State Reentry Council Collaborative

FACT SHEET

Created by the NC General Assembly (SL 2017-57, Section 16C.10), the State Reentry Council Collaborative (SRCC) will study the needs of individuals who have been recently released from a correctional institution, on community supervision, or have a criminal background. The SRCC will also identify methods to increase the effectiveness of local reentry councils. Chaired by the Secretary of the NC Department of Public Safety, the SRCC membership is comprised of representatives from governmental agencies, faith-based and community-based organizations, non-profits, local reentry councils and formerly incarcerated individuals. Workgroups will be created to develop substantial recommendations for review by the SRCC. These recommendations will form the basis of a statewide Reentry Implementation Plan.

**SRCC Membership**

***Governmental Agencies***

NC Department of Public Safety

NC Department of Transportation, Division of Motor Vehicles

NC Department of Health and Human Services

Administrative Offices of the Courts

Superior Court Judge

NC Community College System

Pamlico Community College

NC Department of Commerce

NC Department of Justice

Asheville Housing Authority

Veteran’s Administration

***Faith-based, Community-based, Non-profits***

Community Success Initiative

Step Up Ministries

LINC

Pardon by Christ

Maggie’s Outreach

Benevolence Farm

NC Justice Center

***NC Local Reentry Council Intermediary Agencies***

STRIVE, Inc (Pitt County)

Freedom Life Ministries (McDowell County)

Buncombe County/RHA

Southeastern Reentry Council (Hoke/Scotland/Robeson counties)

**SRCC Workgroup Descriptions**

***Housing***

Housing is a subject that becomes keenly important as a person prepares to leave a correctional facility and return to the community. There is insufficient affordable housing available to people coming out of prison and of the affordable housing options available, people with criminal records often are ineligible. Additionally, transitional and supportive housing are not available in sufficient supply. These housing barriers negatively impact successful transition back into local communities.

***Transportation***

The lack of affordable transportation and availability of transportation services hinders the successful transition of returning citizens to obtain and maintain employment, attend treatment and programs, address other legal obligations, and comply with conditions of supervision.

***Employment***

Individuals with criminal convictions face substantial legal and logistical barriers in obtaining a job. Barriers to employment include the stigma of a criminal record, spotty work histories, low education and skill levels, and physical and mental health problems. Most individuals are released from incarceration without a job or transitional work placement. And once employment is secured after release, job retention over a period of time becomes a challenge.

***Mental Health/Substance Abuse/Medical***

Individuals with mental illnesses are significantly overrepresented in prison and jail populations and the majority of individuals incarcerated have a history of substance abuse. Co-occurring substance abuse disorders are common among people with mental illness who are incarcerated, and relatively few individuals receive drug or alcohol treatment while incarcerated. Mental Health/Substance abuse treatment can reduce both criminal activity and drug use, particularly when in-prison treatment is coupled with community aftercare.

***Educational/Vocational Training***

Most incarcerated individuals have low levels of educational achievement, have limited job skills, and report low earnings prior to their incarceration. Research indicates that prison educational and vocational programs can improve behavior, reduce recidivism, and increase employment prospects upon release. As more educational and vocational opportunities are offered during incarceration, it is a challenge to connect individuals with employment opportunities in their field after release.

***Faith/Community-based Organizations***

Engaging community based providers and faith based organizations to offer services to incarcerated individuals and returning citizens is an important strategy that shows promise in reducing the adverse effects of the complex barriers and health problems justice involved individuals face. It is imperative to the successful transition of returning citizens to facilitate efforts of community and faith-based institutions to engage and mentor returning citizens, and to foster relationships that improve trust and confidence in treatment and services.

***Advocacy/Communications***

Educate and communicate with the public about the needs of the returning citizens and how successful transition is critical to public safety.

***Family Reunification/Support***

Released individuals frequently look to their families to help with a range of immediate needs, including employment, housing, substance abuse treatment, financial well-being, and physical and mental health. In many cases, family members are not able to provide support when individuals return home due to limited finances, feelings of resentment, relocation, and new relationships. Despite the challenges of families fragmented by incarceration, research demonstrates these families often have a resilience that can serve as a source of strength and support. Families can play an important role in facilitating successful reintegration.

***Legal Issues***

Pending legal issues can create challenges when returning citizens are seeking employment, housing and other resources after their release.