



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice

Roy Cooper, Governor
Eddie M. Buffaloe, Jr., Secretary

Timothy D. Moose, Chief Deputy Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety

FROM: Eddie M. Buffaloe, Jr., Secretary 
Timothy D. Moose, Chief Deputy Secretary 

RE: State Reentry Council Collaborative (SRCC) Annual Report

DATE: December 1, 2021

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143B-604(c), *beginning November 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, the SRCC shall report its findings and recommendations to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety.*

Please find the 2021 State Reentry Council Collaborative annual report attached.

2021 State Reentry Council Collaborative Legislative Report

November 2021

To create the State Reentry Council Collaborative (SRCC), in November 2017, the Secretary of DPS directed staff to complete the following tasks:

1. Develop a membership list for the SRCC as outlined in Section 16C.10 of Session Law 2017-57, Part 1 of Article 13 of 143B of the General Statutes to include those required members and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate by the Secretary.
2. Convene an initial meeting of the SRCC.
3. Develop a list of potential State Reentry Council Collaborative workgroups, identify participants, and gather contact information, areas of interest, and those interested in leadership roles.
4. Discuss the needs of formerly incarcerated individuals and identify the methods to strengthen local reentry councils.

The SRCC then established ten workgroups to make recommendations on how North Carolina citizens, governmental entities, advocacy groups, law enforcement, the judicial system, and faith communities can collaboratively address reentry in our state. The document linked [here](#) represents the culmination of the SRCC's work to date, including its final recommendations. At the end of 2018, the SRCC presented these final recommendations to the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA). At that point, the ten-workgroup structure dissolved into four implementation teams: Legislative, Executive, Communications/Awareness, and Local/Community. All the SRCC principal members and workgroup members had the option to join one of these implementation teams (or none at all). These teams each continue to meet regularly separately from the SRCC quarterly meetings to address SRCC recommendations related to that area:

The Legislative Team reviews the recommendations that require legislation, and prioritizes and develops strategies for getting legislation passed.

The Executive Team prioritizes and implement the recommendations that can be executed by Gubernatorial action, or one or more state agencies.

The Communications and Awareness Team implements recommendations involving better communication, data sharing, cultural sensitivity, and other issues within and between the entities that make up the SRCC.

The Local/Community Team works with LRCs to support their work, and also works closely with the Communications/Awareness Implementation Team on related recommendations.

Implementation Team Status Updates: Legislative Team

The SRCC has four Legislative recommendations that are complete, five that are in progress, and ten that have not been started. The following SRCC legislative recommendations are complete:

1. Automatically convert adult criminal convictions at ages 16 and 17 to juvenile status (SB 562/SL 2020-35).
2. Amend expunction and certificate of relief statutes to allow greater access to relief, including:
 - a. GS §15A-145.5 (Expunction of certain misdemeanors and felonies; no age limitation) to exclude up to three Class 2 misdemeanors and all Class 3 misdemeanors as disqualifying convictions (SB 562/SL 2020-35).
 - b. GS §15A-146 (Expunction of records when charges are dismissed or there are findings of not guilty) to provide for automatic expunction of dismissed charges and not guilty dispositions (SB 562/SL 2020-35).
3. Enact a statute that requires all licensing boards to remove subjective terms, such as “good moral character” and “moral turpitude”, as a licensing or certification requirement (HB 770/SL 2019-91).
4. Repeal the prohibition on the offering of Associate of Arts, Associate of Sciences, and Associate of General Education degrees and repeal the contact hour reporting requirement in corrections facilities (HB 463/SL 2020-54).

The following Legislative recommendations are in progress. The SRCC Legislative Team proposes that the first three be prioritized for the 2022 short session.

1. Recommendation: Amend G.S. § 20-28(a) to make retroactive the amendments of Session Law 2015-186 eliminating permanent suspensions for three or more convictions of driving while license revoked-not impaired revocation.

Update: This was part of a broad recommendation to facilitate restoring driver’s licenses to incarcerated individuals prior to release and maintaining licensure during post-release supervision. The NC Justice Center supported a bill containing this recommendation, S490, sponsored by Sens. Hise, Britt, and Mohammed. The bill passed the Senate unanimously in May 2021. Last action on the bill was on August 23rd, 2021, when it was re-referred to the Committee on Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House. We are hoping to build off this prior momentum and continue amplifying this issue during the short session.

2. Recommendation: Amend statutes to better protect people from being charged for removal of mugshot information.

Update: People who have been incarcerated, as well as people who have been arrested, frequently face exploitation by companies such as the Slammer, Mugshots.com, UnpublishArrest.com, and UnpublishingPartners.com. These companies seek to make money by

broadcasting a person's previous involvement with the criminal justice system. After passing the Senate by an overwhelming 47-1 vote in April 2021, [S660](#), was referred to the Committee on Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House, and hasn't progressed further. This bill, sponsored by Sens. Lazzara, Britt, and Nickel, would stop booking photographs from being public records and would limit the ways in which law enforcement agencies could provide these booking photographs. We want to continue pushing these changes during the short session.

3. Recommendation: GS §15A-173.1 (Certificate of Relief) to eliminate the 12-month waiting period after a sentence is completed for eligible persons.

Update: The 12-month waiting period piece of this recommendation has not been addressed yet, but Sens. Britt, Batch, and Lazzara sponsored [S667](#), which would allow a person to go to one county and submit a petition for a Certificate of Relief for all counties, thereby making access to CORs easier. On April 8th, 2021, this bill was referred to the committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate, but was never heard in committee.

4. Create statutory standards for a global, tiered approach to disposition of minor matters for persons incarcerated.¹
5. Amend several provisions of Chapter 20 of the North Carolina General Statutes, including:
 - a. G.S. § 20-24.1(a)(2) to require a pre-deprivation hearing to determine if a defendant is able to pay before suspending the defendant's license for failure to pay.
 - b. G.S. § 20-24.1(b) to provide for automatic restoration of a driver's license after a 12-month suspension period²
 - c. GS § 20-26(b) to provide free certified driving records to nonprofit legal services providers
 - d. various provisions to allow hearings on permanent suspensions to occur in the county of incarceration.

¹ At times, individuals who are incarcerated for a conviction in one county complete their sentence with criminal matters still pending in other counties. If the person completes an active sentence and returns to his or her community without resolving these matters, he or she will inevitably be rearrested for that minor offense or failure to comply that did not get handled while the person was in prison, and the cycle of incarceration continues.

² License to Work ([S 490/H 570](#)) passed from the Senate to the House on May 11th and is now in the Rules Committee. This bill would require the DMV to restore a license 12 months after the effective date of revocation for either failing to appear at trial or a hearing or to pay court-ordered fines, penalties or other court costs for motor vehicle offenses.

The following Legislative Recommendations have not been started.

Funding

1. Appropriate new funding to hire a housing support specialist and a peer support counselor in each of the state's 17 local reentry councils (LRCs), plus 3 months of reentry rental assistance for returning citizens at all 17 LRCs.³
2. Appropriate \$140,000 for a pilot program creating two full-time Reentry Education Navigator positions at two different community colleges entirely dedicated to the needs of justice-involved students.
3. Expand the Formerly Incarcerated Transition (FIT) program to additional sites within North Carolina. The NC FIT Program utilizes specially trained community health workers (CHWs) with a personal history of incarceration, (i.e., peer support workers) to establish rapport and trust while linking persons recently released from prison to health services.
4. Allocate \$25,000 for the development of online professional development modules for faculty and staff across the state who serve individuals with criminal records. These professional development modules would be made available to all agencies and educational institutions who serve this population including community colleges, LRCs, universities, and workforce development agencies.
5. Establish a pilot voucher system to fund transportation expenses of people on post-release supervision based on need and at the discretion of post-release supervision officers.⁴
6. Define transitional housing more clearly, establish a special designation of supportive group housing for returning citizens, and provide funding to local reentry councils designated for transitional housing.
7. Provide funding to nonprofit legal services providers to resolve indefinite driver's license suspensions under G.S. § 20-24.1

Policy

8. Pass and implement a law promoting alternatives to incarceration for people who are caregivers giving judges the discretion to sentence mothers who are primary caretakers of their children to alternative programs instead of incarceration within county jails or state prison facilities.
9. Repeal the prohibition of the utilization of state funds for community college training in local jails and reinstate the inmate waiver.

³ The LRCs include Buncombe, Craven/Pamlico, Durham, Hoke, Robeson, Mecklenburg, McDowell, Nash/Edgecombe, New Hanover, Scotland, Pitt, Cumberland, Forsyth, Wake, Wilson, Guilford, and Orange.

⁴ The number of people currently on post-release supervision in NC is 11,866 as of June 30, 2020.

10. Toll the statute of limitations (stop the clock) for child support until the person is released.

Implementation Team Status Updates: Executive Team

The SRCC has four Executive recommendations that are complete, eight that are in progress, and four that have not been started. The following SRCC Executive Team recommendations are complete:

1. Host a state-wide reentry conference.
2. Ensure that individuals leaving prison who are eligible for the Transitions to Community Living Initiative (meaning individuals with disabilities transitioning from adult care homes or state hospitals and citizens who are at risk for institutionalization) are able to access these services, so that they can have supportive services in the community rather than in institutional settings, per the 1999 [Olmstead Supreme Court decision](#).
3. Change language within NCDPS to language that does not dehumanize people under DPS correctional control, using “person-first” language such as “incarcerated people”, whenever possible.
4. Continue to research NCDPS’s current Work Release Program, as well as other states’ work release programs, to identify strategies to increase utilization of the work release program.

The following Executive Team recommendations are in progress and will continue to be worked on in 2022:

1. Share data between NCDPS and NCDHHS to:
 - a. Identify people who are incarcerated in North Carolina who have active Medicaid coverage, and redirect those premium payments to Local Management Entity-Managed Care Organizations (LME-MCOs) to related services and support of those Medicaid-eligible people who have been released from prison in the last 12 months.
 - b. Facilitate the timely re-establishment of Medicaid for eligible individuals upon their release from prison.

Update: Processes have been started for both a and b, but more monitoring is needed to confirm that the process is fully working to get people’s Medicaid reinstated.

2. Expand mobile driver’s license and identification unit services to all 34 minimum custody facilities.

Update: Lack of IDs continues to be one of the earliest and most harmful barriers to successful reentry. For the moment, DMV mobile units are not returning to prisons. Therefore, administrative solutions are being sought whereby DMV offices throughout the state can more quickly start the process of getting formerly incarcerated people IDs by consistently accepting all forms of prison ID and sharing more information with DPS.

3. Make a range of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) options available to those who are incarcerated in reentry facilities with a history of opioid dependence.

Update: The NC Department of Health and Human Services is already moving forward on their Diversion and Reentry services project, which will include a \$15-20 million investment over the next 20-24 months at the county level for pre- and post-arrest diversion, treatment in jails, and re-entry services. The Executive Team will continue monitoring the progress of this project.

4. Distribute Narcan overdose reversal kits to individuals who are about to be released and provide them instruction on the use of these kits.

Update: Contracts have been signed between DHHS and DPS for the distribution of Narcan to individuals on release, but the process is not yet fully operational. The Executive Team will continue monitoring this process.

5. Enlist the aid of SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) specialists to assist people with disabilities who are released from incarceration in their applications for Supplemental Security income (SSI), Social Security Disability (SSDI), and other benefits, including connections to outpatient care and recovery services.

Update: Specialty mental health officers are currently being educated on how SOAR works. The SOAR training is provided on-line for agencies and counties who hire SOAR workers. DHHS hopes to see this expanded further statewide in every county. The 3-year state MOU with DHHS, DPS Community Corrections, NC Administrative Office of the Courts, the North Carolina Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities (TASC) Network, and ACDP has already been signed.

6. That NCDPS work with DHHS and county DSS offices to develop and improve resources, policies, and procedures to help incarcerated parents and their children maintain their relationships during periods of incarceration.

Update: The Family Reentry Support and Help (FRESH) project is being supported by a 3-year federal grant (10/1/2020 until 9/20/2023). The grant allows NCDPS to perform institutional activities and services for all the designated reentry facilities, including correctional staff training on the role of the family in the reentry process, review of policies and procedures to ensure protection of minor children, and support to create child-friendly visitation spaces. The Executive Team will receive regular updates on the progress of this grant.

7. Create two permanent State Funded Chaplain I positions specifically for the Transitional Aftercare Network (TAN).

Update: Chaplain Jerry Love was hired for this position in summer 2021. We do not yet have a second permanent State Funded Chaplain I position.

8. One recommendation initially assigned to the Executive Team is being worked on by a separate reentry Collaborative tangential to NCDPS, the NC Prison Education Collaborative (NCPEC). This recommendation was to map all educational and vocational programs and services at NC

prisons to enable prison staff, in collaboration with their partners, to plan for individuals during the rehabilitative process appropriately and efficiently. In October 2021, NCDPS and NCPEC submitted a grant proposal to the Laughing Gull Foundation to fund this mapping of services.

The following Executive Recommendations have not been started:

1. The SRCC Women and Incarceration workgroup recommends designing a reentry program, similar to the [Bridges to Home model](#), to address the trauma that is unique to women who are reentering society post-incarceration.
2. Provide people who want to volunteer inside facilities with a streamlined, transparent sign-up process on the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) website.
3. Study the possibility of expanding the Medicaid Family Planning Waiver (FPW) program to cover health conditions other than those directly related to family planning to enable some recently released individuals to have health insurance that they would not otherwise be able to obtain.
4. That DMV use its discretion pursuant to GS §20-28(c1) to issue new licenses for people in prison with permanent driver's license suspensions for 3 or more convictions of Driving While License Revoked (DWLR) offenses.

Implementation Team Status Updates: Communications Team

The SRCC has two Communications recommendations that are complete, four that are in progress, and one that is not started. The following SRCC Communications Team recommendations are complete:

1. The SRCC Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends the creation of a network of people who have completed vocational or academic programs while incarcerated. Further, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) should develop supports for the implementation of a Justice Involved Alumni Network to be operated by the local reentry councils (LRCs) of North Carolina.
2. The Advocacy Workgroup recommended that the full SRCC participate in a Phase 1 Racial Equity Institute training in early 2019.

The following SRCC Communications Team recommendations are in progress and will continue to be worked on in 2022:

1. This workgroup recommends adding a button to the Offender Family Services page to direct families to reunification and other resources that help incarcerated people have a productive and successful transition back into the community.

Update: The Communications Team produced a general poster for placement in prison waiting areas with resources and questions for discussion when a loved one is about to return home, but it hasn't been finalized or posted online yet.

2. This workgroup recommends creating and distributing a brochure with important conversation topics for families with an incarcerated loved one, as well as information about family reunification services in their geographic area.

Update: The same content within the poster described above will be made into brochure form as well.

3. Educate people involved in the criminal justice system on the legal options available to people with criminal records as they transition back into their communities, including certificates of relief and expungements, waivers of criminal justice debt, and driver's license restoration.

Update: The NC Department of Justice and the NC Justice Center are working on a joint training on certificates of relief that will include CLE credits.

4. To raise awareness and educate the public about reentry efforts in the State of North Carolina, this workgroup recommends the implementation of a Reentry Awareness Campaign. This awareness campaign would include comprehensively engaging broadcast, digital and print media, community advocacy resources, and faith-based communication channels. It would also include leveraging partnerships with reentry involved agencies, organizations, and associations.

Update: The Communications Team developed a one-pager that gives an overview of opportunities for this joint SRCC/Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice (TREC) communication effort. The one-pager outlines the general goal of both campaigns (one is aimed at employers and business owners, and the other towards people leaving prison), and the audiences for each. It is currently being shared with potential funders.

The following Communications Recommendation has not been started:

1. Recommend strategies to do targeted outreach to employers about the benefits of certificates of relief as well as the legislation's most recent expansion of applicant eligibility.

Implementation Team Status Updates: Local Team

The SRCC Local Team had two recommendations. The first is complete; the second is in progress:

1. The Advocacy Workgroup recommends developing a roster of SRCC members for the 2019 year (the "implementation phase") that is at least 25% people who have been justice-involved.
2. Conduct professional workshops with local reentry councils (LRCs) to raise their awareness of family/child reunification issues as a part of reentry services and support.

The Local team is currently working towards this recommendation by connecting LRCs with DHHS to better disseminate information about programs that foster better relationships between incarcerated parents and their children. For example, in November 2021, several LRCs will host trainings on the Access & Visitation program, a resource that supports and facilitates incarcerated parents' relationships with their children, as well as the Child Support program.

The Local team also collects reentry related events and sends them out to the NC Reentry Database on a weekly basis. This team is also working on bringing in reentry contacts in counties without LRCs to encourage them to participate in the SRCC. Finally, LRCs and other reentry organizations organized over 20 reentry events for Second Chance Month in April 2021, including job fairs, resource fairs, panels celebrating successful formerly incarcerated people, entrepreneurship events, a 5k for reentry, a radio show, and special LRC meetings with additional programming for Second Chance Month. DPS emailed out this list of events and also posted it online.

Meeting Reports

a. November 2020

No meeting. See letter from Secretary Eric Hooks (Appendix B).

b. February 9, 2021

At this meeting, Jasmine McGhee, Special Deputy Attorney General, Public Protection Section at NCDOJ, and Kerwin Pittman, Executive Director of RREPS (Recidivism Reduction Educational Programs Services, Inc.) gave a presentation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Racial Equity in the Criminal Justice System (TREC). We also heard implementation team updates from all four implementation team leads. Finally, Nicole Sullivan, Deputy Secretary for Analysis, Programming, and Policy at NCDPS (formerly Director of Reentry, Programs & Services), gave an ACJJ reentry update.

c. May 11, 2021

At this meeting, Dr. Cynthia Fraga Rizo, Assistant Professor, and Dr. Rebecca Macy, professor and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development at the UNC Chapel Hill School of Social Work, gave a presentation on their recently completed joint project with NCDPS entitled Human Trafficking and North Carolina Corrections: Identifying and Responding to Victims and Women at Risk. The Executive, Legislative, and Communications Team leads also gave updates on their teams' progress.

d. August 10, 2021

At this meeting, Jasmine McGhee gave an update on TREC progress. Mercedes Restucha-Klem, Assistant Attorney General at NCDOJ, gave an update on the progress of the Communications Team. We then had four presentations on housing services in North Carolina: a presentation on rapid rehousing in NC by Denise Neunaber, Co-Creator at Redesign Collaborative, a presentation on the Housing Opportunities and Prevention of Evictions (HOPE) program by Laura Hogshead, COO at the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR), a presentation on recent legislative and policy progress in housing by Pamela Atwood, Director of Housing Policy at the NC Housing Coalition, and a presentation on promising national housing models by Thomas Coyne, Senior Policy Analyst in Behavioral Health at the Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Appendix A

State Reentry Council Collaborative Roster (as of 10/20/21)

These SRCC Principal Members include both the agencies and community partners deemed necessary to develop and finalize council recommendations. In addition to the SRCC's principal and implementation team members, there are also many interested individuals who participate in SRCC meetings.

Chris Moore Interagency Coordinator Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs	LaShauna Austria Executive Director Benevolence Farm
Judge Allen Baddour North Carolina Superior Court	Brent Bailey Local Reentry Coordinator Buncombe County
Torre Jessup Commissioner Division of Motor Vehicles	Natalia Botella Policy Advisor Office of the Governor
Angela Coleman Director of Adult Programs StepUp Ministry	Machelle Baker Sanders Secretary Dept. of Commerce
Linda Davis Alpha for Prisons/Kairos Outside	Vacant Reentry Program Coordinator Dept. of Commerce
Rick Glazier Executive Director NC Justice Center	Bessie Elmore Executive Director Straight Talk Support Group
Joyce Jones Reentry Consultant Dept. of Public Safety	Dennis Gaddy Executive Director Community Success Initiative
Jasmine McGhee Special Deputy Attorney General Dept. of Justice	Danny Hampton Local Reentry Coordinator Freedom Life Ministries

<p>Timothy Moose Chief Deputy Secretary Dept. of Public Safety</p>	<p>Todd Ishee Commissioner of Prisons Dept. of Public Safety</p>
<p>Stella Bailey Justice Innovations, Innovation Section Chief Dept. of Health & Human Services</p>	<p>Kody Kinsley Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health & IDD Dept. of Health & Human Services</p>
<p>Frankie Roberts Executive Director LINC</p>	<p>Bernice McPhatter Local Reentry Coordinator Local Reentry Council</p>
<p>Attorney General Josh Stein Dept. of Justice</p>	<p>Dave Nash Chief Operating Officer Asheville Housing Authority</p>
<p>Karen Tikkanen Director for Workforce Continuing Education Training & Standards NC Community College System</p>	<p>Ophelia Ray Executive Director Maggie's Outreach</p>
<p>Thomas Stith III President NC Community College System</p>	<p>William Lassiter Deputy Secretary Dept. of Public Safety</p>
<p>Kristie Puckett Williams Regional Field Organizer, Campaign for Smart Justice ACLU of NC</p>	<p>Nicole Sullivan Deputy Secretary for Analysis, Programming, and Policy Dept. of Public Safety</p>
<p>Judge Andrew Heath Director NC Administrative Office of the Courts</p>	<p>Lucas Vrbsky Veterans Incarcerated Reentry Specialist Veterans Administration</p>
<p>Joseph Kyzer Legislative Liaison NC Administrative Office of the Courts</p>	<p>Kristin Siemek Recruitment Manager NC Office of State Human Resources</p>

Appendix B



Roy Cooper, Governor

Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

November 10, 2020

Dear SRCC principals and implementation team members:

Thank you for your continued partnership and dedication to moving the State Reentry Council Collaborative (SRCC) recommendations forward during such a tumultuous and uncertain time.

The SRCC continued to meet throughout 2020. During the February 2020 meeting, four employees from the NC Department of Commerce gave presentations on the agency's reentry work. In May, we started meeting virtually with Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice Chief Deputy Secretary Tim Moose and I giving an update on efforts to manage COVID-19 in prisons and throughout the state. Finally, NCDPS hosted a two-day Virtual Reentry Month event in August 2020 with numerous partners, attended by about 285 people. There continues to be progress in many of the programs you saw during the Virtual Reentry Month presentations.

NCDPS Reentry, Programs & Services (RP&S) has continued to provide reentry services during the pandemic at an even higher rate due to the increased number of individuals being released--either early or to serve a portion of their sentence in the community through extending the limits of confinement. NCDPS has continued to work with its partners on a number of projects. Notably, North Carolina was one of only five states to receive a National Institute of Justice grant for a randomized control trial on Pokket technology, an app utilized on tablets, that allows incarcerated people close to release to access personalized reentry planning and programming, which they can continue to use during their period of supervision. RP&S is also partnering with Straight Talk Support Group in Durham to pay for 10 transitional housing beds in Durham for formerly incarcerated people with serious medical and/or mental health conditions. RP&S coordinated a successful process for moving people into this house and coordinates their care upon release. Finally, RP&S recently received a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance in partnership with Coastal Horizons focused on family reunification, specifically providing programming for minor children and their incarcerated parents.

Local Reentry Council (LRC) staff are working remotely and staggering in-person visits while practicing social distancing to provide justice involved individuals with the vital services they need to successfully transition to their communities. As you know, providing services such as housing, employment, and transportation is always challenging. Those challenges have been exacerbated this year. However, through the strong LRC partnerships and creativity, the delivery of services continues to be provided within reasonable timeframes. The LRCs are utilizing their websites, conducting virtual training sessions, and strengthening their partnerships with Prisons

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and Community Corrections field personnel to continue connecting with justice involved individuals in need of transition assistance. We have increased the number of independent councils, specifically Hoke, Scotland, Robeson, and Wilson county are no longer part of multi-county LRCs.

The SRCC Implementation Teams have continued meeting throughout this year. Since the Legislative Team started meeting, this team has helped pass several important bills that included SRCC recommendations, including [HB 770](#), [HB 463](#), and [SB 562](#) (also known as the Second Chance Act). The Executive Team continues to work on implementing SRCC recommendations that can be accomplished with executive action by one or more state agencies, including better information-sharing and communication, cross-agency collaboration, and finding funding for prioritized programs. The Communications Team continues to raise awareness and educate the public about reentry efforts through its work on educational materials, a logo, a video, and a website. Finally, the Local Team is working with an external consultant to identify reentry contacts in all 100 counties and strategies to strengthen and support local reentry efforts.

The SRCC steering committee and the implementation teams are currently looking at which recommendations are most feasible for 2021 and planning how we will move those forward. While that process continues, we decided not to have our full SRCC meeting scheduled for November 10, given broader uncertainties and how thinly stretched everyone's time and resources are right now. We will continue our quarterly virtual meetings during at least the beginning of 2021, and will transition to meeting in person only when it is completely safe to do so. As of now, **the 2021 meeting dates are February 9, May 11, August 10, and November 9.**

We offer our heartfelt thanks to all this year's SRCC principal and implementation team members, and will announce any changes in SRCC membership in early 2021.

Please continue to stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Erik A. Hooks
Secretary/Chair

State Reentry Council Collaborative 2018 Recommendations

The State Reentry Council Collaborative (SRCC), a legislatively mandated state body, developed the recommendations included in this report during calendar year 2018. These recommendations are the result of extensive research and collaboration regarding post-incarceration transition services and programs. The findings and opinions contained herein are not official policy of the State of North Carolina and do not represent the official or personal positions of the Office of the Governor, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS), or any other North Carolina state agency.

Preface

The purpose of this document is to explain the process, outcomes, and future direction of the SRCC. The SRCC includes representatives of state agencies, institutions of higher education, business, faith and community-based organizations, nonprofits, and other stakeholders. Working together and sharing information and ideas, these principal and workgroup members of the SRCC developed ten (10) action items for immediate implementation and twenty-four (24) recommendations to be considered for future implementation. While every recommendation may not be feasible for implementation, the purpose of this document is to demonstrate a commitment to sharing the entire scope of SRCC recommendations and acknowledge the input and contributions of so many to these efforts.

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Overview

Creation of SRCC

The SRCC was created by the NC General Assembly (NCGA) in 2017 (S.L. 2017-57, Section 16C.10) and included several directives:

(a) The Secretary of the Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) shall establish the State Reentry Council Collaborative (SRCC). The SRCC shall include up to two representatives from each of the following:

- (1) The Division of Motor Vehicles.
- (2) The Department of Health and Human Services.
- (3) The Administrative Office of the Courts.
- (4) The North Carolina Community College System.
- (5) The Division of Adult Correction of the Department of Public Safety.
- (6) A nonprofit entity that provides reentry services or reentry programs.
- (7) Any other agency that the Secretary deems relevant.

(b) The Secretary, or the Secretary's designee, shall chair the SRCC which shall meet at least quarterly upon the call of the chair. The SRCC shall study the needs of ex-offenders who have been recently released from a correctional institution and to increase the effectiveness of local reentry councils.

(c) Beginning November 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, the SRCC shall report its findings and recommendations to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety.

To create the SRCC, the Secretary of DPS directed staff to complete the following tasks, all of which have been completed:

1. Develop a membership list for the SRCC as outlined in Section 16C.10 to include those required members and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate by the Secretary. See Appendix 1 for membership list.
2. Convene an initial meeting of the SRCC.
3. Develop a list of potential SRCC workgroups, identify participants, and gather contact information, areas of interest, and names of participants interested in leadership roles.
4. Discuss the needs of formerly incarcerated individuals and identify methods to strengthen local reentry councils (LRC).

To help staff the work of the SRCC, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation provided financial support to contract with Forward Justice, a law, policy, and strategy center dedicated to advancing racial, social, and economic justice in the Southern United States. In its role as SRCC consultant, Forward Justice provided staff support to the SRCC workgroups and facilitated workgroup discussions, leading to draft recommendations. Forward Justice also identified and researched best practices to help shape workgroup recommendations and worked closely with NCDPS staff and Governor's Office policy staff to plan and direct all aspects of the SRCC and workgroup

activities. The 10 workgroups held monthly phone calls to discuss recommendations for addressing the identified focus issues for the SRCC.

In addition to Forward Justice staff, the workgroup chairs (listed below) are principal members of the SRCC and played a crucial role in facilitating progress on workgroup recommendations.

Workgroup Chairs Include:

- Frankie Roberts, Leading Into New Communities, Inc. (LINC) – Housing
- Torre Jessup, North Carolina Department of Transportation – Transportation
- Nate Humphrey, North Carolina Community College System – Education and Vocational Training
- Wendi Eure, North Carolina Department of Commerce – Employment
- Sonya Brown, North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services – Mental Health, Substance Misuse, and Medical
- Linda Davis, Kairos Prison Ministry International – Faith/Community-Based Organizations
- Judge Allen Baddour, Superior Court Judge District 15B – Legal
- Bessie Elmore, Straight Talk Support Group – Family Reunification
- Dennis Gaddy, Community Success Initiative – Advocacy
- Kristie Puckett Williams, Community Activist & Advocate – Women and Incarceration

Highlights of 2018 SRCC Meetings

The SRCC held meetings on February 6, 2018; May 8, 2018; August 14, 2018; and November 13, 2018. Highlights from the meetings are as follows:

- February 6 — meeting focused on the infrastructure of the SRCC, establishing workgroups on specific topics related to reentry, and discussing their goals and objectives. The first five workgroups, representing Employment, Faith/Community-Based Organizations, Transportation, Substance Misuse, Mental Health, and Medical, and Advocacy reported on their initial discussions and recommended some of the priorities to be addressed.
- May 8 — meeting included reading the Governor’s proclamation for Reentry Week and reflections from SRCC members; a presentation and discussion with Ms. Susan Burton regarding women and incarceration from a national perspective; a review of workgroup goals and objectives for all 10 workgroups; reports on initial discussions of the other five workgroups, representing Housing, Education and Vocational Training, Legal, Family Reunification, and Women and Incarceration; and the framework to be used in developing and submitting recommendations from each workgroup.
- August 14 — meeting focused on preliminary recommendations from all 10 workgroups, including group discussion and feedback on the recommendations.
- November 13 — meeting included presenting final recommendations from all 10 workgroups, a remembrance of Dr. Devah Pager, and an explanation of the 2019 Implementation Teams and the transition away from the 10-workgroup setup.

Roadmap for the Recommendations

Each of the ten (10) SRCC Workgroups had between two and three tiers of final recommendations.

- The Tier 1 (Action Item) recommendations are achievable during 2019 and do NOT require legislation or a budget to be implemented.
- The Tier 2 recommendations are the top priority recommendations that will likely take more time and possibly legislation and/or funding to implement.
- The Tier 3 recommendations encompass all the other recommendations.

State Reentry Council Collaborative Workgroup Recommendations

Legal Workgroup 2019 Action Item – Communications/Awareness

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Educate people involved in the criminal justice system on the legal options available to people with criminal records as they transition back into their communities, including certificates of relief and expungements, waivers of criminal justice debt, and driver's license restoration.

BACKGROUND

Approximately 77 million Americans, or 1 in 3 adults, have a criminal record. In NC, more than 1.5 million people, or 1 in 5 adults, have criminal records. A criminal record can make it difficult, or even impossible, for an individual to find work in a given field, obtain housing or education, and maintain productive familial relationships. In response to these reentry challenges, members of the NC Second Chance Alliance have successfully advocated for expanded access to certificates of relief, expungements, and other legal relief to ease the reentry burden shouldered by so many people with criminal records. As a result of this advocacy, tens of thousands of residents across North Carolina currently are eligible for expungement and/or certificates of relief. However, much of the legal community, including defense attorneys, prosecutors, and members of the judiciary, are not aware of the legal remedies, which can hinder the reentry efforts of people with records.

RECOMMENDATION

The Legal Workgroup recommends the development of a legal education campaign focused on people within the criminal justice system, including defense attorneys, prosecutors, probation officers, and judges, on the legal options available to people with criminal records as they transition back into their communities, including certificates of relief and expungements, waivers of criminal justice debt, and driver's license restoration.

More specifically, the workgroup recommends the development of legal education materials, which highlight the current legal remedies that mitigate or alleviate the collateral consequences of arrest and conviction for people with criminal records. Once the legal education materials are created, the workgroup recommends specific outreach to identify individual stakeholders within the North Carolina Conference of District Attorneys, the Judges Conference, NC and US probation offices and the Public Defender Association that will serve as liaisons for the scheduling and implementation of education seminars within their respective stakeholder groups.

STAKEHOLDERS

- UNC School of Government
- NC Conference of District Attorneys
- NC Public Defender Association

- Judges Conference
- NCDPS – Community Corrections
- NC Attorney General’s Office
- State and local legal service providers (Legal Aid, NC Justice Center, etc.)
- US Attorney’s Office
- US Probation Office
- NCGA
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based organizations
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The cost for the development of legal education materials will be primarily the cost of the time it takes to organize and compile the legal resources into a single document for wide dissemination.

Legal Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Recognizing that there are significant legislative changes that need to be made to North Carolina's legal landscape to facilitate more effective reentry, the Legal Workgroup recommends implementing several legislative recommendations, including but not limited to:

1. Amend expunction and certificate of relief statutes to allow greater access to relief.
2. Create statutory standards for a global, tiered approach to disposition of minor matters for persons incarcerated.
3. Toll the statute of limitations (stop the clock) for child support until the person is released.
4. Automatically convert adult criminal convictions at ages 16 and 17 to juvenile status.
5. Amend statutes to better protect people from being charged for removal of mugshot information.

Implementing one of these recommendations would be a significant step forward in the reentry space, but this workgroup recommends that they all be implemented eventually. These recommendations are equally significant and not listed in priority order.

BACKGROUND

There are several legal barriers making it difficult for individuals returning home from prison to make a clean break with the justice system and reenter with a clean slate. Some of those barriers are listed below. There are corresponding solution(s) to each of these issues in the list of recommendations on the next page.

1. Pending Legal Matters

At times, individuals who are incarcerated for a conviction in one county complete their sentence with criminal matters still pending in other counties, including outstanding orders for arrest for failure to comply with disposed judgments. Without an order for arrest, these cases would generally result in short sentences or no confinement at all. If the resolution of any of these outstanding matters results in an active sentence (or revocation of a previously ordered sentence in the case of a failure to comply), and that occurs while the person is serving a prison sentence, concurrent time is common. However, if the person completes an active sentence and returns to his or her community without resolving these matters, he or she will inevitably be rearrested for that minor offense or failure to comply that did not get handled while the person was in prison, and the cycle of incarceration continues.

2. Child Support

Usually, when an individual is incarcerated, and he/she is under a current order to pay child support, any missed payments will accrue and become past due. These past due amounts are termed arrearages. However, if the "supporting party" or the incarcerated person who owes child support payments is not on work release, they typically cannot pay because they are incarcerated. Once a defendant is released from incarceration,

however, he or she might be rearrested because they missed a court date due to being in custody. Moreover, the arrears have accrued during a period where they clearly cannot work.

3. Certificates of Relief

Lack of transportation is another barrier facing individuals transitioning back into their communities. It is common that individuals return home from prison without a driver's license. Currently, the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is sending mobile units into some prisons to help individuals obtain state issued identification or a driver's license. However, this program is not designed to address license suspensions that may stem from old FTA's (failures to appear) or FTP's/FTC's (failures to pay/comply). Additionally, under a new state law went into effect at the end of 2018, an estimated 90 percent of charges will meet eligibility requirements for certificates of relief. These certificates can greatly assist with housing for those reentering communities and can, for example, shelter a landlord from liability for deciding to lease to someone with a criminal record.

4. Criminal Record Websites

People who have been incarcerated, as well as people who have been arrested, frequently face exploitation by companies such as the Slammer, Mugshots.com, UnpublishArrest.com, and UnpublishingPartners.com. These companies seek to make money by broadcasting a person's previous involvement with the criminal justice system.

5. Juvenile Criminal Record

In 2017, North Carolina became the last state to "Raise the Age," meaning that nonviolent crimes committed by 16- and 17-year-old individuals will be heard in juvenile court, effective December 1, 2019. However, there are many people serving, or having formerly served, sentences for crimes they committed at age 16 or 17 for which they would have been tried as a juvenile if this law had been in effect at the time they committed their crime. This means that these crimes are still on their adult record, despite the recent legislation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Pending Legal Matters

Improve communication and record checking capacity for persons incarcerated.

- a. Amend N.C. Gen. Stat. §15A-301.1 (o) to include all outstanding failures to comply (including minor traffic offenses which are disposed but include an unpaid fine without orders for arrest).
- b. Amend N.C. Gen. Stat. §148-10.5 to add all outstanding failures to comply here in this statute as well.

2. Child Support

- a. Enact a statute that requires all persons serving a sentence in the Division of Adult Corrections who also have existing child support court orders to have the existing child support obligation stayed until their release from custody. Additionally, this statute should be amended so that any arrears that may have accumulated during the period of incarceration will be automatically remitted (consistent with §50-13.10(d)). Currently this issue is often addressed after a person is released and has been brought to court on a show cause order for failure to pay child support.
 - b. Toll the statute of limitations (stop the clock) for child support until the person is released.
- 3. Certificates of Relief
 - a. 15A-145.5 – amend to allow expunctions of non-violent felonies or misdemeanors when a person possesses a prior conviction for not more than three (3) low-level misdemeanors (e.g. simple worthless check, second degree trespass), or unlimited prior convictions for Class 3 misdemeanors.
 - b. 15A-146 – amend to allow for automatic expunction of dismissed charges and not guilty dispositions.
 - c. 15A-173.2(b)(1) – amend to eliminate the 12-month waiting period (after a sentence is completed) to request a certificate of relief for persons who, while completing the sentence of the offense that will be the subject of the certificate of relief request, have either:
 - 1) Had a period of good behavior while incarcerated (proved with affidavits of good behavior by Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice (DACJJ) officials; and/or
 - 2) Completed a prison program to further their education, develop vocational skills, or to address substance misuse or mental illness (proved with a certificate from DACJJ or the same affidavit to include both behavior and the program). This is significant because without removal of the waiting period, assistance with housing or employment via a certificate of relief will not take place for at least 12 months after release.
- 4. Criminal Record Websites
 - A. Amend statutes to better protect people from being charged for removal of mugshot information, including:
 - a. Amend N.C. Gen. Stat. §75 to prohibit the use of mugshots for commercial purposes, including charging for removal of mugshots.
 - b. Amend the Public Records Act (N.C. Gen. Stat. §132) to clarify that arrest photographs are not public records, except for limited case-by-case use by media in noteworthy cases.
 - B. Enact a new statute to create an additional civil penalty for third-party data providers who continue to disseminate information on expunged charges in violation of N.C. Gen. Stat. §15A-152.

5. Juvenile Criminal Record

In conjunction with 2017 “Raise the Age” legislation, automatically convert adult criminal convictions at ages 16 and 17 to juvenile status so that they are no longer publicly accessible as a part of a person’s adult criminal record.

Other:

- Create statutory standards for a global, tiered approach to disposition of minor matters for persons incarcerated.
 - Remit costs/fines in previously disposed cases for persons serving more than 6 months active.
 - Dismiss low-level misdemeanors for persons serving more than 6 months active.
 - Permit remote, video pleas for concurrent sentences for misdemeanors that would not extend time incarcerated for which dismissal is not possible.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- Child Support Enforcement Offices
- North Carolina Department of Justice (NCDOJ)
- US Probation Office
- NC State Bureau of Investigation (SBI)
- NC Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)
- Local court expunction programs
- Clerks of Court
- District Attorneys, Public Defenders, and Judges
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based organizations
- Justice-involved individuals

Education & Vocational Training Workgroup 2019 Action Item – Local/Community

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends the creation of a network of people who have completed vocational or academic programs while incarcerated. Further, NCDPS should develop supports for the implementation of a Justice Involved Alumni Network to be operated by the LRCs of North Carolina.

BACKGROUND

Justice-involved people are in a unique position to understand the challenges the justice-involved face. Access to peer expertise will empower justice-involved people to conceptualize and realize their post-release objectives, and a dedicated alumni network will facilitate that access.

RECOMMENDATION

Several alumni groups are developing across the country, though few do more than manage an email listserv and a Facebook page. This workgroup recommends connecting alumni of NCDPS vocational and academic programs with one another through an email listserv and Facebook pages, one public and one private. The listserv and Facebook pages will serve as a forum where people in the network can ask questions and make suggestions. Leaders of the alumni network will post useful information, questions, or suggestions on a weekly basis to cultivate robust discussion and problem solving. Topics will be wide-ranging and will include education, housing, employment, and transportation.

The private Facebook page will only be accessible to alumni and will be administered by a justice-involved person, while the public Facebook page will include other stakeholders, including educators, social service providers, and NCDPS staff.

A staff person at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) will create the alumni network email listserv and Facebook pages and administer the public Facebook page. The private page will be administered by a justice-involved person, and one has been identified and is currently working with UNC-CH to create it. UNC-CH's Correctional Education Program will map out the logistics and create and maintain the network. The UNC-CH staff person and private Facebook page administrator are in the process of creating the Facebook pages. The UNC-CH staff person will create a PowerPoint about the network, which will be distributed to all relevant stakeholders, including LRCs. The staff person will create a contact sheet for distribution at the end of all NCDPS educational programming.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- UNC-CH Correctional Education program
- LRCs
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

This will not be a cost-intensive initiative. The responsibility for creating and maintaining the network will become part of a job description of a UNC-CH Correctional Education Program position.

Education & Vocational Training Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends the NCGA allocate \$140,000 for a pilot program creating two full-time Reentry Education Navigator positions at two different community colleges entirely dedicated to the needs of justice-involved students. These individuals will assist people transitioning from incarceration to release in their local community by assisting them in identifying personal and professional goals, opportunities, enrollment in educational or vocational programs, and employment leading to a livable wage. This two-year pilot will provide competitive funding as outlined below for a NC community college to employ and house one of the Reentry Education Navigators on their campus to assist with the reentry needs of their service area.

BACKGROUND

Like other vulnerable populations, justice-involved students disproportionately need social, economic, and legal support, and they also have unique needs. Just as there is support for other vulnerable populations, justice-involved students will benefit from support dedicated to them.

There are examples of programs that provide transitional assistance specifically to justice-involved students. This type of support has been proven to be effective. All California programs have identified a dedicated staff person as the key need for supporting justice-involved students. Additionally, the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges supports a Reentry Navigator position at each of the state's prison facilities to ensure a smooth transition back to society and to reduce the prohibitive cost of recidivism in the state.

RECOMMENDATION

The dedicated full-time staff at the two community colleges will begin by developing partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders such as with social services, transportation, and housing providers. Furthermore, these staff members will develop relations with NCDPS parole and probation staff to facilitate handing off formerly incarcerated people to community colleges and four-year schools as well as educating NCDPS staff about college opportunities for probationers and parolees.

Program staff will be familiar with issues confronting justice-involved students and have expertise in helping justice-involved students effectively navigate educational institutions. In addition, program staff will be familiar with community services and employers in the community college's area.

Program staff will also provide a safe space for justice-involved students to talk and share their experiences and difficulties. The existence of this space will facilitate a culture change on campus of acceptance, support, and sensitivity towards people who are justice-involved.

NCDPS will manage the awarding of these funds based on the criteria outlined below. The awarded community colleges will hire the staff person.

The criteria that must be addressed by a college applying to serve as a pilot are outlined below.

- College must have a designated reentry (correctional) facility in its service area.
- College must have or be able to demonstrate the ongoing development of a local reentry council in its service area.
- College must demonstrate its capacity to support such a position on its campus and to support the partnerships required to be successful.
- College must be willing to identify, hire, and train people who have been justice-involved to serve in these roles.
- Preference is given to colleges serving at least one Food and Nutrition Service Employment and Training county.

Timeline:

Short-term:

- Seek NCGA funding for the program during the 2019 Long Session.
- Research best practices for staff person and create a job description.

Medium term:

- Hire staff person. Staff person develops relationships with community partners, NCDPS, and law enforcement.

Long-term:

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of this program for possible expansion to all reentry missioned facilities.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS Prison representatives
- NCGA
- Leadership at the awarded community colleges
- Local partners to the awarded community colleges
- Justice-involved individuals
- North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS)

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

\$140,000 for 100% funding for compensation. This budget is based on the funding requirements for two full-time positions during the pilot and funds the positions with the same level of compensation as NC Community College Career Coaches.

Education & Vocational Training Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendations - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION 1

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends the NCGA repeal the prohibition on the offering of Associate of Arts (AA), Associate of Sciences (AS), and Associate of General Education (AGE) degrees; repeal the prohibition of the utilization of state funds for community college training in local jails; repeal the contact hour reporting requirement in correctional facilities; and reinstate the inmate waiver in the next legislative session. It is further recommended that NCDPS and the State Board of Community Colleges add this as a joint priority in the next legislative session.

BACKGROUND

In response to the state budget constrictions brought on by the Great Recession, NCGA prohibited NCDPS from covering the tuition at NC community colleges for students seeking AA, AS, and AGE degrees, even those tied to clearly identified job skills, transition needs, or both.

While incarcerated, it is imperative that students be able to both continue education they have started prior to incarceration as well as begin post-secondary education that prepares them to return to the workforce or complete educational attainment upon release. Repealing the prohibition on the offering of these Associates degrees is critical to capturing the potential for reducing recidivism through education within the correctional environment. According to a RAND Corporation study, individuals who participate in correctional education programs had a 43 percent lower chance of recidivating than those who did not. This reduction in recidivism translates to direct savings for the taxpayers of North Carolina.

Various research studies have demonstrated the power of education on the reduction of recidivism over the past several decades. While the RAND work is viewed as seminal, others demonstrate a progressive reduction in recidivism as educational attainment increases. The National Correctional Education Association reports that individuals who earn AA/AS degrees are 70% less likely to recidivate than those who do not complete a program. Further, individuals who participate in prison education programs are more likely to be employed and earn higher wages upon release, both of which reduce reliance on the state and reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

RECOMMENDATION

The Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends the NCGA make the following legislative adjustments during the 2019 Long Session or as soon as practicable.

Amend NC Session Law 2010-31 Section 8.3 EDUCATION FOR PRISON INMATES as outlined below:

SESSION LAW 2010-31
SENATE BILL 897

EDUCATION FOR PRISON INMATES

SECTION 8.3.(a) Funds appropriated for community college courses for prison inmates shall be used only for inmates in State prisons. The first priority for the use of these funds shall be to restore the FTE for basic skills courses to the FY 2008-2009 level. Funds not needed for this purpose may be used for continuing education and curriculum courses related to job skills training. ~~These funds shall not be used for Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, or Associate of General Education degrees.~~

SECTION 8.3.(b) Courses in federal prisons ~~or local jails~~ shall not earn regular budget full-time equivalents, but may be offered on a self-supporting basis.

Amend **NC General Statute § 115D-5 Administration of institutions...** as outlined below:

(c1) ~~Community colleges shall report full-time equivalent (FTE) student hours for correction education programs on the basis of contact hours rather than student membership hours.~~ No community college shall operate a multi-entry/multi-exit class or program in a prison facility, except for a literacy class or program. The State Board shall work with the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety on offering classes and programs that match the average length of stay of an inmate in a prison facility.

Repeal changes made in Session Law 2011-145 SECTION 8.12.(a) amending **NC General Statute § 115D-5(b)(14)** by reinstating the “Prison Inmate” waiver as outlined below:

NC General Statute § 115D-5(b)

(14) ~~Repealed by Session Laws 2011-145, s. 8.12(a), effective July 1, 2011.~~
~~Incarcerated individuals in State and Local facilities.~~

Timeline:

Short-Term:

- Seek legislative changes as outlined. Potentially enlist support of a lobbyist from the Vera Institute of Justice to help implement some of these proposed legislative changes.

Long-term:

- NCCCS, NCDPS Reentry Programs and Services, and local jails collaborate and plan for reimplementation of AA, AS, AGE programs within facilities, returning services to a membership hours basis in the corrections environment, reimplementation of services in local jails, and the reimplementation of the NC Community College tuition waiver for incarcerated individuals in State and Local facilities.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCGA
- NCDPS
- Rehabilitative Services
- NCDPS Education Services

- State Board of Community Colleges
- NCCCS
- Justice involved individuals

Education & Vocational Training Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendations - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION 2

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends the NCGA allocate \$25,000 for the development of online professional development modules for faculty and staff across the state who serve individuals with criminal records.

BACKGROUND

Justice-involved students face a variety of issues regarding financial aid, registering for classes, engaging course material, evaluating transcripts, and course of study. Difficulty with any one of these issues can be detrimental to academic success. Currently, North Carolina community colleges and the University of North Carolina-system schools do not train advisors, registrars, and other key points of contact about reentry-specific issues. Many educational staff are unaware of these unique issues, preventing them from giving effective support and leading to reduced retention of these students.

Further, many formerly incarcerated students have experienced trauma, so trauma-informed support is necessary for helping this population succeed academically. Familiarizing staff with these issues will help frame relationships and develop teaching techniques responsive to justice-involved students, again increasing student retention and success.

RECOMMENDATION

The Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends the NCGA allocate \$25,000 for the development of online professional development modules for faculty and staff across the state who serve individuals with a criminal record. These professional development modules would be made available to all agencies and educational institutions who serve this population including community colleges, LRCs, universities, and workforce development agencies. The purpose of these online modules would be to better prepare front line staff to serve justice-involved populations and help to foster a successful transition back into society. The development and delivery of these modules would be managed by the NC Virtual Learning Community, a joint project of NCCCS, Fayetteville Technical Community College, Surry Community College, and Wake Technical Community College. Altogether, producing and utilizing a webinar addressing these issues will empower education professionals to support justice-involved students.

California is the only state to produce similar training modules targeting this important student population. These trainings are in their infancy and continue to be developed. One California community college has contracted with Innovative Educators, a company producing a webinar addressing best practices in serving justice-involved students. North Carolina will study this implementation and consider the procurement of this content in addition to the development of content specific to North Carolina students. In addition, to educate North Carolina's LRCs, prisons, and education partners on best practices around criminal justice and higher education,

the THRIVE Technical Assistance Program will be coming from New York to give a 3-day training from May 20th-22nd, 2019, that includes an implementation plan and follow-up support.

NCCCS should take the lead in managing this project. The four-year system will review the training module and incorporate information relevant to its context.

At a minimum, these modules will address the following topics:

- Trauma-informed care
- Terminology when talking to or about people with criminal records
- Barriers to successful reentry

Timeline:

Short-term:

- Seek NCGA Funding for the program during the 2019 Long Session.
- The Education and Vocation Workgroup continues research of best practices and resources around the country.

Intermediate:

- Upon funding, develop contract with the NCCCS Virtual Learning Community for the management of the research, development, hosting, and delivery of the two modules.
- December 2019 training program will be completed and made available.
- Spring semester 2020 faculty and staff will have completed the training.

Long-term:

- Ongoing review of the implementation and incorporation of new innovative practices in the field.

STAKEHOLDERS

- Faculty, advisors, registrars, financial aid, and any other staff at community colleges and four-year colleges and universities who work with justice-involved students.
- NCCCS Virtual Learning Community Office
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

\$25,000 would fund the research, development, hosting and delivery of two professional development modules by the NCCCS Virtual Learning Community. A research team of faculty and staff currently serving the population, in addition to student stakeholders, would be assembled to collect and synthesize information about reentry-specific issues at community and four-year colleges inclusive of existing best practices.

Education & Vocational Training Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendations - Executive

RECOMMENDATION 3

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends allocating \$120,000 to hire a full-time employee within NCDPS Reentry Programs & Services to implement and maintain a guided pathways pilot that would map all educational and vocational programs and services at NC prisons, youth development centers, and local jails.

The purpose of inventorying and electronically maintaining these pathways is to enable prison staff, in collaboration with their partners, to appropriately and efficiently plan for individuals during the rehabilitative process. This investment will enable NCDPS to better allocate space and resources across the corrections system, reducing costs to taxpayers. This mapping will enable individuals to take the most efficient educational/vocational path that lead to credentials of value to employers, internal job assignments, apprenticeships, and work release opportunities. Improvements in these areas will reduce recidivism, lead to sustaining wage careers upon release, and ultimately reduce the cost of corrections to the NC taxpayer.

BACKGROUND

NCDPS provides services to individuals who participate in education activities so that they may become responsible and productive persons who can effectively manage their incarceration and make contributions to their community upon release. A large array of education services is provided to meet the wide variety of needs of individuals, including the skills required to be successful as jobholders and as contributing members of their communities. Programs include adult literacy and high school equivalency, short-term vocational training programs aligned to industry credentials, credit-based certificate, diploma, and degree programs. It would be helpful if NCDPS had the capacity to also give people an assessment around their skills, abilities, and vocational aptitude when it is initially evaluating them at the diagnostics phase, but it is not able to do this yet.

The wide array of offerings varies from facility to facility based on the local capacity of the facility and their educational partners such as local community colleges, universities, and community-based organizations. This presents a challenge for both NCDPS staff and students when trying to map out an education plan during incarceration. For example, if an individual has the interest and ability to pursue training in the trades but has yet to obtain a high school diploma, they might be able to pursue that at their current facility assignment, but unless their caseworker knows what facility they will need to be transferred to for pursuing trades vocational training, they may never obtain the skills for success upon release. Further, there is not currently a way to map individuals who have obtained credentials while incarcerated to available work release opportunities to enable them to gain valuable on-the-job experience while still incarcerated, which would further increase their likelihood of success upon release.

RECOMMENDATION

By fully inventorying and mapping educational and vocational opportunities from incarceration to release, NCDPS will be better positioned to deliver its rehabilitative programs and services, thereby reducing the high cost of recidivism to the taxpayers of North Carolina. By providing the funding to inventory and maintain all educational, vocational, job assignments, work-release, and apprenticeship opportunities within the NCDPS computer system, staff will be better positioned to ensure that programs and services are being delivered in an efficient manner and that individuals are best prepared to obtain sustaining wage careers and rejoin society as contributing members upon release.

The Education and Vocational Training Workgroup recommends that the legislature allocate funds and create this position to support this recommendation.

Timeline:

Short-Term:

- Education and vocational partners, in collaboration with Reentry Programs & Services staff, will form a workgroup to inventory and document the various educational pathways and associated credentials along those pathways for inclusion within the database.
- Workgroup members, in collaboration with partners, will inventory occupational licensure barriers to employment within NC for inclusion in the database and to enable service delivery staff to make informed decisions on programs so they can advise students appropriately.
- Seek funding for full-time position during the 2019 legislative session.

Long-term:

- New IT staffer will develop, implement, and maintain a web-based database application for use by NCDPS and its educational and vocational partners.
- Professional development will be provided to NCDPS and its partners on how to use the new system.
- Adjustments to educational and vocational programs as well as the realignment of existing resources for program delivery to align with external partners and opportunities for transitioning individuals.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS Rehabilitative Services
- NCDPS Education Services
- NCCCS
- ApprenticeshipNC
- NCDPS Education and Vocational partners
- NCDPS Work Release partners
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The budget for this project is \$120,000 for a full-time position and the necessary technological enhancements to implement this recommendation.

Employment Workgroup 2019 Action Item – Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

This workgroup recommends NCDPS and the NC Department of Commerce Reentry Initiative (NCDCRI) continue to research NCDPS's current Work Release Program, as well as other states' work release programs, to identify strategies to increase the proportion of qualified people participating in the work release program.

BACKGROUND

North Carolina's Work Release Program provides selected people who are incarcerated the opportunity for employment in the community during imprisonment. It addresses their transitional needs and gives them the opportunity to support their families and reduce the economic costs of their imprisonment.

Criteria for Participation

Work Release participation is based on factors such as the sentence the person received, the statute under which they were sentenced, and their record of behavior. Participants must be in the final stage of imprisonment and are carefully screened for participation by prison managers.

Since the Structured Sentencing Act passed in North Carolina in 1994, a much smaller proportion of the incarcerated population has been eligible for work release. This is because this law reserves incarceration for more serious felonies, so fewer misdemeanants are incarcerated. In addition, sentences tend to be longer than before Structured Sentencing, meaning that only a small proportion of the people incarcerated who manage to make it to minimum-3 (the lowest level of custody) have enough time left on their sentence to participate in work release.

Program Operation

The Work Release Program is available at most minimum-security prisons. People who are incarcerated can leave the prison each day to work and are required to return to the prison when their work is finished. They must earn at least minimum wage. The job plan and job site must be reviewed and approved by prison managers. They must work in a supervised setting and cannot work for family members or operate their own businesses. The work release employer must receive an orientation from NCDPS Prison staff and agree to the rules of the program. The employer must have Worker's Compensation insurance. Earnings from work release wages are used to pay restitution and fines, to pay family support, to pay prison housing and work release transportation costs and to set aside money for the people who are incarcerated upon release. Prospective employers interested in employing people who are incarcerated should contact the minimum-security prison nearest their location.¹

Benefits of Program

The financial benefits to the state in having incarcerated people in the Work Release Program

¹ <https://www.ncdps.gov/Adult-Corrections/Prisons/Prison-Facilities>

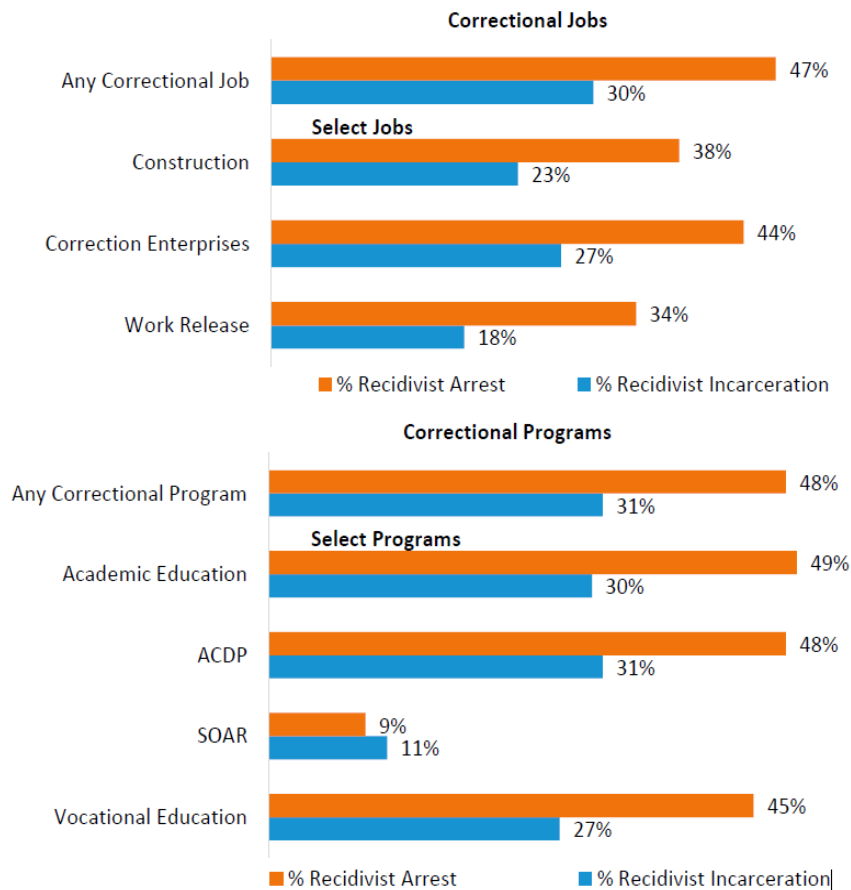
are tremendous. NCDPS reported, “Inmates on work release receive prevailing market wages from their employers, but must pay a room-and-board fee to the prison unit. For FY 2016-2017, inmates paid the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice \$5,487,078 in per diem and \$1,936,064 for transportation and job-related expenses. They also paid child support and restitution totaling \$1,650,824. During this period, inmates paid an additional \$2,435,626 for personal expenses, spousal support, and other family expenses.” A total paid out of **\$11,509,592**. This is in addition to the taxes which were deducted from their paychecks.²

The Work Release Program has also been proven to be one of the most successful prison programs at reducing recidivism. “Figure 4.9, below, provides recidivism rates for prison releases assigned to select correctional jobs and programs. Recidivism rates for prisoners in Academic Education, Alcoholism & Chemical Dependency Programs (ACDP), and Vocational Education were fairly similar or slightly lower than those found for the overall prison population.” However, “prisoners in Correction Enterprises, SOAR, and **Work Release** generally had lower recidivism rates than the overall prison population.” According to this report, participation in the Work Release Program reduced recidivist incarceration from 47% (the rate for any correctional job) to 34% (work release only) and recidivist arrest from 30% (the rate for any correctional job) to 18% (work release only).³

² Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Annual Statistical Report. NC Department of Public Safety. Retrieved 7/26/2018 from: <https://randp.doc.state.nc.us/pubdocs/0007081.PDF>

³ NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2015 Correctional Program Evaluation Data, https://www.nccourts.gov/assets/documents/publications/recidivism_2018.pdf?4VQBsstuyzU5dH1Ap7SJQiMe0zTKYU1G

Figure 4.9
Criminal Justice Outcomes for Prison Releases Assigned to Select Correctional Jobs/Programs



RECOMMENDATION

This workgroup recommends NCDPS and NCDCRI continue to research NCDPS's current Work Release Program, as well as other states' work release programs, to identify strategies to increase utilization of the work release program.

More information is required to determine what specific action(s) need to be taken to support the full utilization of North Carolina's Work Release Program by people incarcerated who qualify and have enough time left in their sentence. First, NCDPS and NCDCRI need to finish the process of surveying North Carolina's Work Release Coordinators to better understand how the agencies might be able to reduce or eliminate some of the barriers to full work release participation by eligible individuals. These agencies have reached out to the work release coordinators and have secured responses from most of them.

Second, NCDPS and NCDCRI need to finish evaluating other states' work release programs. There may be innovative solutions used by other states that NCDPS could learn from. NCDPS's Reentry Programs & Services section developed and sent out a survey to the states through the Association of State Correctional Administrators. NCDPS received these results on November 1,

2018 and is reviewing.

Third, after evaluations are completed, additional recommendations will be developed to reduce barriers to eligible individuals' participation in the Work Release Program. NCDPS and NCDCRI will utilize their relationship to help prepare people who are incarcerated for work assignments and assist them in applying for opportunities. The NCDCRI staff will help promote the work release program to employers as they are conducting employer outreach efforts and/or events. NCDPS should also utilize relationships with other agencies who conduct employer outreach such as LRCs, Step Up Ministries, Jobs for Life, Goodwill Industries, Community Success Initiative, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc., to promote work release.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- NCDCRI
- Step Up Ministries
- Jobs for Life
- Goodwill Industries
- Community Success Initiative
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Chambers of Commerce
- NC Businesses
- Other community agencies who are willing to promote the Work Release Program with employers
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based community
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Currently this recommendation does not require any additional funding. The budget for this project may change after the research phase is completed.

Employment Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Employment Workgroup recommends the NCGA enact a statute that requires all licensing boards to remove subjective terms, such as “good moral character” and “moral turpitude,” as a licensing or certification requirement.

BACKGROUND

Approximately 77 million Americans, or 1 in 3 adults, have a criminal record. Having a criminal record can make it difficult, or even impossible, for an individual to work in a given field, especially one that requires an occupational license. Considering 1 in 3 adults⁴ has a criminal record and 1 in 4⁵ occupations requires a license, such barriers can pose significant challenges for states that want to encourage rehabilitation of people with criminal records. In 2014, employment barriers faced by people with felony convictions—including occupational licensing and other challenges—were associated with a reduction in the overall employment rate, amounting to a loss of at least 1.7 million workers from the workforce and a cost of at least \$78 billion to the economy.⁶

In North Carolina, hundreds of occupations require some form of licensure. These occupations constitute approximately 30 percent of all jobs. As a result, more than one million North Carolinians—from pawnbrokers to accountants—must satisfy statutory and administrative requirements to work in their chosen fields. Oftentimes, occupational licensing statutes and regulations contain ambiguous “good moral character” and/or “moral turpitude” clauses which give decision makers unbridled discretion when making licensing decisions for people with criminal records. Consequently, people with criminal records are routinely denied occupational licenses because their criminal records are presumed to be evidence of “moral turpitude” or a lack of “good moral character.”

RECOMMENDATION

Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb signed a bill in 2018 that reduces licensing barriers for persons with criminal histories. The bill⁷ requires all licensing boards to revise any licensing requirements that look at an applicant’s criminal history. Specifically, by November 2019, every board must:

1. Explicitly list all disqualifying crimes;

⁴ Unlicensed & Untapped: <https://www.nelp.org/publication/unlicensed-untapped-removing-barriers-state-occupational-licenses/>

⁵ Occupational Licensing: A Framework for Policymakers
https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/licensing_report_final_nonembargo.pdf

⁶ License to Work: <https://ij.org/report/license-to-work/>

⁷HOUSE ENROLLED ACT No. 1245

https://custom.statenet.com/public/resources.cgi?id=ID:bill:IN2018000H1245&cuiq=750f0532-c727-5973-b696-a024b26ec104&client_md=9e8a761565ab5b657fe0023d322ee7a0&mode=current_text

2. Eliminate any vague terms that allow the board unfettered discretion in licensing decisions, such as “moral turpitude” or “good character;” and
3. Exclude, from consideration, any arrest records not resulting in a conviction.

Moreover, the bill allows an applicant who has a prior conviction for a disqualifying crime be allowed the opportunity to show evidence of rehabilitation and mitigating factors.

The Employment Workgroup recommends that the NCGA enact a similar statute requiring all licensing boards to remove non-specific terms, like “good moral character” and “moral turpitude,” as a licensing or certification requirement.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCGA
- NCDOJ
- North Carolina Second Chance Alliance
- Justice-involved individuals

Employment Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendation – Communications/Awareness

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Recommend strategies to do targeted outreach to employers about the benefits of certificates of relief as well as the legislation's most recent expansion of applicant eligibility.

BACKGROUND

In North Carolina, criminal records present a significant barrier to employment and housing. In 2011, the NCGA passed the Certificate of Relief Act (S.L. 2011-265). In 2018, this was amended (S.L. 2018-79). This bill provides judges expanded discretion to reduce civil barriers to employment, housing, and other essential resources by issuing certificates of relief to significantly more individuals. Specifically, this expansion makes individuals with multiple convictions for misdemeanor and up to three convictions for Class H and I felony offenses (multiple convictions disposed in the same session of court count as one conviction for purposes of certificate of relief eligibility) eligible for a certificate of relief. Unlike an expunction, a certificate of relief does not obscure or change the criminal record itself. Instead, a certificate addresses a broad range of civil disabilities imposed by the state of North Carolina and shields employers, landlords, and other decision-makers from the risk of certain types of negligence liability. These protections make it more likely that decision-makers will hire, rent to, or otherwise grant an opportunity to a certificate holder.

A certificate of relief restores opportunities for individuals to be productive, law-abiding citizens in several ways:

1. Transforms certain automatic civil disqualifications into discretionary civil disqualifications (ex. occupational licensing).
2. Provides employers, landlords, and other decision-makers evidence of “due care” that shields them for negligence liability.
3. Provides employers, landlords, and other decision-makers additional information and context in determining an applicant's suitability for a specific position or resource.

RECOMMENDATION

For the expansion of certificates of relief to be truly effective, the Employment Workgroup recommends targeted outreach to educate employers about the benefits. The workgroup's recommendation is that community partners focus on educating employers about the benefits of certificates of relief. Many state and local agencies (both government and nonprofit) are currently providing employer recruitment. The objective is to strengthen these efforts by including information about the expanded eligibility of certificates of relief. This outreach will also include targeted public information to ensure that the community, including those with criminal records, are aware of these changes.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NC Correction Enterprises
- NCDCRI
- County Chambers of Commerce

- LRCs
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based organizations
- Justice-involved individuals
- Judicial system
- State, county, and local governments
- Advocacy organizations

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

This will not require significant financial burden to the state, as it only requires more targeted education on the part of agencies already recruiting employers. A small budget for a public information campaign, to include public service announcements and laminated informational sheets to be displayed in county jails and state prison libraries, may increase the effectiveness of this initiative.

Housing Workgroup 2019 Action Item - Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Housing Workgroup recommends appropriate staff within the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) collaborate with NCDPS to ensure individuals leaving prison who are eligible for the Transitions to Community Living Initiative (TCLI) are able to access these services. This collaboration would ensure that NCDPS staff working with people exiting prison are briefed, provided screening tools, and are informed on how to access services for potentially eligible individuals.

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the US Supreme Court, in *Olmstead v. LC* (“*Olmstead*”)⁸, decided that the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires states to provide support services to individuals with disabilities in the community as opposed to in institutional settings. The US Department of Justice (US DOJ) began investigating North Carolina in 2010, specifically focused on mental health services. In July 2011, the US DOJ issued a formal letter of findings stating that North Carolina failed to provide adequate services and stood in violation of the ADA. In an August 2012 settlement, North Carolina agreed to expand community-based services and supportive housing over the next eight years, establish a pre-admission screening process to prevent people from unnecessarily entering institutions, and create an institutional discharge planning process to ease transitions into community-based settings.

Through the resulting TCLI, NCDHHS, and the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) are working to ensure sufficient housing is provided to eligible North Carolinians. TCLI focuses on individuals transitioning from adult care homes or state hospitals and citizens who are at risk for institutionalization. The program is a six-part initiative, focused on transitioning existing persons, diverting potential persons from institutions, providing community-based housing, providing supporting employment, providing assertive community treatment, and maintaining high quality. Moreover, the program provides for a Transitions to Community Living Voucher, a tenant-based voucher program for up to \$600 per month that can be used with any landlord who accepts the voucher. This program also includes assistance for security deposits, move-in expenses, and funds for risk mitigation in case of non-payment of rent, abandonment, or damages. Moreover, the state developed a 2017 Permanent Supportive Housing Plan to both increase the pipeline of eligible units and maximize access to opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION

The Housing Workgroup recommends NCDHHS collaborate with NCDPS to ensure that TCLI-eligible individuals leaving prison are able to access the program. Appropriate staff within NCDHHS should brief NCDPS staff on the US DOJ settlement and the programs and assistance for which individuals with severe and persistent mental illness exiting prison might be eligible. NCDHHS should ensure NCDPS staff working with people exiting prison are provided screening tools and know how to access services for potentially eligible individuals.

⁸ <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/527/581/>

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDHHS
- NCDPS
- NCHFA
- Managed Care Organizations
- Individuals exiting prison with severe and persistent mental illness
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based organizations
- Justice-involved individuals

Housing Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation– Communications/Awareness and Legislative

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Housing Workgroup recommends defining transitional housing more clearly, establishing a special designation of supportive group housing for returning citizens, providing funding to LRCs designated for transitional housing, and eliminating the local prohibition on sex offenders moving into existing reentry transitional houses in the event that a school or daycare opens after the house's establishment.

BACKGROUND

Currently there is no statewide definition of transitional housing. It is also difficult to establish reentry transitional homes consisting of more than four unrelated individuals due to city and county ordinances mandating that supportive group homes have a "disability designation."

RECOMMENDATION

It is critical to have a common definition of Reentry Transitional Housing for use by NCDPS and service providers throughout the state. To begin the discussion, the Housing Workgroup offers the following definition and core elements:

The term "Reentry Transitional Housing" means providing housing:

1. To facilitate the movement to permanent housing within 9 months,
2. To a homeless individual with a disability, or
3. To a family who has taken in a member.

That person must also have been released from prison in the last 45 days while also being on parole or probation.

Reentry Transitional Housing must include the following:

1. At the time of occupancy, the participant must have an area median income of 30% or below and insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing or less than \$2,000 in assets.
2. Participants must be enrolled and participating monthly with their LRC case manager.
3. Participants must have a realistic 9-month Exiting to Permanent Housing plan that includes community supportive services customized solely for that purpose and approved by a Peer Support Specialist.

Reentry Transitional Housing must also:

- Be a registered and established LLC or non-profit entity.
- Abide by all city and county geographic zoning ordinances.
- Abide by city and county inspections and certifications.
- Have registered partnership with LRCs and NCDPS.

Though the majority of returning citizens have a disability, including a drug or alcohol addiction, this workgroup also recommends establishing a specific category of transitional housing

entitled “Reentry Transitional Housing.” This will supersede the requirement of “disability” to establish supportive housing that includes, but is not limited to, people with disabilities. This will allow for private ownership and community based transitional programs to partner with NCDPS and expand services.

To aid in returning individuals’ transitions, the Housing Workgroup also recommends that LRCs disburse an expanded level of funding for transitional housing subsidies for returning citizens: \$100 per month per individual not to exceed 9 months, unless petitioned otherwise by case management (i.e. 500 returning citizens x \$900 = \$450,000 max).

Finally, knowing that some of these reentry transitional houses may contain sex offenders, NCDPS will abide by all legal statutes and ordinances in establishing these reentry transitional houses, including the prohibition on establishing such a house within 1000 feet of schools and day care facilities. However, once a reentry transitional house is established, the Housing Workgroup recommends eliminating the prohibition on new sex offenders moving into the house in the event that a school or daycare opens AFTER the reentry transitional house’s establishment.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- Transitional housing providers
- LRCs
- Community members
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based organizations
- Justice-involved individuals

Housing Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendations - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Housing Workgroup recommends the NCGA appropriate new funding to hire a housing support specialist and a peer support counselor in each of the state's 14 LRCs, working with local partners to help returning citizens rent from private landlords, public housing agencies, and other permanent housing providers. The workgroup also recommends that the legislature appropriate new funding that would cover three months of reentry rental assistance for returning individuals at all 14 LRCs.

BACKGROUND

Homeless Continuums of Care across North Carolina have developed models for rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing over the last 15 years. Rapid rehousing involves short term supportive services and rental assistance. Supportive services include landlord and neighbor mediation, assistance accessing mental health, substance misuse treatment or other services needed to find a rental unit and maintain the residence once it is secured. These service models have worked successfully with people experiencing homelessness, many of whom also have justice involvement, so they are readily adaptable by LRCs.

RECOMMENDATION

The Housing Workgroup recommends the NCGA appropriate new funding for a program that gives formerly-incarcerated individuals access to rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing. A critical part of why rapid rehousing is successful is the combination of services and rental assistance. Therefore, the core components of the program are housing support services and housing rental assistance.

Similar to homeless service models, housing support specialists would help returning individuals find and maintain existing permanent housing in the public and private rental market. A robust supportive services component is an essential resource to recruit private landlords and public/non-profit housing providers in serving vulnerable populations like returning individuals. Housing supportive services models have proven effective with other vulnerable populations and these examples provide an approach that can be used to serve returning individuals. The added staff capacity of peer counselors working alongside housing search support specialists would begin to expand job opportunities for justice-involved people. An experienced housing support specialist will provide credibility with local landlords and public housing agencies, working alongside the peer support counselor who provides credible support for the returning individuals, based on lived experience. This modest investment in the LRCs, after demonstrating success in reducing recidivism could be expanded as new reentry councils continue to be established.

Appropriations should include some non-staff funding for a pilot landlord risk mitigation program, including such components as:

- a. Supplemental security deposits provided to the landlord as an incentive to lease to returning individuals, or reimbursement for damages caused by a tenant that are not covered by the tenant's security deposit (up to a capped amount);
- b. Reimbursement for any unpaid tenant portion of rent or late fees if the tenant abandons the unit, which could be extended during a limited period of vacancy if the landlord agrees to lease to another returning individuals;
- c. A housing stability bonus of approximately \$500 per tenant if the lease is renewed after the first year.

Local governments or other stakeholders could be encouraged to supplement these landlord incentive funds.

Housing rental assistance is just as important to gaining housing stability as housing services. This program would require approximately \$2500 of rental assistance per returning individuals, which will include three months of rental assistance and some cushion for utility assistance. Some returning individuals might not need all three months, and some might need more, but 3 months is generally average. In order to further develop the program policies and eligible activities standards, it will be necessary to adapt language from the NCDHHS Emergency Solutions Grant.⁹ The National Alliance to End Homelessness' Rapid Re-Housing Performance Benchmarks and Program Standards document is another model that could provide insight when developing standards and benchmarks for this program.

STAKEHOLDERS

- LRCs
- Homelessness services providers
- Private landlords
- Public housing agencies
- Private Foundations
- County governments
- Local law enforcement agencies
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based organization
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The budget for this project is \$3.15 million. This includes \$1.4 million for 3 months of reentry rental assistance and \$1.75 million for the new staff positions.

Based on the homeless service model, two new staff members dedicated to housing support can assist at least 40 returning individuals annually. If this workgroup assumes that each of the

⁹ NC Emergency Solutions Grant – Grantee Information.

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/aging-and-adult-services/nc-emergency-solutions-grant/nc-emergency-solutions-grant-%E2%80%93>

14 LRCs assists 40 returning individuals, and that each returning individual needs about \$2500 for approximately three months of short-term rental assistance, then rental assistance would cost approximately **\$1.4 million** (40 returning individuals x \$2500 = \$100,000, and \$100,000 x 14 LRCs = \$1.4 million). This budget also includes **\$1.75 million** (\$125,000 for each LRC) to fund 28 new staff positions across the state, including some funding for landlord incentives and risk mitigation funds.

The per-LRC cost of implementing these supports is \$225,000 (\$100,000 for rental assistance + \$125,000 for new staff, incentives, and risk mitigation). The average annual cost of incarcerating one person in North Carolina is \$35,252.¹⁰ If **only seven** of the returning individuals in the catchment area of each LRC avoided re-incarceration as a result of this increased housing support each year, the savings would outweigh the costs of the program (\$35,252 x 7 = \$246,764). Therefore, this is an eminently cost-effective solution to the difficulties that returning individuals have finding and maintaining permanent housing.

¹⁰ <https://www.ncdps.gov/adult-corrections/cost-of-corrections>

Transportation Workgroup 2019 Action Item - Executive

RECOMMENDATION

In order for all eligible incarcerated individuals to be released with a driver's license and/or state issued ID, this workgroup recommends that the NCDMV expand mobile unit services to all 34 minimum custody facilities.

BACKGROUND

Without a proper state identification, formerly incarcerated individuals cannot register to vote or apply for bank accounts, jobs, social services, or rental housing. To solve this problem, in 2015, NCDMV initiated a multi-phase process. In Phase 1, NCDMV began delivering services from mobile units at 7 minimum custody facilities, producing state identifications and driver's licenses for incarcerated individuals. In 2016, NCDMV expanded this service to 7 additional sites (Phase 2). Phase 3, scheduled to occur in early 2018, was postponed due to staff shortages. By the end of 2018, it was resumed as the Division hired additional examiners and began to promote the REAL ID requirement. The plan is to expand to the 20 additional minimum custody state facilities. Completing this phase would mean that all 34 minimum custody facilities would have this important service.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDMV
- NCDPS
- Justice-involved individuals

Transportation Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

To facilitate restoring driver's licenses to incarcerated individuals prior to release and maintaining licensure during post-release supervision, the Transportation Workgroup recommends the NCGA:

- Provide funding to nonprofit legal services providers to resolve indefinite driver's license suspensions under G.S. § 20-24.1; and
- Amend several provisions of Chapter 20 of the North Carolina General Statutes to reduce barriers to regaining driving privileges.

BACKGROUND

As of August 2017, there were 1,179,680 people in North Carolina with an indefinite suspension of their license for failure to pay traffic court fees and/or failure to appear in traffic court. Between August 2016 and August 2017, just 59,660 people resolved these types of suspensions and restored their driving privileges. Indefinite suspensions for failure to pay disproportionately impact people involved in the criminal justice system, including incarcerated individuals and people on post-release supervision, due to higher rates of unemployment and poverty. Many individuals in prison also have permanent suspensions of their license for a range of reasons, including three or more convictions of certain types of traffic offenses. A permanent suspension may be lifted by a DMV hearing officer after a certain period and if certain criteria are satisfied. Of 64 participants in the Driver's License Restoration Program¹¹ incarcerated at Wake Correctional Center, 42 individuals had an indefinite suspension of their license based on failure to appear in court for a traffic ticket, 25 individuals had an indefinite suspension of their license based on failure to pay a traffic ticket, and 17 individuals had a permanent suspension of their licenses, mostly for three or more convictions of driving while license revoked.

RECOMMENDATION

To facilitate restoring driver's licenses to imprisoned people prior to release and maintaining licensure during post-release supervision, the Transportation Workgroup recommends the NCGA:

- Provide funding to nonprofit legal services providers to resolve indefinite driver's license suspensions under G.S. § 20-24.1.

¹¹ The Driver's License Restoration Project is staffed by Leading Into New Communities (LINC), the NC Justice Center ("NCJC"), and the NC Pro Bono Resource Center with support from the UNC School of Law, District Attorney Ben David's office, and the New Hanover local reentry council. The goal of the program is to restore driving privileges for people whose driver's licenses are suspended, particularly people exiting prison with traffic court debt. To be referred for project services, a person in NDCPS custody must satisfy each of the following criteria:

- A. The person's driver's license is currently suspended;
- B. The person is scheduled to exit NCDPS custody within the next 60 days;
- C. New Hanover or Pender County is designated in the person's home plan;
- D. The person consents to referral.

- Amend several provisions of Chapter 20 of the North Carolina General Statutes, including:
 - G.S. § 20-24.1(a)(2) to require a pre-deprivation hearing to determine if a defendant is able to pay before suspending the defendant's license for failure to pay;
 - G.S. § 20-24.1(b) to provide for automatic restoration of a driver's license after a 12-month suspension period;
 - GS § 20-26(b) to provide free certified driving records to nonprofit legal services providers;
 - various provisions to allow hearings on permanent suspensions to occur in the county of incarceration; and
 - G.S. § 20-28(a) to make retroactive the amendments of Session Law 2015-186 eliminating permanent suspensions for three or more convictions of driving while license revoked-not impaired revocation.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCGA
- NCDMV
- Nonprofits and nonprofit legal service providers
- Justice-involved individuals

Transportation Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendations – Legislative

RECOMMENDATION 1

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

To increase access to public and private transportation services for people on post-release supervision, the Transportation Workgroup recommends NCDPS establish a pilot voucher system to fund transportation expenses of people on post-release supervision based on need and at the discretion of post-release supervision officers.

BACKGROUND

In a 2017 survey conducted by the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission (NCSPAC), lack of transportation was most commonly identified as the biggest barrier to employment for people on post-release supervision.¹² The problem is especially dire for people released to rural communities who have little or no access to public transportation. In its June 2018 report, “Study of Employment Collateral Consequences in North Carolina,” NCSPAC found that people on post-release supervision “often do not have their own means of transportation to and from work, and were reliant on public transit options, which could still be expensive to use on a regular basis.”

There are several potential models for public, private, and charitable transportation programs responsive to the transportation needs of people on post-release supervision in both rural and urban communities, including:

- The National Volunteer Transportation Center, in partnership with the National Center for Mobility Management, facilitates volunteer driver programs that provide free transportation in 13 North Carolina communities. The program empowers local volunteers to provide essential transportation services to vulnerable populations by providing training, software, and liability insurance.
- The US Department of Veterans Affairs’ Veterans Transportation Service provides mileage reimbursement and ride services to transport veterans living in remote and rural areas across North Carolina to medical appointments.
- The Kansas Department of Corrections provides need-based voucher funds for people on post-release supervision at the request of post-release supervision officers. Voucher funds can be used for “intra-city and intercity bus, taxi, gas, bicycle,” as well as “costs associated with restoring a driver’s license.”
- Through its Community Impact Initiative, Uber partners with “nonprofits, social enterprises, and educational institutions” to leverage its technology solutions to address community challenges by improving “mobility, opportunity, safety, and efficiency.”

¹² <https://www.nccourts.gov/assets/documents/publications/Study-of-Employment-Collateral-Consequences.pdf?g4ZZoz8UgG05M4gwRcqUyzPTqdZdFn16>

RECOMMENDATION

To increase access to public and private transportation services for people on post-release supervision, the Transportation Workgroup recommends NCDPS establish a pilot voucher system to fund transportation expenses of people on post-release supervision based on need and at the discretion of post-release supervision officers.

Post-release supervision officers will all have access to these voucher funds. Officers should determine who should receive these vouchers based on the needs (e.g. job interviews, probation meetings, service provider appointments, etc.) of the individuals under community corrections supervision.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS community corrections officers
- Justice-involved individuals
- Faith-based organizations
- Nonprofits
- Transportation programs (public, private, community, charitable, etc.)

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The workgroup is in the process of estimating a budget for this recommendation based on the number of people currently on post-release supervision in North Carolina (12,606 as of 12/30/2017)¹³ and the estimated cost of their per capita bus, taxi, etc. needs, which will depend on where they live within the state.

¹³ <https://randp.doc.state.nc.us/pubdocs/0007081.PDF>

Transportation Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendations - Executive

RECOMMENDATION 2

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Transportation Workgroup recommends NCDMV use its discretion pursuant to GS 20-28(c1) to issue new licenses for people in prison with permanent driver's license suspensions for 3 or more convictions of Driving While License Revoked (DWLR) offenses. There should be a presumption a new license will be issued without a hearing if (a) the underlying suspension is not a driving while impaired offense, and (b) the eligibility standards identified by GS 20-28.1(c1) are satisfied.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, the NCGA passed Session Law 2015-186 which eliminated permanent suspension of a driver's license for a third conviction of DWLR offenses after December 1, 2015, as long as the underlying suspension was not for a driving while impaired offense. These changes were not applied retroactively and many people in prison and on post-release supervision have permanent suspensions based on convictions that occurred before the enactment of Session Law 2015-186. Most of these DWLR convictions were not related to Driving While Impaired (DWI) suspensions and they would not have permanent suspensions if the same convictions occurred today.

People with permanent suspensions can apply to a NCDMV hearing officer for a new license after 3 years of good behavior pursuant to GS 20-28(c1). The statute does not require a hearing and provides broad discretion to the hearing officer if several criteria are satisfied. GS 20-28(c1) states:

"Upon the filing of an application the Division may, with or without a hearing, issue a new license upon satisfactory proof that the former licensee has not been convicted of a moving violation under this Chapter or the laws of another state, a violation of any provision of the alcoholic beverage laws of this State or another state, or a violation of any provisions of the drug laws of this State or another state when any of these violations occurred during the revocation period. For purposes of this subsection, a violation of subsection (a) of this section shall not be considered a moving violation."

RECOMMENDATION

The Transportation Workgroup recommends DMV use its discretion pursuant to GS 20-28(c1) to issue new licenses for people in prison with permanent driver's license suspensions for three or more convictions of driving while license revoked offenses. There should be a presumption that a new license will be issued without a hearing if (a) the underlying suspension is not a driving while impaired offense, and (b) the eligibility standards identified by GS 20-28.1(c1) are satisfied.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- NCDMV
- Justice-involved individuals

Mental Health, Substance Misuse, and Medical Workgroup
2019 Action Item – Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Share data between NCDPS and NCDHHS to:

- Identify people who are incarcerated in North Carolina who have active Medicaid coverage, and redirect those premium payments to Local Management Entity-Managed Care Organizations (LME-MCOs) to related services and support of those Medicaid-eligible people who have been released from prison in the last 12 months.
- Facilitate the timely re-establishment of Medicaid for eligible individuals upon their release from prison.

BACKGROUND

Successful implementation of this recommendation might save the state a significant amount of money if there are cost savings due to eliminating premium payments to the LME-MCOs for people who are incarcerated. South Carolina, for example, reported recovering \$1,400,000 in premium payments to their managed care contractors. The amount of recouped costs that North Carolina might recover has yet to be determined.

RECOMMENDATION/TIMELINE

Now:

- Establish a data sharing agreement between NCDPS and DHHS, including staff with the skills to determine the technological challenges involved in matching the DHHS/Medicaid and NCDPS databases. The Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) would need to gather information to make an estimate on how much money this agreement would save, potentially using data from a sample of the incarcerated population.

Within six months:

- Share and analyze the NCDPS and DHHS data.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- DHHS
- LME-MCOs
- Justice-involved individuals

Mental Health, Substance Misuse, and Medical Workgroup
Tier 2 Recommendation - Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

- Make a range of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) options available to those who are incarcerated in reentry facilities with a history of opioid dependence.
- Obtain and distribute Narcan overdose reversal kits to individuals who are about to be released and provide them instruction on the use of these kits.

BACKGROUND

An estimated two-thirds of people who are incarcerated have a substance use disorder (SUD), and of those, many are dependent upon opioids.¹⁴ People who are incarcerated who are dependent on opioids need best practice treatments to reduce their risk of overdose death, enhance their chances of recovery, and therefore lower their rates of recidivism. Studies have found the greatest success in treatment of opioid dependence occurs when a range of medications for treatment of addiction are available.¹⁵ In addition, when people with opioid dependency who are incarcerated leave prison, their risk of death from an overdose within the first two weeks following release has been found to be more than 100 times greater than any other population.¹⁶ There is no population at higher risk of death, and no risk period greater, than for persons with opioid dependence who've just been released from prison. Individuals with opioid addiction prior to incarceration usually detox on their own in prison, and often are not aware of their diminished tolerance to these drugs when released, making them vulnerable to an accidental overdose.

The increased availability of extremely potent opioids like Fentanyl makes the need for medications to reduce overdose deaths even more important. Also, as cocaine and other drugs are increasingly cut with opioids like Fentanyl, people who use other drugs (not just people who are incarcerated who have opioid dependence) are increasingly at risk of an overdose.

RECOMMENDATION

To enhance their chances of successful reentry, and reduce their risk of relapse and overdose death, MAT should be provided to those with opioid dependence while in prison.

The NCDHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Misuse Services (DMH/DD/SAS) was recently awarded a State Opioid Response Grant from the Substance Misuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), USDHHS. The proposal includes plans to pilot MAT in two Reentry Facilities. Prior to release from prison, an extended-

¹⁴ "Behind Bars II: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population," <https://www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction-research/reports/behind-bars-ii-substance-abuse-and-america%E2%80%99s-prison-population>.

¹⁵ "Effectiveness of medication assisted treatment for opioid use in prison and jail settings: A meta-analysis and systematic review," <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30797392>.

¹⁶ "Opioid Overdose Mortality Among Former North Carolina Inmates: 2000-2015," <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304514>.

release injectable form of naltrexone will be used to support behavioral health counseling. The proposal also includes funding for naloxone kits to be provided to people at the time of release from the two Reentry Facilities. These services will be particularly necessary for people who completed any SUD treatment while in custody, as well as those identified as having a SUD but were unable to access treatment during their period of incarceration.

In addition, all people who are incarcerated should be informed about their risk of death from overdose upon release from prison, especially those who have used opioids and other drugs in the past. Individuals who are about to be released with a history of opioid dependency should receive Narcan kits, and instructions on how to use these kits, for overdose reversal. By providing MAT and Narcan kits to these individuals, risk of overdose death upon release can be reduced by 60%.

Timeline:

What can be done now?

- Begin planning for the development of an MAT program in the NC prison system. Establish a working group to determine the cost of piloting an MAT program, secure funding for a MAT program, determine the facility in which it would most appropriately be piloted, how people who are incarcerated will be selected for participation in the MAT program, and develop protocols for implementation of the MAT program.
- Begin planning for the development of educational materials that warn those about to be released of their risk of death from an overdose due to reduced tolerance following their abstinence from drug use while in prison. Communicate to all prison social workers and case managers the need to provide this warning to all those who are soon to be released.
- Establish a committee to develop a plan to distribute Narcan kits to people who are about to be released and their significant others and cohabiting family members.

In the short-term – within six months?

- Train staff on implementation of the MAT program protocols and procedures.
- Begin MAT for people who are incarcerated with opioid addiction and link them to MAT providers in the community upon their release.
- Develop a system for identifying people who are incarcerated with a prior history of opioid dependence and target them for information and education within a month prior to their release.
- Develop and distribute to all reentry facilities and jails educational materials, flyers, and posters warning people who are incarcerated of their risk of overdosing on opioids after release.

In the intermediate term – 6 to 18 months?

- Evaluate effectiveness of the prison MAT program. Refine the MAT model and protocols.
- Purchase and distribute Narcan Kits to people who are about to be released who are known to have a history of opioid addiction, as well as to their significant others.

In the long-term – more than 18 months?

- Expansion of MAT to other NC prisons.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- NCDHHS - DMH/DD/SAS
- LRCs
- Harm Reduction Coalition
- Drug Alcohol Recovery Treatment (DART) – Cherry Hospital
- Community-based SUD treatment programs
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based organizations
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Cost estimates would depend on the resources available to purchase medications for MAT and to train staff to administer the MAT program. Cost estimates would also depend on the resources available to purchase and distribute Narcan kits. Cost of one Narcan Kit containing two doses = \$75.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS

Cost of medications for MAT.

Cost of Narcan Kits.

Stigma of opioid addiction, and opposition to MAT by those who view it as enabling people with opioid use disorder.

Mental Health, Substance Misuse, and Medical Workgroup
Tier 3 Recommendations - Executive

RECOMMENDATION 1

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Explore innovative ways to reinstate or expand health insurance coverage to formerly incarcerated individuals.

- Enlist the aid of SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) specialists to assist people with disabilities who are released from incarceration in their applications for Supplemental Security income (SSI), Social Security Disability (SSDI), and other benefits, including connections to outpatient care and recovery services.
- Study the possibility of expanding the Medicaid Family Planning Waiver (FPW) program to cover health conditions other than those directly related to family planning. Expanding the FPW program to cover a wider range of health conditions would enable some recently released individuals to have health insurance that they would not otherwise be able to obtain.

BACKGROUND

People in prison are three times more likely to be disabled than people in the general population, and about one third of those in prison report having at least one disability. Upon release, many of those with disabilities are homeless and especially vulnerable, and therefore in great need of assistance. If this assistance is not provided, they may neglect their healthcare needs until they end up in our hospital emergency departments, where critical medical care is rendered, but at a high price. As information from other states demonstrate, expanding covered healthcare expenses through Medicaid in North Carolina will lead to increases in the shares of people with a personal physician, getting check-ups, and getting recommended preventive care such as cholesterol and cancer screenings, and decreases in the shares of people delaying care due to costs, skipping medications due to costs, or relying on the emergency room for care.¹⁷ By all accounts, then, expanding Medicaid would lead to decreased reliance on emergency room care for this population.

Some might apply for disability (SSI/SSDI) benefits, but approval rates for those applications for benefits are abysmally low – only 15% for those who are disabled and homeless. The SOAR program was developed specifically to assist people with disabilities in their applications for disability benefits, and SOAR has demonstrated great success – a 77% approval rate within three months among persons who were homeless and considered disabled. An added benefit is that persons approved for SSI automatically qualify for Medicaid, and those with SSDI automatically qualify for Medicare. Therefore, these disabled and formerly incarcerated individuals would have health insurance, in addition to a stable source of income. More

¹⁷ https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/uncompensated-care-costs-fell-in-nearly-every-state-as-acas-major-coverage#_ftn6

than 500 caseworkers in North Carolina have been trained in SOAR, and North Carolina has 28 full-time dedicated SOAR workers.

Most individuals released from prison to the community are not eligible to receive Medicaid. Like North Carolina, South Carolina has not expanded Medicaid. However, South Carolina has requested permission from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) to use their Medicaid FPW program to cover screenings for health conditions, like heart disease, that could impact a pregnancy. Both South Carolina and Texas have requested permission from CMS to further expand the FPW program to pay for preconception health services, such as treatment of chronic diseases, including mental illness and substance use. If both states are granted permission by CMS to use the FPW program to pay for treatment of chronic health conditions, North Carolina should similarly explore using the FPW program to provide medical care to formerly incarcerated people to treat those same medical conditions. It would be preferable to be able to get as many formerly incarcerated people as possible on Medicaid itself instead of the Medicaid FPW program. Since North Carolina hasn't expanded Medicaid, however, getting them the FPW would at least be a work-around solution.

RECOMMENDATION

Pilot the SOAR program at a NCDPS Reentry Facility to assist those who are disabled and at risk of homelessness upon release with their application for disability benefits. Applying for disability benefits is a time intensive process that requires much effort and considerable skill. Hiring at least two dedicated SOAR staff for this pilot program is recommended.

The Reentry Facility could screen all entering people who are incarcerated for their eligibility and need for SOAR services through an existing SOAR screening tool, then assign a dedicated SOAR worker to assist those who might qualify for SSI/SSDI benefits. Although the application may be started at any time, the application may not be filed earlier than 90 days before release. If SSI/SSDI benefits are not awarded by their release date, the SOAR responsibilities could be transferred to a community corrections officer, Treatment Alternatives for a Safer Community (TASC) staff, or others in the community who have received SOAR training.

This workgroup also recommends tracking the efforts of South Carolina and Texas to obtain permission from CMS to use the FPW to pay for preconception health services and chronic health conditions.

If Medicaid is expanded, a portion of the cost savings should be redirected to provide more funding for state healthcare navigators to assist people who have just been released and are eligible for Medicaid. These healthcare navigators would educate people who are about to be released about their healthcare benefits and how to access low cost healthcare.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- NCDHHS – Division of Medical Assistance (DMA)
- NCDHHS – DMH/DD/SAS

- CMS
- Justice-involved individuals

TYPE OF ACTION

Executive action will be needed.

Legislative action may be required if additional funding is sought.

BUDGETARY ESTIMATES/CONSIDERATIONS

- 2 FTEs for dedicated SOAR staff at @ \$50,000 per year per person = \$100,000.
- 2 SOAR two-day trainings for a total of 70 Community Corrections & TASC staff at a cost of \$110 per participant = \$7,700.
- Total Estimated Budget Year 1: **\$82,700**
- Total Estimated Budget Year 2: **\$107,700**

These budget estimates are based on the funding necessary to successfully implement each respective recommendation, given the significant reduction of federal funding for Navigator services. Implementation of these SOAR recommendations is contingent on available funding.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS

Implementation for expansion of the FPW program hinges upon permission provided by the federal government (i.e., CMS) to use the FPW for the purposes indicated.

Mental Health, Substance Misuse, and Medical Workgroup
Tier 3 Recommendations - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION 2

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

This workgroup recommends expanding the Formerly Incarcerated Transition (FIT) program to additional sites in North Carolina. It also recommends developing a model medical discharge planning program similar to FIT, but for individuals being released to more rural counties that have fewer reentry resources, and piloting that model in at least one rural location.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, nearly 25,000 people were released from North Carolina prisons – about 30-40% of them suffer from chronic disease including diabetes, hypertension, kidney problems, and lung disease. Up to 20% have significant mental illness and about 50% suffer from SUD. Only individuals with HIV/AIDS are regularly linked to health care – very few people released from prison have health insurance. Recently released individuals commonly suffer from housing and food insecurity, barriers to transportation, unemployment, and are disconnected from essential health care services. The vast majority of this population only receive medical care through expensive emergency room visits and preventable hospitalizations, neither of which results in linkages to ongoing primary care or treatment for mental illness and/or SUD. This pattern of continued emergency medical care ultimately dramatically raises costs of healthcare for this vulnerable population. Again, health care costs could be lowered, and coverage increased for this population if Medicaid were expanded and they did not have to rely so frequently on expensive emergency room care. People who are incarcerated have much higher rates of communicable diseases, like tuberculosis, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS, and they are released back to the community without adequate health care. Not only is their own health at risk, but so is the health of the community to which they are released.

The FIT program builds on existing reentry resources and safety net health systems in North Carolina, such as the NC Community Health Centers (NCCHCs) and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and leverages the resources of these safety net providers to care for persons released from prison with complex health conditions, including mental illness and substance use problems. The NC FIT Program utilizes specially trained community health workers (CHWs) with a personal history of incarceration, (i.e., peer support workers) to establish rapport and trust while linking persons recently released from prison to the health services at the NCCHCs and FQHCs and to other supports that they need in the community. FIT can also help extend statewide efforts to combat the opioid epidemic and help protect the overall health of our communities.

NC FIT is based on the Transitions Clinic Network model that is being successfully implemented in 25 clinics in 11 states and Puerto Rico.

The FIT Program emphasizes:

- “Warm handoffs” of care from health care in prison to needed healthcare services in the community.
- A peer navigator/peer support model that works with LRCs and community-based organizations to create comprehensive reentry plans, including plans for the provision of health care.
- Culturally competent, patient-centered medical services capable of addressing the complex needs of people returning from prison to their communities.
- Leveraging resources of safety net providers to serve those formerly incarcerated.

The FIT program is currently being operated in collaboration with NCDPS and the University of North Carolina Medical School’s Department of Family Medicine. There are FIT programs in Orange and Durham counties, and FIT recently expanded to Wake and Mecklenburg counties.

RECOMMENDATION/TIMELINE

Immediate:

- Identify new locations for FIT Program expansion.
- Develop a medical discharge planning model for rural areas with fewer reentry resources.
- Develop a process and protocol for screening people who are about to be released who are referred to FIT for MAT for an opioid use disorder.

Short-term - 6 months:

- Establish contact in identified expansion sites with reentry community, law enforcement and safety net clinics to prepare for FIT Program implementation in those new counties.

Intermediate term - 6-18 months:

- Hire CHWs for new FIT Program sites.
- Train partners in implementation of the FIT Program.
- Develop MOUs with local reentry partners and health service providers.
- Begin in-reach into local prisons and jails to identify clients to enroll in FIT Programs.
- Hire regional social workers for pilot of prison medical discharge planning program.

Long-term – more than 18 months:

- Continue to expand the FIT Program, in coordination with NCDPS, across the state.
- Expand Prison Medical Discharge Planning Program to areas that do not have a FIT Program to address chronic disease, mental illness and/or SUD.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- LRCs and community-based reentry organizations
- FQHCs and safety net clinics
- County health departments
- County jails
- Local and statewide mental health service providers

- SUD treatment programs
- Statewide opioid overdose reduction efforts
- The University of North Carolina
- Transitions Clinic Network
- Families and communities impacted by mass incarceration
- Justice-involved individuals
- Faith-based organizations
- Nonprofits

BUDGETARY ESTIMATES/CONSIDERATIONS

Funding is requested to enable NC FIT to offer MAT for SUD and cover transportation costs and medical visit/pharmacy copays for clients. Additional funding is needed to expand the FIT Program to other NC communities.

Cost per FIT site per year:

CHW salary and benefits: -----	\$55,000
Administration support from FIT Program local partner: -----	\$10,000
Administrative support from NC FIT Program including program evaluation: -----	\$57,000*
Technical support from Transitions Clinic Network -----	\$7,500
Copays for medical visits and pharmacy for 100 clients (\$250 per client per year)-----	\$25,000
Copays for MAT and medication for 20 clients (\$2,150 per client per year x 20)-----	\$43,000
Transportation Vouchers for 100 clients (\$100 per client): -----	\$10,000
Total cost per FIT site per year:	\$207,500

*This is an estimate based on the current number of FIT sites. The more FIT sites, the lower the administrative costs per site.

FIT Program Prison Medical Discharge Planning Pilot:

[No costs incurred in year one, the planning phase. The implementation phase begins in year two, and annual estimated costs to implement this pilot project in year two and thereafter are as follows]:

Two Social Workers: (\$75,000 each for salary and benefits)-----	\$150,000
Travel and training expenses: -----	\$10,000
Funding for clinic visit and pharmacy copays for 100 uninsured patients: -----	\$50,000
Total cost to implement Prison Medical Discharge pilot per year:	\$210,000

POTENTIAL BARRIERS

Limited reentry services in rural and more under-resourced counties.

Lack of adequate community mental health and SUD treatment, including MAT, and cost to patient for medications.

Lack of health insurance for most people coming out of incarceration.

Difficulty in obtaining medical records of formerly incarcerated people.

Lack of information on health care utilization of uninsured people.

Advocacy Workgroup 2019 Action Item – Local/Community

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Advocacy Workgroup recommends developing a roster of SRCC members for the 2019 year (the “implementation phase”) that is comprised of at least 25% people who have been justice-involved.

RECOMMENDATION

This workgroup recommends that the SRCC steering committee and principal members make an explicit effort to get justice-involved people to the table during the SRCC implementation phase that will take place in 2019, such that at least 25% of the SRCC implementation team members are people who have been justice-involved. This will ensure that people with a diverse set of experiences with the justice system are at the table, increase the chance that their needs are addressed during this process, and reduce the chances that the SRCC is a top-down bureaucratic group that does not always keep the interests of affected individuals at the forefront. This percentage is necessary to ensure that SRCC implementation team members who were justice-involved are not tokens, but critical voices in the conversation. Additionally, it is vital that the SRCC models the inclusion it is asking for from the public.

In sum, the SRCC will be a more successful advocacy tool if it has people with a diverse set of experiences with the justice system at the table during the implementation phase.

STAKEHOLDERS

- SRCC steering committee and principal members
- SRCC implementation team members
- Justice-involved individuals

Advocacy Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation - Communications/Awareness

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Advocacy Workgroup recommends that the full SRCC (including both principal members and implementation team members) participate in a Phase 1 Racial Equity Institute training in early 2019.¹⁸

BACKGROUND

In the United States and in North Carolina, race is a primary determining factor in numerous areas of well-being, from educational attainment, life expectancy, income level, quality of health, and, finally, an individual's likelihood of being involved in the justice system. Numerous books, articles, and studies have revealed the racial disproportionality in justice system outcomes. For example, African Americans are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of whites, and even though African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately 32% of the US population, they comprised 56% of all incarcerated people in 2015.¹⁹

In North Carolina in particular, extensive research has been done on racial disparities in the justice system on everything from traffic stops to being referred to juvenile court to contact

¹⁸ The Racial Equity Institute of Greensboro provided its Groundwater Training during the February 12, 2019 SRCC meeting. This training provided SRCC principal and implementation team members with background in structural racial inequality and the ways it affects justice-involved individuals.

¹⁹ <https://www.naacp.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/>

SRCC Recommendations with Recent Action

Transportation Workgroup 2019 Action Item

Executive Implementation Team

RECOMMENDATION

In order for all eligible incarcerated individuals to be released with a driver's license and/or state issued ID, this workgroup recommends that the NCDMV expand mobile unit services to all 34 minimum custody facilities.

Employment Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation

Legislative Implementation Team

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Employment Workgroup recommends the NCGA enact a statute that requires all licensing boards to remove subjective terms, such as "good moral character" and "moral turpitude," as a licensing or certification requirement.

Legal Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation

Legislative Implementation Team

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Legal Workgroup recommended implementing several legislative recommendations, including amending expunction and certificate of relief statutes to allow greater access to relief.

Employment Workgroup 2019 Action Item

Executive Implementation Team

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

This workgroup recommends NCDPS and the NC Department of Commerce Reentry Initiative (NCDCRI) continue to research NCDPS's current Work Release Program, as well as other states' work release programs, to identify strategies to increase the proportion of qualified people participating in the work release program.

with the adult correctional system. African Americans only make up 22% of North Carolina's population, but they comprise 57% of the state's prison population. Close to home, in Durham County, African Americans are nearly nine times more likely to be incarcerated for criminal conduct than whites.²⁰

National surveys measuring the "racial typification of crime" - particularly the extent to which people explicitly associate crime with blacks and Latinos - reveal that this occurs most strongly among whites. In addition, implicit bias tests have shown that the general public holds negative associations of blacks and Latinos and frequently suspects them of criminality. These biases are believed to reach all corners of the criminal justice system.²¹ The ubiquity of these racial biases is an important factor in the difficulty of eliminating racially disparate criminal justice outcomes. These biases, of course, extend to reentry efforts, and people of color are disproportionately on the receiving end of reentry programming. This makes it that much more necessary that SRCC members have an awareness of the historical racial framework of our criminal justice system and can critically examine and question their own racial biases.

RECOMMENDATION

The workgroup recommends that all SRCC Implementation Team members participate in a Phase 1 Racial Equity Institute training in early 2019. This workshop helps to provide talking points, historical factors and an organizational definition of racism. This training would help ensure that all SRCC Implementation Team members have an adequate and accurate baseline understanding of the history of racial prejudice and racist policies throughout the history of the U.S., especially how this history has played a critical role in determining current racial disparities in the justice system. Undergoing this training would also serve as a start in making sure that all SRCC members can operate from an organizational definition of racism, as well as ensuring that they can both proactively address racism and ensure racially equitable outcomes in their organizations and communities. Like the rest of the criminal justice system, true reform in reentry cannot be accomplished without viewing the work through a racial lens. This training will create the necessary context for reentry reform and will prime stakeholders to be conscientious and aware of deep-seated biases that risk hindering the important work the council is poised to do.

STAKEHOLDERS

- SRCC Implementation Team members
- Indirectly, LRCs and corresponding local reentry stakeholders will benefit from the SRCC Implementation Team members' greater awareness of race-based power dynamics.
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

²⁰ https://www.unc.edu/~fbaum/papers/NCAJ_Exec_Summary.pdf

²¹ <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/race-and-punishment-racial-perceptions-of-crime-and-support-for-punitive-policies/#A.%20Overestimating%20Black%20and%20Hispanic%20Crime%20Rates>

\$8500 plus travel expenses for trainers.

Advocacy Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendation - Communications/Awareness

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

To raise awareness and educate the public about reentry efforts North Carolina, this workgroup recommends the implementation of a Reentry Awareness Campaign. This awareness campaign would include comprehensively engaging broadcast, digital and print media, community advocacy resources, and faith-based communication channels. It would also include leveraging partnerships with reentry involved agencies, organizations, and associations. By utilizing these various information and communication sources, the campaign will give external and internal audiences insight into the numerous challenges and barriers faced by individuals transitioning from incarceration back into their communities. Subsequently, the campaign will spark a healthy dialogue that will foster understanding, acceptance, support, and the creation of healthy, safe, and sustainable communities.

BACKGROUND

In North Carolina, the vast majority of people currently serving time in the state's prison facilities will eventually be released. The challenges faced by the formerly incarcerated often stem from the stigma associated with having been in prison. As the SRCC works to remove the barriers that can derail a successful reentry process for many individuals, it is important that critical work first be done to change the perceptions that stigmatize past justice involvement. That stigma fuels the prejudicial practices that cause roadblocks for individuals when they seek basic necessities like housing, transportation, employment, education, medical and mental health services, and family support.

In 2018, the SRCC launched NC Reentry Week to raise awareness of the challenges individuals face as they work to rebuild lives and enter communities after incarceration. Governor Roy Cooper issued an official proclamation aimed at bringing attention to reentry issues and spotlighting the work of the SRCC to create a sustainable action plan for the successful reentry of people leaving the state's prisons and jails. This type of awareness-building leads to an increase in the public's focus on providing access to critical services and improving accommodations for justice-involved individuals. The long-term goal of this work is to reduce the likelihood of recidivism, fill potential gaps in the workforce, foster economic independence, and lift the social stigma commonly associated with being incarcerated.

RECOMMENDATION

The Advocacy Workgroup recommends the NCGA allocate funds for the execution of a comprehensive public awareness campaign. This initiative will utilize the skillsets and knowledge of communication and marketing personnel from NCDPS and advocacy, outreach, and public relations experts who are members of the SRCC. Funding would be used to develop print and digital materials, produce informational videos for commercial broadcast, venue and talent acquisition for community and public forums and town hall meetings, and participation in community and faith-based events across the state.

Proposed campaign components and deliverables

Deliverable	Timeline	Projected Completion Date	Lead person	Next Steps	Budget Considerations
Glossary in English/Spanish (rack card/brochure)	short-term	Fall 2018	Naz Ahmed	Review/revise existing glossary and send for workgroup review/edits	TBD
Landing page	short-term	Fall 2018 until it's done	Irene Lawrence, Kirsten Barber	Content Meeting 9/11	TBD
Social media campaigns	short-term	Spring 2019	Irene Lawrence, Kirsten Barber	Content Meeting TBD	TBD
Printed collateral/1-pagers	medium-term	Spring 2019 and ongoing	Patrice Funderburg, Irene Lawrence, Naz Ahmed	TBD	TBD
Video productions: mini-DACJ documentaries	long-term	Summer 2019	Jeffrey	Planning Meeting Winter 2019	TBD
Exhibitions, trade shows and job fairs	long-term	Ongoing	Various	Participate as recommended	TBD

Preferred language glossary: The glossary would feed into all external communications related to the SRCC, particularly during the campaign. It would discuss how language can further the stigma against individuals reentering society after their time in incarceration. These stigmas often hinder people's abilities to rebuild stable lives and access housing and employment. The language glossary would serve as a guide for communicating with and about people reentering society. It would identify words that have a problematic origin or define people by their time spent incarcerated, and instead provide alternative language intended to help people regain control of their individual narratives.

STAKEHOLDERS

This initiative, while targeting all North Carolina residents, will require engagement from a cross representation of government and community stakeholders, as well as individuals who were formerly incarcerated or the families of those who have been incarcerated.

Communication Strategy for LRCs

A core component of the LRCs' communication strategy is the integration and leadership of impacted individuals, families, and communities. It will be necessary to educate the public, stakeholders, policymakers, and the press about the need for reform. LRCs will need to develop a multi-strategy effort with the following key activities:

- Support partner outreach and press efforts by collecting the stories of impacted individuals and deploying high-quality videos of these stories through social media;
- Launch several social media campaigns that garner significant new engagement and messages about reentry issues and reform;
- Train impacted individuals to serve as spokespeople at press events;
- Engage partners to understand the reforms needed and to participate in press events and communicate with their networks and decision-makers;
- Publish regularly through allied groups' communications, including widely read blogs;
- Develop and maintain relationships with reporters and editorial boards to secure stories, opinion pieces, and editorials in all major media markets;
- Hold press events with allies around the state;
- Organize meetings to educate business leaders, community leaders, decision makers and other influential people.

This campaign requires development of an array of communications tools and messaging strategies focused on the rationality of a comprehensive and coordinated reentry system. The public awareness campaign should highlight the waste and economic cost of unnecessary barriers that exclude individuals working to re-integrate to their communities, and the successful, bipartisan, and evidence-based reforms making progress around the nation. The campaign should also detail the experiences and needs of impacted men and women, as described and explained by those individuals.

Faith/Community-Based Organizations Workgroup
2019 Action Item – Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

This workgroup recommends planning and hosting a state-wide reentry conference in late February/early March 2019.²²

RECOMMENDATION

This workgroup is planning a statewide reentry conference to convene 300-400 reentry stakeholders, LRC representatives, members of the faith community, and other organizations and volunteers involved with people moving from incarceration to communities across the state. The goal of the conference is to raise awareness and share information about reentry, connect and share best practices, and to encourage individuals to get involved in reentry at the local level.

The reentry conference will be an annual event, organized and coordinated by the SRCC and NCDPS. It is not intended to be an event specifically relating to the goals of the Cooper administration; the workgroup hopes it continues in perpetuity and that it grows into a 2- or 3-day conference in future years.

The conference must be culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of Hispanic/Latinx residents returning to their communities. To that end, reentry workshops should ideally be available in both English and Spanish, and the needs of a racially and culturally diverse prison population should be addressed in a Diversity in Reentry session.

Planning for the conference includes designing and distributing flyers, developing the agenda, reaching out to speakers and guests, managing registration and billing, and other logistics.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- NC Governor's Office
- NC clergy and religious organizations
- Prison ministry organizations
- LRCs
- Conference invitees
- Justice-involved individuals
- Nonprofits
- Faith-based organizations

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Approximately \$40,000

²² The North Carolina Reentry Summit will be held on March 12, 2019 at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, NC. Individuals, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations will learn how they can support justice-involved individuals as they transition into communities across the state.

Faith/Community-Based Organizations Workgroup
Tier 2 Recommendation - Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

This workgroup recommends providing people who want to volunteer inside facilities with a streamlined, transparent sign-up process on the NCDPS website that minimizes bottlenecks, implementing more consistency in the volunteer training program, and ensuring that the entire process is accessible to Spanish-speaking volunteers and that their skills are effectively utilized.

BACKGROUND

Volunteering in prisons has proven to be a successful tool to those who are incarcerated and seeking assistance in rehabilitation, reentry, employment, housing, and establishing a successful transition home, especially for families seeking restoration and healing as a result of their loved one's incarceration. Volunteers often serve as positive role models in the residents' lives and can assist in the rehabilitation process. Due to the important roles that volunteers play in the lives of the incarcerated, it is important that both NCDPS and the volunteers themselves see volunteers as part of a partnership, not as a liability.

To better improve the volunteer onboarding process, the workgroup recommends NCDPS hold a meeting for volunteer coordinators (one from each facility) in early 2019. The purpose of the meeting is to educate the volunteer coordinators about current volunteer issues, ensure they are all on the same page going forward about how/when to conduct the trainings, go over updated volunteer training materials, and introduce them to new volunteer administrative processes.

RECOMMENDATION

Initial Application

Currently, the process for people wishing to volunteer in any North Carolina corrections facility begins with the applicant sending the application directly to the facility or volunteer coordinator, or online at the NCDPS website. Once a person finishes their application, it gets sent to the director of the Office of Citizen Participation at NCDPS Reentry Programs & Services, who then contacts the person to find out where they want to volunteer and what they want to do as a volunteer. Much of the time, the applicant does not have answers to these questions, so the director will instruct them to contact a facility within their county of residence. This significantly delays the process because it is often difficult to reach the facility contact.

To help remedy this problem, the workgroup recommends that the volunteer application include a list of specific tasks that volunteers may perform in prisons (e.g. help with religious services, religious programming, home leave, etc.). Applicants **MUST** choose their top preferences volunteering. The application should also ask at the very beginning whether the applicant has a specific program they want to start at a prison, and if so, they should be directed to another application entirely. This would obligate potential volunteers to consider how they could best use their skills within a facility **BEFORE** they apply and would also ensure that people wanting to start a new program at a prison are directed to the correct process. The

volunteer application should also ask for a short statement on why the applicant wants to volunteer in a facility, their prior experience volunteering inside prison facilities, and any prior connections they may have with existing group of volunteers in any North Carolina prisons (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, a religious organization, etc.).

Trainings

Per NCDPS policy, each facility is already required to hold three volunteer trainings per year. Case Managers are already stretched thin and cannot add more trainings. Therefore, the workgroup recommends NCDPS Prisons require facilities to start consistently holding these trainings three times per year at each facility as scheduled. Each facility can have their own individual training dates (they need not be the same three dates across all facilities), but each facility must have a consistent set of three dates on which trainings are held.

This workgroup recommends the volunteer application page contain a list of facilities with each facility's details (location, security level, gender, and volunteer training dates). Knowing the dates of each facility's trainings in advance could help volunteers decide where to volunteer. Applicants will still send completed applications to the Office of Citizen Participation at NCDPS Reentry Programs & Services. Upon final approval of their application, volunteers should receive information on training requirements.²³

This workgroup also recommends standardizing the volunteer training program across all state facilities. Some facilities currently conduct training with a PowerPoint presentation, but then once that staff member leaves, the next coordinator may not have access to it and must create their own training format. To standardize trainings, a video presentation could cover the NCDPS mission and vision, code of ethics and dress code, reentry programs, and other standard information. Volunteer training should be conducted by the volunteer coordinator, Prison Rape Elimination Act coordinator, chaplain, and/or chief security officers at each facility. Program staff should provide both blue and orange cards (all levels of volunteer approval) at the end of each training.

Currently, both the initial training and the refresher training are a minimum of two hours but could be longer if needed. Off-site volunteers must complete a minimum of one-month on-site training (or longer if deemed necessary by the facility head) before being certified to sponsor a person in prison for offsite passes. We recommend that each volunteer go through the training once per year rather than having separate trainings for new and returning volunteers.

The workgroup also recommends specifically targeting bilingual Spanish/English speaking volunteers during the volunteer training process and ensuring that they know which facilities most need their language and cultural skills, and which activities are most needed in Spanish. There should be a note on the volunteer website identifying facilities with the highest numbers of Spanish-speaking residents, and therefore where their services are especially needed, so that

²³ The Chaplain may verify whether a religious group is legitimate/suitable for serving in a correctional setting and verify credentials and other issues before the volunteer is scheduled for training.

Spanish-speaking potential volunteers can be aware of these needs before they start the training process.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS - Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice (DACJJ)
- NCDPS – Reentry Programs & Services
- LRCs
- Faith-based organizations
- Nonprofits
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The cost of implementing this recommendation is yet to be determined. Volunteers' increased understanding of their roles is likely to result in higher numbers of volunteers at facilities across the state (currently about 8,000 volunteers per month participate in one or more activities at an NC prison). After website changes to application process online are implemented, vetting and approval can be scheduled in a systematic way to maintain open communication between NCDPS, local facilities, and volunteers.

Faith/Community-Based Organizations Workgroup
Tier 3 Recommendation - Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

This workgroup recommends creating one permanent State-funded Chaplain I position specifically for the Transitional Aftercare Network (TAN).

BACKGROUND

Chaplains play an important spiritual and emotional role in the lives of residents. They work directly with residents to provide religious services and accommodate their faith group needs within the scope of NCDPS Prisons policy. Chaplains interface with residents, with volunteers both inside and outside the facility, and with those who lead reentry courses. Chaplains are present to plan and/or provide reentry courses and training for residents and volunteers. Their work enhances residents' personal and spiritual development, improves their commitment to ethical and moral growth and accountability, and improves individual preparation for reentry. Pre- and post-release mentoring reduces recidivism and encourages successful reentry. For all these reasons, the TAN program needs more support in playing this vital role in the spiritual lives of currently and formerly incarcerated people.

TAN is currently active, but understaffed, due to the lack of a permanent chaplain in the position. TAN is an established program that has been up and running for many years and originally set the standard for reentry mentoring and reentry support programming for NCDPS. The major struggle has been to keep the position staffed, as skilled temporary chaplains are looking for permanent positions that offer benefits and more security for their families. All research confirms that people who are incarcerated respond positively to pre- and post-release mentoring. Therefore, it is also essential that correctional institutions allow religious services and classes to be given in the primary language of the incarcerated. NCDPS should work to provide spiritual support opportunities for all residents, not just select individuals.

RECOMMENDATION

This workgroup recommends creating one permanent State-funded Chaplain I position specifically for the TAN program. The person hired for this position would ideally be Spanish-speaking, as that would allow him/her to better serve Spanish-speaking residents of these facilities.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- Justice-involved individuals
- Faith-based organizations

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The budgeted amount needed for this recommendation would be \$39,611.00 – \$63,378.00, based on the NC salary range for one Chaplain I position.

Family Reunification Workgroup 2019 Action Item – Communications/Awareness

RECOMMENDATION

This workgroup recommends adding a button to the Offender Family Services page (referred to in this document as The Family Reunification Resource Button/Link) to direct families to reunification and other resources that help incarcerated people have a productive and successful transition back into the community. This button would contain a digital version of the brochure that contains important information on reunification services, described in recommendation #2, as well as any other reunification resources not in the brochure. The Offender Family Services page can be accessed at this link - <https://www.ncdps.gov/adult-corrections/prisons/offender-family-services>.

Once there is an SRCC page on the NCDPS website, the resource link will also be added to that page.

BACKGROUND

Currently, when you visit the offender search web page there is a host of information about the person's crime history. There is nothing available on the website that could lead the person to resources available during reentry.

STAKEHOLDERS

- State and local government
- Nonprofits
- Faith community
- Employers
- Family members of people who are or have been incarcerated
- Justice-involved individuals

Family Reunification Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation – Communications/Awareness

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

This workgroup recommends creating and distributing a brochure with important conversation topics for families with an incarcerated loved one, as well as information about family reunification services in their geographic area.

BACKGROUND

Currently, when a family member or friend visits North Carolina prisons, there are no handouts available that could lead the person to resources upon reentry.

RECOMMENDATION

This workgroup is in the process of creating a brochure with a universally-applicable tips section with conversation topics that are critically important to have with incarcerated loved ones before reentry, including the following:

1. Family home plan, including how to discuss as a family before coming home.
2. Health plan, including Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, and medical issues.
3. Job plan, including job training.
4. Fines, child support, and court fees.
5. Auto, life, and health insurance.

The brochure will include family reunification services in the given geographic area. The workgroup's template brochure will specifically list family reunification services in Wake County. However, after the brochure is created, other counties can use it as a template for creating their own brochures with family reunification services in their county.

The brochure would serve as the family's preliminary source of information for post-release, featuring parenting tips, counseling services, support groups, and other resources a family may need to build healthy relationships post-incarceration. It would be a resource for case managers, people who are incarcerated, family members, and government officials. It could also be a resource for the family members of people just going into the prison system.

STAKEHOLDERS

- State and local government
- Nonprofits
- Faith community
- Employers
- Family members of people who are or have been incarcerated
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Brochure design and printing.

Family Reunification Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendations - Local/Community

RECOMMENDATION 1

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

Conduct professional workshops with LRCs to raise their awareness of family/child reunification issues as a part of reentry services and support. The goal will be to encourage LRC members to think about family/child issues and how they relate to areas of reentry such as employment, housing, and education.

BACKGROUND

As LRCs across North Carolina work to ensure appropriate housing, employment, health care and other services for men and women who are returning home from jail and prison, there is concern that the issues around family/child reunification are not being addressed.

RECOMMENDATION

The SRCC Family Reunification Workgroup recommends that funds are allocated (by the legislature, a state agency, community organization, foundation, etc.) to develop and implement professional workshops with LRCs to raise their awareness of: 1) family/child reunification issues as part of the reentry planning, 2) resources available within certain communities, and 3) tools that can be used. These workshops can include discussion about unmet needs and community resource gaps. Such information can be incorporated into future workshops and service planning.

These workshops will take place annually with each LRC.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- LRCs
- Local service providers
- Workshop presenters
- Faith-based organizations
- Nonprofits
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The budget for this project will depend on resources available in each LRC community. For LRCs that have family reunification-focused organizations in their communities, the goals of this project could be accomplished at no cost to the LRCs. Other situations might require LRCs to cover travel or per diem costs for presenters who they bring in from other communities.

Family Reunification Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendations - Executive

RECOMMENDATION 2

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

This workgroup recommends that NCDPS work with NCDHHS and county Division of Social Services (DSS) offices to develop and improve resources, policies, and procedures that would help incarcerated parents and their children more effectively maintain their relationships during periods of incarceration.

BACKGROUND

Many incarcerated men and women are parents of minor children. A certain percentage of those families have DSS involvement. Reunification between children and parents would be enhanced if there were more opportunities for contact (e.g. general visitation, specialized visits, phone calls, letter writing, etc.), if incarcerated parents were viewed as a resource for identifying potential, appropriate placements, and if parents had access to services that would allow them to focus on their DSS case plans.

RECOMMENDATION

This workgroup recommends NCDPS form a task force to include representatives from DSS and community groups. This task force would review family reunification best practices from other states, and develop or revise policies, procedures, and training for both NCDPS and DSS staff. These policies would aim to create more opportunities for contact between children and their parents, viewing incarcerated parents as a resource for identifying potential, appropriate placements, and ensuring appropriate services for incarcerated parents to access as they work on their DSS case plans.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- NCDHHS
- NC Division of Social Services and county DSS offices
- Prison facilities
- Justice-involved individuals
- Community groups (nonprofits, faith-based organizations, etc.)

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The budget still needs to be developed and will need to cover the costs of facilitating task force meetings, including travel and meals during the meetings.

Women and Incarceration Workgroup 2019 Action Item – Communications/Awareness and Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Women and Incarceration Workgroup recommends the language used on the NCDPS website to describe incarcerated individuals be changed to language that addresses injustices without dehumanizing the people described. As an example, the workgroup recommends that wherever “inmate” or “offender” are used, they be changed to “people in prison or jail.”

BACKGROUND

Currently, on the NCDPS website homepage, there is a box that states that the department is working on prison reform and reads “Ensuring the safety of Public Safety employees, visitors and **inmates** within prison facilities is the top priority of the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice. Learn here about the current and future actions planned to make prisons safer.” If someone wants to look up an incarcerated person, they are directed to the “**Offender** Search Page.”

Too often, language used to describe people in prison or jail is dehumanizing. The humanity of those under government control is undercut by using these derogatory phrases. The term “inmate” is perhaps the most pervasive of these words and is used widely by judges, prison and jail officials, staff, and the media. Words such as inmate, offender, convicted felon, and convict objectify and disparage people who are imprisoned and returning home from a period of incarceration. Those words and others like it focus attention on a person’s incarcerated status instead of emphasizing that even in prison, the person is first and foremost a person.

Defining someone as “other,” in the media and other arenas, makes it more acceptable to treat people inhumanely—and for the rest of us to ignore these misuses. The negative connotations of criminal justice language have real-life consequences for people who experience incarceration. The label “inmate” is wholly dehumanizing and underscores the invisibility of the human being. It undermines the self-esteem and self-worth of people as individuals, parents, and family members, creating a public and subconscious persona that is far removed from a person’s true identity.

Use of this type of language makes it more acceptable to treat people inhumanely and for people in general to ignore these misuses. The word “inmate” facilitates a worldview through which prison administrators and employees objectify the people in their custody. When someone is considered inferior and undeserving, it is easier to treat them badly. It also feeds into the pervasive notion that they may be lying to manipulate staff or the system, making it easier to dismiss their needs.

This workgroup believes that language matters. The way people write and speak helps shape others’ perceptions about the world and the people in it.

RECOMMENDATION

The workgroup encourages NCDPS to jettison terms like “inmate” and “offender” once and for all, and instead adopt the phrase, “a person in prison or jail.” This is phrasing that emphasizes the personhood and humanity of the individual instead of using words that locate the person in an institution of punishment.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS webmaster
- NCDPS communications staff
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Women and Incarceration Workgroup Tier 2 Recommendation - Executive

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Women and Incarceration Workgroup recommends designing a reentry program, similar to the Bridges to Home model described below, to address the trauma that is unique to women who are reentering society post-incarceration.

BACKGROUND

Facts about women who are incarcerated

- Women use drugs at nearly double the rate of men.
- 2/3 of women in prison are women of color.
- Women are now the fastest growing group of people incarcerated.²⁴
- Nationally, the number of women in jail has increased 14-fold from 8,000 in 1970 to 110,000 in 2014.²⁵
- Incarcerated women experience post-traumatic stress disorder, substance misuse, HIV, addiction, and mental illness.²⁶

Research supports the idea that an overwhelming number of women in the judicial system suffer as the result of untreated physical and mental trauma. Women may have either survived rape, assault, or childhood sexual abuse, or they may have been the silent victims, watching abuse being done to others. Trauma can result in physiological changes in the way our brains respond to danger, especially when the trauma is repeated. Trauma has also been linked to depression, suicidal tendencies, chronic anxiety, hostility, impaired ability to relate to others socially, and many other serious consequences in one's personal life.

Incarceration: The difference between men and women

Women's road to incarceration is starkly different from the usual path for men. Women are more likely to have experienced poverty, partner violence, sexual abuse, and exploitation. Women of color are more likely than men to be impoverished. Their engagement in the criminal justice system is more often related to their connections with others (ex. exposure to dysfunctional/abusive relationships). Women reporting histories of victimization and trauma continue to be vulnerable and can experience re-victimization in the criminal justice system. Finally, more than 66,000 women who are incarcerated are mothers of minor children.

The experiences that female trauma survivors have in the criminal justice system, far from leading them to positive changes in their lives, often add new trauma and deepen their wounds. "Many of these women will never be able to break out of the narrow trajectory that constricts their futures unless the justice system and their communities can help them to focus on the root problem: trauma, its lasting effects in human lives, and the need to begin the healing

²⁴ <https://www.vera.org/research/overlooked>

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Dirks, Danielle. "Sexual Revictimization and Retraumatization of Women in Prison." *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 3/4, 2004, pp. 102–115. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/40004582.

process.”²⁷

Furthermore, per SAMHSA:

- According to most estimates, trauma is an almost universal experience among people who use public mental health, substance misuse, and social services, as well as people who are justice-involved or homeless.
- While individuals with trauma histories are the majority of those served in behavioral health care and criminal justice systems, trauma survivors are not likely to seek treatment specifically for trauma-related symptoms.
- Justice-involved women are more likely to have experienced physical and sexual abuse than justice-involved males or women in the general population.

SAMSHA has produced a “Sequential Intercept Model,” which focuses on five “intercept” points at which women may encounter the criminal justice system, each of which offers an opportunity to begin recovery. This model has been shown to benefit women, the criminal justice system, and other service systems by:

- Enabling women to recognize the impact of trauma in their lives, get support, and move ahead toward healing;
- Helping women lead stable lives and restore relationships with children in the system;
- Reducing recidivism and related costs, such as foster care; and
- Enabling women who are incarcerated to reduce conflict with other people who are incarcerated, as well as with prisoners and guards.²⁸

Other states already have programs making use of this model, such as the Bridges to Home Program in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Bridges to Home reentry program serves women who are incarcerated in Philadelphia Prison System’s Riverside Correctional Facility. It connects those who are within 60-120 days of release with a Mental Health Partnerships Peer Support Specialist and Case Manager to facilitate their transition to stable housing, the reinstatement or acquisition of benefits, and other social/cultural/community-based services. The program focuses on three intersecting conditions of incarcerated women: gender specific and responsive service delivery, women who identify as experiencing serious emotional and/or psychological distress which may co-occur with substance use, and women who have faced or will be facing homelessness.

Bridges to Home Certified Peer Specialist Training

The Bridges training offers learners the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to serve as a Certified

²⁷ TraumaInformedCareproject.org. (2018). Creating a Trauma-Informed Criminal Justice System for Women. [online] Available at: <http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/TIC%20criminal%20justice%20for%20women%20.pdf> [Accessed 8 Aug. 2018]

²⁸ Ibid.

Peer Specialist (CPS) in Riverside Correctional Facility as well as in the community. Upon successful completion of the CPS Training Program, learners will receive a Certificate of Completion, which is the Pennsylvania state-approved certification to provide Peer Support Services. In addition to the CPS Certificate of Completion, there is an additional certificate for successful completion of the two-day Wellness Recovery Action Plan Seminar I training, which is embedded in the CPS Training Program.²⁹

A program could be created that would:

- Identify female peer specialists willing to help justice-involved women facilitate their transition back to their communities. These peer specialists would have to be willing and able to provide this support in a way that is gender-responsive, trauma-informed, relational, and strengths-based and that includes a path to rebuild trust and build safe spaces.
- Train a smaller group of the women receiving this mentorship to become Certified Peer Specialists themselves upon release. They would get a stipend to work inside prison walls and support other incarcerated women upon their release.

RECOMMENDATION

The Women and Incarceration Workgroup recommends designing a reentry program, similar to the Bridges to Home model described above, to address the trauma that is unique to women who are reentering society post-incarceration. We also recommend that this program be staffed by justice-involved people.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCGA
- NCDPS
- NCDHHS
- LRCs
- Nonprofit service providers
- Justice-involved individuals
- Faith-based organizations

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The cost to implement this recommendation is yet to be determined.

²⁹ Mental Health Partnerships (2018). Available at:
<https://www.mentalhealthpartnerships.org/news-events/2017/10/23/new-program-bridges-to-home-brings-hope-to-incarcerated-women>

Women in Incarceration Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendation - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Women and Incarceration Workgroups recommends North Carolina pass and implement a law preventing the incarceration of caregivers that reflects similar laws passed in other states. This law would give judges the discretion to sentence mothers who are primary caretakers of their children to alternative programs instead of incarceration within county jails or state prison facilities.

BACKGROUND

Families go through immeasurable pain and face generations of trauma when parents are separated from their children due to incarceration. When parents are convicted, their children are punished too. Alternative sentences keep parents actively involved in their children's lives and help alleviate suffering. When a parent is incarcerated, families lose needed income and often struggle to meet basic needs. Alternatives to incarceration allow parents to be home in their community so they can continue loving, caring, and providing for their children.

Alternative sentences are cheaper and reduce recidivism. Money spent on incarceration can be reinvested towards more alternatives. Instead of jail and prison, parents could receive drug and alcohol treatment; vocational training and job placement; parenting classes; and affordable and safe housing assistance.

In Massachusetts in April 2018, the state legislature passed a Primary Caretaker Bill. This law provides community-based sentencing alternatives for primary caretakers of dependent children who have been convicted of non-violent crimes. The goal of this bill is to alleviate harm to children and their parents or caretakers caused by separation during incarceration, and to strengthen families' connections to their communities. The law allows judges to consider the impact of incarceration on the parent they are sentencing, and that parent's children and community. This humanizes people who are convicted of crimes. The judge then has the option of issuing an alternative sentence.

RECOMMENDATION

The Women and Incarceration Workgroup recommends the NCGA introduce and pass a law similar to the one passed in Massachusetts that will give judges discretion to sentence mothers who are primary caretakers of their children to alternative programs instead of incarceration within county jails or state prison facilities.

A primary caretaker is defined as someone who has assumed responsibility for a dependent child's housing, health, financial support, education, family ties, or safety; or a woman who has given birth to a child after or while awaiting her sentencing hearing and who expresses a willingness to assume responsibility for the housing, health, and safety of that child. A parent who, in the best interest of the child, has arranged for the temporary care of the child in the home of a relative or other responsible adult shall not for that reason be excluded from the definition of "primary caretaker of a dependent child."

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- NCGA
- Judges
- Justice-involved individuals

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The cost to implement this recommendation is yet to be determined.

SRCC 2019 and Beyond

2019 Implementation Teams

To ensure maximum progress with implementation of the SRCC recommendations, SRCC staff developed four implementation teams. Each team will focus on a major category of implementation that reflects the SRCC work groups' recommendations. The implementation teams are Legislative, Executive, Local/Community, and Communications/Awareness. SRCC workgroup and principal members informed NCDPS of their availability to continue working with the SRCC and if able, which implementation team they'd prefer joining. Justice-involved people who have experience in these various areas were also invited to participate on the implementation teams. Implementation team membership as of February 2019 is below.

Legislative Implementation Team

1. Bradford Sneed
2. Jasmine McGhee
3. Daniel Bowes
4. Sallie James
5. Allen Baddour
6. Bill Rowe
7. Greg Singleton
8. Jesse Bennett
9. Amanda Martin
10. Judge Amanda Maris
11. Mildred Spearman
12. Dawn Blagrove
13. Miera Walker
14. Kristie Williams

Communications/Awareness Implementation Team

1. Tiawana Brown
2. Patrice Funderburg
3. Portia Bright
4. Kristie Williams
5. Ariel Aponte
6. Naz Ahmed
7. Rodney McGill
8. David Chatham
9. Michael Shank
10. Dennis Gaddy

Local/Community Implementation Team

1. David Nash
2. Melissa W. Radcliff
3. Joseph Martinez
4. Portia Bright
5. Chuck Manning
6. Demetrius Lynn
7. Corey Purdie
8. Jermaine McNair
9. Wendi Eure
10. Frankie Roberts
11. Justin Loeser
12. Jaraun "Gemini" Boyd
13. Salahudeen Abdallah
14. Bernice McPhatter
15. Kerwin Pittman-EL

Executive Implementation Team

1. Reggie Skinner
2. Tim Moose
3. Commissioner Angela Bryant
4. Dr. Brian Long
5. Demetrius Pulley
6. Karen Tikkanen
7. Andrea Hudson
8. Tracy Little
9. Chris Battle
10. Karen Buck
11. George Pettigrew
12. Annette Jones
13. Maggie Brewer
14. Dr. Bob Kurtz
15. Sonya Brown

Implementation Team Charges

The work of the SRCC will be carried out by four implementation teams, as well as *ad hoc* advisory workgroups. The implementation teams and their charges are as follows:

Legislative Implementation Team

The Legislative Implementation Team will review each of the legislative recommendations from the SRCC workgroups and decide which recommendations to pursue, while ensuring that the recommendations the SRCC is pursuing are in sync with the legislative agendas of all the agencies involved (NCDPS, NCDOJ, NC Administrative Office of the Courts, the Governor's Office, etc.). It will also determine priorities and timelines for pursuing the recommendations, including whether to seek legislation to further study the issues involved in some of the recommendations. The team will build supportive coalitions, seek bill sponsors, and support each proposal through the legislative process, working closely with the NCGA and other stakeholders.

Communications/Awareness Implementation Team

The Reentry Communications/Awareness Implementation Team will work to elevate the reentry conversation in North Carolina. This team will work on implementing the SRCC recommendations that are related to better communication and data sharing within and between the state and private agencies that make up the SRCC. It will also plan the SRCC's activities over North Carolina Reentry Week, design and implement a Reentry Awareness Campaign, and work closely with NCDPS's Communications Team to finalize the SRCC's website and communications materials.

Local/Community Implementation Team

The Local/Community Implementation Team will work closely with LRCs to support their work and to specifically encourage LRCs to consider family/child issues and how they relate to all areas of reentry: employment, housing, and education. This team will also work closely with the Communications/Awareness Implementation Team on related recommendations.

Executive Implementation Team

The Executive Implementation Team will work with state agencies, boards, and commissions to suggest, prioritize, and assist with implementing the SRCC recommendations that can be accomplished with executive action on the part of the Governor or one or more state agencies. This could include researching initiatives, models, and funding sources. This team will work with NCDPS as well as the NC Department of Commerce, NCDMV, NCDHHS, and state and county Departments of Social Services, among others.

The 10 'action item' recommendations from the 10 workgroups from 2018 are all to be implemented quickly. The four implementation teams will move forward on the other recommendations as they receive approval from the appropriate agency(ies).

Dates for 2019 SRCC meetings

While the dates of each implementation team meeting are not yet set, the dates for the 2019 full SRCC meetings are as follows:

Tuesday, February 12th

Tuesday, May 21st

Tuesday, August 13th

Wednesday, November 13th

If you have any questions regarding the State Reentry Council Collaborative Report, please contact Nicole Sullivan, Director of Reentry Programs & Services, NCDPS at (919) 324-6489.

Appendix

Appendix I

State Reentry Council Collaborative (SRCC) Roster

Secretary Erik Hooks, Chair Dept. of Public Safety	Secretary James H. Trogon Dept. of Transportation
Torre Jessup Commissioner Division of Motor Vehicles	G. Reginald Skinner, Jr. Administrative Officer Division of Motor Vehicles
Secretary Larry Hall Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs	Sonya Brown Team Lead, Justice Innovations Dept. of Health & Human Services
Judge Marion Warren Director Administrative Office of the Courts	Mildred Spearman Legislative Liaison Administrative Office of the Courts
McKinley Wooten Deputy Director of Court Program Administrative Office of the Courts	Jennifer Haygood Acting President NC Community College System
Dr. Peter Hans President NC Community College System	Jim Ross President Pamlico Community College
Deputy Secretary Mark Benton Dept. of Health & Human Services	Timothy Moose Deputy Secretary for Operations Adult Correction & Juvenile Justice Dept. of Public Safety
William Lassiter Deputy Secretary for Juvenile Justice Adult Correction & Juvenile Justice Dept. of Public Safety	Linda Nunnallee Executive Director Step Up Ministry
Michael Shank Executive Director Pardoned by Christ	Frankie Roberts Executive Director LINC
Rick Glazier Executive Director NC Justice Center	Miea Walker Engagement Coordinator NC Justice Center
Secretary Anthony Copeland	Elly Goetz

Dept. of Commerce	Executive Director Benevolence Farm
Bonnie Helmink Applicant Services Manager Dept. of Commerce	Attorney General Josh Stein Dept. of Justice
Jasmine McGhee Special Deputy Attorney General Dept. of Justice	Joyce Jones Executive Director STRIVE, Inc.
Danny Hampton Local Reentry Coordinator Freedom Life Ministries	Dennis Gaddy Executive Director Community Success Initiative
Bernice McPhatter Local Reentry Coordinator Local Reentry Council	Brent Bailey Local Reentry Coordinator Buncombe County Local Reentry Coordinator
Dave Nash Chief Operating Officer Asheville Housing Authority	Lucas Vrbisky Veterans Incarcerated Reentry Specialist Veterans Administration
Judge Allen Baddour Superior Court Judge District 15B	Ophelia Ray Executive Director Maggie's Outreach
Secretary Michael Regan Dept. of Environmental Quality	Linda Davis Alpha for Prisons/Kairos Outside
LaShauna Austria Executive Director Benevolence Farm	Wendi Eure Reentry Initiative Program Coordinator Dept. of Commerce
Genia Newkirk Regional Chief Examiner Division of Motor Vehicles	Robbie Quinn Deputy Director, Field Services Division of Motor Vehicles
Reuben Young Interim Chief Deputy Secretary Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice Dept. of Public Safety	Bessie Elmore Executive Director Straight Talk
	Kristie Puckett Williams Community Activist & Advocate

Appendix II

Additional Recommendations

Employment Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendations - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Employment Workgroup recommends allocating \$1.75 million over three years to pilot the Carolina Entrepreneurship Community (CEC) Project described below.

BACKGROUND

Entrepreneurship is the engine of economic innovation. Supporting the development of new businesses that fill important needs is exactly what allows an economy to grow and thrive. Support of entrepreneurship generally in the state would be a worthwhile investment. The workgroup thinks the entrepreneurship support needed for the general population and the support needed for the justice-involved is coextensive and that the additional help the justice-involved require can be provided at low additional cost. The project described below would work for both those who have been justice-involved and the general population.

Those who have been justice-involved are very often excluded from an array of employment opportunities that lead to personal and income growth. Helping justice-involved individuals who are motivated and have innovative ideas become entrepreneurs is one way to help formerly incarcerated people find a way forward that helps them and the state's economy.

RECOMMENDATION

The Employment Workgroup recommends, therefore, that NCDPS and the NC Department of Commerce partner with organizations like Self-Help, Inmates-to-Entrepreneurs, WeWork, Habitat for Humanity, TROSA, local educational institutions, and businesses to implement the CEC project. This project will support entrepreneurial activity across NC, and, at the same time, encourage and support entrepreneurial activity for people who have been justice-involved.

While the project has several parts, the major focus is to establish co-working spaces with bare-bones residential capacity for justice-involved members who need it. In addition, the project would create links to microloans, educational opportunities, treatment, and the tools to prototype both physical and electronic innovations. Co-working spaces create innovative energy, physical and psychological support, and an efficient way to deliver needed education and training for all populations. The addition of a modest residential capacity for those justice-involved individuals who need it would enhance the capacity for innovation for all members.

Incarcerated individuals in the program would begin to learn business and entrepreneurial skills they will need while still in prison. Some of these individuals will already have a marketable idea, and family or other support while they begin their business, so they would benefit from simply having an additional workshop in place to help them apply for a microloan (through Self-Help, the Small Business Administration, or other organization).

Other individuals who have the basics of an innovative idea in place would require time and a supportive setting to prototype their idea. Those individuals would be best served through the co-working option. The cost of a space in a co-working facility that would support up to 50 co-workers (assuming 20 have been justice-involved and 15 are residents) would be about \$150,000 per year.³⁰ Additional microloans could be available to help fund materials not routinely provided by the center. There could be limits on the number of years a justice-involved co-worker could be permitted to stay in the space, but that might be linked to the progress of their entrepreneurial effort (about 5 years with decreasing state support would be reasonable). After the first site has been piloted, this workgroup envisions opening sites in strategic locations throughout the state.

1. Program Goals

A. Through this program, justice-involved individuals interested in becoming entrepreneurs would gain:

- A good understanding of the basics of running a business of any kind, including the ability to see and communicate the need and viability of their proposed business.
- A sponsor to help them. The sponsor would work with them to help them think through the many obstacles anyone faces when they try to start a business.
- Knowledge of the workings of several low-capital businesses. This aspect is vital since justice-involved individuals are unlikely to have access to the capital needed to start anything that requires significant outlay.
- Access to a place to stay, possibly also an undemanding job that gives them time to develop their business and an "office" with a community where they can work to prepare the materials they will need to launch the business.
- Access to the life skills assistance they may need.
- Access to competitive microloans to defray some of the material cost of a startup for all of those who are regular members of the co-working site.

B. For those not justice-involved the project would:

1. Give them special access to educational programs and technical support they would not get easily elsewhere.
2. Give them access to wonderful work-space with special support.
3. Access to competitive microloans to defray some of the material cost of a startup for all of those who are regular members of the co-working site.

C. For the State:

1. Provide real-time and affordable support for entrepreneurial activity in the general population.
2. Decrease "technical" recidivism (recidivism caused by a lack of a place to live and employment) while decreasing the real recidivism rate among those in the program.

³⁰ This estimate assumes the price WeWork charges for a co-worker is \$350/month for all 20 justice involved co-workers and an additional \$350/month for the 15 who will reside in a loft-like residential area within the building chosen for the site. The up-front cost of converting the space could be done with help from Habitat. Partnering with Self-Help to teach how to develop viable microloan applications would also be necessary.

3. Develop a pool of sponsors by requiring justice-involved entrepreneurs to “pay-it-forward.”

2. Project Requirements

A. Partnerships

Required: NCDPS and NC Commerce, Self-Help, WeWork (or similar organization), TROSA (as consultants), Habitat for Humanity, educational institutions, and businesses.

Desirable: Health and treatment organizations.

Estimated Ongoing Annual Fixed Costs:

Staff: \$150,000 (1.5 FTE) to develop, coordinate, and manage the project

Data collection and analysis: \$10,000

Estimated Ongoing Annual Variable Per Site Costs:

Estimated cost per site per desk: \$150,000

Costs for special materials: \$20,000

Educational Initiatives \$12,000

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDPS
- NC Commerce
- Justice-involved individuals
- Nonprofit and community organizations (e.g. TROSA, WeWork, Habitat for Humanity, etc.)
- Businesses
- Education institutions

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Allocation of \$1.75 million over three years to pilot the CEC Project described above.

Housing Workgroup Tier 3 Recommendation - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

The Housing Workgroup recommends the NCGA provide NCFA with \$7.5 million in new funding through the Supportive Housing Development Program (SHDP) - \$3.5 million of which would be for rental support for existing reentry transitional housing units specifically for people who have been incarcerated, and \$4 million would be for the bricks and mortar cost of permanent supportive housing and down payment assistance for this same population. Resources should focus on sub-sections of the formerly incarcerated population that have especially high barriers to finding transitional and permanent supportive housing, such as formerly incarcerated people with a sex offense on their record.

BACKGROUND

In North Carolina, individuals transitioning back into society after serving time for a criminal offense face difficulties trying to access affordable housing. Individuals that have served their time need a positive and supportive pathway to become part of their communities again.

Funding is available through the SHDP on a competitive basis once a year. Formerly incarcerated people are already included in the SHDP categories of populations who require supportive services.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Expand residential and commercial transitional housing/permanent supportive housing units for people who have been incarcerated.
2. LRCs will market and educate the community to expand housing partners, resources, and to work with local government regarding zoning ordinances.
3. LRCs will be used to help coordinate residential placement and concurrent care.
4. Sell/lease properties for \$1 (owned by: city/county municipalities or the State of NC) to credible non-profits with reentry/housing development experience to develop additional transitional/permanent housing.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

The total budget for this project is \$7.5 million for expansion of current and new housing programs. This includes \$3.5 million for the bricks and mortar cost of transitional housing, \$3 million for the bricks and mortar cost of permanent supportive housing, and \$1 million for down payment assistance for the purchase of a home. State funding would be a portion of the necessary financing.

STAKEHOLDERS

- NCHFA
- Public housing entities
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta
- NCDPS
- LRCs

- Nonprofits
- Justice-involved individuals
- Faith-based organizations
- Local governments

Appendix III

Review of 2010 StreetSafe Task Force Recommendations

Focused efforts on reentry for people in prison and formerly incarcerated individuals began in North Carolina as early as 2009, when then-Gov. Perdue signed Executive Order No. 12, the Governor's StreetSafe Task Force to Stop Repeat Offenders. This Executive Order charged the StreetSafe Task Force with establishing policy goals that would serve as a roadmap for state policymakers, agencies, and community groups to coordinate reentry planning and preparation initiatives.

The SRCC reviewed this report as part of the SRCC process. There are a few recommendations from this report that the SRCC will evaluate and consider recommending in the future, from several areas of reentry, listed below.

The following page numbers refer to the 2010 *StreetSafe Task Force Report Initial Recommendations*.³¹

A. Employment

Ensure that training offered to inmates coincides with jobs that are in demand in the marketplace.

Implementation steps:

- a. The StreetSafe Coordinator should facilitate collaboration between DOC, NC Community College System, Employment Security Commission and Workforce Development entities to determine which industries and jobs should be the focus of inmate skill development (p. 9).

Empower DOC to enter MOU with licensing agencies such that there would be a presumption of fitness if an inmate completes training.

Implementation steps:

- a. The StreetSafe Coordinator should work with DOC to determine if legislation is required.
- b. The StreetSafe Coordinator should work with DOC and other agencies to determine what administrative actions are required (p. 9).

B. Legal

Individuals should be able to exit prison without outstanding legal issues and charges holding them back from seeking employment if they could have been resolved while in custody.

³¹ https://www.ncdoj.gov/getdoc/f3aa0c47-9686-4bba-a13b-206340e9d7e7/StreetSafe-report_9-16-10.aspx

NCAWARE is changing the landscape of the criminal justice system in North Carolina by automating criminal justice information previously only available on a county-by-county basis, including unserved warrants and orders for arrest. This tool can be used to ensure that DOC officials and District Attorneys are aware of the outstanding legal issues for individual inmates. This will promote judicial efficiency and will ensure that inmates will be aware of any existing legal obligations upon release.

Implementation steps:

- a. Appropriate officials within DOC should have access to NCAWARE.
- b. DOC policies should be updated to require that at intake, NCAWARE is queried for each inmate or probationer to find outstanding legal issues.
- c. A coordinated plan for communicating information about outstanding processes of inmates or probationers should be established between DOC and District Attorneys for appropriate disposition (p. 14).

Appendix IV

Acronyms

AA	Associate of Arts
ACDP	Alcoholism & Chemical Dependency Programs
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
AGE	Associate of General Education
AS	Associate of Science
CEC	Carolina Entrepreneurship Community
CHW	Community Health Worker
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
CPS	Certified Peer Specialist
DACJJ	Division of Adult Corrections and Juvenile Justice
DMA	Division of Medical Assistance
DMH/DD/SAS	Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services
DMV	Department of Motor Vehicles
DWI	Driving While Impaired
DWLR	Driving While License Revoked
FIT	Formerly Incarcerated Transition
FPW	Family Planning Waiver
FQHC	Federally Qualified Health Center
FTA	Failure to Appear
FTC	Failure to Comply
FTP	Failure to Pay
LME	Local Management Entity
LME-MCO	Local Management Entity-Managed Care Organization
LRC	Local Reentry Council
MAT	Medication Assisted Treatment
NCAGO North	Carolina Attorney General's Office
NCAOC	North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts
NCCHC	North Carolina Community Health Centers
NCDHHS	North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
NCDOJ	North Carolina Department of Justice
NCDPS	North Carolina Department of Public Safety
NCDCRI North	Carolina Department of Commerce Reentry Initiative
NCGA	North Carolina General Assembly
NCHFA	North Carolina Housing Finance Agency
NCSBI	North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation
NCSPAC	North Carolina Sentencing & Policy Advisory Commission
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
SRCC	State Reentry Council Collaborative
SSDI	Social Security Disability
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
SOAR	SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery
SUD	Substance Use Disorder

TAN	Transitional Aftercare Network
TASC	Treatment Alternatives for a Safer Community
TCLI	Transitions to Community Living Initiative
UNC-CH	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
USDOJ	United States Department of Justice