of community input and involvement. The affected policies and practices provide a rich context for an examination of the community's role in the MPRI and thus a guide to the work to be done.

The primary role of the MPRI Community Coordinator is to be the "point person" who channels the community's input so that the services of key local stakeholders can be adjusted accordingly, and who maintains communications systems that ensure everyone is clear about the MPRI process and has a voice in its development.

Task 1. The Community Coordinator ensures that information from each prisoner's TAP is provided to the local MPRI transition team.
Task 2. The Community Coordinator ensures that local MDOC Field Operations staff share with the local transition team timely information on the targeted or earliest release date of each offender and the status of each offender's movement to the facility nearest his or her city of return.
Task 3. The Community Coordinator ensures that the local reentry parole agent is coordinating the interaction of the transition team with staff of the local prison and also is convening and facilitating local team meetings to develop a TAP for each releasee.
Task 4. The Community Coordinator oversees the use of the TAP as a "hand-off" for transfer of the parolee's case to responsible parties in the community who will continue providing services and guidance when the individual discharges from parole supervision.

FOCUS AREA TWO: Community Assets, Policy Barriers, and Gaps in Services. In each locality, it is necessary to identify community assets that can be applied to improve parolee success, any policy and operational barriers that may exist among state and local agencies that are potentially involved in reentry, and any service gaps that can be filled with state, federal, and local funding.

Task 5. The Community Coordinator organizes the community-assessment task of evaluating the assets, barriers, and service gaps relevant to reentry that are present in the local area.

FOCUS AREA THREE: Community-Based Comprehensive Prisoner Reentry Plans. Local teams develop Comprehensive Prisoner ReEntry Plans that articulate the framework, rationale, and funding scheme for improved policies, practices, and programs in their community. The success of these efforts is measured by reduced crime and fewer returns to prison. The Community Coordinator facilitates the local process and provides the staff support needed to write the Comprehensive Plan.

> **Task 6**. *The Community Coordinator ensures the development and completion of the Comprehensive Prisoner ReEntry Plan in each locality.*

Mutual Capacity Building

The partnerships that have allowed Michigan to advance the MPRI Model have also opened the door to mutual capacity-building that removes the boundaries of "us" and "them" and leads to greater awareness that crime and justice affect everyone. By collaborating with the community and local partners in reentry, corrections agencies help to catalyze transformative changes in all of the systems and agencies that contribute to keeping our neighborhoods safe.

Though MPRI is still in its early stages of implementation, it has already generated a better than 25% decrease in recidivism by prisoners who have transitioned through the MPRI process. These gains illustrate the power of partnership and its culmination in a mutual capacity-building that can effect the change necessary to protect our neighborhoods. By maintaining a focus on systems thinking, sustaining a unified commitment, organizing and structuring partnerships, and catalyzing change, the MPRI Model is one example of how collaboration and partnership can build capacity and improve the safety of local communities. ♦

For more information:

Le'Ann Duran
Manager
Office of Offender ReEntry
Michigan Department of Corrections
P.O. Box 30003
Lansing, Michigan 48909
(517) 373-3653
duranl@michigan.gov

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Providing Tools for Risk Reduction Case Management in Parole and Community Corrections

by
Keven Pellant,
Deputy Secretary,
Community & Field Services,
Margie Phelps,
Reentry Director,
Tina Waldron,
Program Consultant II,
and
Kathleen Graves,
Director, Community
Corrections Services,
Kansas Department of
Corrections,
Topeka, Kansas

K ansas is committed to reducing entries and returns to prison, and also to using comprehensive risk reduction and reentry practices that will give offenders a better chance of returning and reintegrating safely and success-fully. Reducing the numbers of offenders in the system and who re-offend—by applying the principles of risk, need, and responsivity—is a multi-faceted and complex undertaking.

The increasing national and state commitment to following the research and implementing system-wide and multi-system change is encouraging, and early returns on reentry and risk reduction programs and services are promising. This is resulting in more support among corrections professionals, lawmakers, policy-makers, service providers, and many other stakeholders for the Kansas Offender Risk Reduction & Reentry Plan (KOR^{3}P).

The Kansas plan is supported by the Kansas Reentry Policy Council (KRPC), a multi-disciplinary group comprising elected officials, cabinet members from several state agencies (including those overseeing substance abuse, mental health, health, housing, and workforce development), a member of the Kansas Supreme Court, a victim representative, and a representative of the Kansas Sentencing Commission. The KRPC provides broad policy support, sets objectives and outcomes, shepherds law and policy change, facilitates and deploys resources, and through its executive director has convened a steering committee with task forces to identify system issues and recommend new practices for implementation.

The Basics

In reentry programs within the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC), high-risk offenders are assessed for risk and need at 14 months prior to release from prison. Reentry case managers then work with offenders to develop comprehen-sive reentry plans, with specific pre- and post-release goals and activities.

Staff specialists in such areas as housing, mental health, employment, cogni-tive programs, and substance abuse play several roles. They teach classes, they develop resources, they bridge to other service systems, and they work with case managers to support the plans. Both unit team counselors in the facilities and parole officers in the field work with reentry case managers and ensure each offender's reentry case plan is consistent with security and supervision require-ments and needs.

KOR^{3}P seeks to expand the reentry model throughout the system. This means that at the time a person enters the corrections system, his or her risk level is assessed, areas of risk and need are identified, and a risk reduction case plan is developed. These plans are then carried out to help the offender exit the system and become law-abiding.

The details of the KOR^{3}P center on 20 goals. Some goals address specific risk/need areas present in the offender population, such as housing, cognitive patterns, employment, substance abuse, and families. Other goals address system and organizational support needed to improve reentry outcomes, such as data system support, evaluation/research, and community capacity.

Because parole, community corrections, and probation services are delivered by three separate systems in Kansas, the plan's success also addresses engaging community corrections and probation in the planning and implementation. This article will focus further on skills development of case managers and extending risk reduction work into community corrections.

Skill Development Is Key

Case managers and their immediate supervisors are the most important group of corrections workers in risk reduction. All of our systems work to improve outcomes ultimately leads back to the ability of the case managers to engage in risk reduction with offenders.

Our specific goals have included:

♦ Development of policies and procedures that enable and support case management;

♦ Integration of systems so services such as substance abuse, mental health care, and housing are available to offenders;

♦ Development of community engagement, so that local residents are receptive to giving offenders a chance to succeed; and

♦ Achieving the right measure of guidelines and discretion to target interventions according to the offender's risk level and risk/need profile.

Above all, case managers need the skills and training to carry out this work. We are now developing an integrated case management training curriculum, to be reinforced and followed up by supervisors trained in supportive supervision, that ultimately will be delivered to all corrections case managers. This training will be a centerpiece to the success of the KOR^{3}P, and roll-out of the full training is under way in the fall of 2007.

Following are some of the key features and lessons we have learned through our process of case management skills development.

♦ **New training content.** The overall training integrates pre-existing training modules with new sessions that tie the various curricula and skill-development elements into one comprehensive program.

For instance, existing courses on the risk/need instrument (the Level of Service Inventory–Revised, or LSI-R), cognitive reflective programming, and advanced communication and motivational skills will be joined with new material on case planning, treatment responsivity, cognitive-based strategies, and training in specific disciplines such as housing, mental health, and substance abuse. All of these skills will be tied together to increase the case managers' knowledge, understanding, and comfort level in developing comprehensive case plans that target high-risk offenders and their individual risks and needs.

New courses will ensure that all case managers are well-versed in current research. Using many skills practice opportunities, case managers will learn such discrete skills as developing and sustaining partnerships with providers, networking with peers, and learning to effectively access and apply available resources within their facilities or offices and in the community.

♦ **Academic model for coursework.** The new training structure will use an academic model, with 100-, 200-, and 300-level classes. Current staff who already have completed some "courses" can round out their learning with the new classes, while the entire program will be available to new staff. This system also will aid supervisors and managers in identifying which courses or combinations of courses are required for specific positions, in the nature of a certificate or "degree" in case management. All case managers will be required to complete all level 100 and some measure of level 200 classes. Specialized case managers will be required to take more advanced classes.

♦ **Training follow-up.** Skills developers will deliver the classroom training and later follow up with case managers and their supervisors to gauge and reinforce use of the skills learned. Some classes will specifically target supervisors, with the aim of increasing their ability to support, coach, model, and mentor their staff in their pursuit of further case management skills.

♦ **Assessment and feedback.** Each class will include very specific measures of proficiency, with behavior-anchored measurements, including pre- and post-tests, trainer observation, and self-assessments. Each case manager will receive individual feedback about progress, both as part of the classes and in follow-up through collaboration between skills developers and supervisors. Standards regarding pass rates for given positions will be set by policy.

♦ **Inclusion of service and program providers.** Staff from partner agencies in key service systems (such as mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and employment) will be invited to participate in corrections-delivered training, in order to broaden their awareness, knowledge, and skills in risk-reduction strategies.

♦ **Training evaluation.** Data on the effectiveness of training will be collected in the classroom and by supervisors observing and capturing the performance of case managers in the field. This will allow us to measure the progress of skill development, identify areas needing further attention, and determine the overall impact of these new approaches to case management training.

This training plan will move into the field, beyond the classroom, to ensure, first, that case managers receive the information and tools they need and, second, that they have the necessary support to implement these practices comprehensively in managing their caseloads. Case managers will have the opportunity to contribute meaningfully and on an ongoing basis to the development of the curriculum to be sure the classroom work is meeting their needs.

This case management training supports the work being done in parole to safely reduce revocations. It will also support legislation for implementing risk reduction case management in community corrections—another significant source of revocations ending in incarceration. With time, case managers who are delivering traditional probation supervision through court services also will have an opportunity to receive this training. In this way, all corrections case managers will learn the same model, information, and approach, so that ultimately any offender involved in the corrections system in Kansas will be managed according to risk reduction principles.

Moving Risk Reduction into Community Corrections

The skills development case management training discussed above provides a resource for support as Kansas moves risk reduction into community corrections. The Kansas community corrections system is comprised of 31 county-operated Intensive Supervision Probation programs that provide services to all 105 counties in Kansas. These agencies have a legislatively defined target population that includes high-risk and -need probationers, and program design is specific to local offender needs and court procedures. The community corrections agencies operate in parallel with, and often in collaboration with, the judiciary system's court services officers, who deliver traditional probation services.

In the 2007 session, the legislature appropriated funding under the Senate Bill 14 Risk Reduction Initiative (SB14 RRI) specifically for risk reduction work in community corrections. Following an application process, KDOC awarded $4 million of this appropriation as grant funds to community corrections agencies. SB14 RRI allowed for a competitive grant process under which these agencies

apply for funding to enhance risk reduction efforts and reduce revocation rates by at least 20%.

The three specific goals of the SB14 RRI are:

♦ To increase public safety;

♦ To reduce the risk level of probationers on community corrections supervision; and

♦ To increase the percentage of probationers who successfully complete community corrections supervision.

Agencies funded under this initiative commit to the philosophy of risk reduction and to building a system that will facilitate probationers' success by targeting the criminogenic needs of medium- and high-risk offenders using evidence-based practices and community supervision methods.

KDOC received technical assistance from the Center for Effective Public Policy (CEPP) in the development of the SB14 RRI grant application and review process. Funding awards were prioritized for distribution to:

♦ Agencies whose rates of condition revocations have been significantly higher than the statewide average;

♦ Agencies striving to reduce their rate of revocation by a percentage greater than the 20% required reduction; and/or

♦ Agencies that target the successful reentry of probationers who are considered medium- to high-risk for revocation.

The application procedure itself constituted a risk reduction planning process. As a part of developing their applications for funding, agencies addressed the following key areas.

♦ **RRI narrative.** These narratives discussed current agency needs. They typically included a description of problems in probationers' successful completion of supervision as viewed through the lens of LSI-R data, an examination of current practice and current resources, an examination of the agency's application of the princples of risk reduction, and an identification of gaps between current and evidence-based practices.

♦ **Service plan**. Agencies presented their plan to close the identified gaps, establish a strategy to reduce revocation rates by at least 20%, target services to medium- to high-risk probationers, and reduce probationer risk and promote effective functioning in the community through the use of evidence-based practices. Agencies also presented evidence of community support for their initiative and indicated willingness to participate in the planning and

implementation of a consistent set of statewide policies for community corrections supervision and revocation.

♦ **Local teams and oversight mechanism.** Agencies established local teams to support the planning, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of the local RRI. They also presented a strategy for monitoring the planning, implementation, and success of the local RRI.

Collaboration for Progress

An essential element of the risk reduction work under way in Kansas is the collaboration between KDOC, national partners (such as the JEHT Foundation, CEPP, and the National Institute of Corrections [NIC]), and local community corrections agencies.

Local agency planning. One form of this collaboration has been evident in assistance to local community corrections agencies as they developed their risk reduction plans and grant applications for SB14 RRI funding.

♦ Support included 2-day training sessions in July 2007 presented by KDOC and CEPP for community corrections agency directors and representatives.

♦ KDOC also held five "Office Hours Sessions" at locations across the state. Team members from KDOC's community corrections division were available to answer questions and provide clarification on the SB14 RRI application process.

♦ KDOC hosted two resource workshops for community corrections agencies to acquaint them with information on a variety of topics. Participants learned about available mental health services, KDOC contracting practices, new managed care practices in Kansas for community mental health and substance abuse services, and recruiting and working with volunteers. Presentations on implementing evidence-based practices were delivered by by KDOC parole managers and community corrections directors who have previously implemented risk reduction work, to share their experiences and lessons learned.

"Growing" a will for change. A core focus of this collaboration is to build an infrastructure for change by providing education on the science of risk reduction to community corrections agencies, their case managers, and their key partners and stakeholders.

♦ This was addressed by holding stakeholder conferences in November 2007. Agency directors, judges, county commissioners, advisory board members, and other key community partners came together at these conferences to learn evidence-based practices. Local teams also worked with a facilitator to address local issues and strategies for change.

♦ Follow-up to these conferences will include regional skills-building training workshops for supervisors and case managers, which will continue to enhance the proficiency of staff statewide in evidence-based practices.

Developing advanced skills for offender management. Once the infrastructure for change is in place, targeted skill development will begin. New training initiatives will focus on skills that improve offenders' chances of success in the community, consistent with the skills-building and case management training being delivered in the KDOC.

♦ **Advanced Communication and Motivational Strategies training.** This program explains the stages of behavior change and gives officers tools for assessing probationers' motivation to change and either reducing their resistance to change or reinforcing their commitment to change.

♦ **Cognitive behavioral tool training.** This material provides officers with a working knowledge of the Thinking for a Change curriculum so that they can support the treatment experiences of probationers.

♦ **Case plan training.** In these sessions, officers acquire training and practice in working with probationers to collaboratively develop a case plan based on LSI-R© data that will be used as a case management tool.

In addition, NIC will support work done in KDOC and community corrections to develop ongoing supervisory training and development. This technical assistance will aid Kansas corrections managers in identifying training needs and designing and developing training. KDOC, in conjunction with NIC, will strive to put forth training in supportive staff supervision, providing field supervisors with education in coaching and mentoring staff and assessing critical knowledge and skill bases.

The ultimate goal of the KOR3P is a 50% reduction in revocations in parole, and a decrease in revocations of at least 20% is required by the legislation that funds community corrections services in Kansas. Developing the specialized skills of risk reduction management for all corrections case managers is a critical ingredient for this success. A strong and sustained partnership between KDOC and community corrections will bring these skills to the case managers who work with the highest-risk offenders in Kansas, and to those whose offender caseloads present with the most need. This comprehensive approach to risk reduction will enable Kansas to safely reduce entries and returns to prison—benefiting the community, enhancing public safety, and allowing wise use of corrections resources. ♦

NIC has developed material supporting delivery of the Thinking for a Change cognitive-behavioral program. Key items include:
– Offender/participant lesson plans, *http://nicic.org/library/016672*
– Facilitator training manual, *http://nicic.org/library/017124*
– Facilitator training program on DVD, *http://nicic.org/library/018311*

For more information:

Margie Phelps
Director of Reentry Services
Kansas Department of Corrections
(785) 296-3128
margiep@kdoc.dc.state.ks.us

Keven Pellant
Deputy Secretary
Community and Field Services
Kansas Department of Corrections
(785) 296-4522
kevenp@kdoc.dc.state.ks.us

Tina Waldron
Program Consultant II
Kansas Department of Corrections
(785) 296-0890
tinaw@kdoc.dc.state.ks

or

Kathleen Graves
Director, Community Corrections Services
Kansas Department of Corrections
900 SW Jackson Street, 4th Floor
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(785) 296-4538
kathleeng@kdoc.dc.state.ks.us

Improving Parole Outcomes with Performance Leadership and Data: Doing What Works

NEW YORK TIMES, JANUARY 3, 2007—"Embattled Chief Executive Resigns at Home Depot." The resignation follows an investor group's proposal to evaluate the company's direction and management because its stock had underperformed due to "deficient strategy, operations, capital allocation, and governance."

*by
Danny Hunter,
Director,
Field Operations Divison,
George Braucht,
Program Specialist,
Field Operations Division,
and
John Prevost
Assistant Director,
Research, Evaluation, and
Technology,
Georgia State Board of
Pardons and Paroles,
Atlanta, Georgia*

Businesses and their leaders come and go based on measured success. Government agencies and the criminal justice system in particular, however, have just recently begun adopting business tools and metrics to embrace accountability to stakeholders. Only in the last 2 decades has "what works" research in criminal justice validated the use of assessed offender risk as the most important metric for predicting recidivism.[1]

The Georgia Parole Board's Field Operations Division is focused on the core business of increasing successful parole completions by managing risk. Georgia was selected in 2004 to participate in NIC's Transition from Prison to the Community Initiative (TPCI) based on its commitment to implement NIC's evidence-based and data-driven reentry model. TPCI is about *how* to effectively do what works.

The leaders of 12 Georgia state agencies spent the first year in TPCI studying offender transition policies, practices, and data, resulting in a slate of recommendations for action. Some recommendations knitted together uncoordinated processes that were already in place. Others required new processes or collaborations. A factor underlying every recommendation—and a key to the initiative's success—is the use of data to track work processes and progress. This article describes the evolution of the Georgia Parole Board's business-oriented data and performance leadership model, beginning in the late 1990s and continuing into the Georgia TPCI project.

Business is Data Driven; Government Should Be, Too

The cornerstone of success in business is a plan that: 1) operationally defines the objective, 2) describes the rationale for how the objective is accomplished, and 3) establishes feedback mechanisms and benchmarks for monitoring progress. Business plans typically are not funded unless they demonstrate how the business will become profitable or meet its objective. Businesses study production costs, market share, profit margin, and customer opinions on almost everything about the product. The ubiquity of customer satisfaction assessments is evident, for

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1. Paul Gendreau, Claire Coggin, and Tracy Little, *Predicting adult recidivism: what works*, Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1996. Online at *http://ww2.ps-sp.gc.ca/publications/corrections/pdf/199607_e.pdf.*

example, on sales receipts from The Home Depot and its rival Lowe's, which ask buyers to take an online survey about their services and the buying experience.

Governments are now taking an empirical approach to demonstrate accountability to their main stakeholders—the public. In the criminal justice arena, perhaps the longest running and most widely reported set of outcome metrics is the FBI's annual Uniform Crime Reports. An application of a data-driven approach to managing crime is New York City's CompStat system, which uses crime statistics that measure performance to drive work activity. Data on the locations and types of crime being committed are presented at regular CompStat sessions at which commanders are held accountable to discuss the steps they are taking to improve neighborhood safety vis-à-vis the performance measures.[2]

Many police departments across the nation have adopted their own versions of CompStat. Local governments also are embracing accountability metrics for other government services, such as how quickly potholes are filled, wait times when calling government agencies, and length of time spent in driver's license renewal lines. These types of performance measures are tracked and reported to the public. A quick Google search lists scores of government websites that report on measures that matter to the public.

Georgia's Data-Driven TPCI Plan

Recommendations of the Georgia TPCI planning team include implementing risk/needs assessments, expanding programming, improving the coordination of services, and developing transition plans at the point of entry to the criminal justice system that follow the offender through the system and back into the community.[3] Included with each recommendation is a requirement that data be used to determine what programs are implemented and which offenders are placed in specific programs.

The final recommendation is: *Evaluation: Create measurable benchmarks and standards against which the initiative is evaluated.* Each partner agency is tasked with developing measures of service delivery and effectiveness. The parole management team has considerable experience identifying what data is useful and effectively informing and focusing managers and parole officers on the core business processes and activities that increase successful parole completions.

Computerized Information Systems: Essential Data to Support Accountability Measures

Georgia's correctional agencies have long shared a robust, mainframe computer system that holds a large data set on every offender who has been under the state's

2. Paul E O'Connell, *Using Performance data for accountability: the New York City Police Department's CompStat model of police management* (Cambridge, Mass.: The PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment for the Business of Government, Harvard University, 2001). Online at *http://www.businessofgovernment.org/pdfs/Oconnell_Report.pdf*.

3. Georgia Reentry Impact Project Policy Team, *Recommendations*, unpublished report distributed to the Steering Committee, October 25, 2005.

jurisdiction since at least 1980. Offender-specific data include demographic, mental health, education, diagnostic, criminal history, prison behavior, and program information. The Parole Board has developed expertise in analyzing and using this data, for example, in a 1992 reassessment of the Parole Board's release decision guidelines. The analysis included determining the actual length of time various offender groups had served before release from prison and updating and re-validating the association of each guideline risk factor with the likelihood of committing a new crime.

In 1998, the agency deployed a computerized case management system (CMS), designed by parole officers and managers to fully document supervision activities in data form. As the leadership team gained experience in identifying pertinent data items, creating effective reports, and subsequently revising the data elements and reports, they came to rely on the CMS data as vital to effective operations.

Prior to launching CMS, supervision activity was documented on paper. Parole officers hand-counted data for a monthly activity summary (MAS), which managers and others up the chain of command compiled into a statewide summary that was typically completed 3 weeks after the end of each month. The MAS included counts of various types of contact with parolees on different levels of supervision, investigations and other reports written, parolee losses and gains, revocations, etc. It was used primarily to determine staff allocations and to provide data for the agency annual report and legislative funding requests.

The Parole Board also prepared a monthly production report, generated from the mainframe computer system, to track parole revocations and discharges. This information was not available until at least 30 days after the end of month and was only available as statewide totals, with no breakdown by regions or districts.

In 2000, the agency created a computerized MAS that tabulates data entered by parole officers during the course of their usual work activities. The original instruction for creating this computerized MAS was that it should look exactly like the paper version; managers were comfortable relying on this information. The computerized MAS significantly reduced the time required to compile and view operational data. However, managers quickly realized information necessary for improving performance was still lacking.

Managing with the Right Data

Having the right information is essential to success. Successful businesses thrive with accurate and timely information about the work processes which contribute most to the quality and quantity of the product. Considerable thought and analysis is necessary to identify which activities and associated measures best predict desired outcomes/results.

During a Franklin-Covey training program, "The Four Disciplines of Execution," Parole Board managers heard a story about a company that sought to increase sales through area stores. Its staff, managers, and executives brain-

stormed many ideas to determine which measures, when monitored and adjusted, best predicted total monthly sales. Many factors were found to affect sales, but the single best predictor was the number of delivery trucks on the road each day. Focusing and providing feedback to managers and line employees on this measure significantly increased sales.

As explained during the training, such predictor numbers (e.g., trucks on the road) are "lead measures." By definition, they can be adjusted and have a direct affect on the outcome. The outcome (in this example, total sales) is the "lag measure." Successful organizations identify, monitor, and adjust lead measures to achieve their goals, or lag measures.

Our parole field management team focused on identifying its lead and lag measures. Fortunately, this was relatively easy. Over many years of thoughtful and deliberate review, the agency mission had been refined to read, in part, "To enhance public safety by successfully transitioning offenders back into the community." The Board's outcome or lag measure of successful transition was therefore identified as the parole completion rate. The parole completion rate provides a clear performance benchmark that aligns well with the agency mission of successfully transitioning offenders.

The next step was identifying the lead measures that influence the parole completion rate. While surveillance for community safety was a continuing necessity, the research was clear: to improve the parole completion rate requires reducing criminogenic risk—that is, addressing parolee attributes that are associated with the likelihood of committing crime.

The senior management team had already recognized that the first computerized MAS did not provide key information on the most important processes (lead measures) that would improve successful parole completions (our lag measure). Our new lead measures are specific to Georgia's parolees and can be used by both managers and parole officers. They are based on an actuarial analysis conducted in 2002 using the CMS supervision data on over 6,300 parole completions between July 2000 and January 2001.[4]

Ten factors were found to best predict the likelihood of a new crime being committed while an offender is under supervision. This finding was used in developing an automated risk assessment instrument that recalculates risk nightly for each parolee, adjusts the risk score when needed, and notifies the parole officer via email when the risk level moves up or down across a predetermined threshold. The four dynamic factors in the risk assessment are positive drug screens, residential moves (each of which increases risk), the number of days employed, and the number of months of program attendance (each of which lowers risk).

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4. George Braucht, Tammy Meredith, and John Prevost, "Automating Offender Risk Assessment," *Topics in Community Corrections: Annual Issue 2004, Assessment Issues for Managers*, 35-41. Online at *http://www.nicic.org/Library/period272*.

This analysis strongly supports and extends the application of the "what works" research to Georgia's parole population. Current parole supervision lead measures are employment rate, drug test results, and program participation. The MAS was subsequently revised to include this vital data. This analysis cements the strong relationship between risk and parole completion. In essence, the parole officer influences a parolee's risk to commit another crime by focusing on the dynamic factors (lead measures) that are directly related to completing parole (lag measure). Figure 1 presents a sample of the new MAS report.

Figure 1. Updated Monthly Activity Summary

Supervision Monthly Activity Summary For SEP-2007
Statewide

Date of Report 13-NOV-07

PAROLED/LOST	Paroled	% Paroled	Lost	% Lost	Discharged	Revoked	% Discharge	Month End Population
Details	956	4.57%	906	4.33%	662	244	73%	20,913

INTERACTIONS	Level	Total Cases	Total F/F	At Least One F/F	% At Least One F/F	% EV	% RV
	High	5,293	5,663	4,918	93%	72%	81%
	High - Other Status	1,839	618	469	26%	N/A	8%
Details	Standard	11,379	6,796	6,213	55%	68%	50%
	Standard - Other Status	2,402	638	480	20%	N/A	5%
	Total:	20,913	13,715	12,080	58%	69%	49%

EMPLOYMENT	Employable	% Employable	Employed	Employment Rate	Exempt	% Exempt
Details	14,200	68%	11,991	84%	2,524	12%

PROGRAM ACTIVITY		Sub Abuse		Cog		SO		MH		Emp		Edu		TOTAL	% of Pop
	Enrolled		3,343		451		143		542		334		151	4,486	21%
Details	Attended	69%	2,306	79%	357	78%	112	50%	271	52%	175	40%	61	3,017	14%
	Program Ends		271		31		3		29		111		3	431	2%
	COMP|TERM	271	0	31	0	3	0	29	0	111	0	3	0	431 / 0	2% / 0%

DRUGTESTS	# Tested	% Tested	Tested Positive	% Positive
Details	5,336	24%	665	12%

RANDOM	Selected	# Tested	% Tested	Not Tested	Unable To Test	Tested Positive	% Positive
Details	1,359	1,190	94%	78	91	120	10%

Effective Reports: Easy to Access, Read, and Understand the Causal Link

Successful companies use the right lead measures to alert managers early on to the likelihood of making a profit. Such measures can include production costs, products ordered, and even trucks on the road. Lead measures are vital because they can be adjusted to ensure later profits. Public organizations also need lead measures that are monitored, shared, and predict the need to adjust work processes to improve the agency's chances of achieving the desired results.

The availability of timely performance (lead) and outcome (lag) data is key to driving both effective parole officer management and offender supervision. The MAS is now deployed in a web-based system called STATS. A series of reports can be run by any agency employee at any time, and the information is no more than 2 to 3 days old.

The MAS displays supervision data in drill-down reports at five levels of agency operation, providing relevant summaries for staff at various levels:

♦ At the highest level, the MAS shows statewide totals;

♦ The regional report displays the information for each of the six regions;

♦ The district report shows comparative data for all parole offices (districts) in the associated region;

♦ The parole office reports show the data for all parole officers in a district; and

♦ The parole officer report lists all parolees on the caseload by name and shows each individual's risk factors and interventions.

Figure 2, below, shows a partial MAS report by regions. Managers can quickly learn, for example, the employment rate for all parolees in the state, in a region, in a district, and/or on a particular parole officer's caseload. These comparisons are particularly useful for identifying what may be affecting changes in the rate.

All levels of MAS reports present parolee data in two assigned levels of supervision, either high or standard. These levels are based on the automated risk calculation and certain policy overrides. Priority for field contacts and attention to criminogenic needs is placed on the high supervision parolees.

Figure 2. Monthly Activity Summary by Region (excerpt)

Interaction Activity During SEP-2007

Region	Supv.	Totals	F/F	% of Cases	EV	% of Cases	RV	% of Cases
Central	High	901	855	95%	467	83%	797	88%
	High-Other Status	265	89	34%	--	--	37	14%
	Standard	1,936	1,116	58%	1,124	78%	1,137	59%
	Standard-Other Status	360	88	24%	--	--	29	8%
	Not Determined	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Total	**3,462**	**2,148**	**62%**	**1,591**	**79%**	**2,000**	**58%**
Metro	High	743	682	92%	349	68%	537	72%
	High-Other Status	295	57	19%	--	--	17	6%
	Standard	2,088	711	34%	997	62%	679	33%
	Standard-Other Status	439	66	15%	--	--	11	3%
	Not Determined	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Total	**3,565**	**1,516**	**43%**	**1,346**	**63%**	**1,244**	**35%**
Northeast	High	836	772	92%	407	73%	675	81%
	High-Other Status	200	58	29%	--	--	14	7%
	Standard	1,724	1,054	61%	848	67%	918	53%
	Standard-Other Status	317	76	24%	--	--	13	4%
	Not Determined	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Total	**3,077**	**1,960**	**64%**	**1,255**	**69%**	**1,620**	**53%**

The MAS is the Field Division's most important report for displaying both lead and lag measures. However, data by itself can be difficult to interpret without a context. Two additional reports present the completion rate in powerful contexts: ranked lists of offenders' completion rates by parole office and by parole officer.

Because everyone in the agency can see these reports, they have generated a tremendous amount of discussion about the range of completion rates across districts, which is typically 50% to 90%. These reports are valuable tools for generating questions about why the differences exist and what can be done to improve the rates, especially in the district offices with the lower completion rates. Figure 3 provides a sample from the report on parole completions by office.

Figure 3. Comparison of Parole Completion Rates by Office (excerpt)

Parole Completion Rates by Office from Highest to Lowest

	Year to Date Summary 01-JAN-06 to 30-SEP-07				Six Month Rolling Summary 01-MAY-07 thru 31-OCT-07		
District Name	Comp %	Parole Ends Comp #	Rev #	District Name	Comp %	Parole Ends Comp #	Rev #
1. Conyers	81.61	253	57	Jefferson	92.06	58	5
2. Dekalb Parole Center	80.27	826	203	Conyers	87.13	88	13
3. North Fulton	79.85	440	111	Dekalb Parole Center	83.21	233	47
4. Jonesboro	79.26	535	140	Athens	82.72	67	14
5. Griffin	79.03	603	160	North Fulton	82.05	128	28
6. Lawrenceville	78.18	387	108	Griffin	80.47	173	42
7. Jefferson	78.03	174	49	Jonesboro	79.62	125	32
8. Clarkesville	76.42	175	54	Canton	78.89	71	19
9. Marietta	75.8	595	190	Thomaston	77.68	87	25
10. Ellijay	75	165	55	Marietta	76.85	166	50
11. Gainesville	74.87	292	98	Clarkesville	76.32	58	18
12. Canton	74.78	258	87	Ellijay	76.27	45	14
13. Brunswick	74.57	173	59	Brunswick	75.76	50	16
14. South Metro Parole Center	74.02	678	238	Lawrenceville	75.16	115	38
15. Adairsville	73.77	346	123	Lyons	74.76	77	26
16. Douglasville	73.71	342	122	South Metro Parole Center	73.73	188	67
17. Athens	73.66	193	69	Douglasville	73.55	89	32
18. Monroe	72.29	287	110	Monroe	73.33	88	32
19. Savannah	72.06	655	254	Hartwell	73.26	63	23
20. Thomson	71.65	91	36	Savannah	72.59	196	74
21. Columbus	69.43	411	181	Gainesville	72.28	73	28
22. Rome	68.8	344	156	Carrollton	72	90	35
23. Americus	67.86	114	54	Dalton	72	90	35
24. Carrollton	67.35	229	111	Statesboro	70.19	73	31
25. Macon	66.21	290	148	Adairsville	70	91	39
26. Hartwell	66.14	168	86	Louisville	68.97	40	18
27. Lagrange	65.55	312	164	Thomson	67.92	36	17
28. Cuthbert	65.43	53	28	Macon	67.8	80	38
29. Dublin	65.27	218	116	Rome	67.07	112	55
30. Dalton	65.26	248	132	Jesup	66.29	59	30

Several STATS reports have further clarified the causal linkage between parole officer activity and improved outcomes over time. While the MAS shows performance at one point in time, information displayed in line graphs can be used to show and compare information over time. For example, the sample report in Figure 4 shows the completion rate for one district over 19 months compared with the regional and state completion rates. The longitudinal report is available at the state, region, district, and parole officer levels.

Figure 4. Sample Longitudinal Report of Parole Completion by District
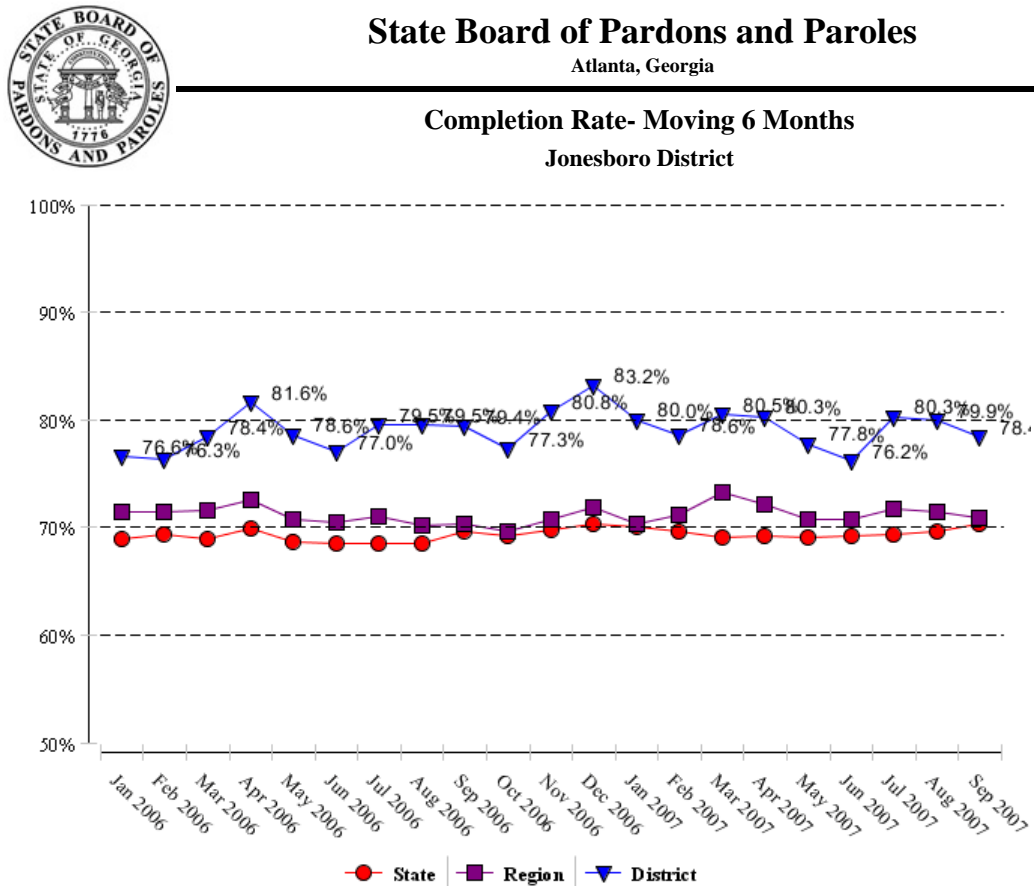
Performance Leadership: Speak Mission and What Works Language at Every Opportunity

As leaders do in successful businesses, leaders in effective public organizations first identify their mission and goals, then develop plans to move the organization toward those goals. Georgia's parole leadership has clearly identified its mission and the research-based lead and lag measures that drive performance and quantify success.

However, one additional factor is required to achieve and sustain success. In business and in government, appropriate measures must be accompanied by organizational leadership that clearly and consistently articulates the mission and the causal link between day-to-day activities and the mission. Georgia Parole's central office and regional managers have invested significant time and energy in helping local chief parole officers and their staff understand this linkage. The Field Division Director spends considerable time at parole offices reviewing the MAS and other reports and discussing each measure and its causal linkage to parole completion. His consistent message, combined with the hands-on data, has resulted in both improved lead measures and higher completion rates.

Performance leadership is reshaping the focus of the parole officer's daily activities. Officers are not only conducting basic residence and employment contacts but also giving more attention to possible drug use and sustained participation in programs. Participation in and successful completion of substance abuse, mental health, and cognitive skills programs are reported on the MAS. Many parole districts conduct orientation sessions, inviting not only new parolees but their families as well, to establish a team approach to success. Parole officers view themselves as advocates and service brokers for offenders who have unmet criminogenic needs, which officers increasingly understand to be associated with the chances of successfully completing parole.

In their book, *The Three Pillars of Public Management: Secrets of Sustained Success*, Ole Ingstrup and Paul Crookall note, "The most demanding task is making the mission part of the overall corporate life. It must become the department's way of thinking, behaving, and relating to issues and opportunities… All initiatives should be proposed and explained in terms of the mission."[5]

The Field Division Director's scope of responsibility includes 50 parole offices, almost 500 staff, and approximately 21,000 parolees located in 159 counties. Focus on the core business is modeled every month during the Regional Directors meeting in reviews of the MAS and STATS reports; the data are discussed in a similar way to how the Division Director's parole office visits are conducted. Managers are expected to consistently speak "mission language"—the Regional Director with her or his Chief Parole Officers, and they in turn with their staff. These discussions reinforce the importance of the causal linkage between the lead measures for reducing risk and increasing successful parole completions. Annual meetings of the Parole Board's field managers include recognition by the Field Division Director of the 10 offices with the highest annual parole completion rates.

One result of this sustained focus is a new initiative called Parole Success Advisory Teams, launched in August 2007. Rather than being imposed by upper management, the advisory teams represent a bottom-up approach by line

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5. Ole Ingstrup and Paul Crookall, *The Three Pillars of Public Management: Secrets of Sustained Success* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1998, 45.

managers and parole officers to assist and learn from each other to reduce risk and improve outcomes. The teams will harness the collective experience of field managers to assess and share offender supervision strategies, interpret STATS data to improve parole officer and caseload management, compare office cultures and practices, make recommendations to improve programs, and conduct other activities while monitoring how changes affect risk and parole completion. Interaction and assistance can range from one chief parole officer discussing strategies with another chief parole officer to a thorough review of every aspect of supervision activity, manager supervision of staff, and office culture.

The formation of these teams further demonstrates that performance leadership is making a difference in Georgia Parole. Performance leadership and its emphasis on the causal linkage between parole officer activity and completion rates is not only prompting collective questions among field staff on why completion rates differ, but it also encourages a learning environment for sharing ideas on how to improve completion rates across the diverse conditions that exist in Georgia.

The Parole Board's performance-based leadership has created a clear mission and vision for the agency and defined the most pertinent objectives, work activities, and metrics for accomplishing the mission. The lead and lag measures are being used in an organizational environment that encourages learning to improve success by collaboratively involving staff. The management team recognizes that these metrics and work activities evolved over several years only through a healthy and open learning environment.

TPCI: How to Do What Works

TPCI is helping Georgia's criminal justice system identify and articulate its goals and focus its work on coordinating the processes that best achieve those goals, within and across agencies. New demonstration projects and revamped work processes are being implemented as offenders enter the system and pertinent risk information accompanies them to sentence completion. By focusing on offender data, the Georgia Parole Board is contributing to the adoption of risk management strategies that are most likely to lead to successful parole completions.

As more actuarial data becomes available about specific offender needs and the interventions offered to address them, the lead measures illustrated here will be modified. The critical point is that, just as business success relies on performance-based leaders who effectively communicate relevant, timely, and accurate data, the corrections field is benefiting from performance leadership and offender intervention strategies that apply a business-like, data-driven model for success. ♦

For more information:

Danny Hunter
Director
Field Operations Division
Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles
(404) 656-9320
danny_hunter@pap.state.ga.us

George Braucht
Program Specialist
Field Operations Division
Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles
(404) 717-0361
george_braucht @pap.state.ga.us

or

John Prevost
Assistant Director
Research, Evaluation, and Technology
Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles
2 MLK, Jr., Dr.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
(404) 651-6744
john_prevost@pap.state.ga.us

For additional information, see National Institute of Corrections publications on effective correctional management (e.g., http://nicic.org/Library/021041) and implementing evidence-based practices (e.g., http://www.nicic.org/Library/019342).

Working Together to Improve Reentry: Bridging Budgets and Programs, Public and Private, Prison and the Community

by
Ginger Martin,
Assistant Director,
Oregon Department of Corrections,
Salem, Oregon

Planning and supporting a successful return to community living for individuals who have been incarcerated can be a complex process. Certainly, successful transition involves more than corrections agencies. Many public and private agencies have responsibility for parts of it, yet no agency has responsibility for all of it. In fact, the successful reintegration of prison inmates into the community requires the efforts of multiple state and local agencies. No single agency can accomplish this goal.

In June 1999, the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) formed a transition steering committee comprised of DOC employees and members from county community corrections agencies, the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision, law enforcement, a variety of state and local social service agencies, the Oregon Youth Authority, inmate families, and victim advocates.

The group first defined "transition" as a process that begins immediately upon entering the criminal justice system and extends through release from prison to community supervision.

More than 300 people representing over 70 organizations participated in the project. Subcommittees and design teams developed detailed plans for initiating and implementing effective, consistent, transition-related policies and practices. The work of this group resulted in many collaborations, both large and small, to improve the transition process. A few of the improvements they created are described in this article.

Department of Human Services—The Oregon Trail Card

The Oregon DOC and the Department of Human Services developed a partnership to make financial resources available immediately to offenders leaving prison. The old process for disbursing inmate trust funds, or the minimum $25 "gate money" provided to inmates at release, involved issuing a check to the inmate. Many newly released inmates did not have proper identification or a bank account, so it was difficult for them to access to these funds when the money was most needed.

Through this partnership, the Department of Human Services made the Oregon Trail Card technology available to support reentry. The Oregon Trail Card is a debit card used to issue state benefits such as welfare and food stamps; it works like the electronic gift cards that can be purchased from many stores. The funds in the inmate's trust account are made available via the card. This gives ex-inmates

instant access to their money to pay for food, transportation, and other immediate transition needs.

Department of Motor Vehicles—Identification Cards

The Oregon DOC and the Department of Motor Vehicles developed a partnership to expedite the process for offenders to obtain identification and driver's licenses as soon as possible after release. Tightened security requirements had resulted in changes at the DMV and, for a time, created a huge obstacle for offenders needing state-issued identification. The DMV would no longer accept a DOC ID card in their process of issuing licenses or IDs. After a long negotiation, the two agencies developed a process whereby the DOC can take agreed-upon steps to verify inmate names while they are incarcerated. Today, the DOC Release ID card does serve as proof of identity for released inmates who have a verified name. Consequently, they are immediately eligible for the state ID they need to find a job, rent a house, establish a bank account, and so on.

Oregon Housing and Community Services—Transitional Housing

This partnership is based on the recognition that the successful transition of offenders from incarceration to community living is a community and public safety issue, and not just a corrections system responsibility. Oregon Housing and Community Services allocated $500,000 to increase transitional housing for offenders and committed to working with the DOC in this effort. Projects have been funded in several counties throughout the state. This initiative is focused on more than increasing the availability of transitional housing—successful projects must include wrap-around services and case management.

This initiative is remarkable in terms of the multiple partners involved, both public and private:

♦ DOC and OHCS are involved at the state level.

♦ The county community corrections office acts as the lead agency.

♦ The local public safety coordinating council represents the entire local criminal justice system.

♦ Local service providers are involved in services and case management.

♦ Local transitional housing providers work with local corrections agencies (in some cases even owning and operating the housing).

♦ Local service providers and corrections agencies are invested in the program, operating the housing, providing case management, and providing wrap-around services.

Criteria for transitional housing programs were developed by the DOC Transition Steering Committee and incorporated into the request for project proposals. Each program must offer:

♦ 24-hour staff support and case management services;

♦ Wrap-around services delivered directly or by referral;

♦ Residences that are accessible to public transportation (where available), social services/treatment programs, and employment;

♦ Extensive drug screening services;

♦ Properties that are well maintained and presentable in the neighborhood;

♦ A safe and structured, clean and sober residential environment with written program rules;

♦ Case management staff skilled at intervening with criminal thinking and substance abuse problems; and

♦ Minimized daily fee assessments during the first 60 days of housing and a requirement for mandatory savings that are used for housing upon release.

Oregon Health Division—Family Planning

The DOC partners with the Oregon Health Division to distribute the "Smart Start" packet to inmates on release. Each released inmate receives health information, samples of health-related products, a variety of over-the-counter birth control devices, and information about how to access public health services in his or her community.

Faith Based Reentry Program—Pro-Social Supports

This statewide program works with hundreds of volunteers and faith- and community-based organizations. It provides offenders with a pro-social support system, gives them opportunities to develop their spirituality, and models pro-social attitudes and behavior.

In this initiative, the DOC's Religious Services unit has moved beyond traditional government partnerships. The unit has identified volunteer community chaplains in most counties in Oregon, it provides support and training to community volunteers, and it has been a catalyst to link area churches with community corrections agencies and to link offenders with a support network that many would not otherwise have at the time of release.

The Future: Governor's Re-Entry Council

Oregon's Governor Ted Kulongoski has signed an executive order creating a state-level Re-Entry Council. He created this group out of an understanding that reentry is not solely a corrections issue.

The Governor's Re-Entry Council is envisioned as a state-level, statewide leadership group that will work collaboratively on improving the success and safety of prison-to-community transition. The Governor's Re-Entry Council will include those state agencies that contribute to successful reentry, including the Department of Corrections, the Board of Parole and Post-Prison Supervision, the Department of Human Services, the Employment Department, Oregon Housing and Community Services, the Veteran's Department, the Department of Transportation, and Oregon's system of community colleges. The Council also will include representatives from local government agencies that contribute to the success of offenders after release, such as community corrections, community services, the judiciary, district attorneys, and law enforcement.

Council members are charged with guiding system-wide policy and implementing corresponding changes in their own organizations to support the changes in corrections' reentry approach. Implementing reform will require the commitment, dedication, and persistence of many working together.

The role of the Council includes:

♦ Providing coordination at the executive level of reentry initiatives across the state;

♦ Conducting a thorough review of existing state-level policies and practices that need to be corrected and making specific recommendations for system improvement;

♦ Removing or minimizing barriers that impede successful transition and reintegration;

♦ Reviewing agency budgets and priorities to ensure they are aligned with policies that support successful transition and with evidence-based practices; and

♦ Establishing implementation groups to work on the operational aspects of system reform—the procedures and practices that will need to be changed in the many agencies involved in the reentry process.

For more information:

Ginger Martin
Assistant Director
Oregon Department of Corrections
2575 Center St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301
(503) 945-9062
ginger.martin@doc.state.or.us

I t is clear both nationally and in Oregon that the number and nature of the barriers to successful reentry are many, and that they extend far beyond the boundaries of any one corrections agency. It will take collaborative leadership to first identify the systemic barriers to successful reentry and then to find creative and cost-effective ways to overcome them. ♦

Ensuring Successful Offender Reentry: Umatilla/Morrow County "Reach-In" Services

*by
Mark Royal,
Director,
Umatilla County
Community Corrections,
Pendleton,
Oregon*

Community corrections practitioners need a practical tool for implementing practices that are consistent with the larger process of offender reentry. The process of reach-in is such a tool. It provides a simple method of contacting an offender prior to release from prison or jail custody for the purpose of coordinating services upon release, thus reducing the anxiety of both the offender and the supervising officer on the day the offender comes back in the community. Though measuring outcomes for reach-in can be difficult, employee performance indicators can help ensure that the process occurs. By taking a big-picture review of system data, we can reasonably accept that the reach-in process is beneficial in the transition process.

Umatilla and Morrow Counties are adjacent to each other in eastern Oregon. Each is rural in nature, and of the counties' joint offender population of about 950 persons, about 10% live in Morrow County. Our two-county offender population constitutes 2.95% of the Oregon State offender population. (By contrast, Multnomah County provides services to 22.5% of the state's supervised felony offender population.) Oregon has 36 counties and a felony offender population of approximately 35,000. Currently, 32 county entities provide services to the felony population, as some of the smaller counties have agreed to establish multi-county offices.

Umatilla/Morrow Community Corrections is within the county government under the Sheriff's Office. We have 17 probation/parole officers and 2 field supervisors. Our agency operates two full-time offices located in our eastern and western population sectors. The east region office also provides jail services and operates the Umatilla County Program Center, a 30-bed facility used for treatment, workforce development, and other programs. The west office provides outpatient treatment programs and staff facilities. Unique to Umatilla/Morrow counties is a single judicial district that provides for three separate court facilities, two in Umatilla County and one in Morrow County. The offender population is essentially split between the east region and west region offices, with 56% of the high/medium-risk offenders in the east and 44% in the west.

Also in Umatilla County are two state prison facilities, located in the east and west regions. Neither prison is currently designated as a "releasing facility," though this may be a possibility in the future. Most prison releases come from the northwest part of the state, 170 miles from our county.

An organizational chart for our county system can be viewed online at *http://www.co.umatilla.or.us/corrections/pdf/CC_ORG_Flow_Chart.pdf*.

Oregon's Model for Post-Prison Supervision

New law was adopted in 1997 that changed how supervision services are delivered. The Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) would no longer provide offender field supervision, and each county would instead develop their own plans for supervision and services, to be approved by the state. In addition, felons sentenced to 12 months or less—who formerly would have served time in a state prison—would remain under local control in each county with a designated supervisory authority. The supervisory authority is designated by the county commissioners and may vary from county to county. Supervisory authority is defined as the state or local corrections agency or official designated by that county's board of commissioners or county court to operate corrections supervision services, custodial facilities or both. In Umatilla County the sheriff is the designated supervisory authority and has delegated supervision services to the Director of Community Corrections.

Management of offenders who have been convicted of a felony, have been sentenced to 12 months or less, and have a condition of post-prison supervision requires sentence calculation, release planning activity, and post-prison supervision orders. Management of state prisoners has the same requirements. Our transition and reach-in process for these populations are similar, except that local offenders are seen face-to-face and state prisoners are contacted telephonically. For offenders serving more than 12 months, the ODOC conducts the sentence calculations and provides release plans to the local offices, and the State Board of Parole and Post Prison Supervision provides for the conditions and actual post-prison order.

It is during this release planning process that our local office makes contact with the offender and the release counselor to provide the releasing authority the information required in the release plan and post-prison order. The two populations are termed "prison releases," and "local control releases." Although the processes for reach-in may vary between the releasing authorities, the content and information gathered remain the same.

What Is Reach-In?

As the state of Oregon continues to redefine its mission with respect to offenders and reentry, our county personnel have begun to redefine our roles as probation/parole officers (in the field) and release counselors (in prison). Policies and practices are changing to accommodate transition. Officers and counselors work together to reach a formidable release plan with the offender's engagement and support.

Our procedure and practice defines reach-in as "an important part of the transition process when the field Probation/Parole Officer makes contact with an inmate to discuss his/her upcoming release." Umatilla/Morrow counties became involved in reach-in services in 2001 through Byrne Grant funding for alcohol and drug treatment programming. A local program developed for the grant, known as "New Life," provided programming as well as contact with the offender while in

custody. The grant required that services be delivered to offenders in transition from prison or jail to the community. The grant also required offenders in prison to have received alcohol and drug services while in custody, with a continuation of alcohol and drug services upon release. These proved to be challenging requirements, mainly due to the small number of inmates receiving alcohol and drug treatment while in custody. Either the services were not readily available, or inmates were able to avoid them by manipulating the system or acting out to avoid attendance. We learned many lessons from the New Life program, one of which was the importance of defining the reach-in process. We also realized the need for broader programming and saw opportunities for expanding our services, both locally and with our state partners. In 2005 we expanded the target population for reach-ins to include all releases from prison and or local jail that had a condition of post-prison supervision. This includes an average of 8 or 9 prison releases and 10 to 15 local control releases per month.

Reach-in is designed to reduce the tension, fear, and frustration offenders may experience, as well as to remove any opportunity to manipulate the process as offenders transition from a custodial setting to the community. It allows our staff to establish a working relationship with the offender, gives the offender information to smooth his/her transition to the community, and helps our officers understand each offender's risks and needs to better prepare him or her for return to the community. By providing the supervising officer the information needed to develop an offender's case plan, reach-in shortens the first field visit with the offender. Appointments can be created during the reach-in process, and the offender can better know what to expect regarding supervision, treatment, housing, employment, and other requirements.

The Reach-In Process

The procedure followed in reach-in is a simple, step-by-step outline that allows officers to collect important information regarding the offender. Risk and need information can also be obtained through interview, which provides a quick screening method for determining a reasonable action plan for the offender upon his/her release.

In brief, the step-by-step method is as follows.

1. The office receives a release investigation from the institution or supervisory authority.

2. The investigation is immediately assigned to a field PPO for investigation and reach-in.

3. Within 30 days of assignment, the PPO contacts the institution and sets an appointment to complete the reach-in. This information is captured through electronic, chronological notes.

4. Reach-in is completed; the PPO uses the reach-in risks/needs assessment form for guidance on assessment requirements.

5. The PPO e-mails our local Transition Team indicating that the reach-in is completed and attaching any referrals to programming.

6. The PPO enters a detailed, electronic chronology with an overview of each area on which the offender was assessed.

7. Reporting instructions are given, and the reach-in process is complete.

Detailed reach-in procedures and instructions for staff can be reviewed online at *http://www.co.umatilla.or.us/corrections/pdf/UCCC_Reach-In_Procedure.pdf.*

Based on the information received during the reach-in, the officer may refer the offender to a number of treatment services and/or programs. The early risk/need assessment during reach-in is only screening in nature, and the officer will schedule an appointment for a Level of Service Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) upon the offender's release and report to the Community Corrections office. Findings in the LS/CMI will determine a referral to our programming intake staff, who further assess the offender's needs regarding program services. Several modules of program services are available within our office and are intended to be responsive in nature to the need.

A flow chart showing available correctional programming is online at *http://www.co.umatilla.or.us/corrections/pdf/CC_Program_Flow_Chart.pdf.*

Partnership Between Counties and the Oregon Department of Corrections

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski in May 2007 established an executive order instructing a council to produce coordinated approaches for assisting released inmates as they reintegrate into society. The order came after substantial progress made through the ODOC Transition Project, which has been active for several years. The Re-Entry Council consists of 19 members, including the Governor and department heads.

The council is charged with creating a common vision for transition and reentry of offenders upon release. Its tasks include:

♦ Reviewing existing policies and practices and making specific recommendations for improvement in such areas as institutional case planning, institutional transition planning and preparation, information sharing, the continuum of services following release, housing, and employment;

♦ Coordinating the state reentry initiative across Oregon;

♦ Removing barriers that impede successful transition and reintegration; and

♦ Recommending changes in funding to support the reformed transition process.

This statewide leadership group will collaborate to improve the success and safety of offenders' incarceration-to-community transition. It also will define state-level performance goals and create a system for measuring performance. The council will develop system-wide agreement on what is to be accomplished at the state level to improve transition. The decision to implement the council was driven in part by the work of the ODOC and the Oregon Association of Community Corrections Directors. These groups have worked in collaboration to overcome internal systems problems and barriers.

The following description was written by Heidi Stewart, Oregon Department of Corrections Program Manager.

In keeping with the department's mission of "holding offenders accountable to their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior," the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) embarked on a project to increase the rate of successful offender transition into the community.

A steering committee was formed and charged with providing direction for the project. The steering committee comprised ODOC employees from every division as well as members from the county community corrections offices, the Board of Parole and Post Prison Supervision, sheriffs, victims' advocacy groups, and other state and local agencies. Planning efforts identified key issues interfering with successful inmate reentry and components that are necessary for successful transition to occur.

One of the necessary components identified was "reach-in" by the Parole and Probation Officers (POs) prior to inmates' release. Historically, the ODOC system did not allow POs easy access into the institution. County ID cards were not accepted, ODOC ID cards were not easy to obtain, POs had to be escorted at all times, and there was no sense of partnership between staff of ODOC and county community corrections. POs simply did not want to deal with the ODOC barriers, nor did they see value to the reach-in process.

Today, as a matter of practice, many Oregon counties do reach-in prior to inmates releasing. This is possible because, in partnership, barriers to reach-in were identified and addressed. ODOC modified its facility access rule to allow POs to enter the institution by using their county ID and not requiring them to go through metal detectors. Once POs are familiar with the institution, they may enter the institution without an escort. Although much progress has been made, there are still areas for improvement. One remaining issue is that institutions have not consistently implemented changes. ODOC is modifying its facility access rule again in order to provide more clarity to the institutions.

Institution staff now see POs as a partner in reentry and welcome reach-in. In addition, POs have realized the value of reach-in. One Oregon county found that abscond rates dropped approximately 14% for offenders just released from prison and reporting for the first time.

ODOC and the counties are developing additional programs to improve and measure the success of offender reentry. By intergovernmental agreement, two counties and the ODOC have developed pilot programs that allow for coordinated transition. These counties not only allow reach-in, but also provide for in-custody treatment within the local county facilities and close collaboration of case planning, assessment, and transition.

The Umatilla and Klamath County program:

♦ Requires reach-in prior to accepting an offender into the program;

♦ Identifies the needs and risk,

♦ Moves the offender to local custody 90 to 120 days before sentence completion;

♦ Coordinates treatment while in local custody,

♦ Transitions offenders to minimum-custody program center facilities 30 days prior to sentence completion; and

♦ Coordinates community services prior to the actual release date.

Participating offenders can access services that are vital to successful reentry—treatment, workforce development, housing opportunities, and community support—all while they are still in DOC custody.

Indicators of Success

With these innovations now established, we can ask, "Is it working?" There are a number of indicators to look at.

♦ Data from the Umatilla/Morrow County program do not show a significant correlation between reach-in and improved reporting to the office after offenders leave prison or jail. In periods before and after reach-in began, no-shows in Umatilla/Morrow County remained around 3%. However, Multnomah County statistics demonstrate a 20% no-show rate for persons not receiving reach-in, compared with only 1% no-shows among those receiving reach-in.

♦ Recidivism for the post-prison supervision population in 2001, before we began reach-in, was 37.5%. As of this writing, the recidivism rate is 23%. We do not attribute this reduction to reach-in alone, but we consider reach-in a contributing factor to an overall increase in performance.

♦ Treatment compliance for this population is currently at 77%. (Treatment compliance is defined as engagement in or completion of a behavioral treatment program.)

♦ In addition to these outcome measures, our office has developed a Continuous Quality Insurance (CQI) model that tracks identified performance measures. Included in the CQI is an audit process, which reviews compliance with the reach-in process, allowing continued monitoring that the reach-in process is occurring.

Though local evidence to date is anecdotal, we believe reach-ins work and are an effective tool. One reason is the advantage of establishing an early relationship between the offender and the supervising officer. During the reach-in process, the supervising officer will review all conditions of supervision and discuss what the offender might expect upon release. As they explain their general and special conditions of supervision, the supervising officer will articulate exactly what they mean in plain terms, identify common violations that occur in relation to conditions, and provide advice on how to avoid common pitfalls based on past experience. By the end of the interview, the offender is more comfortable with the conditions of supervision and has had a chance to get his or her questions answered.

The reach-in process also allows for the involvement of the offenders' families and/or their community to support to the offender upon his/her release. We find that inmates often talk with their family members and/or a community support person about their contact with the supervising officer, and will explain to them the conditions of their supervision and their requirements for treatment and reporting. These support people sometimes will call the supervising officer for clarification. This gives the supervising officer an excellent opportunity to provide detail and elicit support, and it also reduces the chances that the offender will manipulate the system or his or her supporters. Contact with the family and other community support people helps them understand our system and our approach to supervision.

The reach-in process itself is simple. Contacting the offender prior to release gives the supervising officer and the offender information that furthers the possibility of success during transition from custody to the community. Reach-in saves time through collaboration with the offender and the involved agencies and provides for an immediate case plan for action. Risk factors are reduced by holding the offender accountable to the responsibilities of their supervision and, at the same time, reducing the fear and anxiety associated with not knowing what to expect.

Reach-in is only a small segment of evidence-based supervision techniques, and the practitioner must consider the other components necessary to complete an evidence-based supervision model. However, our experience verifies that the reach-in process complements other evidence-based approaches, including motivational interviewing, risk/need assessment, treatment, and continuous quality improvement. ♦

For more information:

Mark A. Royal
Director
Umatilla/Morrow County
Community Corrections
4705 NW Pioneer Place
Pendleton, Oregon 97801
(514) 276-7824 ext. 229
Mark.Royal@cc.doc.state.or.us

Creating Better Transitions at Indiana's Plainfield Reentry Educational Facility

by
Michael Lloyd,
Superintendent,
Plainfield Reentry
Educational Facility,
Indiana Department of
Correction,
Plainfield, Indiana

This year in Indiana, more than 17,000 offenders will be released from the state's prisons. These men and women—particularly those who have served lengthy sentences—face significant challenges as they return to the community. Most have inadequate job skills, little work experience, insufficient education, poor personal management skills, and few social support systems. They are in need of housing, employment, education, medical and mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and a variety of other services to help them live as productive and law-abiding citizens. Furthermore, they generally return to the same environment or situation that fostered their criminal activity in the first place, so it is not surprising that nearly 4 out of every 10 will recidivate within the next 3 years. Many do so within the very first month following their release—returning to prison, keeping already troubled families and neighborhoods in emotional and financial turmoil, perpetuating the criminal cycle, and jeopardizing public safety.

Nationwide, the issue of recidivism is a significant and growing concern as increasing numbers of offenders are released from incarceration. The Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) currently houses approximately 25,000 adult offenders, and the number of new commitments continues to increase each year. In order to accomplish its paramount duty of maintaining safe and secure facilities, the IDOC demands the second largest portion of the state budget, with direct expenditures approaching $600 million last year. Yet the cost to the public is compounded dramatically in both dollars and additional victimizations when ex-offenders commit new crimes and return to prison.

Focus: Reducing Recidivism

Recognizing that successful reentry is critical to reducing recidivism, the IDOC in 2005 initiated a comprehensive strategy to reduce the state's recidivism rate by focusing its mission toward successful offender reentry. By implementing better procedures for case management, strengthening connections with agencies at the state and local levels, and establishing new partnerships with community stakeholders, the IDOC has improved how offenders are prepared for their return to the community.

These efforts employ evidence-based practices and a broad, systems approach in addressing the key areas of education, job training, housing assistance, substance abuse treatment, medical care, and mental health treatment. This work has placed Indiana as one of the nation's leaders in prisoner reentry initiatives.

The flagship of Indiana's reentry initiatives has been the development of an innovative new facility with a mission focused entirely on preparing offenders for their return to the community. The Plainfield Reentry Educational Facility (PREF) opened in January 2006 and is the first of its kind in the country. Set on 240 picturesque acres (the former site of the historic Indiana Boys' School), PREF is a unique facility that specifically targets the key areas of education, vocational training, and life skills development.

The PREF Philosophy

At the core of PREF's approach is the notion that reentry is a philosophy, not a program. PREF has an operating capacity of 404, offering an open environment and a daily operation that reflects the "real world" to which the offenders will soon be returning. The adult male population is referred to as "residents." Residents wear civilian clothing rather than typical prison uniforms, and the entire facility operates in a culture of respect and mutual support. Establishing and acclimating to this environment has been a significant challenge for staff and residents alike, as PREF works to change not only the culture of traditional corrections, but also to confront the attitudes and beliefs of a society which is still very focused on retributive, punitive justice.

The foundation of PREF's unique program is the work of reentry specialists, who are specially selected and trained case managers. They maintain low caseloads that allow them to work closely with the residents to provide highly individualized programming and case management. Focused reentry planning is based on each resident's Reentry Accountability Plan (RAP), which identifies areas of specific need and targeted interventions to help the resident resolve these problem areas and prepare them for successful and productive living in the community.

In facilities throughout the IDOC, most offenders participate in a variety of programs designed to support successful reentry, including education, vocational training, substance abuse treatment, and cognitive-behavioral programs. The department also mandates a standardized 65-hour, pre-release curriculum that addresses issues such as life skills training, educational advancement, accessing community resources, and job search training. (A modified 15-hour curriculum is also available as release circumstances warrant.)

PREF is unique in that it addresses each of these areas as a "full immersion" experience, rather than as an isolated program. While PREF's programming focuses intensively on the key areas of education, vocational development, and life-skills training, a variety of other important need areas are also addressed, including substance abuse treatment, family reunification and parenting, anger management, and problem-solving. Custody and facility maintenance staff assume non-traditional roles and are an integral part of a comprehensive Unit Team, working closely with the residents as teachers, supervisors, coaches, mentors, and role models.

Program Elements

Though PREF is a minimum-security facility and may appear to be more like a laid-back college campus than a correctional facility, it is in fact a highly demanding program. All residents have volunteered to participate and are approved through a meticulous application process. Qualifying residents must meet stringent classification criteria, be within 12 to 24 months of release, and commit themselves to participating in a program that is far more demanding than those in the larger, higher-security facilities in which they may have spent many months or years. Residents are responsible for their own success, and they are held to the highest standards of conduct. Those who do not meet or maintain PREF's expectations for behavior, attitude, or participation are terminated from the program and transferred to another facility appropriate to their classification and risk level. In return, the PREF program offers its committed residents a number of unique and valuable opportunities designed to provide them with the best chance for success after their release.

Education and vocational skills development. All residents participate in educational or vocational programming. Those who have already earned a high school diploma or GED and have obtained a vocational training certificate or have an occupational specialty are classified into appropriate jobs. Residents may work either inside the facility or on one of several "outside" job assignments. Educational programs cover the full spectrum from basic literacy to GED preparation and testing. Vocational programs provide skill-based training in occupations that include business services, building trades, culinary arts, electronics repair, landscape management and horticulture, and small engine repair. PREF also has partnered with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development to create the "Major Opportunities" program. This groundbreaking program provides qualified residents with classroom instruction and on-site, on-the-job training. The program is currently in a pilot phase with the Indiana Department of Transportation. Residents who successfully complete this program become eligible for regular, full-time employment with that agency upon their release.

Employment assistance. A variety of classes and workshops assist residents in developing basic employability skills and preparing rèsumès. To supplement these programs, PREF also employs a full-time, on-site representative from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, who works closely with area employers and the facility's Unit Teams to match qualified and appropriate residents with viable employment after release. Assisting residents with the wide variety of employability issues that confront ex-offenders is a key focus at PREF. The ability to obtain and maintain stable employment is most often the critical difference between succeeding in the community or returning to prison.

Families and children. Family reunification is also an important focus in preparing many PREF residents for release. Specialized programs help prepare the men to return to their families as husbands and fathers. "Inside Out Dads" and "Reading with Dad" help residents re-establish their parenting role. The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) is a recognized best-practice program that strengthens the marital bond and reduces divorce rates,

commonly high among ex-offenders. A representative from the state's Department of Child Services/Child Support Bureau is on-site regularly to assist residents with child support issues and help develop achievable payment plans if necessary.

Financial services. PREF residents also have the opportunity to establish a savings account. Lincoln Bank, a local financial institution, has partnered with PREF to provide residents with this invaluable service, unavailable in any other prison setting. PREF residents receive a debit card for use at the facility, manage their own account funds, and on release have an established, active bank account. This unprecedented opportunity gives ex-offenders a solid foundation that is critical for establishing and building financial independence and responsibility.

Life skills. Important life- and social-skills training opportunities are provided throughout the resident's stay at PREF. A variety of classes, workshops, and volunteer-facilitated programs all focus on helping the resident successfully transition from "inmate" to community citizen. But it is the facility-wide PREF culture of support, teamwork, and mutual respect that is perhaps the most critical training opportunity of all. It is this culture that provides an ever-present role-modeling of the values and character traits necessary for success in the demanding life ex-offenders will face after they are released from incarceration.

Coordination at Release

Since PREF opened in January 2006, more than 200 residents have completed the program and been released to parole or probation. Approximately 75% of these releases are to state parole supervision, and 25% are to county probation. PREF currently averages about 10 releases each month. At all facilities throughout the IDOC, representatives from parole work closely with the offender's Unit Team. PREF is unique in that the local parole district office is actually located inside the facility, which provides for an effective collaboration and allows parole staff to play an active, integral role in helping residents prepare for release.

In Indiana, probation is administered by individual county courts that do not fall under the direction of the IDOC; however, PREF's Re-Entry Specialists collaborate closely with the designated probation office to ensure that critical issues of housing, employment, and transportation are addressed prior to the residents' release. In the event a resident is to be released without any formal post-release supervision, PREF's Re-Entry Specialists work intensively with the resident and community service providers to identify appropriate and accessible resources that will provide necessary aftercare and support services.

While it is too early to draw any data-based conclusions, early numbers indicate that only 5% of the residents released by PREF thus far have been returned to IDOC custody. Ultimately, of course, the success or failure of this new approach to reentry preparation will be determined by the residents' ability and willingness to use the tools and resources PREF provides. Nevertheless, PREF is a working example of the IDOC's commitment to reducing recidivism and providing for greater public safety in Indiana. ♦

For more information:

Michael Lloyd
Superintendent
Plainfield Reentry Educational Facility
Indiana Department of Correction
501 W. Main Street
Plainfield, Indiana 46168
(317) 839-7751, ext. 4101
MCLloyd@idoc.in.gov

Gender-Responsive Reentry in Rhode Island: A Long and Winding Road

by
Bree Derrick,
Principal Planner,
Planning and Research Unit,
Rhode Island
Department of Corrections,
Cranston,
Rhode Island

Rhode Island boasts one of the lowest incarceration rates in the country and has one of the nation's highest rates of community supervision (Glaze and Bonczar, 2006). This translates into more than 20,000 offenders on probation and parole living within Rhode Island's 1,214 square miles. Despite our low incarceration rate, Rhode Island's prison population has more than doubled over the past 20 years. The Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) also faces the unique challenge of providing services to a rapidly changing prison population, as more than two-thirds of all sentenced commitments serve 6 months or less of incarceration time. RIDOC operates a unified correctional system, in which all pretrial and sentenced offenders, regardless of charges or sentence length, are housed in one of RIDOC's prisons.

Because Rhode Island is only 48 miles north to south and 37 east to west, offender reentry is literally in everyone's "back yard," demanding a statewide systemic approach, rather than a corrections-only fix.

Offender reentry is not a new concept in Rhode Island. More than a decade ago, RIDOC recognized that many offenders were being released into our state's communities with little preparation and even fewer employment skills. At that time, RIDOC sought federal funding to improve pre- and post-release services for offenders. RIDOC allocated approximately 85% of the monies it received under the Violent Offender Incarceration and Truth-in-Sentencing Incentive Formula Grant program to create a reintegration center—an intensive release preparation facility for offenders leaving secure custody. Several years later, through the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative, RIDOC bolstered its discharge planning services, critical post-release services in the community (employment training, victim services, and mentoring), and intensive probation supervision for youthful offenders.

By the time the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) launched its Transition from Prison to the Community Initiative (TPCI), RIDOC was already enmeshed in offender reentry. Technical assistance under TPCI introduced Rhode Island to a philosophical shift regarding offender reentry. Instead of simply augmenting available services, there was a new focus on restructuring our practices to increase success for offenders who were transitioning back into the community. Through TPCI, an NIC consultant provided guidance to the state's reentry efforts. It had become clear that, despite changes in available services and the delivery systems, prisoner reentry was larger than the Department of Corrections.

A Statewide Focus

Rhode Island's offender reentry efforts received a much-needed boost when the state was selected as one of seven sites awarded grants by the National Governors' Association to participate in Round One of the Prisoner Reentry State Policy Academy. The goals of the Policy Academy were to: 1) organize a "one-stop" process for ex-offenders and families to access state services, 2) identify and erode bureaucratic and procedural obstacles to services (such as waiting periods and a lack of communication), and 3) re-examine statutes, formal rules, and regulations that erect official barriers to reintegration.

As part of the project, Governor Donald L. Carcieri issued the nation's first executive order directing all state agencies to participate in prisoner reentry, and he established a cabinet-level Reentry Steering Committee to coordinate efforts in the state. Reporting to the Steering Committee are two additional tiers of committees, one of managerial staff and one of direct service providers. This governance model is designed to provide a channel for issues to flow upwards to management when service providers encounter barriers to providing services to ex-offenders in the community. Issues that can be resolved at the managerial level are resolved there, and issues requiring legislative or statewide policy changes are raised to the Steering Committee for review.

Conversely, as new collaborative protocols and processes for reentry are developed, they flow downward for pilot testing by the service providers. A subcommittee of the second tier was created for this purpose and was named the Learning Lab. The Learning Lab is chaired by the warden of the women's prison, and its members include counselors, social workers, staff from the planning, programming, and pre-release units of RIDOC, and representatives from the Rhode Island Commission on Women and the Department of Children, Youth & Families.

The target group for the Learning Lab is women offenders in custody. This population of about 240 individuals provides a manageable sample. The women are a good population to work with, because all are under the supervision of one warden and they present far fewer safety risks to the community than their male counterparts.

Early in the process, however, the members of the Learning Lab found that women offenders need a system of reentry that is vastly different than the approach used with returning men. The Learning Lab therefore served as the impetus for Rhode Island to implement a more gender-responsive system of corrections. Through a multi-stage technical assistance project, NIC has provided guidance to RIDOC in implementing best practices for managing and transitioning women offenders.

Women's Issues, Past and Present

The number of women offenders in the Rhode Island prison system has more than tripled over the past 20 years. Our incarcerated women are primarily white (66%), single (66%), and mothers (70%), and their average age is 36 years. The majority

are sentenced for nonviolent (63%) and drug-related crimes (19%). Women serve an average of only 4 months in prison. Although the number of women entering our system has greatly increased in recent years, women still account for only about 6% of the total population. The small percentage of women in the prison population is at least partly responsible for the marginalization women have experienced in terms of correctional programming. The focus in Rhode Island, as in many other jurisdictions, has long been male offenders.

With few exceptions, the correctional system for women in Rhode Island has been adopted directly from the men's system. For example, women offenders are assessed using the same classification instrument, are disciplined according to the same scale of institutional misconduct, and receive similar institutionally based rehabilitative programs as the men.

There are exceptions, however, where gender-responsive principles have long been incorporated.

♦ During the 1990s, feminist principles were integrated purposefully into programs whenever possible.

♦ We modified programs, such as residential drug treatment and counseling for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, to include what are now known as gender-responsive principles.

♦ Another early gender-responsive program is the mentoring program for women, which was launched in 1991 to pair offenders with successful, positive women in the community. Mentoring uses a relational context to help women offenders successfully transition into the community. New mentor pairing was discontinued in November 2007, but existing mentor relationships are still being supported.

♦ The parenting program is another example, which allows for extended visits for parent-child bonding.

♦ The physical health system for women employs a specialist in women's health issues.

♦ A Female Offender Advisory Board, comprised primarily of members representing woman-centered community agencies, also provided political support for women offenders and for leadership at RIDOC who were trying to advance women's issues.

These programs predated current research on the etiology and manifestation of women's crime and were based on the interest of particular staff members, rather than a commitment toward gender-responsiveness at a departmental level. Sadly, many of these programs were not institutionalized in policy and, therefore, regression away from the feminist principles occurred with time, changes in staff, and budgetary constraints.

Consciously Implementing a Gender-Responsive Approach

Now, with the benefit of the ever-growing literature around best practices for working with women offenders and continued guidance from NIC, RIDOC has begun to formally evaluate the existing correctional system for women. We intend to make adjustments that will reintegrate gender-responsive principles into programming and incorporate them into daily prison operations.

The first round of NIC assistance came in the form of a 2-day training that introduced the concepts of gender-responsivity to RIDOC staff as well as stakeholders from throughout Rhode Island. About 6 months later, NIC conducted a site visit to examine correctional practices and programming for women. Following the site visit, NIC made three major recommendations: 1) create a relational environment, 2) provide women with comprehensive access to services, and 3) introduce the concept of transitional planning to integrate intake, classification, case planning, and discharge planning functions.

As a result of the site visit, and in order to properly align rehabilitative programming with the needs of the population, our first tasks have been to create a profile of the women in our custody and to inventory existing programming.

Assessment. RIDOC has been using the Level of Service Inventory–Revised (LSI-R) for about 2 years to assess sentenced women. However, it is used only with women who will serve more than 6 months, which is less than one-third of the women entering RIDOC. The LSI-R also has predictive limitations for women. To ensure that all women receive a comprehensive and gender-responsive assessment, RIDOC is planning to migrate to use of the LSI-R and Trailer for Women for institutional custody placement.

Our planned adoption of a new gender-responsive assessment tool is an exciting opportunity for RIDOC to incorporate evidence-based decision making into the heart of daily operations. The new, dynamic assessment tool will be a vast improvement over the current instrument, which contains primarily static criminal history items and fails to account for mental health or substance abuse treatment needs in women's custody placement. Once adopted, it can potentially provide seamless assessment and reassessment from institution through pre-release planning to the community for probationers and parolees.

If the new assessment protocol is approved, our next round of technical assistance will include training on the assessments and the actual assessment of a cross-section of the custodial population. Armed with an accurate profile of the risks and needs of the women, RIDOC can better determine whether programming is meeting women inmates' needs.

Program examination and updates. RIDOC also has begun the arduous task of systematically evaluating each program operating in the women's prison. Due to our limited funding for programs, RIDOC has historically welcomed volunteers into our prisons to provide courses that run the gamut from recreation to trauma

recovery. This open-door policy has greatly increased our available programming but is fraught with potential problems, not the least of which is providing oversight to an ever-changing list of programs.

To begin the assessment process, RIDOC required all providers to complete a standardized questionnaire, which collected basic information such as programmatic goals, eligibility criteria, pre- and post-tests, and performance measures. To ensure program fidelity, efficacy, and adherence to gender-responsive principles, we plan to use the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI) and the Checklist for Gender Responsive Programming With a Focus on Gender Responsive Reentry (Berman, 2007). Internal programs found to be ineffective or inherently male-centered will be modified, and volunteers also will be asked to modify their programs as necessary. Any providers who are unwilling to comply with our goal of providing comprehensive programming for women offenders will be eliminated, but we don't believe this will be necessary. It is our belief that our contracted staff and volunteers intend to provide the best programming possible to incarcerated women and will, therefore, modify courses to best suit their identified needs.

Additionally, the women's facilities are planning to implement an incentive-based behavioral management model in lieu of the existing punitive one. These changes, and others which are currently prioritized, will go a long way toward achieving a relational environment and improving services for women in custody.

Field services. For women offenders in the community, RIDOC recently has created a gender-specific probation caseload. Women who are at high risk for reincarceration and have high levels of service need are being prioritized for intensive supervision. By design, their supervision will occur primarily in the community—a significant change from the office-bound supervision that occurs when caseloads average close to 250. Probation officers will provide case management services in addition to traditional supervision. The officer and probationer will work together to create a case plan that addresses the woman's risks and needs. Intensive probation services are intended to continue for 1 year, providing the most intensive services during the critical transition period immediately following release from prison. The goal of this collaborative approach is to support women as they become stable in the community and empowered to live crime-free.

Challenges in Reentry

Perhaps the most difficult part of our offender reentry initiative is simply the time it takes to make such significant changes. Change of this magnitude is extremely slow when it is overlaid with a decreasing budget, difficult personnel rules, and a conservative labor culture.

Like many other states, Rhode Island is in dire financial straits, having recently experienced a $300 million shortfall statewide. As a result, our reentry and gender-responsive efforts require creative solutions and the reallocation of existing resources. Unlike most states, however, Rhode Island's reentry efforts are

frequently countered by the risk-avoidant culture that pervades the department. The union that represents professional staff—such as counselors and clinical social workers in the prison as well as correctional officers—has challenged RIDOC's attempts to implement progressive practices. The use of risk/needs assessment tools, for example, has been delayed by strong resistance in the labor relations process.

Another handicap to Rhode Island's progress is that no one person was initially assigned to coordinate the statewide prisoner reentry effort. Staff working on prisoner reentry have struggled to manage their existing duties as well as pursue reentry projects. With the appointment of a Statewide Reentry Coordinator in January 2007, the system gained an individual responsible for the oversight of this massive project, lending clarity of focus and accountability to the process.

Given our experience in Rhode Island, we recommend that other states embarking on reentry initiatives should consider how to strike an appropriate balance between including a wide array of participants and bringing too many agendas into the process. There is certainly the risk that too many "cooks" can spoil the "broth."

Another suggestion is to establish a Reentry Coordinator, if not an entire Reentry Office, at the outset to direct the project. The same recommendation applies for advancing gender-responsive policies and practices. Progress is most easily made when there is a position dedicated to coordinating the change. It has also been our experience that national consultants can exert pressure for change in the system that departmental employees may have difficulty generating, which can move the process forward more expediently than would otherwise be possible.

This is an exciting time at the RIDOC as, after our years of engagement in prisoner reentry efforts, we stand poised to reap the rewards of systemic change, including decreased redundancy of work, improved communications and data sharing, and a streamlined process of managing and transitioning offenders. For our women offenders, improvements in the correctional system mean formalizing gender-responsive principles into policy and daily practice to ensure the best treatment of women offenders—both now and in the future. Of course, the overall goal is not just a better way of doing business, but a more effective system for preparing offenders to live productive and crime-free lives in our communities and neighborhoods. ♦

For more information:

Bree Derrick
Principal Planner
Planning and Research Unit
Rhode Island
Department of Correction
40 Howard Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920
(401) 462-1622
bree.derrick@doc.ri.gov

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Missouri Makes Its Move
Toward a New Reentry Philosophy

*by
Julie Boehm,
Women's Programs/
Reentry Manager,
Missouri Department of
Corrections,
Jefferson City, Missouri*

O ne of the most pressing and complex changes facing state government in Missouri and elsewhere across the nation today is the reintegration of adult offenders from prison back into the community. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of all men and women committed to Missouri prisons will someday be released from incarceration. In fiscal year 2005, our releases totaled 20,684 individuals. It is in everyone's best interest that released offenders reenter society safely and live as productive, law-abiding, and self-sufficient citizens. The Missouri corrections system is making major progress toward this goal through internal changes and external partnerships, as approached through the Transition from Prison to the Community (TPC) model being advanced by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC).

Missouri adopted this innovative transition model in 2002 as a philosophical framework for improving offender transition processes. The TPC approach proposes that states can increase public safety, close the revolving door of incarceration, diminish new victimization, and break the cycle of offenders' children becoming the next generation of offenders. This can be accomplished by forming strategic and tactical partnerships to integrate and coordinate basic policies for providing services to former inmates, and by sustaining and nurturing those partnerships and policies over time.

A milestone in Missouri's transition was reached on September 21, 2005, when Governor Matt Blunt signed Executive Order 05-33 establishing a permanent interagency Missouri Reentry Process (MRP) Steering Team. The team is comprised of senior leaders from the Departments of Corrections, Mental Health, Social Services, Health and Senior Services, Economic Development, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Revenue, and from the Office of the State Courts Administrator. Other members represent stakeholder groups including crime victims, ex-offenders, law enforcement, treatment providers, and the faith-based community.

The Executive Order defines the mission of the MRP Steering Team as the successful integration of offender reentry principles and practices within state agencies and communities, resulting in partnerships that enhance offender self-sufficiency, reduce re-incarceration, and improve public safety.

Preparing for Change

The state-level MRP Steering Team initially identified factors that are highly correlated with successful transition or reduced recidivism, and it developed

strategies to address these factors, based on an analysis of Missouri quantitative and qualitative baseline data.

Locally established MRP steering teams have expanded on this work by identifying specific areas of need and strategies for response at the local level to address the particular barriers in each community. Missouri has established 33 MRP Community Steering Teams (CSTs) across the state. They are comprised of representatives from community organizations, local and state agencies, faith-based organizations, the Missouri Department of Probation and Parole, local law enforcement, the judiciary, local businesses, treatment providers, victims, ex-offenders, and correctional staff. Each CST collaborates on the application of Missouri reentry principles in its community. Their goal is to identify the needs of offenders in their communities and partner to meet those needs, making their community stronger in the effort.

The local reentry CSTs have been established in collaboration with Missouri's existing framework of Community Partnerships. There are 21 of these independent, non-profit organizations throughout the state. Each Community Partnership is governed by the state's Family and Community Trust (FACT), a private/public Board, and is funded through the state Department of Social Services.

Addressing Barriers to Success

A wide range of service enhancements have been put in place through alliances between state agencies and between state and local agencies, organizations, and service providers.

Employment. Unemployment and underemployment are the leading factors behind offenders being returned to prison. Missouri data show that offenders who do not find full-time employment upon release are much more likely to return to prison than those who do. Employment provides adequate income that is critical to the offender's overall stability in the community.

Several strategies have been implemented to address the issue of employment.

♦ Offenders are receiving employability skills/life skills programming. An evidence-based, 10- to 12-week program covers a wide variety of topics that people typically encounter in their daily lives. Offenders learn to assess their job skills and abilities, complete employment applications, and interview for jobs. Sessions also cover family relationships, self-esteem, marriage, parenting, budgeting, and other issues

♦ The Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Division of Workforce Development (DWD) are working together to help offenders obtain employment soon after release, thereby reducing recidivism rates and saving taxpayers' dollars. Before release, all offenders are screened for services offered at local one-stop Career Centers, such as Parent's Fair Share, the

Career Assistance Program, and veterans' services. Offenders are registered in the DWD's "Great Hires" system and have a scheduled appointment with a Career Center before their release from incarceration.

♦ The DOC and DWD have initiated a public information program that emphasizes the benefits of hiring ex-offenders. A video and various other materials describing the Missouri Reentry Process are being shared with the community, and a brochure on employing ex-offenders has been developed to educate prospective employers about the benefits of hiring former inmates. Benefits of hiring ex-offenders include the work opportunity tax credit, which is available to employers that hire targeted groups of workers, including ex-offenders. In addition, there is the Federal Bonding Program, which provides bonding insurance to employers willing to hire certain high-risk applicants who may otherwise be denied coverage from commercial bond carriers. The bonds protect employers against theft, forgery, larceny, and embezzlement.

♦ Because reentry into the labor market is one of the most challenging situations an ex-offender faces, the DOC has implemented institutional job fairs in collaboration with the DWD. The job fairs familiarize offenders who are approaching release with the types of employment opportunities available to them, and they expose potential employers to a skilled workforce pool they may not have considered previously.

♦ Ensuring that offenders have a Social Security card, a birth certificate, and a state-issued identification card when released from prison directly affects their ability to obtain employment quickly after their release. To do this, DOC staff help offenders verify their Social Security numbers through a procedure agreed to by the Social Security Administration. The DOC also has partnered with the Department of Revenue and the Department of Health and Senior Services to help offenders obtain a birth certificate and state identification card before their release.

Substance abuse. The DOC estimates that 75% of offenders in Missouri need substance abuse treatment services. Though substance abuse treatment is offered within correctional facilities, there is considerable variance from one facility to another in the types and quality of programs and services provided. Data show that when offenders leave a treatment setting and are linked with aftercare immediately upon release, they are less likely to return to prison.

In an effort to address the serious issue of substance abuse and aftercare, the following strategies have been implemented:

♦ The DOC and the Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, are collaborating to revise the Code of State Regulations by placing a new emphasis on certification of institutional treatment programming, discharge planning, and continuity of care.

♦ Community-based treatment programs now offer individualized programming that helps offenders succeed in both employment and substance abuse treatment, without one interfering with the other. Staff have been trained on the importance of flexibility in schedules between employment and treatment. Our staff as well as our treatment providers strive to ensure that offenders have a realistic schedule so they can become economically self-sufficient and also maintain their progress in the world of recovery.

♦ A standardized substance abuse screening and assessment tool has been implemented for offenders in reception and diagnostic centers and in the community.

Mental health. More than 75% of Missouri offenders with serious mental health issues return to prison within 5 years of release. Although mental health care is offered within the institutions, our system has had poor coordination of care for transition from prison to the community. Without a well designed discharge planning process, offenders needing and/or receiving mental health services are at high risk of disruption of necessary services. Discharge planning begins early, and each offender's plan is continuously addressed and updated until he or she is discharged from community supervision or released. Proper discharge planning ensures better communication between the institution, field probation and parole staff, and community providers.

To address the serious risk of releasing offenders who have untreated mental health conditions, the following strategies have been implemented.

♦ In February 2005, the DOC finalized its new policy on mental health discharge planning. This policy established guidelines for preparing offenders with serious mental illness for discharge to the community.

♦ The DOC and the Department of Social Services are collaborating to help potentially eligible offenders apply for Medicaid 90 days prior to release. This ensures continuity of care for most persistently and chronically mentally ill and medically disabled offenders who are released from DOC custody.

Another issue in mental health care is the lack of standards of care for agencies or professionals who work with offenders, unless they are certified by the Department of Mental Health or contracted by the DOC. This creates variance in the quality of mental health services provided once released offenders enter the community. Specific elements with significant variation include the conditions under which information is shared, the level of involvement of field officers, processes for officers' outreach to and engagement with offenders' family members, use of assessments, protocols for treatment planning, methods of treatment evaluation, and discharge planning.

In response, the DOC and the Department of Mental Health collaborated in developing a set of guidelines for mental health and substance abuse treatment

professionals who provide clinical services to offenders under probation or parole field supervision. The guidelines also delineate expectations of probation and parole officers in the referral and treatment process.

Education. Approximately 55% of Missouri offenders without a high school diploma or GED return to prison. In an effort to promote educational advancement among inmates prior to release, the following strategies have been implemented.

♦ Research shows that praise is the single most powerful motivator for good behavior and achievement. Offenders participating in GED classes are provided an Academic Achievement Report every 30 days.

♦ Additional data show that offenders who raise their vocational skill level while in prison have a much lower return-to-prison rate in the first 5 years after release than those with no vocational skills. All Missouri Vocational Enterprises (MVE) programs are now classified as vocational training and have received accreditation from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Veterans' assistance. Making sure veterans are linked with available services can greatly improve their reintegration into our communities.

♦ The DOC formed a partnership with the Missouri Veterans Commission to ensure that incarcerated veterans statewide are aware of veterans' benefits and are able to receive assistance for a successful transition into the community. An Incarcerated Veterans Reentry Coordinator provides a presentation to incarcerated veterans during the transitional phase of their incarceration, meets with them to determine if they are eligible for benefits and services, and helps them complete necessary applications.

Families. Studies show that continued contact with family members during and after incarceration can reduce recidivism and foster integration into the community.

♦ The DOC is training staff who work in the visiting room on issues related to offender and family dynamics, family values, and the importance of family and pro-social relationships.

♦ The University of Missouri–Extension provides a program called "Building Strong Families," which helps families identify and build on their strengths, face their challenges, and make informed choices.

Missouri offenders in prison and under community supervision report having 112,246 dependent children. A high percentage of offenders do not receive visits from their children.

♦ The DOC is piloting a Supportive Parent/Child Visitation (SPCV) Model for incarcerated parents, their children, and other family members at the Algoa

Correctional Center and the Western Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center. SPCV focuses on healing and building positive relationships, pre-visit preparation, structured visits, and post-visit debriefings.

Transportation. Focus groups conducted with parolees revealed that transportation is another major issue for releasees, particularly in the rural areas of Missouri. The DOC and the local MRP Steering Teams continue to address this barrier.

♦ The DOC has partnered with the Missouri State Highway Patrol to allow offenders to take the written driver's license test at three correctional facilities. On release, offenders who have passed the written exam can go to the Department of Revenue to take the driving portion of the test.

Preparing for Release

Three major innovations represent a new dynamic for offenders experiencing release from prison in Missouri.

Transitional Housing Units. The NIC transition model stresses the importance of pre-release planning conducted intensively in the 6 six months prior to an offender's release into the community. Eleven (11) of the DOC's institutions currently have a Transition Housing Unit (THU) within the correctional facility. The purpose of these units is to provide intense pre-release preparation with offenders who are within 6 months of their release date.

Pre-release preparation in the THUs addresses continuity of care for mental health, medical, and substance abuse treatment, employment search assistance, help with personal identification, exploration of faith-based links to the community, help with child support and child care arrangements, transportation plans, educational needs, family support, pro-social community participation, impact on victims, cognitive skills development, insurance, and any other needs identified by the staff and the offender. The offender is essentially given a "toolbox" with the tools needed to be successful and is held accountable for doing so.

Transition Accountability Plans. The DOC also has created and implemented a process for the development of a Transition Accountability Plan (TAP) for each offender being released. At first, TAPs were prepared only for offenders in the THUs, but their use is being expanded to all institutions. This document is used by all staff who work with offenders and is shared with partnering agencies, organizations, and treatment providers that serve released offenders. The TAP outlines the offender's assets and liabilities as well as outlining goals, self-defeating behaviors, and plans of action for the offender. The TAP is the primary document for case management, and it has increased communication greatly between institution and field staff within the DOC as well as with service providers in the community.

Case management. An Integrated Case Management Model is in the process of being designed for the DOC. As the DOC has moved into case planning, release

planning, and utilizing the Transition Accountability Plan, creating a case management model has become a priority. The model focuses on assessment, appropriate program referrals based on risk and need, and effective case planning. Motivational interviewing is included in the staff training plan for implementing the case management model.

Extending Connections

Missouri's Community Partnerships have established themselves as the experts in the areas of community-based collaboration, facilitation, and coordination. Governor Blunt has endorsed the work of FACT and the Community Partnerships, calling the partnerships a good example of "system change" and stating that they are positioned to help state departments achieve their goals.

With the establishment of the CST reentry collaboration, the Community Partnerships were awarded a grant to hire 20 VISTA volunteers to further the progress of offender reentry in Missouri communities within several urban areas that together receive a high percentage of released offenders.

The goals of the VISTA project are:

♦ To build or maintain, and expand, an ex-offender Reentry Advisory Group associated with each of the participating Community Partnership sites;

♦ To make easily available the resources identified by each Reentry Advisory Group to all returning ex-offenders and the community in general;

♦ To coordinate the building of a network of community support for children and family members of those incarcerated, as well as for the returning ex-offenders themselves;

♦ To reduce employment barriers that confront returning ex-offenders by locating and promoting employment opportunities;

♦ To reduce or overcome barriers to mental health care that confront returning ex-offenders;

♦ To address education/training issues that confront returning ex-offenders by seeking out educational opportunities on their behalf; and

♦ To address housing/home plan issues that confront returning ex-offenders by seeking out potential housing sites and also by locating resources to assist those who are returning to live in the homes of family members.

Celebrating Partnership

It is very evident that the Missouri DOC would not have been able to progress to this degree without the partnerships established throughout the state. Collaboration has been the key to the success of the reentry initiative in Missouri.

Our hard work and that of our partners was rewarded recently when the Missouri Department of Corrections received the Service Excellence Award from Governor Blunt at the 2007 Governor's Conference on Economic Development. The award was specifically given to the Missouri Reentry Process as a result of its partnership with the Division of Workforce Development.

The Service Excellence Award was presented to the DOC to recognize collaborative excellence by a group of partners who have formed strategic alliances and designed initiatives that serve a unique population in the workforce system. The award also recognizes their efforts in developing non-traditional pipelines to enhance economic opportunities for hard-to-serve populations, including offenders.

Missouri will continue to identify strategies to resolve the barriers that confront offenders already under supervision in our communities as well as those just coming home from incarceration. Public safety is a top priority, and the State of Missouri recognizes that preparing offenders to be productive, employed, and law-abiding citizens is a win-win situation.

As suggested by NIC's TPC model, the Department of Corrections alone cannot effectively address all the issues offenders face when they are released into our communities. By forming strategic and tactical partnerships that enhance offender self-sufficiency, the Missouri Reentry Process Steering Team is making a difference in the number of successful offenders in our communities.

Missouri could not have continued the momentum without the assistance we received from the National Institute of Corrections and the Center for Effective Public Policy. These two organizations have provided technical assistance in every stage of our progress, and each has been a loyal contributor to this philosophical change in Missouri. ♦

For more information:

Julie Boehm
Women's Programs/
Reentry Manager
Missouri Department of
Corrections
Division of Offender
Rehabilitative Services
2729 Plaza Drive
Jefferson City, Missouri 65109
(573) 526-1206
Julie.Boehm@doc.mo.gov

Reentry Resources

Bureau of Justice Assistance, Prisoner Reentry Initiative
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/reentry.html
Office of Justice Programs, Reentry Initiative
http://www.reentry.gov
NCJRS Reentry Resource Map
http://www.reentryresources.ncjrs.gov

— Organizations —

The Urban Institute Reentry project overview —
http://www.urban.org/projects/reentry-portfolio/index.cfm
Reentry publications —
http://www.urban.org/projects/reentry-portfolio/publications.cfm
Center for Effective Public Policy
http://cepp.com/work/subexp.php
Council of State Governments, Reentry Policy Council
http://www.reentrypolicy.org
National Governors' Association Reentry Academy
http://tinyurl.com/3ywgrk

— National Institute of Corrections —

NIC homepage on Offender Reentry/Transition
http://nicic.org/TPCI

Transition from Prison to the Community: Profiles of participating states

State	NIC link	State link
Georgia	http://nicic.org/TPCGeorgia	http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/
Indiana	http://nicic.org/TPCIndiana	http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/reentry/
Michigan	http://nicic.org/TPCMichigan	http://michigan.gov/corrections
Missouri	http://nicic.org/TPCMissouri	http://www.doc.mo.gov/reentry/MissouriReentryProcess.htm
New York	http://nicic.org/TPCNewYork	http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/crimnet/ojsa/initaitives/tpci_crtf.htm
North Dakota	http://nicic.org/TPCNorthDakota	http://www.state.nd.us/docr
Oregon	http://nicic.org/TPCOregon	http://www.oregon.gov/DOC/TRANS/index.shtml
Rhode Island	http://nicic.org/TPCRhodeIsland	http://www.doc.ri.gov/reentry/index.php

Shortcut to NIC Library resources on reentry:
http://nicic.org/Features/Library/?Tag=385&Group=7
Research Help — 1-800-877-1461 or *asknicic@nicic.org*