

Florida Department of Corrections

Walter A. McNeil, Secretary



Recidivism Reduction *Strategic Plan*

Fiscal Year 2009-2014



Office of Re-Entry

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**FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT of
CORRECTIONS**

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Governor
CHARLIE CRIST
Secretary
WALTER A. McNEIL

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June 2009

Dear Fellow Floridians:

A prominent issue confronting the state of Florida is the safety and security of our neighborhoods across the state. A threat to our safety is the steady rate of repeat criminal behavior committed by offenders. Last year, 41,054 inmates were admitted to Florida's prison system, and another 107,861 offenders were admitted to community supervision. However, each year the rate at which ex-offenders recommit crimes in Florida after leaving the custody and supervision of the Florida Department of Corrections continues virtually unchanged.

The number of inmates in our prisons rose 19.8 percent over the last 5 years from 81,974 in June 2004 to 98,192 in June 2008. Without working to resolve the steady rate of offender recidivism, Florida is expected to reach a peak of nearly 125,000 inmates by 2013. The state will need the equivalent of 19 new facilities to meet this increase in prison population. It will cost approximately \$2.14 billion to build these new facilities and \$613 million to operate them annually. It will be difficult if not impossible for Florida to build its way out of this problem. Proactive measures that directly address this problem must be employed.

This document is our roadmap for the implementation of methods and strategies that we are confident will decrease the rate of offender recidivism. To address the problem of repeat criminal behavior, the Florida Department of Corrections has developed the Recidivism Reduction Plan. This plan gleans knowledge from our previous actions and builds a balanced plan to resolve the high rates of recidivism for inmates and offenders.

While the Recidivism Reduction Plan is focused on the actions of the Department of Corrections, the success of this effort will not be the sole responsibility of just one agency. Multiple state agencies, local law enforcement, community service providers and local judicial systems will all have an investment in the success of this strategy. This collective effort will increase the safety and security of our communities and prevent future criminal victimization.

Sincerely,

Walter A. McNeil
Secretary, Florida Department of Corrections

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS MISSION

To protect the public, ensure the safety of department personnel, and provide for the proper care and supervision of all inmates and offenders under our jurisdiction, while assisting, as appropriate, their reentry into society.



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS CODE OF CONDUCT

- I. I will never forget that I am a public official sworn to uphold the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Florida.
- II. I am a professional committed to the public safety, the support and protection of my fellow officers, and co-workers, and the supervision and care of those in my charge. I am prepared to go in harm's way in fulfillment of these missions.
- III. As a professional, I am skilled in the performance of my duties and governed by a code of ethics that demands integrity in word and deed, fidelity to the lawful orders of those appointed over me, and, above all, allegiance to my oath of office and the laws that govern our nation.
- IV. I will seek neither personal favor nor advantage in the performance of my duties. I will treat all with whom I come in contact with civility and respect. I will lead by example and conduct myself in a disciplined manner at all times.
- V. I am proud to selflessly serve my fellow citizens as a member of the Florida Department of Corrections.



Executive Summary

Introduction

Florida has and will continue to be steadfast in its commitment to ensure inmates serve 85 percent of their sentences, and that offenders on community supervision are comprehensively supervised. Our communities are safer because of our commitment to monitoring offenders on community supervision, and making certain prison sentences are served to their fullest extent. However, more should be, and can be done to make our state safer. In order to ensure the safety and security of the citizens of Florida, as well as the millions of tourists who visit this great state each year, it is critical that steps be taken to reduce repeat criminal behavior.

Eighty-eight percent of all inmates incarcerated in Florida will eventually be released.¹ During fiscal year 2007-2008, 37,018 inmates completed their sentences and were released back into our communities. Approximately 12,142 (32.8 percent) of those released inmates are projected to return to prison within three years.² Over the past decade the number of offenders supervised in the community has increased by 10 percent. On June 30, 2008, 158,079 offenders in our communities were being supervised by Probation Officers. During fiscal year 2007-2008, 17,181 community supervision releases were revoked from their community supervision due to a new offense.

A 1995 report from the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPGA) noted that most of the growth in Florida's prison population since 1985 was due to re-incarceration rather than offenders entering prison for the first time.³ Based on this understanding, if the re-incarceration of offenders could be reduced, then the growth of our prison

system could be reduced. How we supervise and monitor offenders, how we treat inmates when they are in our custody, and what steps are taken as inmates transition back into our communities have been identified as significant factors in reducing repeat criminal behavior and preventing future re-incarceration. By reducing criminal activity, we are reducing the number of crime victims.

The Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) has defined reentry as the process by which the Department, other governmental entities, and community-based organizations enhance public safety and reduce recidivism among inmates and supervised offenders through comprehensive needs assessments upon incarceration or supervision and a broad range of treatment and training programs within the correctional institutions and the communities which will significantly enhance the likelihood that the inmates and supervised offenders will successfully re-enter or transition into their communities as productive and law-abiding citizens. Inmates receiving these types of services are less likely to return to prison, and more likely to transition into a productive, law-abiding tax-paying citizen.

The FDC's reentry efforts are centered on justice reinvestment strategies, which are data-driven strategies designed to reduce spending on corrections, increase public safety, and improve conditions in the neighborhoods to which most inmates and offenders return. This strategy involves identifying areas in the state which receive large numbers of released inmates and offenders and focusing resources on those areas for greatest impact. Such resources can be allocated to those areas to better coordinate reentry services such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, job

training, and education. These efforts benefit everyone, not just released inmates and offenders, by increasing the likelihood of successful reentry, increasing public safety and decreasing the number of victims in the community.

Building the Plan

Identifying the key elements of reentry is essential to crafting a viable plan. The process of reentry begins the moment an inmate enters reception or when an offender goes through the intake process for community supervision. The importance of having the necessary resources available for inmates and offenders to receive academic, vocational and substance abuse programming in order to successfully transition back into their communities and not recidivate has been noted in countless academic research publications, and has also been recognized by the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). In addition, a well-trained work force, both in the community and in prisons, with a keen understanding of evidence-based practices and the reentry process will buttress the rehabilitative programming that is already available.

While the *Recidivism Reduction Plan* was centrally drafted, input was received from a wide variety of sources, both from within the Department and from correctional policy experts in the field. In June 2008, Governor Charlie Crist held a Restoration of Civil Rights Summit where breakout sessions focused on reentry and identifying areas for improvement. Soon after the Summit, the Department's Re-entry Advisory Council was created. The work of the Council members assisted in guiding the development of the plan of action by producing a list of recommendations to improve reentry outcomes. The complete listing of the Re-

entry Advisory Council's members and their recommendations are contained in Appendix A.

The intent of this strategy is to outline the Department's goals, objectives, plan of action, and detailed performance measures that will be used to gauge progress in reducing recidivism. The complex social and political challenges impacting offender reentry require locally-driven policies. To achieve this, the execution of the plan of action will be conducted at the regional, circuit or institutional level. Managers and personnel in the field will receive clear guidance about what must be achieved to lower recidivism, but it will be left to staff that have the local knowledge and expertise to determine how best to implement and sustain detailed reentry operations.

This course of action will allow for the freedom of movement of staff in the field, and will allow Department employees to create innovative ways to assist in the success of reducing recidivism. The continual assessment and information dispersion regarding the measurement and progress toward completing our performance measures will be conducted by the Office of Re-Entry.

Recidivism Reduction: A Two-Pronged Approach

The Department's plan to reduce recidivism takes into account changes that occur rapidly in our offender population, and our plan is adaptable to address new problems that will certainly arise as we move forward. Our progress in achieving our desired end state will not be consistent or steady. It will take detailed planning, a clear understanding of the sometimes subtle differences that exist in each community, the ability to identify and account for programs that work, and

the courage to discard the ones that do not work.

Our goal is clear-- increased public safety through a reduction in the rate of recidivism, fewer projected prison beds, and the creation of the necessary partnerships and infrastructure to sustain lasting positive outcomes. Recidivism reduction is a way to increase public safety by lowering the rate of repeat criminal behavior and preventing future criminal victimization, thus reducing the number of victims. This can be accomplished by providing reentry services to inmates and offenders on community supervision by increasing their chances of successful transition back into their communities.

When addressing prisoner reentry, a primary focus should be on providing a safe environment for victims of crime and the community. It is imperative that the needs of the victims of crime be addressed in conjunction with the development and implementation of prisoner reentry and reintegration plans. Traditionally, the purpose of the FDC was to ensure offenders carried out their court imposed sentence. A more comprehensive model is emerging, in which, the FDC is offering healing and hope to inmates as a restorative means to engage the offender, the community, and the victim, if interested, in the process of repair of the inmate's harm. Victim safety, and in general public safety, should be considered in every aspect of offender reentry.

To achieve our desired goal, the *Recidivism Reduction Plan* is built on a two-pronged approach--Community Corrections and Institutional Recidivism Reduction. Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction's span of control will include all offenders on state community supervision, and the small number of inmates who have supervision to follow after their incarceration (less than 30 percent of all inmates released have a requirement of community supervision). The approach will be to ensure all offenders on community supervision are appropriately monitored, and that a strong focus be placed on assisting offenders in their reentry.

The Institutional Recidivism Reduction's span of control will include all inmates currently incarcerated within the Department of Corrections. The Institutional Recidivism Reduction method contains varying processes that will require each region and correctional facility to develop rehabilitative programming relevant to their inmate population. The approach will work to properly assess each inmate's needs at reception. After the reception process, work will be initiated to transfer inmates to institutions that have the necessary rehabilitative programming to fit a particular inmate's needs, at the same time taking into account institutional security concerns. Finally, the process will conclude with staff working in advance of an inmate's release to develop a viable transition plan before the inmate returns to their community.



Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Trends and Conditions

- Overview
- Independent, Validated Research
- Community Corrections Institutions
- Gaps/Barriers to Re-Entry
- Importance of Family Support
- Existing Community Partnerships
- Restoration of Civil Rights
- Reducing Recidivism Supports Public Safety
- Evidence-Based Practices

Chapter 2: Plan of Action

- Overview
- Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction Plan
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Current Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction Practices
 - Future Community Corrections Recidivism Planning
- Institutional Recidivism Reduction Plan
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Current Institutional Recidivism Reduction Practices
 - Reception
 - In-Prison Programs
 - Transitioning Back into the Community
 - Future Institutional Recidivism Reduction Planning
 - Reception
 - In-Prison Programs
 - Transitioning Back into the Community
- Administrative Goals
 - Garnering Support for Recidivism Reduction
 - Media Campaign
 - Legislation to Support Our Reentry Mission
 - Staff Support of Our Reentry Mission

Chapter 3: Measuring Success

- Overview
- Our Core Principles
- Performance Measures
 - Community Corrections
 - Institutional
 - Administrative
- Sustainability

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Appendix A: Re-Entry Advisory Council Members

Appendix B: Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations



Chapter 1: Trends and Conditions

Overview

Creating safe neighborhoods where citizens are free from crime and violence is the central role of government. Law enforcement officers, elected officials and our judicial system continually work toward improving the safety and security of our communities. Florida's effort to improve the safety and security of its citizens has made great strides over the past two decades. Increases in law enforcement spending, penalty enhancements for certain crimes, and coordinated crime prevention initiatives have created sustained reductions in our crime rate. This has allowed Florida to grow and foster a condition where businesses and tourists feel safe and welcomed.

However, the task of ensuring public safety is continuously changing. The work of crime control is always moving in order to stay a step ahead of criminal behavior. Criminals on the other hand adapt to new anti-crime measures or find weaknesses that may exist and exploit them for their own personal gain. It is this push and pull that makes the task of providing public safety complex. Nevertheless, no matter how difficult the task may be, it is one that requires constant analysis and government's full attention.

Last year, 37,018 inmates completed their sentences and were released back into our communities. Approximately 12,142 (32.8 percent) are projected to return to prison within three years. More can be done to support the increases in law enforcement spending, and the enhancements that have been made to our crime laws, by working toward lowering the rate of repeat criminal behavior.

A "lock'em up and throw away the key" mentality is only effective if inmates are never released. On the contrary, 88 percent of the inmates at the Department of Corrections will one day be released back into our communities. One key way to reduce the rate of recidivism is to work toward the rehabilitation and reentry of ex-offenders. This can be achieved by providing substance abuse treatment, education and vocational training to inmates, and by linking inmates and offenders with services in the community upon their release. The Florida Department of Corrections is in a unique position to spearhead the state's effort to reduce the rate of offender recidivism by being able to work with both inmates in prison and offenders on community supervision.

Independent, Validated Research

The challenge the Department and communities ultimately face is to understand how to effectively manage the inevitable returning offenders from prison so that communities will be safer.⁴ It is evident that pre- and post-release transitional services must be reinforced to provide the ex-offender the required vocational, educational and emotional tools needed to reintegrate into their community. Through early pre-release services, post-release intensive case management and after-care, this plan will address the multiple needs and required services of the returning offenders in an effort to reduce recidivism, improve public safety and strengthen offender family unity and community involvement.

Our performance and process improvement measures gauge where we are in achieving our desired goal.

However, just measuring progress will not be enough. We must be supported by reliable research that is specific to the uniqueness of Florida. The Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) is a research unit of the Florida Legislature under the oversight of the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee. OPPAGA was created to help improve the performance and accountability of state government and conducts studies on the performance of state agencies and programs to identify ways to improve services and cut costs.

Over the years, OPPAGA has published several reports that highlight the Department's activities. Specifically, OPPAGA reported in February 2007 that "transition services act as a bridge between incarceration and life in the community for newly released offenders. In absence of meaningful transition services, offenders may return to illegal activities and prison. As a proactive cost avoidance measure, priority should be given to transition services as part of an overall strategy to reduce inmate recidivism."⁵

In January 1996, OPPAGA urged the Florida Legislature not only to increase funding for self-improvement, rehabilitative and work programs but also, to reduce the statutory restrictions on the types of industries that can operate inside the correctional facility. Additionally, the report highlighted that these programs could also be used to reduce inmate idleness.⁶ This point was made again by OPPAGA in December 2000 and April 2001, when it reported that cuts to FDC's budget impeded the positive effect programs such as education, vocational training, and substance abuse treatment has on "inmates' institutional adjustment and successful reintegration into the community."⁷

Most recently, OPPAGA issued a brief to the Florida Senate (2009-313) entitled "Breaking the Cycle of Crime: The Department of Corrections and Re-Entry Programming." This report illustrates the efforts the Department has taken to address reentry and it draws attention to the low completion rate for education, vocation and substance abuse programs. However, it also points out that those who complete programs have a lower incident of recidivism than those who did not complete these programs.

In March 2008, OPPAGA was directed to assess whether the Department of Corrections' educational programs could be more appropriately administered by another entity. The findings reported show "no compelling reason to change Florida's model for providing correctional education, which has been shown to have positive effects on inmates and appears to cost less than other option."⁸

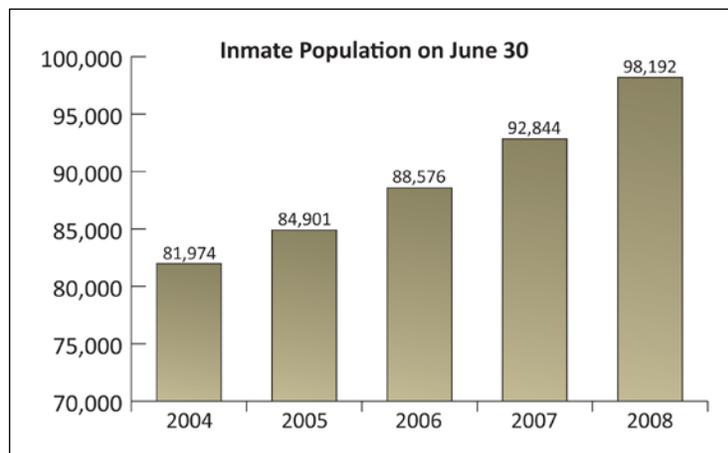
However, government-sponsored funding for correctional programs has not kept pace with population growth; this further reduces the number of programs aimed at helping offenders. The Florida Legislature appropriated approximately \$1.9 billion dollars to the Florida Department of Corrections for fiscal year 2004-05. Less than 2% or \$32.4 million, however, was allocated for inmate programs.

In response to this lack of funding for institutional programs, inmate idleness has sharply increased over time. In 2004, the Florida Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) reported, "Since 2000, inmate idleness has doubled from 18% to 33%."⁹ In 2006, MGT of America, an independent program evaluation company, reported, "The assessment teams found an extremely high level of inactivity and idleness within the institutions of the Florida Department of Corrections. The elimination of the majority of educational,

vocational and recreational funding has left the institutions with a noticeable absence of *constructive* activities to occupy inmates. For example, the elimination of the practice of using canteen profits for the purchase of recreational equipment has impaired the ability to provide adequate recreational activities. It is believed that idleness is directly connected to the safety and security of the institutions and the potential for instability within the inmate population.¹⁰

The need for education is further substantiated by findings made by a state commission. In its *1999 Annual Report*, the Florida Corrections Commission found a lower rate of major disciplinary reports for inmates who completed vocational, transitional, or life skills training. During fiscal year 1995-1996, some 719 major disciplinary reports were issued per 1,000 inmates who completed these programs, as compared to 1,025 per 1,000 of the remaining inmate population.

Many states have already implemented evidence-based practices, expanded vocational and educational opportunities for ex-offenders, and have increased funding for substance abuse and mental health treatment. This course of action has led to either consistent declines or a leveling off of prison population and has improved public safety. Scholars have studied these innovative states and research has been published



highlighting the elements that received the highest rate of return for taxpayers' investment.

As we move forward with our plan of action, we must find ways to create the necessary research to support our tactics, and to also direct us in our future planning. The Department of Corrections has the most reliable and frequently cited set of criminal justice data in the state. Our Department's Bureau of Research and Data Analysis has the capability and means of generating the necessary research to analyze our recidivism reduction efforts. In addition, the Department will work to forge partnerships with the numerous research-based universities in Florida to set up a framework where university resources can be leveraged with our plan to reduce recidivism.

Community Corrections

Community Corrections is comprehensive community supervision that uses human resources, communications systems, and specialized supervision approaches intended to protect the community and

encourage sentenced offenders to avoid future criminal behavior. Offenders are either placed on community supervision through specific court placement or by other assignment to a community-based program

as a condition of their prison release.

As of June 30, 2008, the Office of Community Corrections was responsible



for the supervision of 158,079 offenders. There are 2,187 certified Correctional Probation Officers assigned to supervise 119,216 active cases and monitor 38,863 offenders who are in active/active suspense category (usually in the county jail waiting for disposition on a violation of supervision).

Community Corrections manages many levels of supervision. Officers make contact with offenders, ensuring court required conditions are met. Offenders not complying are returned to the court for further sanction. Emphasis is placed on the more specialized community offender needing a higher level of supervision, including drug offender probation, community control, sex offender probation, sex offender community control, post prison release, and all offenders convicted of a sex crime. Community supervision practices also use technology such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and other forms of electronic monitoring to improve the supervision and monitoring for certain high-risk offenders.

Probation Officers and Community Corrections' staff have recently implemented the requirements of the Jessica Lunsford Act. Staff has coordinated with local law enforcement and the judiciary on the implementation of the Anti-Murder Act. Officers have

taken a more aggressive role in searching and locating absconders in the community, and there have also been increases in partnerships with local law enforcement, which have led to increased planned compliance initiatives in the field.

Community Corrections has experienced steady growth in the number of offenders sentenced to community supervision and future projections continue to show increases in the number of offenders who will have to be supervised in the community. The Office of Community Corrections will continue to ensure offenders on supervision comply with the terms and conditions of their supervision. However, it is important to note that community supervision was once a place for relatively low-level offenders who posed little threat to public safety. Probation caseloads have become more populated with offenders who potentially pose greater community safety threats.

The current population of offenders is more likely to consist of gang members, sex offenders, or domestic violence offenders and require more officer time to provide adequate supervision, treatment, and enforcement of conditions to change an offender's behavior. To continue to achieve comprehensive supervision practices, staff will have to effectively use existing resources to supervise these high-risk offenders.

Institutions

Inmates are housed in 139 correctional facilities, consisting of 60 major institutions (prisons), which include 6 privately run contracted prisons. Additionally, there are 42 work or forestry camps, 32 work release centers, and 5 road prisons throughout Florida.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report *Prisoners in 2006*, the state of Florida has the third highest

prison incarceration rate in the United States. On June 30, 2008, the inmate population was 98,192.

Gaps/Barriers to Re-Entry

An ex-offender faces many challenges to successful reentry. These challenges include employment barriers, financial obligations, the lack of appropriate housing, and strained family relationships. To further compound these challenges, institutional programs aimed at assisting inmates in dealing with these issues have been sharply reduced in recent years. Absent educational programs and meaningful work opportunities, inmates returning to the community will receive few self-improvement benefits from their incarceration, other than time spent reflecting on past criminal behavior.

Typically an offender leaves prison with a \$100 release gratuity, a bus ticket and no court-ordered community supervision. In FY 2007-08, only 27.7 percent of offenders released had some type of community supervision to follow. The lack of supervision after release can be another barrier to successful reentry because it places more of a burden on prison staff to fully prepare inmates for release. Without supervision to follow, inmates must then make the transition back to their community on their own, hopefully to a positive support system of family and friends.

In most cases a smooth transition is very challenging because most inmates return

to low-income neighborhoods that consist of few unskilled labor jobs, and to peer groups that provide relatively few contacts to legitimate work. Success in reducing recidivism demands that inmates and offenders who lack adequate education, job skills, and work experience have opportunities to participate in self-improvement programming in prison and while on community supervision. After receiving this type of rehabilitative programming, a continuum of services must be established, either with community supervision or coordination with outside recovery support service providers.

Most inmates and offenders have limited education and cognitive skills. Once released from prison or sentenced to community supervision, offenders are unable to identify support services available to them in their community. With the steady increase of offenders being released each year, communities are unprepared to absorb the economic and social burden of returning offenders. As a result, offenders lack the supportive services needed to reintegrate into society and lead productive, law abiding lives.

Several Florida communities have established task forces or committees to begin to work toward breaking down the barriers to successful reentry. These communities have seen firsthand how the reentry of offenders can reduce their community's crime rate. The formation of local reentry task forces can be the first step in establishing a system of collaboration and recovery support



services. These task forces are able to take stock of the resources that are available to ex-offenders in their communities, and assist in streamlining services to best serve them.

Another barrier to successful reentry is a person's status as an ex-offender. Having to provide criminal history information before a job interview eliminates many job opportunities for offenders. Some states have decided to stop asking about criminal records on applications for certain job positions. This gives employers the opportunity to meet and speak with job applicants before discovering their criminal history. This change has the potential to improve job outcomes for ex-offenders by allowing them the opportunity to explain past actions and show employers they have been rehabilitated and have changed for the better.

Furthermore, many returning offenders face major monetary concerns that may include supervision and restitution fees. Job search skills and employment opportunities are often limited for ex-offenders, and many have no previous legitimate employment record. Even offenders with an established vocational skills or work history now face a felony conviction record and negative employer attitudes toward hiring ex-felons.

Importance of Family Support

The Vera Institute of Justice has stated that "supportive families were an indicator of success across the board, correlating with lower drug use, greater likelihood of finding jobs, and reduced criminal activity."¹¹ Predictably, prison life disrupts family life on many levels and creates hardships on all involved. An offender must deal not only with the forced separation between parents,

spouse, children and extended family, but also, with the anger and shame felt by their family members. Upon returning to their family and community, a released offender often faces rejection from the very support system he or she needs the most.

Given these setbacks, family support is vital for successful offender reentry. Research has shown that strengthening the family network and maintaining supportive family contact throughout an inmate's prison sentence can improve outcomes. This can be achieved by maintaining family connections through phone calls and personal visits at the institution. A significant hardship is that many inmates serve their sentences in rural areas, at locations that cause a long distance for family members to travel. This makes actual face to face contact with supportive family and friends almost impossible.

While there are many challenges in trying to maintain high levels of family support for inmates, some obstacles can be resolved. Enhancements can be made for visitation procedures and other various forms of communication between family and an inmate. However, any process improvements will always be analyzed and implemented with the clear understanding that priority is given to the security needs of an institution before any new reentry policy is implemented.

Existing Community Partnerships

The Florida Department of Corrections has established many strong working relationships with community groups and other government agencies to enhance inmate re-entry. Agreements and partnerships have been established for many years with these entities while others partnerships are in the process of

either being developed or re-established. As a means to enhance existing programs and as strong support of this plan it should be noted that FDC currently has existing agreements, partnerships and working relationships with approximately 14 Federal agencies, 57 Florida counties, over 100 Florida cities, over 20 other states and a large number of community based organizations. Following is a list of existing agreements related directly to inmate reentry:

- The Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
- Workforce Florida Inc.
- The Agency for Workforce Innovation
- The Florida Masonry Apprentice and Education Foundation
- The Department of Children and Families
- The Social Security Administration
- The Florida Safety Council
- Florida State University
- Florida Agriculture and Mechanics University
- The Jacksonville Urban League Inc.
- Tallahassee Community College
- Daytona Beach Community College
- Florida Ready to Work

Through relationships like these, the Florida Department of Corrections is able to maximize program dollars and enhance delivery of programs and services. Additionally, Florida Department of Corrections employees working in prisons and community corrections spend countless hours interfacing with community and criminal justice agencies on both the state and federal levels as they perform their job duties.

Restoration of Civil Rights

The final report published by the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force found almost 40 percent of the 7.6 million jobs in Florida were subject to criminal background checks or restrictions based on criminal history.¹² These restrictions include requiring restoration of civil rights, disqualification based on the commission of specific crimes, or requiring the passing of a background check. Finding and maintaining a job is vital to improving an offender's chances of not recidivating. Lack of restoration of civil rights has proven to be a barrier for ex-offenders to obtain employment. Many offenders find themselves in difficult situations where they are trying to find employment, but the loss of their civil rights restricts them from even interviewing for a possible job.

In April 2007, Governor Charlie Crist and the Florida Cabinet changed the Rules of Executive Clemency to make certain levels of convicted felons who have completed their sentences eligible for restoration of civil rights. This action resulted in a significant increase in the number of offenders who have had their civil rights restored. The Florida Parole Commission is responsible for the restoration process, and the Department of Corrections continues to work with the commission in providing information about upcoming releases and in fulfilling its statutory duty to educate inmates about the availability of their restoration of civil rights.

Reducing Recidivism Supports Public Safety

Reducing recidivism results in fewer crimes, fewer victims and cost savings for the taxpayers of Florida.¹³ The Urban Institute recently stated, "while there are

crime control effects from incarceration, recent research shows that more prison expansion would produce only minimal gains in public safety.”¹⁴ Since 88 percent of the incarcerated population in Florida will one day re-enter our communities, it would be prudent to provide them with skills to become productive, taxpaying members of society. To do so, the Department of Corrections must be able to provide inmates and offenders with the necessary substance abuse treatment, educational and vocational training, and cognitive behavior skills to positively change behavior. The following is the current state of those supportive programming methods.

Evidence Based Practices

Over the past 40 years, a number of major changes in corrections have occurred. As pointed out by Cullen and Gendreau (2001)¹⁵, the professional philosophy has moved from one of “nothing works” to an examination of “what works.”¹⁶ “Evidence based corrections” focuses on the use of science to understand and answer questions about the effectiveness of programs.¹⁷ It uses the best evidence available to assist in making decisions that affect the day to day operations of the Department.

Research supports the belief that programs based on “best practices” reduce recidivism. Several studies report findings that support the following: Structured programs that focus on developing skills and that use behavioral methods, are more effective in reducing recidivism. Additionally, programs that address offender characteristics associated with criminal activities (e.g., education, substance abuse, lack of money management skills, lack of resume building experience, and job related skills)¹⁸ are an essential part of a successful transitional program.

Substance Abuse Treatment

The inability of many individuals suffering from addiction to drugs and alcohol to receive substance abuse treatment is a very significant problem we face in Florida, as well as, nationally. The Florida Department of Children and Families reports that 472,996 adults and 122,740 children/adolescents are in need of publicly supported substance abuse treatment services. During fiscal year 2006-2007, 115,729 adults and 53,024 children/adolescents received individualized prevention, intervention, detoxification, treatment, and recovery support services through community-based providers contracted with the Department of Children and Families. The numbers of individuals served represents 24 percent of adults and 43 percent of children/adolescents needing publicly-supported services.

This gap is also evidenced by the fact that of all offenders on active state felony supervision in Florida, over fifty-eight percent (92,000) are potentially in need of substance abuse treatment.¹⁹ In FY 2007-08 drug related offenses accounted for over thirty-four thousand (34,000) community supervision admissions. The Department contracts with local community treatment agencies, as funding permits, to provide a substance abuse treatment continuum of care for offenders. Offenders are frequently held in jail awaiting residential substance abuse treatment placement.

The substance abuse treatment gap is only compounded when the thousands of inmates who are in need of some form of substance abuse treatment are factored into this analysis. In fiscal year 2007-08, the highest number of prison admissions involved drug related offenses (11,872). For the last five years this has been the trend in prison admissions. Approximately 66 percent of the Florida

inmate population has been identified as being in need of substance abuse treatment services. Of the over twenty-six thousand inmates identified as having a substance abuse problem who were released from prison in fiscal year 2007-08, eighty-two percent were released without receiving needed substance abuse treatment.²⁰

In-prison and community based substance abuse treatment has been associated with positive outcomes, including reduced use of injection drugs, fewer hospital stays for drug and alcohol problems, and decreased recidivism rates.²¹ Furthermore, recidivism data provided by the Department's Bureau of Research and Data Analysis indicates that thirty-six months out of prison, substance abuse program completers are recommitted to prison for a new offense or technical violation at a rate ten percent (10%) less than that of inmates identified as having a substance abuse problem who did not receive treatment. Additionally, thirty six months after release from supervision, substance abuse program completers are recommitted to prison at a rate fifty-six percent (56%) less than that of drug offenders who did not receive treatment.

Educational and Vocational Training

The Department of Corrections assesses the educational level of inmates upon their arrival and throughout their incarceration. The median grade level for inmates admitted in fiscal year 2007-08 was 6.3. Academic education programs operate in 54 institutional facilities. In fiscal year 2007-08, 1,733 inmates were awarded General Education Development (GEDs) by the Florida Department of Education.

Special education program services are also provided in accordance with the provisions of federal law, known as "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" (IDEA), which mandates a free and appropriate public education. Special education services refer to specifically designed instruction to meet the unique needs of the inmate with a disability. Special education services are extended to inmates that meet eligibility requirements, are under the age of 22 years old, and have not attained a high school diploma.

The Department of Corrections has 87 career and technical education courses in 36 distinct career and technical education trades. These courses are offered at 34 facilities. All vocational teachers are certified and all programs use Department of Education approved curriculum frameworks. In fiscal year 2007-08, 5,023 inmates were enrolled in vocational education programs, and 1,658 inmates were awarded 3,037 vocational certificates.

Studies have found that participation in prison education, job training, and placement programs are associated with improved outcomes, including reduced recidivism.²² In a study of corrections-based education, vocation, and work programs, recidivism was 29 percent lower among education program participants than among nonparticipants.²³ Recidivism rates of participants in prison education, vocation, and work programs have been found to be 20 to 60 percent lower than those of nonparticipants.²⁴ Furthermore, that same research also found that individuals who participated in prison education programs earned higher wages upon release than nonparticipants.²⁵

Work Release Centers

Work Release Centers (WRC) house two categories of inmates: community custody inmates who are participating in community work release by working at paid employment in the community and minimum custody inmates who are participating in a center work assignment by working in a support capacity for the center (such as food services and laundry). Inmates must be within two or three years of their release date to be eligible, depending on their job assignment. Sex offenders may not participate in work release or center work assignments. There are no perimeter fences, and inmates must remain at the WRC when they are not working or attending programs.



Inmates who participate in work release must save part of their earnings to pay victim restitution, as well as room and board. More than 3,000 inmates participate in Florida's 30 work release programs annually, with about 3 percent of the prison population enrolled at any given time.

Work release provides advantages to both the state and offenders. It allows inmates to gain work experience, is less expensive than institutional housing, and has been shown to lower recidivism.²⁶ Washington State Institute for Public Policy, a nationally recognized nonpartisan research organization, found that work release programs lower total recidivism by 2.8 percent and lower felony recidivism by 1.8 percent.²⁷ Work release programs are shown to be highly beneficial both to participants and the community. An important component of work release programs is the fact that they allow

inmates to become tax-paying members of society.²⁸

Cognitive-Behavioral Programs

Cognitive-Behavior programs operate on the premise that thinking controls behavior, so if thinking changes or is improved then behavior will change or improve. Cognitive-behavioral treatment programs, which aim to help participants develop better reasoning skills to change their negative behavior, have been

increasing in popularity among correctional institutions.²⁹

A substantial body of scientific research has consistently found that participants in cognitive behavioral programs have recidivism rates that are 10 to 30 percent lower than rates for offenders who did not

receive such services.³⁰ Among the general population of prisoners, cognitive behavioral treatment decreased recidivism by 27 percent. Larger gains have been noted with higher risk prisoners, whose recidivism was reduced by nearly 60 percent after receiving interventions administered by providers with at least a moderate amount of training.³¹

Research has also demonstrated that adult cognitive-behavioral treatment programs can be particularly cost-effective relative to other therapy models. Studies have estimated economic returns of from \$2.54 to \$11.48 for every program dollar invested in cognitive behavioral treatment, while punishment-oriented interventions have yielded returns of only 50 to 75 cents for every program dollar spent.³²



Chapter 2: Plan of Action

Overview

The Department of Corrections' *Recidivism Reduction Plan* is built on a two-pronged approach of Community Corrections and Institutional Recidivism Reduction. Each approach has unique factors that will contribute to crime reduction and a decrease in future crime victimization. While each are unique, both work in a coordinated fashion to achieve the desired goal of increased public safety through a reduction in the rate of recidivism, fewer projected prison beds, and the creation of the necessary partnerships and infrastructure to sustain lasting positive outcomes.

This strategy bases its work in reducing recidivism on sound research and accurate data. Measuring what we do is critical in order to base future planning. Evidence based research will be the foundation for our commitment to improving public safety. There are many programs that are already underway and several new initiatives currently under construction. We must begin the process of evaluating what we do to buttress actions that have been deemed successful, and also to disregard those operations that have been proven to offer little benefit in reducing crime.

To ensure both parts are working together, the plan of action outlines the goals and objectives of Community Corrections and Institutional Recidivism Reduction. The goals and objectives were created over the course of several weeks by the Department's seven Re-Entry Work Groups. These workgroups consisted of key personnel from a wide range of bureaus within the Department of Corrections who used their expertise to develop the goals and objectives. In

addition, the goals and objectives were influenced by work completed during the Re-Entry Summit and Re-Entry Advisory Council.

Department's Seven Workgroups

Mirroring key aspects of reentry models, Secretary Walter A. McNeil commissioned seven workgroups to focus on specific targets of change within the Department of Corrections system. The seven workgroups are: (1) Inmate Classification and Assessment, (2) Inmate/Offender Behavior and Programs, (3) Probation and Parole Services, (4) Probation and Parole Revocations, (5) Community Corrections Aftercare, (6) Public Safety, and (7) Marketing. Each workgroup is tasked with developing a detailed understanding of their substantive topic area. Each workgroup is comprised of Department heads, key players and topic experts within the Department. The workgroups are to develop a comprehensive understanding of their area of responsibility and to identify ways to reduce the barriers to the reentry initiative. Additionally, they are to assess these barriers and solutions utilizing national best practice principles. The Department has created a tracking system to follow the workgroups progress and keep key level staff apprised of the advancement.

Re-Entry Summit

The Florida Department of Corrections hosted the first Statewide Restoration of Rights (i.e., Re-Entry Summit) in Tallahassee June 17 – 18, 2008. The purpose of the summit was to develop a formal and comprehensive understanding of the issues facing inmates and offenders

when transitioning back into their communities. Nine breakout groups identified barriers to offender reentry and workable solutions to correct these barriers. Subsequently, these recommendations have been used to guide the State of Florida in developing its strategic plan for inmate and offender reentry.

Re-Entry Advisory Council

In June 2008, the Florida Department of Corrections took the initial steps to develop a coordinated systems approach to offender reentry. With this aim in mind, the Re-Entry Advisory Council was formed to assist in the development of a Re-Entry Strategic Plan that will guide the State of Florida. The goal of the Re-Entry Advisory Council is to develop and implement a coordinated and comprehensive continuum of care for those who need assistance to successfully reintegrate back into society. The Council will also recommend policy and other changes relating to risk and needs assessments, accountability and self-sufficiency, and family and community participation in the individual reentry process.

Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction

Overview

The Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction is not a new approach for the Department. Florida Statutes state the Department of Corrections has the authority “To provide intensive and meaningful supervision for those on probation so that the condition or situation which caused the person to commit the crime is corrected.”³³ Furthermore, Florida law requires Department staff to “[u]se all practicable

and proper methods to aid and encourage persons on probation and to bring about improvement in their conduct and condition.”³⁴ The guidance that has been previously prescribed in law allows staff the ability to use a variety of techniques and resources that have been deemed effective in reducing repeat criminal behavior.

The Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction is focused on assisting offenders in their successful completion of supervision. This is achieved by preparing offenders to lead productive, self-sufficient, and crime-free lives during and after their term of community supervision. Probation Officers will use a range of evidence-based practices to tailor their supervision strategies to the specific requirements of each offender.

Goals & Objectives

Goals

- Increase successful terminations by using supervision strategies and community services to reduce criminal behavior and activities.
- Ensure supervision revocation recommendations are appropriately based on offender risk and severity of behavior by consistently reporting appropriate recommendations to the court.
- Develop a system to ensure offender needs are continuously addressed on community supervision after release from prison/jail.

Objectives

- Objective 1: Increase successful outcomes by using evidenced-based practices.
- Objective 2: Expand outreach and partnership efforts with the

- community (volunteers, mentors and office interns).
- Objective 3: Increase the number of offenders who successfully complete court ordered treatment (substance abuse, mental health, sex offender and Probation Restitution Centers).
- Objective 4: Increase and document referrals that address offender needs (employment, education, and other self-improvement programming).
- Objective 5: Enhance continuity of care and services to address offenders' needs after release from prison/jail.

Current Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction Practices

Comprehensive Community Corrections Supervision

Probation Officers supervise and monitor offenders to ensure compliance with the terms of their supervision. The core terms of supervision are usually consistent from one offender to the next, but certain offenders have conditions imposed on them due to the nature of their crime. These conditions can vary from a nightly curfew requirement to where an offender can live or with whom he or she can associate. To appropriately supervise each offender on his or her caseload, an officer must use sound judgment in monitoring offenders during the course of their supervision.

As the Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability (OPPAGA) noted in a 2007 report, the use of officer judgment has not always been the

standard operating procedure for community supervision practices in Florida.³⁵ In 2004, after several high-profile murders, the Department made the decision to implement a "zero tolerance" policy for offenders on community supervision. The discretion and judgment of an officer was removed, and non-compliance with any condition of supervision was deemed a violation and reported to the court.

In March 2006, steps were initiated to move the Department's policy toward a more balanced approach by requiring Probation Officers to once again use their judgment in determining if an offender's violation was willful or non-willful, and to report only willful violations. Officers are now provided full support in using their skills and experience to delineate the circumstances surrounding a violation. Officers report violations in context in order that judges and the Parole Commission can make decisions on incarceration and punishment knowing they have been provided complete information surrounding an offender's violation.

Motivational Interviewing, Individualized Supervision Planning and the Community Corrections Resource Directory

Renewed emphasis has been placed on the front end of the supervision process to reduce recidivism. The Office of Community Corrections researched, developed and implemented a comprehensive training program on Motivational Interviewing for all Probation Officers. Motivational Interviewing is a directive, client-centered counseling style for obtaining behavior change by helping offenders to explore and resolve ambivalence. Research shows that Motivational Interviewing techniques

can result in positive behavior change in offenders.³⁶

Officers are now using their Motivational Interviewing skills when they work with offenders to determine individual offender needs and goals. This effort is being supported with the implementation of Individualized Supervision Plans (ISPs). The ISPs are jointly developed by the offender and their Probation Officer and include both short and long term goals. Probation Officers can use the ISP to monitor the offender's progress and make necessary changes or updates to the plan during the course of supervision.

These quality improvements in contacts by staff will make the difference by beginning to address offender's needs and assisting offenders with referrals to resources and services available in the community. The Probation Officer will play a vital role in this linkage process because of the Community Corrections Resource Directory. The directory is a statewide index that includes links to local employment, social services, counseling, educational and vocational, health services, transportation and housing agencies in each county. Offenders have access to this directory in probation offices and it is also available on the Department's public website.

In addition to the specific actions officers are initiating with offenders, there are also ongoing recidivism reduction activities occurring in each judicial circuit. These include having staff participate in local reentry task forces, organizing job fairs, offering reentry classes at probation offices, and entering into new partnerships and agreements with various

agencies for services (transportation vouchers, or food and clothing banks operated or organized by faith-based organizations).

In some circuits there can be a lack of coordination for reentry services and resources. Some cities have multiple initiatives already in place, but others are disjointed due to a lack of communication. Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction efforts will assist communities in pulling all available resources together in order to best serve the community.

Substance Abuse Programming

Importance of Treatment

Illegal drugs drive crime in at least two major ways: drug-specific crimes (possession or distribution), and drug-related crimes (robbery, theft or property crimes committed to support an offender's addiction). Discovering an exact causal relationship between drug use and crime is difficult, but what can be ascertained is the fact that a link exists between increased drug use and increased criminal behavior. Substance abuse treatment, combined with community supervision, must be used more frequently to combat offenders' chronic drug use.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), "outcomes for substance abusing individuals can be improved when criminal justice personnel work in tandem with treatment providers on drug abuse treatment needs and supervision requirements."¹ Research has repeatedly supported NIDA's statement by highlighting how recidivism rates have fallen when individuals were adequately supervised and received the necessary



substance abuse treatment and recovery support services.

A recent emphasis has been placed on research and best practices for maintaining recovery for offenders with substance abuse disorders. This has led to the development and use of recovery management strategies. These strategies work to engage individuals, their families, social networks, and communities to sustain an offender's recovery. Recovery management strategies include case management, peer-to-peer support groups, and faith-based support services. The Recidivism Reduction Strategy recognizes that substance abuse treatment must be tailored to the needs and uniqueness of the offender, and recovery management strategies are tools to assist in accomplishing this feat.

Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment

The Department contracts with licensed community-based substance abuse treatment providers in all twenty judicial circuits for outpatient substance abuse treatment services. Contracted services include outpatient, intensive outpatient, drug court and aftercare services. These contracted services provide therapeutic activities for offenders while they maintain residence and employment in the community, thus supporting themselves and their families, as well as paying restitution. The level of outpatient substance abuse services provided to an offender is based on his or her assessed need and court order.

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment

The Department contracts with licensed residential community-based substance abuse treatment providers in seventeen of the twenty judicial circuits. These contracted programs are evidenced based

and have been recognized by the American Correctional Association. Both nonsecure and long-term residential treatment programs are designed using a therapeutic community (TC) model. This model emphasizes structure, responsibility, credibility, accountability, discipline, consistency and limit setting with consequences. The program targets non-violent offenders who fail outpatient treatment, or are evaluated as needing this level of a structured treatment environment. All offenders participating in these programs are court ordered by the judiciary or sentencing authority.

Programming is specifically for the criminal justice population and consists of an intensive treatment component (ITC) followed by an Employment/Re-Entry Component (ERC). During the Re-Entry Component, the offender is required to obtain and maintain employment. This phase assists in the offender becoming a responsible citizen, contributing to his or her family and ensuring victim restitution as a budget priority.

As a part of recovery management strategies, offenders are encouraged to participate in twelve step support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and non-deity based support groups. Effective use of these recovery management strategies provides an opportunity for the offender to establish contact with community based support groups prior to discharge and to prepare for a successful transition into the community.

The two types of contracted residential substance abuse treatment programs are:

Long-term Treatment Program

This program consists of up to twelve (12) months of an intensive treatment component and up to six

(6) months of an employment/ re-entry component. The total length of stay does not exceed eighteen months. Ancillary services, including vocational and educational programs, are incorporated into the treatment program.

Nonsecure Substance Abuse Treatment Program

This program is a six to eight month residential program based on each offender's needs. Programming consists of a two month intensive treatment component followed by a four month employment/re-entry component. Ancillary services, including educational programs, are incorporated into the treatment.

Substance Abuse Drug Courts

Drug Court efforts have helped contribute to a reduction in prison admissions for non-violent drug offenders. The judiciary, state attorney, public defender, local law enforcement, and county government are partners with the Department of Corrections in providing a comprehensive continuum of community-based sanctions and programs.

Drug Testing

Historically, for approximately 21 years, the Department has conducted drug testing on offenders who are placed on community supervision. Testing offenders is a viable tool for probation officers to monitor offenders' substance abuse. Substance abuse testing is incorporated in both the residential and outpatient substance abuse treatment programs. This testing information is shared between the probation officer and the treatment provider to enhance

treatment and assist in monitoring the offender's conditions of supervision.

Probation and Restitution Centers

The Department contracts for Probation Restitution Centers (PRC) programs. These programs offer a community-based sentencing alternative to judges, while providing a resource for offenders who experience difficulty in obtaining/maintaining employment and/or meeting their court-imposed financial obligations to victims, the Courts, and the Department. The program consists of a four to six-month residential phase; followed by a three to six-month community based extended support and follow-up phase. Additionally, PRCs may provide transitional housing and program assistance to released inmates.

The residential component provides a continuum of services that offer, at a minimum: life skills training, money management, employability skill training, vocational and educational training through linkages to community-based employers, substance abuse treatment services, transitional housing, and additional services to promote personal responsibility, self-improvement and public safety.

Mental Health and Sex Offender Outpatient Treatment

The Department contracts with licensed community-based providers for outpatient mental health and sex offender treatment programs. The contracted mental health and sex offender services include assessment, psychological evaluation, and individual and group treatment sessions. Offenders participating in these services have been court ordered through the judiciary or sentencing authority.

Future Community Corrections Recidivism Planning

During the past 24 months, Community Corrections has moved to a more balanced approach in its supervision practices. The inclusion of Motivational Interviewing, Individualized Supervision Plans, and enhancements to the Community Corrections Resource Directory and community partnerships has set the groundwork for our future endeavors. Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction builds upon its existing foundation, and the progress that has been made over the past two years.

Officers – Our Most Precious Resource

The *Recidivism Reduction Plan* contends that the Department's most precious resource is its officers and support staff. As consistent funding sources for reentry programs continues to be scarce, it will be critical for staff to receive the necessary equipment, training and support from their chain of command for the execution of their assigned duties. Department personnel must continually receive the necessary training to be proficient in both evidence-based practices and Motivational Interviewing. In addition, new training opportunities will be pursued to keep officers a step ahead in implementing new trends and techniques to manage and supervise their offender caseload.

Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction efforts are appropriated a small portion of funds for a limited number of offenders to receive substance abuse treatment services (outpatient and residential treatment, Probation Restitution Centers, and transitional housing). However, this lack of funding for Community Corrections Recidivism

Reduction does not, and will not deter our work as we move ahead. Our funding for reentry programming has been, and will continue to be supported with strong, well-trained personnel who are dedicated to the mission of public safety. Probation Officers' work will be supported by our ability to enter into partnerships with stakeholders and service providers already in the community.



Increasing Community Partnerships

The Department partners with a variety of stakeholders in the criminal justice system to reduce offender recidivism and enhance public safety. These partnerships provide a crime prevention benefit by sharing resources with law enforcement agencies, community service providers and philanthropic leaders. Strengthening and enhancing these partnerships will enable the Community Corrections Recidivism Reduction approach to be successful in achieving its desired goal of fewer repeat offenders.

Probation Officers promote crime prevention and teamwork in improving public safety by attending law enforcement intelligence meetings and exchanging information regarding sex offenders, violent offenders and local gang activity, as permissible within existing law. This sharing of intelligence assists Community Corrections staff by providing updated information about offenders on their caseload, and helps local law enforcement by adapting their operations

to changes that may be occurring in their community. Further partnerships with local law enforcement also leads to joint operational task forces that work to get violent criminals off our streets.

Partnerships with local service providers leverage existing resources in the community to link offenders with services that will assist them with their rehabilitation and reduce their chances of recidivating. Staff participates in Criminal Justice Coordinating Council meetings and Re-Entry Coalitions to assist local communities in planning and implementing new prevention and intervention initiatives.

While these partnerships are beneficial, more coordination is needed for Florida's 67 counties and 20 judicial circuits to function in a more integrated fashion. The problems and issues vary from county to county, and from circuit to circuit. This can cause disconnected areas of responsibility and is further compounded by "stovepiping." This phenomenon occurs when money flows in narrow funding streams from multiple sources (federal, state, and local) to isolated projects that share neither their resources nor knowledge.

Stovepiping can be broken down when communities begin taking stock in what resources they currently have available to them. This is occurring in many communities by bringing together diverse interests and jurisdictions to coordinate local strategies to combat the problem of recidivism. Re-Entry Coalitions are increasing the level of collaboration with both ends of the spectrum- law enforcement and recovery support service providers. The FDC will continue to strengthen the collaboration and coordination among various entities which will enable Florida to continually move forward with implementing both

approaches of the *Recidivism Reduction Plan*.

Sex Offender Supervision

Recent sentencing revisions have led to increased penalties for sex offenders who have committed heinous acts against our most vulnerable citizens. Passage of the Jimmy Ryce Act in 1998 and the Jessica Lunsford Act in 2005 were two significant steps taken to strengthen Florida's laws and make it less likely for sex offenders to reoffend. The Jimmy Ryce Act keeps sexual predators in state custody after their prison sentence is completed if they are deemed to still be a danger to the community. The Jessica Lunsford Act imposes a mandatory minimum sentence of 25 years in prison and lifetime electronic monitoring for adults convicted of lewd or lascivious acts against a victim less than 12 years old. In addition, the Act provides conditions for background checks on contracted personnel who work on school property and the law increases the number of times a sex offender must register their residence information at their local sheriff's office.

Both acts keep sex offenders locked up for longer periods of time and place enhanced restrictions on sex offenders who live in our communities. To further combat sex offenders, communities in Florida have passed over 130 local residency restrictions outlawing where sex offenders may reside. These local ordinances can leave an impression on communities that they are now safer because sex offenders cannot reside near schools, parks, playgrounds or other areas where children congregate. It should be noted, however, that these local ordinances say very little about where sex offenders may go during the day.

Additionally, local residency restrictions that go above and beyond the state statutory requirement that sex offenders

cannot reside within 1,000 feet of certain establishments, such as schools and day care centers, have forced many sex offenders, who would otherwise have found a residence, into homelessness. To ensure public safety, local residency restrictions alone will not solve the dilemma about how we should manage sex offenders in our communities. A comprehensive approach must override quick fixes and political expediency. This method should include effective community supervision, information dissemination to the public and evidenced-based treatment.

There are several proven research-based solutions being used to improve outcomes for sexual offenders. These include community supervision by specially trained Probation Officers, use of electronic monitoring for high-risk offenders, and access to sex offender treatment. A widely held myth is that sex offenders cannot be treated. Recent research has reported that cognitive behavioral treatment can reduce sex offender recidivism.³⁷ Additional studies have found that when the clear effects of treatment were not present after an offender completed treatment, just the fact that they were able to successfully complete a treatment program made the offenders less likely to reoffend than those who did not receive treatment.³⁸

The Department of Corrections will continue to ensure public safety by supervising those whom the courts place in its charge. It cannot singlehandedly resolve the current dilemmas regarding sex offender residency or homelessness. It will be the responsibility of all parties (e.g., the courts, elected officials, community leaders, and experts in the field of sex offender treatment and management) to work together to make communities safer for our children.

Florida Gang Reduction Strategy

During the summer of 2007, the Attorney General of Florida convened an executive work group to formulate a plan to reduce criminal street gangs. The work group created a strategy built on three pillars: Prevention/Intervention, Law Enforcement, and Rehabilitation and Re-Entry. The Florida Gang Reduction Strategy's mission is to increase the safety of the citizens of Florida by empowering Florida's youth to reject criminal gangs as a viable option and by substantially reducing gang-related crime and violence in Florida.



The Department of Corrections has, and will continue, to play a significant role in the effort to reduce criminal gang influence in our communities by planning and implementing sound practices that are being developed by the Regional Gang Reduction Task Forces

Institutional Recidivism Reduction Plan

Overview

The Department is taking significant steps in collaborating with other federal, state, and county agencies. Additionally, the Department is making efforts to partner with faith and community-based organizations to expand the scope of reentry services provided to inmates while incarcerated, and to then establish a continuum of care for services that best meets the needs of inmates upon their release from prison.

Goals & Objectives

Goals

- Provide inmates with appropriate tools and resources to become and remain successful law-abiding citizens upon completion of their criminal sanctions.
- Enhance public safety and reduce recidivism by successfully transitioning inmates into the community.

These goals are specific to the needs of the Institutional Recidivism Reduction, and both are to be acted upon concurrently. These goals are broad, but both are supported by specific objectives to develop the necessary policies and resources needed for success.



Objectives

- Objective 1: Develop a validated, automated, integrated classification system that identifies risks, needs and strengths for all inmates/offenders at intake.
- Objective 2: Ensure appropriate inmates are identified and placed in appropriate program slots.
- Objective 3: Create or enhance pre-release reentry services.

Objective 4: Increase the number of Re-Entry Centers/Dorms statewide.

Objective 5: Coordinate efforts with state agencies whose responsibilities intersect with reentry.

Objective 6: Partner with faith and community-based organizations across the state that provide needed services to the targeted population.

Current Institutional Recidivism Reduction Practices

The process of reentry begins for an inmate at reception. During the reception process, a tentative road map is created that details the physical and rehabilitative measures an inmate will need to address while serving time at an institution. After an inmate is assigned to a permanent correctional facility, staff works to the best of their abilities and within limited resources to link inmates to programming that will assist them after they are released. Then, as inmates near the completion of their sentence the transition process begins and inmates are prepared for life back in their communities. To describe how this process functions, it will be broken down and reviewed in the following three categories: (1) Reception; (2) In-Prison Programs; and (3) Transitioning Back to the Community.

Reception

The Department of Corrections provides a structured reception process. The process begins with a diagnostic and assessment guideline for analyzing the needs of each inmate. Next, inmates are assigned to the appropriate custody levels and then

placed into institutions and programs designed to meet identified needs. A comprehensive review allows the Department to assess the risk of each inmate in order to ensure the safety of staff, other inmates and the public. At the same time, inmates go through a battery of assessments, including a Risk and Needs evaluation, that allows for institutional and program placement.

An inmate's classification team is responsible for compiling the necessary information to accurately assign the inmate to his or her permanent institution and job/program assignment. Placement of inmates into institutions depends on certain factors, such as housing levels, custody, institutional needs, and medical needs. Program assignments are based on the inmate's level of need and bed space availability. Currently, beds in the Department are at a premium. Initial placement of inmates into institutions that could immediately meet their needs do not always occur at this point. Generally, placements are made at institutions that have available beds.

Inmates receive a progress report (evaluation) at various times during incarceration. The frequency of these evaluations is dependent on sentence length and the time remaining to serve. During these meetings, staff recommend placement into programs based on the inmate's needs. Inmates are ranked by their need and placed in programs accordingly. Due to the location of programs throughout the state, when possible, the Department conducts transfers to accommodate the inmate's program needs.

In-Prison Programs

Substance Abuse

On July 1, 2000, the Department implemented a standardized screening



and priority placement process for substance abuse programming. Social Services Counselor positions were assigned to each reception center to administer the standardized screening tool, Drug Simple Screening Instrument (DSSI), to every inmate sentenced to the Department. Based on the results of the DSSI, severity of addiction, previous treatment history, criminal history, treatment recommendation of the sentencing authority and anticipated release date, inmates who need substance abuse programming are placed on a prioritized waiting list. Inmates from the waiting list are then placed into available substance abuse program slots based on the priority of their need.

The Department uses a continuum of services to provide in-prison substance abuse programs. Treatment programs incorporate the use of random urinalysis. The Department currently operates the following types of evidenced- based In-Prison Substance Abuse Programs:

- **Pre-Program Motivational Component:** At sites where substance abuse treatment programs are offered, inmates are generally placed in this pre-treatment component prior to their admission to the treatment component. This component focuses on denial, addiction, recovery principles, program

motivation, self and mutual help concepts and other related substance abuse topics.

- **Prevention Services:** This component provides activities and strategies that increase awareness and knowledge of the risks of substance abuse, assist with the recognition of criminal thinking patterns, improve life skills and responsible behavior, and provide tools for change.
- **Intensive Outpatient Component (Modality 1):** This is a four (4) to six (6) month substance abuse treatment program. Treatment occurs for half a day and these activities include educational life skills, group and individual counseling. Treatment interventions are aimed at changing behaviors and attitudes that result in criminal behavior, future victimization and drug abuse. As a part of recovery management strategies, inmates are encouraged to participate in twelve step support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and non-deity based support groups in order to establish contact with community based support groups prior to discharge and prepare for a successful transition into the community.
- **Residential Therapeutic Community (Modality 2):** This is a nine (9) to twelve (12) month residential Therapeutic Community (TC) program housed within an institution or at a designated community based facility. This program is designed to treat individuals who have a significant substance abuse

addiction and an extensive criminal history. Program inmates are housed together in the same dormitory, apart from non-program inmates. The TC model emphasizes structure, responsibility, credibility, accountability, discipline, consistency and limit setting with consequences. As a part of recovery management strategies, inmates are encouraged to participate in twelve step support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and non-deity based support groups in order to establish contact with community based support groups prior to discharge and prepare for a successful transition into the community.

- **Substance Abuse Transitional Re-Entry Program Centers:** These centers offer a continuum of substance abuse services including prevention, outpatient, intensive outpatient, and aftercare services as well as education/vocational services. The focus is on teaching, developing and practicing reentry/transitional skills necessary for a successful drug-free reentry into the community upon release from prison. Program services attempt to instill educational, vocational and other work and social skills. This program promotes the development of community partnerships, the use of volunteers, and family reunification. The inmate's use of these recovery management strategies provides necessary tools for successful community reintegration as a responsible citizen.

- **Alumni Component:** Inmates who complete substance abuse treatment are required to participate in the on-going Alumni groups, as long as they are at a facility offering them. Alumni groups serve as a support group. This component primarily focuses on relapse prevention.

Education Programs

The Bureau of Institutional Programs aims to provide quality programs to inmates by equipping them with the competencies necessary to become productive, crime-free members of society. All correctional education programs use a competency-based instruction format that allows students to proceed at their own learning pace. The education programs are open-entry, open-exit which allow students to enter or exit the program at any time, therefore, serving more inmates in need of educational services.

The Department evaluates inmates for academic, career, and technical education needs during the initial reception process and then at least once every 6 months thereafter. These recommendations are used to prioritize an inmate's placement into programs.

Academic Education

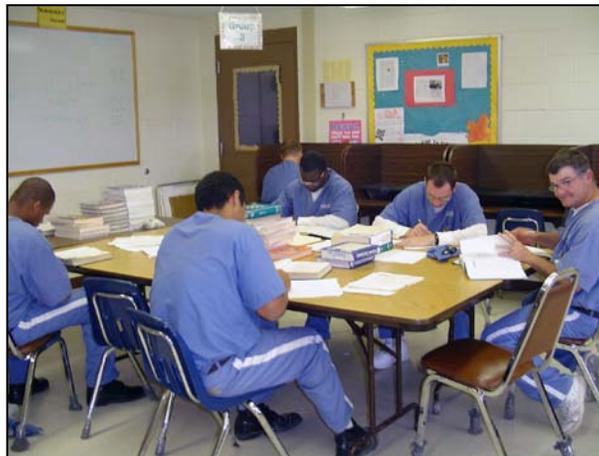
Academic education programs are operated in 55 correctional facilities. Each program has 1 or more certified academic teachers who provide instruction to inmates of all educational levels. This instruction includes, but is not limited to,

mathematics, reading language and workforce readiness skills. The Department also offers the opportunity for inmates to receive their General Educational Development (GED) diplomas. In addition, Chapter 944.801 Florida Statutes, requires any inmate who has 2 or more years to serve on her/his sentence and who has a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) battery score below a 6.0 grade level to complete at least 150 hours of sequential instruction in a correctional adult basic education program.

Academic Education Programs for Exceptional Students

Twenty-one (21) of the 55 institutional academic education programs are staffed to provide special education services to exceptional students in accordance with

federal law, know as "The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)." In addition to Academic Teachers, these programs are usually staffed with Education Supervisors, Placement & Transition Specialists, Special Education Teachers, and Teacher Aides. A



Speech and Hearing Therapist is also available to assist staff in providing services to students with appropriate exceptionalities. Special education services are extended to inmates who meet eligibility requirements, are under the age of 22 years old, and have not attained a high school diploma.

Close Management Programs

Certified Academic Teachers provide close management inmates, including inmates

with disabilities, both cell-front and correspondence-study instruction in mathematics, reading, language, and workforce readiness skills, as well as the opportunity to secure general educational development (GED) diplomas. Close management education programs are operating at Santa Rosa CI, Union CI, Florida State Prison, Lowell Annex, and Charlotte CI.

Inmate Teaching Assistant (ITA) Programs

The Department provides academic education services to inmates at institutions without academic education (ABE/GED) programs, by using trained Inmate Teaching Assistants (ITAs) working under the direction and supervision of a certified Academic Teacher. Inmate Teaching Assistant Programs are operating in 25 institutions and annexes.

In fiscal year 2006-07, the Florida Legislature provided the Department \$500,000 to establish and/or enhance educational programs that use computer technology to teach reading to inmates. These funds were used to establish computer-based reading and assessment testing laboratories in 18 inmate teaching assistant academic education programs.

Local Education Agency (LEA)-Operated Programs

Local Education Agency (LEA) programs are federally funded adult education programs operated by county school districts and community colleges. These programs are currently operating at Daytona Beach Work Release Center, Pensacola Work Release Center, Reception and Medical Center Work Camp, St. Petersburg Work Release Center, Tomoka CI and Tomoka Work Camp.

Career and Technical Education

The Department has 87 career and technical education courses in 36 distinct career and technical education trades. These courses are offered at 34 of Florida's facilities. All vocational teachers are certified and each program uses an approved Department of Education (DOE) curriculum framework.

The Department also operates career and technical training courses funded by the Specter grant program. The *Grants to States for Workplace and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Youth Offenders* (Specter) program is a federal grant that provides postsecondary vocational training for youthful offenders 25 years of age and under, have GED or high school diplomas, and are within five years of release from prison. Participants receive postsecondary vocational certificates upon successful completion of the training. This program assists inmates with the transition process by providing the job skills training necessary to obtain gainful employment upon release. Six (6) technical centers, colleges and universities provide training programs in 7 institutions. In fiscal year 2007-08, 670 inmates enrolled in Specter-funded programs earned 490 certificates.

Specter Re-Entry Seminars are offered to Specter participants to provide valuable information regarding employment opportunities, community providers, social services, housing, food, and other resources available within their respective communities to ensure a smooth transition upon release. Federal, state and local entities are invited into the prisons to provide inmates with specific information relating to the services they offer. Re-Entry Seminars are held annually at each Specter site.

PRIDE Enterprises

Prison Rehabilitative Industry and Diversified Enterprises (PRIDE) is a state-authorized, private, not-for-profit, internationally recognized inmate training company operating general manufacturing and services facilities in correctional institutions throughout the State of Florida.



Since 1981, when the Florida Legislature authorized the company to manage and operate the state's correctional industries, PRIDE has trained thousands of prison inmates and has provided them with marketable and accredited job skills.

PRIDE is supported by a strong partnership with the Florida Department of Corrections. PRIDE's work programs are designed to provide vocational training, to improve prison security, to reduce the cost of state government, and to promote the rehabilitation of state inmates. Over the next five years, the Department intends to support the expansion of PRIDE programs to all Re-Entry Centers. Currently, there are PRIDE programs at both Re-Entry Centers, Demilly CI and Baker CI. (For more information on other existing PRIDE programs, please see Chapter IV.)

Work Release

Work Release is a portion of the Community Release Program that allows selected inmates to work at paid employment in the community during the last months of their confinement. Work Release provides an inmate with a gradual reintegration back into the community, gainful employment, accumulation of

savings from paid employment, and preservation of family and community ties.

Within two weeks of admission to the community work release program, a written Personalized Program Plan is developed for each inmate. This plan incorporates the inmate's individual needs and provides a positive framework for program participation (i.e., orientation and intake, employment, furloughs, personal budget, substance abuse counseling, academic and vocational education, mental health, and medical rehabilitative programs). The plan includes program objectives to be accomplished while an inmate is assigned to the community work release program. Measurable criteria are established in determining completion of the objectives, along with a reasonable time schedule to achieve each goal and a progress review for evaluating progress toward objectives.

Transitioning Back Into the Community

The release process begins 180 days prior to an inmate's anticipated release date. During this time, Release Management notifies other departments that the inmate is nearing release and that he or she is scheduled for necessary appointments and programs, such as medical appointments and the 100-Hour Transition Training Plan. The initial release interview is conducted which addresses inmate release needs, such as housing, employment and medical, identification, and post-release requirements (e.g., detainers, supervision and registration,). This information is captured in the Inmate's Release Plan.

100-Hour Transition Training Program

The 100-Hour Transition Training Program is a statutorily mandated comprehensive transition program that

covers job readiness and life management skills, including goal setting; problem solving and decision making; communication; values clarification; living a healthy lifestyle; family issues; seeking and keeping a job; continuing education; community reentry; and legal responsibilities. This training (or an approved equivalent) is provided to all inmates within the 12 month period prior to their release.

It is important that inmates have access to information and resources to facilitate their successful transition to the community. As part of the 100-Hour Transition Training Program, a reentry resource center has also been created. Each resource center maintains a library of resource materials and directories, as well as a suggested list of resources available in the community.

Re-Entry Seminars

Re-Entry Seminars are conducted throughout the state to provide inmates with valuable information regarding employment opportunities, community resources, social services, housing, and food to ensure a smooth transition back to their respective communities. Federal, state and local entities are invited into the prisons to provide inmates with specific information relating to their services.

Transitioning Inmates with Medical Care

Individual healthcare needs may pose a significant barrier to the successful reentry of inmates leaving prison. Inmates have a constitutionally guaranteed right to access the care comparable to what is available in the community while they are incarcerated. However, there is no right to care guaranteed to citizens of Florida or the United States, so patients may be denied needed care based on their ability to pay

for services once released from the Department of Corrections.

Healthcare costs may create strain for low-income or indigent inmates transitioning back into the community. To lessen the strain, the Department has recommended that inmates, upon release, be given a waiver for a 90-day automatic enrollment into Medicaid to ensure the opportunity to continue care in the community. This waiver will give offenders enough time to apply and possibly enroll in the Medicaid program without any gaps in treatment coverage.

Inmates currently receive a 30-day supply of medications and necessary supplies upon release from prison. The Department believes that the most important contribution it can make for ensuring continuity of care is to appropriately share information and work to link inmates with community healthcare providers. Inmates have a right to keep personal health information private under federal and state law, and the Department will continue to protect that right, while assisting inmates in their efforts to successfully reintegrate back into their communities.

Aftercare planning for inmates with mental illnesses begins within 180 days of release. The Department of Corrections has a cooperative agreement with the Department of Children and Family



Services (DCF) to automatically transfer information (unless the inmate refuses) relating to an inmate's mental health treatment. The Department works to make an initial appointment at a community mental health center close to where the inmate will reside. This system allows staff from the Department, DCF, and community health providers to send, track, and receive referrals from the point of referral to the time when the inmate arrives for their mental health appointment. The Department of Corrections will seek to renew this agreement, and will continue to work toward strengthening this important partnership.

Veteran Affairs

The Florida Department of Corrections continues to work in partnership with both state and federal representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs. This relationship allows releasing inmates who are veterans to make initial contact with a Veterans Affairs representative. The representative in turn assists the inmate access various goods and services available to them upon release.

Future Institutional Recidivism Reduction Planning

The Department of Corrections has taken a progressive approach to recidivism reduction by creating a system of reentry. This system will increase inmates' chances of successfully transitioning back into society by coordinating efforts to ensure a seamless delivery of services. The Department believes that changes can best be made to the current system by emphasizing evidence-based reentry strategies that have proven to be successful.

Reception

Target Population

Considerable research reveals that programs targeting offenders who are at a higher risk to recidivate are more effective in reducing recidivism than those that do not.³⁹ The Risk-Needs-Responsivity Principle (RNR) refers to predicting which inmates have a higher probability of recidivating, and treating the criminogenic needs of those higher risk inmates with appropriate programming and services based on their level of need⁴⁰. Criminogenic needs are those factors that are associated with recidivism that can be changed (e.g. lack of education, substance abuse, criminal thinking, lack of marketable job skills, etc.). Offenders are not higher risk because they have a particular risk factor, but, rather, because they have multiple risk factors. Accordingly, a range of services and interventions should be provided that target the specific crime producing needs of offenders who are higher risk.

The Department is currently revising its operations to conform to the RNR Principle. The existing Risk⁴¹ and Needs system is being modified to better serve institutions and the inmates who are under its custody. First, the Department is developing a Recidivism Index (RI) which assesses an inmate's or offender's likelihood to reoffend. The RI is made up of both static (factors that do not change or change in only one direction, i.e. age at first commitment) and dynamic (factors that do change, i.e., drug use, employment) factors that are associated with recidivism.

An inmate's RI score will determine his or her priority for intervention and services. The Recidivism Index will be administered twice during an inmate's incarceration depending on sentence length – once at reception and once again

at 42 months. The RI will feed into the Correctional Integrated Needs Assessment System (CINAS). CINAS is the improved version of the Needs portion of the existing Risk and Needs System. It is designed to allow for a flow of information between Community Corrections and Institutions.

For instance, when an inmate is received at a Reception Center, the staff will have access to detailed information about any prior supervision. Likewise, if an inmate is released to community supervision, Probation Officers will have access to an offender's incarceration history and relevant release information. This information will be used to better serve the offender and prepare them for successful transition back into the community.

The Department's use of the Recidivism Index and CINAS will allow for development and implementation of programs that will increase the likelihood of successful transition. The Department will match factors that influence an inmate's responsiveness to different type of services with programs that are proven to be effective within an inmate population. This involves selecting services that are matched to the offender's learning characteristics and then to the offender's stage of change readiness.⁴² By applying this principle, the Department avoids focusing resources on individuals ill-equipped to handle specific behavior problems, and ensures the most appropriate treatment-setting possible is being assigned, based on an inmate's characteristics.

Realign Placement of Existing Resources

The Department will review all educational, vocational, substance abuse and transitional resources in order to realign them to most effectively meet the

needs of inmates. This action will allow the Department the opportunity to open Re-Entry Dorms in several parts of the state; expand the use of volunteers, faith-based entities and community resources in programming and release services; and will include an element that involves the family in the reentry process.

Prioritize Program Transfers

When the CINAS is implemented, reception centers will continue to transfer inmates based on security level, bed space and medical needs. However, once an inmate arrives at the permanent institution, he or she will be evaluated for job or program placement at that facility. . In the future, if the institution cannot meet the inmates needs, a subsequent transfer will be considered.

In-Prison Programs

Re-Entry Centers

There is a growing recognition by correctional leaders, academics and public policy makers that success of the reentry depends on a seamless delivery of services and program interventions that begin at reception and continue through to the end of sentence. The Department will implement reentry centers in each region that will service groups of inmates with significant needs. These centers are being strategically placed in counties where a disproportionate number of inmates and offenders are returning. The Department is attempting to site these centers within the top 10 counties receiving returning inmates. This program will be modeled after the Columbia Annex Substance Abuse Transitional/Re-Entry Program. Inmates within 9-12 months of release will participate in intensive Life Skills, Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Education and Vocational programming following a holistic approach. Program participants will be selected based on their

risk to reoffend. This model of selection will be accomplished by using the Correctional Integrated Needs Assessment System (CINAS).

Inmates will be housed in either an open bay dorm or a secure housing unit, depending on the location selected. One housing unit will be selected in each institutional region. The housing/program unit will be separate from other housing units by partition fences and the inmates will remain separated from the general population until they are released.

The program will be similar to the therapeutic community concept, with the addition of a vital component—community support. Selecting inmates from the area in which the institution is located will allow for supportive family, friends and mentors to participate more frequently in the rehabilitative process. Each program will also have staff dedicated to working with the inmates on their housing, employment and other important social service needs as they prepare for release. Currently, the Department operates two institutions that fit this model: Demilly Correctional Institution and Baker Correctional Institution.

Demilly Correctional Institution

Demilly Correctional Institution operates as a lower custody facility providing programming and work experience necessary for successful reentry into the community. Demilly C.I. is located in Polk County, Florida. In fiscal year 2007-08, 2,095 inmates returned to Polk County; only the Hillsborough, Broward, and Miami-Dade areas received more inmates. Demilly CI houses lower custody inmates expected to be released within a shorter period of

time, allowing for programming and movement into the community work release program in an effort to improve the prospect of reentry into the community.

Baker Correctional Institution

Baker Correctional Institution serves inmates being released to Duval and surrounding counties. In fiscal year 2007-2008, 1,864 inmates returned to Duval County, which ranks sixth out of the 67 Florida counties in terms of inmate releases. Baker C.I. is located in Sanderson, Florida and houses various custody inmates. The facility will provide comprehensive services that focus on cognitive-behavioral model and evidence-based practices with the aim of reducing recidivism. Inmates released from Baker C.I. will be connected to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office *Portal of Entry*. This *Portal of Entry* is a partnership between the Department and the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office that will include various reentry services to better transition inmates back into the community.

Faith-Based Institutions and Volunteers

The Department of Corrections uses volunteers to engage with inmates and offenders and transform their lives for the better. Scarce rehabilitative resources have forced institutions to reduce the amount of programming made available and increased the waiting time for available programming slots. The faith community can assist in filling the gaps in institutional programming by working with the Department to effectively implement new faith-based programs.

However, in order for this to be achieved, the culture within institutions must support and encourage community volunteers.

Incorporating faith-based practices and their volunteers should in no way negate the need to have professional paid staff at correctional institutions. The use of



volunteers supports and reinforces the dedicated work of Department staff. In addition, volunteers can help provide the necessary emotional and mental encouragement for inmates to cope with life experiences on the inside and upon release. Volunteers provide motivational support by acting as mentors to inmates.

The Department will, wherever practical, use faith-based programs that address documented criminogenic needs. A “call to action” moment will be initiated as a way to create awareness among the faith community of the needs of inmates and will highlight avenues in which citizens can get involved. More importantly, efforts will be made in the short-term to inform the faith community of the needs of ex-offenders and to highlight volunteer opportunities that are available.

An important link in achieving this goal is to identify the leaders among the faith community. Staff within the Department will be used to accomplish this by using

existing organizations, groups, and established relationships. Additionally, this opportunity of faith-based expansion must be extended to faith groups of all kinds. To achieve this large-scale collaboration, the Department will add an easily visible section to its public web site for the faith community that identifies different programming opportunities for volunteers. The section will contain volunteer opportunities linked to specific communities, including contact information for volunteer coordination within certain correctional institutions.

Victim Awareness

The Department of Corrections has a Victim Assistance Office whose primary function is to assist victims of crimes committed by inmates in the Department's custody or under our supervision, and to notify victims prior to an inmate's release. The office also provides referral services to victims with specific needs, such as counseling, support groups, crimes compensation, and crisis intervention.

The Department offers a toll-free automated inmate information and notification service. Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) Service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Any person may call the toll-free number and receive an inmate's current location and tentative release date. Individuals may also register to receive an automated notification when an inmate is released, transferred, escapes, is placed in a work release facility, transferred to another jurisdiction, returned to the Department's custody, or dies while in custody. The VINE Service is anonymous and confidential.

Additionally, the Department offers Victim Awareness classes for inmates. Victim awareness classes are educational programs designed to teach inmates about

the individual consequences of crime. Offenders are taught about how crime affects victims, their families and friends, and their community. These classes also address the personal consequences of crime on inmate families, friends and communities. The Department's goal in offering these classes is to teach inmates about trauma victimization and to help them accept responsibility for their past criminal actions.

Responsible Family Programming

Prison life disrupts family life on many levels and creates hardships on all involved. An inmate must deal not only with the forced separation between parents, spouse, children and extended family, but also with the anger and shame felt by these family members. Upon returning to family and community, the released offender often faces rejection from the support system needed the most.

The Department seeks to develop and implement a program that engages immediate family members in the programming process that focuses on family issues and needs as the inmate or offender prepares for reentry. The program will incorporate content relating to responsible parenting, social and emotional concerns that may impact the family support and offender adjustment during the transition from incarceration to the community. Participation of family members in the offender's program regimen will provide offenders with tangible family support and assistance as they plan for their reentry.

Mentoring Initiative

It is the goal of the Department to develop and implement mentoring programs that will aid the participant in his or her personal development. A partnership will be created between the community, the Governor's Mentoring Initiative, and the

Department of Corrections. This partnership will play a vital role in ensuring that each individual offender has a positive and proactive partner in their quest towards successful reintegration.

As time passes, the mentoring initiative will allow opportunities for past program participants to give back by volunteering their experiences and successes to future participants. These mentors will provide each participant with a tangible "real world" accounts of what will be necessary to carry the successes they experience in the program into the communities in which they will soon reside.

Transitioning Back Into the Community

100-Hour Transition Training Program

The 100-Hour Transition Program is currently being improved to more effectively address inmate transition needs. Two versions of the curriculum are being developed: one for live instruction and one for self-study. Staff will use the inmate's recidivism index score to determine whether an inmate will receive live instruction or will be placed on self-study. This change will ensure that inmates receive the appropriate level of programming.

Inmate-At-A-Glance

The current release process is being enhanced to facilitate a comprehensive approach to reentry. The Bureau of Admission and Release is involved in the creation of the Correction Integrated Needs Assessment System (CINAS) to ensure continuity of release planning from reception through release. The current Inmate Release Plan is being revised to capture additional information that will allow Release Officers to better assess inmate release needs and staff's ability to

make more appropriate referrals. An additional enhancement of this process is the implementation of the *Inmate-At-A-Glance*. The *Inmate-At-A-Glance* will act as a central repository of vital information about the inmate's release needs, which can then be accessed by both Institutional and Community Corrections staff at any point in time.

Web-Based Needs Assessment and Release Plan

Development of a Needs Assessment and Release Plan, using information obtained on the Web-based Resource Directory, will allow for information via web page overlay to populate a multitude of OBIS screens currently used to input an inmate's Release Plan. The use of this web-based program will allow Release Officers to complete a Needs Assessment on an inmate, and based on the information provided, be able to create a Referral and Release Plan using a "click and shop" format based on needs. Additional plans are being developed for inmates who have supervision to follow their incarceration to allow for information to be sent directly to their supervising Probation Officer. This critical information will outline the inmate's needs, institutional behavior, and special concerns to be accessed by Probation Officers in order to gain a better understanding of an offender's past behavior.

Community Resource Directory

The existing Community Resource Directory is being expanded to be more "user-friendly" for release officers and will provide more up-to-date services by county and type of services for inmate release plans. The Resource Directory will include various community organizations that offer services to ex-offenders (e.g., housing, employment, transportation, child support, etc.). Departmental staff

will have access and be able to provide up-to-date detailed services by county and by type of service for inmate release plans. The Directory will be available on the public web site, providing additional information for ex-offenders to assist with their reintegration into society.

Administrative Goals

The two-pronged approach of Community Corrections and Institutional Recidivism Reduction has specific goals and objectives that are unique to their operations. However, there are four additional goals that must be accomplished by both sides. These four goals are designed to change the public's perceptions regarding offender reentry and to strengthen staff support of the reentry mission at the Florida Department of Corrections.

Goals

- Market and expand opportunities for media outlets to highlight and articulate the work of recidivism reduction.
- Increase legislative and public support for recidivism reduction efforts.
- Maintain a well-trained and effective workforce.
- Foster partnerships to assist in providing prevention, intervention and diversionary services to at-risk individuals, offenders and ex-offenders.

Media Campaign

For the *Recidivism Reduction Plan* to be successful, public perceptions must change. Without strong public support, our work to reduce recidivism will erode and increases in public safety will not be

sustained. Citizens are unfamiliar with the reentry process, and the role agencies play in providing services to inmates and offenders. Also, the stigma attached to inmates reentering society often diminishes work toward developing policies and local programs to improve reentry efforts.

The Department of Corrections must promote a broader public understanding of reentry. The elements that are essential to successfully lowering the rate of crime must be laid out and discussed in order to gain full support for this initiative. In addition, support must be solicited from a variety of media outlets. Information transferred from media outlets (television, radio, print media, and the internet) play a powerful role in shaping policy debates.

The Department's ability to articulate the plan for reducing recidivism can be hindered by an inability to reach large, receptive audiences on a regular basis. The use of the media can assist us in carrying our message that investing in and developing new reentry efforts will lead to increased public safety and decreased victimization. When provided with a clear message, the media has the power and the ability to persuade the public to fully support our strategy.

One recent example of how media can positively change perceptions, and increase the safety of citizens was the Department of Corrections' 10-20-LIFE ad campaign. When the media campaign was created more than 10 years ago, it was made evident to all Floridians that criminals who use a

firearm during the commission of a crime will be faced with strict and lengthy prison sentences. Using a wide-range of media forms, the public began to understand the importance of the initiative and quickly got behind it. This was achieved in part because of media saturation, and the fact that the message was framed as a crime prevention initiative that eventually caused perceptions to change.

Legislation to Support our Reentry Mission

Public safety is government's top priority. As we progress with the implementation of our plan to reduce recidivism, we must always be looking for opportunities to support and assist with the passage of legislation that can strengthen our work. Providing public safety is an evolving process that needs to be reviewed on a constant basis. Our elected officials must be continually updated on the advancement of our reentry plan, and how it is impacting public safety in their community. The updates we provide to elected officials, and to their staffs, will offer them insights about how our plan is working, and will allow them an opportunity to offer further solutions to improve our plan of action.

This type of collaborative effort between the Department of Corrections and the Florida Legislature will permit all good ideas to be discussed, debated and possibly implemented. Assisting lawmakers with the passage of sound public safety legislation will support our law



enforcement officers by protecting scarce funding resources, and over time increase crime prevention measures like substance abuse treatment, education and vocational training. Without unwavering support from the Legislature to assist in offering direction, and funding for our plan of action, progress toward our desired end state cannot be realized.

Staff Support of Our Reentry Mission

Before media campaigns can be undertaken, and before new legislation can be passed, the Department of Corrections must first make internal changes to its own operations in order to have a positive impact on reducing recidivism. In May 2007, the Department revised its mission statement to include reentry of inmates and offenders. Then in the fall of 2008, the Department made a shift in its internal structure to create the Office of Re-Entry. This office now coordinates reentry services for inmates and offenders to ensure successful transition back into their communities.

It will not be enough, however, for the Department to only highlight the organizational changes it has made to improve reentry outcomes. Support from all levels of staff must be received, and every employee must get behind the work of reentry in order to achieve success. Leadership at the Department must consistently communicate to employees that the Department's role is to both protect the public and to assist in the reentry of inmates and offenders. It must become common knowledge that recidivism reduction efforts are not just a series of initiatives, but are the standard operating procedures for the Department.

Historically, correctional policies in Florida have focused on incarcerating criminals, and releasing them back into

our communities with minimal to no rehabilitation. We now know that policy has only increased the safety and security of our communities to a degree. To fully sustain reductions in the rate of crime, the Department must now support public safety laws that reflect sound correctional policies to assist in the rehabilitation and transition of a larger population of inmates and offenders on community supervision who are ready for an alternative to a life of crime and incarceration.

Department operations can begin to adjust as leadership continues to explain how our plan of reducing repeat criminal behavior will benefit all who are involved. Stating our intentions and publishing our strategy is only the beginning. There is a critical need to properly train all staff members on the principles of successful reentry. The Bureau of Staff Development, in coordination with the Office of Re-Entry, will create and implement a comprehensive yearly training program for all personnel at the Department. This program will provide staff with the necessary skills to adequately address inmates' and offenders' needs as it relates to reentry. The work of reentry will also be a part of an employee's yearly performance evaluation to assess their ability to supervise, and when appropriate, assist with the reentry of inmates and offenders.

In addition, the *Recidivism Reduction Plan* will not just be a plan of action for senior level management in Central Office to review and implement. It will be the responsibility of all levels of the Department, to include all Wardens, Circuit Administrators, Bureau Chiefs, Correctional Officers, Probation Officers, Classification Officers, support and contracted staff, to work together from this unified plan. For sustained success in improving public safety, it will be the duty

of all staff to understand how their role impacts the overall success of the Department's plan to reduce recidivism and prevent future crime victimization.

Each day Correctional Officers in our prisons, Probation Officers on our streets, and the support staff who make it possible for both sides to do their jobs safely, labor under the most difficult conditions. The *Recidivism Reduction Plan* has been created to reinforce their work by building upon the systems that are currently in place to allow officers to securely maintain the custody and care of those in their charge and for officers to safely supervise offenders in our communities. When fully implemented, this plan will aid all staff by holding inmates and offenders accountable, and at the same time, provide the necessary training, life skills and education to end an offender's cycle of crime.



Chapter 3: Measuring Success

Overview

The Department's plan of action for reentry outlines the previous steps that have been taken to reduce recidivism, and future planning and measures that will be needed to increase public safety. In order for us to receive the necessary support to move the *Recidivism Reduction Plan* forward we will have to measure - and our measures must be meaningful. Circumstances are constantly changing and our plan must be able to adapt when times call for change.

Our performance measures gauge progress in achieving our long term goals of increasing public safety, reducing recidivism, and enabling released offenders to successfully transition back into their communities. The overarching goal is to reduce offender recidivism from its current level of 32.8 percent to 20 percent by 2014. From this central goal of reducing the overall rate of recidivism, several subsets have been created to measure specific actions that will be necessary to ensure the reduction in recidivism is accomplished.

Recidivism can be measured and assessed in multiple ways. The Department of Corrections measures recidivism over a three-year time period for inmates and offenders who are released and are then subsequently returned to the Department (either for a new arrest or for a violation of their release) during that time

The objectives, tasks, performance and process improvement measures provided were developed using information gathered during FDC's Re-Entry Summit, Re-Entry Advisory Council and FDC's Seven Re-Entry Work Groups. Each entity prepared a series of recommendations that guided the *Recidivism Reduction Plan* development. These recommendations, with modest revisions, were subsequently incorporated into the present document.

Our Core Principles

Our work must be directed by a set of core principles that guide our efforts. These three principles are:

Principle 1: Be balanced, inclusive, and research-based in both of our approaches (Community Corrections and Institutions) to reduce recidivism.

Principle 2: Maintain positive, accountable and crime-free relationships that will play a fundamental role to combat repeat criminal behavior.

Principle 3: Set high goals, continually gauge progress and always be responsible for performance at every level.

Performance Measures

In an effort to carry out the plan outlined in this document, the Department will measure progress using accurate, comprehensive data that will be collected about our operations and the offenders and inmates we supervise. The following measures are the outcomes we will achieve to reach our goal of lowering the state's recidivism rate to 20 percent.

Reduce offender recidivism from its current level of 32 percent to 20 percent by 2014.

Baseline	FY 2009-10	FY 2010-11	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14
32.8%	30.8%	28.8%	26.4%	23.4%	20%

Community Corrections Performance Measures**Objective 1: Increase successful outcomes by using evidenced-based practices.**

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1(a). Use Motivational Interviewing	1(a). Train staff on Motivational Interviewing	1/15/2009
2(b). Implement Individualized Supervision Plans (ISP)	2(a). Complete ISP with offenders within 60 days of supervision	Ongoing

Objective 2: Expand outreach and partnership efforts with the community (volunteers, mentors and office interns).

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1(a). Regional Directors and Circuit Administrators work to expand partnerships with local providers	1(a). Regularly meet with community leaders to discuss opportunities to partner with the Department of Corrections.	Ongoing

Objective 3: Increase the number of offenders who successfully complete court ordered treatment (substance abuse, mental health, sex offender and Probation Restitution Centers).

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1(a). Provide enhanced field staff regarding treatment systems and procedures	1(a). Facilitate meetings to coordinate best practices	Ongoing
2(b). Improve communication between courts, probation and treatment providers	2(a). Facilitate meetings to coordinate best practices	Ongoing
3(c). Work with field staff and contracted treatment providers to identify obstacles and barriers to successful treatment completion and effectuate necessary changes.	3(a). Solicit input from field staff in a regular and formalized manner. 3(b). Annually meet with contracted treatment providers and follow up on recommended changes.	Ongoing

Objective 4: Increase and document referrals that address offender needs (employment, education, and other self-improvement programming).

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1(a). Use Individualized Supervision Plans	1(a). All offenders will have documented ISPs by October 2009. From that date forward, all new offenders on community supervision will have ISPs completed within the 1 st 60 days of supervision.	Ongoing

Objective 5: Enhance continuity of care and services to address offenders' needs after release from prison/jail.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1(a). Coordinate with Release Management to enhance inmate released with supervision to follow	1(a). Regularly hold meetings to coordinate and disseminate best practices.	Ongoing
2(b). Office of Health Services will work to expand opportunities for inmates to receive medical care upon release	2(b). Continue to work with DCF and other providers to create expanded opportunities for released inmates to receive necessary treatment and medication upon release.	Ongoing

Institutional Performance Measures

Objective 1: Develop a validated, automated, integrated classification system that identifies risk, needs and strengths for all inmates/offenders at intake.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Research risk/need practices in other states.	1(a). Complete literature review. 1(b). Make recommendations.	12/15/2008 12/18/2008
2. Review evidence-based research on risk/need/responsivity principle.	2(a). Complete literature review. 2(b). Make recommendations.	12/15/2008 12/18/2008
3. Assess current risk/need practices in Florida.	3. Review existing OBIS risk/need system.	12/18/2008
4. Develop <i>Recidivism Index</i> (RI) to identify inmates/offenders risk to recidivate.	4(a). Compare existing information against validated risk/needs assessments. 4(b). Create 1 st generation RI. 4(c). Test RI for predictability. 4(d). Create 2 nd generation RI based dynamic placeholders.	12/15/2008 1/8/2009 1/29/2009

	4(e). Test RI-2 for predictability.	1/29/2009
	4(f). Create 3 rd generation RI based on desired dynamic factors.	2/10/2009
	4(g). Pilot 3 rd generation RI for predictability.	9/15/2009
5. Incorporate evidence-based practices into new Correctional Integrated Needs Assessment System (CINAS).	5(a). Develop plan for implementing changes to current system.	2/5/2009
	5(b). Add 3 rd generation RI to system plan.	2/5/2009
	5(c). Create factor scoring.	2/15/2009
	5(d). Develop logic program.	2/25/2009
	5(e). Submit CINAS requirements to OIT.	3/31/2009
6. OIT build CINAS program.	6. Build CINAS program.	8/31/2009
7. Pilot CINAS with sample of inmate/offender population.	7(a). Select sites.	9/1/2009
	7(b). Train staff.	9/15/2009
	7(c). Implement CINAS.	10/1/2009
	7(d). Collect and analyze data.	11/15/2009
	7(e). Revise if necessary.	12/1/2009
8. Launch CINAS.	8. System fully operational.	1/2/2010

Objective 2: Ensure inmates are identified and placed in appropriate program slots.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Review and assess existing resources.	1. Complete review of current program availability.	9/15/2009
2. Realign to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of the targeted population.	2. Consolidate existing programs in centralized locations.	1/15/2010

Objective 3: Increase the number of Re-Entry Centers/Dorms.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Create Re-Entry Centers/Dorms.	1(a). Identify sites.	6/15/2009
	1(b). Identify eligible target populations.	Ongoing
	1(c). Realign programming and staff to meet reentry mission.	Ongoing
	1(d). Open site.	Varies
	1(e). Move inmates into site.	Ongoing

Objective 4: Create or enhance pre-release reentry services.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Review current literature and practices to determine best approaches to programming and performance outcomes.	1(a). Complete review. 1(b). Make recommendations. 1(c). Develop plan to incorporate evidence-based programs.	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
2. Provide inmates who do not have GEDs with opportunities to enroll in academic education programs prior to release.	2(a) Submit legislative budget requests to secure state funding for additional academic teachers to increase enrollment capacities. 2(b). Revise academic needs scoring to prioritize academic placements for inmates within 5 years of release. 2(c). Create monthly audit report to identify noncompliance with priority ranking. 2(d). Implement quarterly TABE, PreGED and GED testing program. 2(e). Implement graduation ceremony for GED graduates and permit offenders' families to attend when security requirements permit it. 2(f). Establish volunteer literacy programs to enable inmates to secure academic instruction during off-duty hours.	Ongoing 1/1/2010 9/1/2010 and monthly thereafter Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
	2(g) Award 60 days of educational incentive gain time to 85%'ers for securing a GED. 2(h) Encourage and/or facilitate local education agencies in establishing academic education programs. 2(i) Ensure that students are available to attend classes for at least 3 hours per day. 2(i) Do not assign/transfer inmates who do not have GEDs to institutions that do not have academic education programs.	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing
3. Provide inmates who do not have current economy-based employment skills with opportunities to secure career and technical education training prior to release.	3(a) – Submit legislative budget requests to secure state funding for additional vocational teachers to increase enrollment capacities. 3(b). Revise vocational needs scoring to prioritize vocational placements for inmates within 3 years of release. 3(c). Create monthly audit report to identify noncompliance with priority ranking.	Ongoing 1/1/2010 9/1/2009 and monthly thereafter

	<p>3(d). Prioritize vocational training in fields the US Department of Labor and/or the Agency for Workforce Innovation have identified as high demand occupations in the State of Florida.</p> <p>3(e). Review current vocational program locations and transfer programs to maximize inmate participation based on vocational needs score.</p> <p>3(f). Revise Work Assignment Technical Manual to eliminate barriers to enrollment.</p> <p>3(g) Ensure that students are available to attend classes for at least 6 hours per day.</p> <p>3(h). Award 60 days of educational gain time to 85%'ers for completing vocational program.</p> <p>3(i). Encourage and/or facilitate partnerships with local education agencies, businesses, and industry/trade associations in establishing vocational programs.</p> <p>3(j). Increase PRIDE program slots.</p> <p>3(k) Do not assign/transfer inmates who need vocational training to institutions that do not have vocational training programs.</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
4. Increase effectiveness of slot utilization by targeting inmates closer to release for substance abuse treatment.	<p>4(a). Adjust substance abuse priority ranking system from ranking inmates who are within 6 six years of release to ranking inmates within 3 years or less of release.</p> <p>4(b). Create monthly audit report to identify noncompliance with priority ranking.</p>	<p>1/15/2010</p> <p>6/15/2009</p>
5. Enhance current Resource Directory (s) and develop web-based utilization.	<p>5(a). Collect and verify current resource provider information.</p> <p>5(b). Create e-mail mailbox to collect service provider information.</p> <p>5(c). Incorporate Community Corrections and OBIS directories into master list.</p> <p>5(d). Enter information into an acceptable format for web-based directory.</p> <p>5(e). Create web linkages to easy navigation.</p> <p>5(f). Create web-overlay pages to be used by Release Officers in creation of Inmate Release/Transition Plan.</p> <p>5(g). Maintain resource provider information.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>6/15/2009</p> <p>1/15/2010</p> <p>1/15/2010</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>2/15/2010</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

6. Complete and submit SSI/SSDI applications for at least 90% of inmates with severe and persistent mental illness and psychotic disorders.	6(a). Provide SSI/SSDI application training to mental health reentry staff.	Ongoing
	6(b). Establish aftercare coordinators.	2/15/2010
	6(c). Maintain relationships with SSA.	Ongoing
7. For those inmates with mental illnesses, schedule aftercare appointment for at least 95% of inmates.	7(a). Establish aftercare coordinators.	2/15/2010
	7(b). Maintain MOA with Department of Children & Families	Ongoing
	7(c). Foster supportive relationships with community providers to improve aftercare planning.	Ongoing
8. Increase the number of Re-Entry Seminars provided.	8(a). Create service provider list.	Ongoing
	8(b). Train institution staff to provide local Re-Entry Seminars.	Ongoing
	8(c). Create partnerships with non-departmental agencies/organizations to offer Re-Entry Seminars.	Ongoing
	8(d). Develop policy and procedures to allow work release inmates to attend Community Correction job fairs.	1/15/2010
	8(e). Create OBIS code to track number of inmates attending non-departmental and Community Corrections job fairs.	9/15/2009
9. Revise and enhance the 100-Hour Transition Training Program curriculum.	9(a). Create and form focus groups.	9/15/2009
	9(b). Compile information received from focus groups.	11/15/2009
	9(c). Incorporate changes into curriculum.	1/10/2010
	9(d). Train coordinators and facilitators in new curriculum.	2/15/2010
	9(e). Create a self-study workbook.	6/15/2010
	9(f). Provide instruction for self-study course.	8/1/2010
	9(g). Update and enhance curriculum as needed.	Ongoing

Objective 5: Coordinate efforts with state agencies whose responsibilities intersect with reentry.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Identify agencies that impact reentry.	1(a). Review needs of exiting inmates. 1(b). Determine corresponding agencies and their services.	Ongoing Ongoing

2. Develop partnership agreements with agencies that impact reentry.	2(a). Determine what partnership agreements are currently in place.	3/1/2009
	2(b). Determine what partnership agreements are needed.	3/1/2009
	2(c). Establish relationship with various agencies.	Ongoing
	2(d). Develop needed partnership agreements.	Ongoing

Objective 6: Partner with faith-based and other non-profit organizations across the state that are actively engaged in the continuum of providing needed services to the targeted population.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Identify service providers that impact reentry.	1(a). Review needs of exiting inmates.	Ongoing
	1(b). Determine corresponding service providers and their services.	Ongoing
2. Develop partnership agreements with service providers that impact reentry.	2(a). Determine what partnership agreements are currently in place.	9/1/2009
	2(b). Determine what partnership agreements are needed.	10/1/2009
	2(c). Establish relationship with various service providers.	Ongoing
	2(d). Develop needed partnership agreements.	Ongoing

Administrative Performance Measures

Objective 1: Market and expand opportunities for media outlets to highlight and articulate the work of recidivism reduction.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Develop external reentry awareness.	1(a). Create information sheet for Legislature on reentry.	1/9/2009
	1(b). Create Helping Hands Handout for Legislature.	1/9/2009
	1(c). Highlight reentry efforts on Department public website.	2/28/2009
	1(d). Create reentry handouts/ brochures.	3/15/2009
	1(e). Hold DeMilly CI press conference.	3/20/2009
	1(f). Develop and implement reentry survey to evaluate public perception.	10/15/2009

Objective 2: Increase legislative and public support for recidivism reduction efforts.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Shift legislative, judicial and public opinion to support reentry and justice reinvestment.	1. Continually update legislature and their staff that reentry is a Department priority.	Ongoing
2. Track progress and provide input to the Correctional Policy Advisory Council.	2. Continually follow-up with key stakeholders.	Ongoing

Objective 3: Maintain a well-trained and effective workforce.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Develop internal staff awareness and training about reentry.	1(a). Develop reentry video seminars.	12/15/2008
	1(b). Incorporate reentry measures into staff performance evaluations and position descriptions.	2/1/2009
	1(c). Create Office of Re-Entry Intranet website.	2/1/2009
	1(d). Create a close management/protective management reentry video	2/1/2009
	1(e). Create reception video.	2/15/2009
	1(f). Develop reentry logo, slogan, pamphlets and posters.	3/1/2009
	1(h). Create Secretary's Leadership video.	6/1/2009
	1(g). Create "Reality Re-Entry" section in the Compass.	6/15/2009

Objective 4: Foster partnerships to assist in providing prevention, intervention and diversionary services to at-risk individuals, offenders and ex-offenders.

TASKS TO ACHIEVE MEASURE	OUTPUT	TIMELINE
1. Increase the number and type of diversionary program available to Judges for alternative sentences.	1(a). Advocate for statutory changes regarding alternative sentences.	Ongoing
	1(b). Target and meet with Judicial Circuits and offer program alternatives.	Ongoing
	1(c). Update Probation and Restitution Centers Department Rule 33-504.101.	9/15/2009
	1(d). Develop request for proposals for Probation and Restitution Centers services.	Ongoing



Chapter 4: Conclusion

The Florida Department of Corrections will be the leader in coordinating and implementing changes to improve inmates' and offenders' chances of living crime-free lives. The methods used to increase public safety will be fact-based. Community Corrections and Institutional Recidivism Reduction approaches will work in a coordinated fashion and will be given equal weight. Both approaches will be flexible and adaptable when changes occur with the dynamics of either inmates or offenders in the community.

The Department, however, cannot be the major catalyst in reducing recidivism in our communities. That responsibility will ultimately rest with the individual. Comprehension of morality and values must be instilled by families first, and then supported by the communities in which they live. Adults who wait until their children are older to guide them away from drugs, crime and violence allow delinquent peers to have more of an influence on their children's decision to live a life of crime.

Gaining an understanding of personal responsibility from accountable family members will increase our youth's chances of staying out of the criminal justice system. This can only happen if family members step forward and take a more positive role in their children's upbringing. For those individuals who have fallen, and are now a part of the criminal justice system, positive family support and guidance will be necessary in order to break the cycle of crime.

Neighborhoods and communities must also set the right tone by not tolerating repeat criminal behavior and being steadfast in their support of law enforcement's efforts to keep our shared communities safe. Family members, community leaders, and Department staff

can offer assistance to individuals who have had enough of the drugs, violence and criminal actions that have led them to their current plight. When an inmate or an offender fails, there will be support, but that support will be contingent upon change and accepting of personal responsibility.

The Department will increase its role by forming strong partnerships and attaining the necessary support to get more inmates and offenders linked to the necessary support resources they will need to be successful after they leave our system. However, it will be up to the individual to take the lessons they have learned, the skills they have earned, and to put them to good use back in their neighborhoods.

Citizens' support for reducing recidivism will begin to build once our plan of action begins to show results. The taxpayers of Florida will demand a return for their support and investment in recidivism reduction efforts, and that will occur by witnessing less crime and a reduction in our rate of repeat criminal behavior. This will be no easy feat, and must be realized through our coordinated plan of action. We will continually highlight what steps are being initiated and what programs are attaining successful results. Our planning, and subsequent performance measurements, will be keys to sustaining the support necessary to ensure our work does not become just a temporary measure, but enduring crime prevention.



Appendix A: Re-Entry Advisory Council

In June 2008, the FDC created the Re-Entry Advisory Council comprised of state and local leaders, representatives of relevant agencies, service providers, non profit organizations, and other key stakeholders. Chaired by Secretary Walter A. McNeil, the Council was tasked with the development of a Re-Entry Strategic Plan that will guide the State of Florida (Appendix B). The goal of the Re-Entry Advisory Council was to develop and implement a coordinated and comprehensive continuum of care for those who need assistance to successfully reintegrate back into society.

The Council recommended policy and other changes leading to a coordinated effort that will provide risk and needs assessments, support accountability and promote self-sufficiency, encourage family and community participation in the individual reentry process. It is also tasked with examining ways to more efficiently use resources that promote lower recidivism rates for returning offenders.

NAME	Office/Title
Secretary Walt McNeil Chair	Secretary Florida Department of Corrections
Vicki Lopez Lukis Vice-Chair	Executive Director Girls Advocacy Project, Inc.
Randy Ball for Jerry McDaniel	Coordinator Public Safety Unit
Robert Blount	President Abe Brown Ministries
Catherine J. Chadeayne	Re-entry Coordinator Jacksonville Sheriff's Office
Allison DeFoor	Statewide Coordinator Earthbalance
Senator Paula Dockery	Senator Florida Senate
Chairman Fred Dunphy	Chairman Florida Parole Commission
Emery Gainey for Attorney General Bill McCollum	Director of Law Enforcement Relations Victims Services & Criminal Justice Programs Office of the Attorney General
Kevin Gay	Executive Director Operation New Hope, Inc.
Raeanne Hance	Executive Director Prison Fellowship

NAME	Office/Title
Gretchen Howard	President Florida Network of Victim Witness Services
Representative Kurt Kelly	Representative Florida House of Representatives
Frank Kopczynski	Chairman Pinellas Ex-Offender Re-entry Coalition (PERC)
Thomas Lanahan III	Community Job Development Coordinator Broward Sheriff's Department
The Honorable Steve Leifman	Associate Administrative Judge Special Advisor on Criminal Justice & Mental Health
Henree Martin	Developer Developer's Realty & Investment Properties, Inc
The Honorable Melanie May	Judge Fourth District Court of Appeal
Newton Sanon	Executive Director OIC of Broward County, Inc.
Tom Pierce for Secretary George Sheldon	Director Office on Homelessness Department of Children and Families
Lois Scott	Manager Agency for Workforce Innovation
Bernadette Woody	Director Gainesville Housing Authority



Appendix B: Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations

The Re-Entry Advisory Council was comprised of four workgroups that met over several months to develop key recommendations to guide development of the FDC's *Recidivism Reduction Plan*. In addition the Council provided recommendation that focused on victim issues, public relations/media and other important topics. Their recommendations are provided below.

Victim Issues

Recommendation 1: Increase victim safety through comprehensive inmate planning that includes victim issues.

- a. Provide introduction letters to all registered victims to include information about the status of the offender, the offender's location, and the projected release date. The letter should also include person(s) or agency(ies) to contact if they have questions or concerns; protective order application and issuance; available medical and mental health services; restitution; and conditions of the offender's release.
- b. Develop procedures that allow the victim, at their request, a dialogue with an inmate. This should include utilizing trained staff and community volunteers to facilitate the process.
- c. Develop and implement a victim awareness program utilizing the National Association of Victim Assistance model.
- d. Develop partnerships with communities that provide inmates opportunities for supportive services to reduce their chance of recidivism.

Workgroup 1: Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Co-Occurring Disorders

Recommendation 2: Create sentencing structures and re-entry programs to more effectively transition offenders with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders from prison to the community.

- a. Create new statutory provisions for re-entry supervision.
- b. Amend existing statutes to provide for modifications to conditional release eligibility and drug offender probation.
- c. Create re-entry programs targeting individuals with mental illnesses in particular.

Recommendation 3: Improve screening and assessment procedures, at reception, to ensure early identification of inmates with mental health and/or substance abuse treatment needs.

- a. Utilize evidence-based procedures to screen inmates for mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders upon admission to the Department of Corrections.
- b. Utilize standardized referral mechanisms for follow-up mental health and/or substance abuse assessments and evaluations.
- c. Define procedures to develop comprehensive and individualized service plans based on results of assessments and evaluations.

- d. Develop interagency information systems that will facilitate early identification of inmates with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders, as well as continuity of care across treatment settings and systems, while preserving state and federal privacy requirements.

Recommendation 4: Provide inmates necessary pre- and post-release services to ensure adequate availability of appropriate mental health and/or substance abuse treatment.

- a. Implement specialized training for correctional staff targeting the unique needs and circumstances of incarcerated individuals experiencing mental health and/or substance use disorders.
- b. Develop evidence-based and best practices programs that correspond to the assessed needs of inmates with mental illness and/or substance use disorders.
- c. Provide ongoing review of individual service plans, to occur at least every six (6) months.
- d. Create a risk assessment screening tool to be administered six (6) months prior to release for use in re-entry planning and placement determination.
- e. Ensure that treatment is received at the optimal time prior to the inmate's reentry into the community.
- f. Utilize a hotline assistance program to support offenders with substance abuse, mental health, and co-occurring disorders as the re-enter the community.

Recommendation 5: Provide early and efficient linkages to community based services for inmates with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders returning to the community.

- a. Screen for history of benefits upon admission to the Department of Corrections to target individuals who need benefits reinstated, as opposed to initially applied for, upon release.
- b. Begin the Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and Medicaid benefit application process prior to release for all eligible inmates.
- c. Provide assistance to inmates in completing applications necessary to access benefits and services prior to release.
- d. Support efforts to "suspend" rather than "terminate" benefits for incarcerated individuals to facilitate reinstatement upon release.
- e. Support efforts to establish programs to provide upfront *gap funding* for individuals awaiting approval of SSI/SSDI benefits, pre-screened to meet eligibility criteria.
- f. Provide inmates with access to consumer information and education regarding mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders and effective treatments so that they can better understand and manage their illnesses.
- g. Employ the use of reentry support vouchers to allow offenders access to needed services.

- h. Link offenders eligible for Veterans services with the appropriate facility and ensure necessary paperwork is completed as part of the transition plan.

Recommendation 6: Reduce recidivism by supporting the creation of additional treatment capacity targeted to serve offenders with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders.

- a. Increase the number of inmates and offenders who receive comprehensive mental health and/or substance abuse treatment prior to release from prison or completion of their term of community supervision by funding and increasing the number of available treatment slots/beds.
- b. Increase community-based re-entry service capacity to provide mental health and/or substance abuse treatment and support services immediately upon release from prison.
- c. Support efforts to create a system of post-release “follow-up” for inmates with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders returning to the community to ensure successful linkages to and ongoing engagement in necessary services and supports, including but not limited to, housing, medications, treatment, and case management.
- d. Upon passage and implementation of the Supreme Court Mental Health Initiative (see Recommendation 8 below), ensure that all inmates with serious mental illnesses or co-occurring serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders, who meet program criteria, are released to placements that provide enhanced levels of services and supports.
- e. Support efforts to expand the use of clubhouses using the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD) model.
- f. Increase the number of peer-led support groups to address health, mental health, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.

Recommendation 7: Increase available funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment through the Criminal Justice Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Act.

- a. Expand the use of, and increase appropriations for, grant programs to include re-entry initiatives specifically targeted for felony offenders on community supervision or felony offenders released from prison.
- b. Appropriate funds for grants to plan, implement and enhance holistic re-entry initiatives that include mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, education, vocation and transition programming for felony offenders/inmates.

Recommendation 8: Reduce parole/probation violations and recommitments to prison by expanding and enhancing community supervision for offenders with mental illnesses and/or substance abuse disorders, and reducing barriers to compliance with and successful termination of parole/probation.

- a. Increase drug offender, and create mental health, probation officers.

- b. Support efforts to implement specialized probation officers with reduced case loads, trained specifically to monitor the needs of ex-offenders with mental illnesses and/or substance abuse disorders.
- c. Train all probation officers on appropriate re-entry evidenced-based and best practices initiatives and incorporate training as an annual requirement.
- d. Support efforts to implement local mapping strategies to identify communities where large numbers of parolees and probationers reside, to ensure the availability and accessibility of parole/probation offices.
- e. Develop interagency information systems that will facilitate information sharing, while preserving state and federal privacy requirements.

Recommendation 9: Support efforts to implement recommendations from the Supreme Court of Florida Mental Health Initiative to ensure effective and sustainable community-based system of mental health and substance abuse treatment (Mental Health: Transforming Florida's Mental Health System, November 14, 2007).

- a. Support efforts to focus on individuals entering the forensic mental health system, and divert those not presenting significant public safety risks to less expensive community-based services incorporating enhanced levels of services for individuals with mental illnesses or co-occurring mental illnesses and substance use disorders.
- b. Support efforts to develop collaborations between communities, jails, the prison system, and state mental health facilities to support community re-entry.
- c. Support efforts to reinvest general revenue appropriations allocated to the state forensic system into community-based mental health and substance abuse services targeting individuals at risk of criminal justice system involvement.
- d. Support efforts to create incentives to prevent individuals from inappropriately entering the justice system, and to quickly respond to individuals who do become involved in the justice system.
- e. Support efforts to establish a Statewide Leadership Group to provide administrative oversight and facilitate technical assistance with the development of state and local plans.

Health

Recommendation 10: Develop a continuum of care for inmates transitioning back into the community with complex medical issues.

- a. Develop a process that will assist acute and/or chronic medically ill inmates with aftercare placement.
- b. Develop a comprehensive discharge plan for inmates with acute and/or chronic medical illness who are difficult to place due to their offense and are within six (6) months of end of sentence.
- c. Provide case manager(s) for each region of the state to assist institutions with release management of those inmates with complex medical issues.
- d. Expand the Department of Health and Department of Corrections interagency agreement to provide HIV-STD services to inmates while incarcerated.

- e. Identify and develop a directory of health organizations in the community to provide referral resources.

Workgroup 2: Education, Vocation & Post-Release Employment

Education

Recommendation 11: Increase the number of General Educational Development (GED) certificates received by inmates.

- a. Develop a plan to determine which inmates have education levels below the ninth grade requirement so as they can participate in GED programs.
- b. Expand the Department of Corrections Reading Initiative to inmates with a TABE score of seventh grade or lower.

Vocation

Recommendation 12: Improve the number of post-release employment opportunities through pre-release vocational programming.

- a. Develop a vocational training plan that correlates with those professions included in the Agency for Workforce Innovation labor market studies.
- b. Provide vocational assessments at intake that identify appropriate placement in vocational programming as early as possible.

Recommendation 13: Align PRIDE mission with the Florida Department of Corrections Re-Entry Strategic Plan.

- a. Research educational/vocational training programs throughout the country to ascertain if PRIDE is the best provider for these services.
- b. Request the Legislature to review the PRIDE Vocational Training program to determine whether it best suits the needs of Florida.
- c. Complete assessment of PRIDE products to determine how to best market the products produced.
- d. Develop programs to increase sales of PRIDE products to State Agencies in Florida.
- e. Increase the number of inmates that participate in PRIDE programs.
- f. Support expansion of the PRIDE transition program.
- g. Support legislation to amend PRIDE statutes to transfer PIE certificates to the Department of Corrections.

Post-Release Employment

Recommendation 14: Increase the number of successful post-release employment placements.

- a. Enhance partnerships with Florida's workforce system and develop partnerships with employers to provide pre-release support and preparation.
- b. Obtain statutory authority to empower the Department of Corrections to issue valid identification cards to all released inmates, which would be acceptable to other State Agencies.

- c. Assist inmates with obtaining Florida Identification Cards and Social Security Cards prior to release.
- d. Assist inmates with job search and placement prior to release.
- e. Provide inmates and potential employers with Federal Bonding and Tax Credit information.
- f. Amend Florida Statutes that address statutory requirements and authority for imposing restoration of rights requirements for public employment and licensure.
- g. Enact a law that defines a proper screening process for applicants with a criminal history to provide public safety while affording offenders employment opportunities.
- h. Develop partnerships with Florida's Community College system to secure vocational training and potential financial aid for ex-offenders.

Recommendation 15: Increase the number of inmate's eligible for Work Release.

- a. Review Work Release eligibility criteria and modify if appropriate so as more inmates have the opportunity to participate in Work Release.
- b. Increase the number of available Work Release beds to accommodate the number of eligible inmates.
- c. Develop work release centers in communities in which the greatest numbers ex-offenders return home.

Workgroup 3: Criminal Thinking & Mentoring Workgroup

Criminal Thinking

Recommendation 16: Develop a mandatory minimum standard for the 100-Hour Transition Training program and alternative programs.

- a. Provide information regarding Criminal Thinking tenets to community-based organizations involved in ex-offender transitional services.
- b. Include a mandatory component of Criminal Thinking to the 100-Hour Transition Training program and alternative programs.

Mentoring

Recommendation 17: Expand faith- and character-based institutions and/or dorms, to the maximum extent possible.

Recommendation 18: Develop Departmental policy that incorporates mentors into the pre-release planning for inmates.

- a. Improve the coordination and communication between FDC staff and mentors to ensure post-release planning goals are approved and supported.
- b. Develop a Departmental policy that limits transfers, when possible, for inmates participating in a Mentor Program.
- c. Develop a Departmental policy that establishes a statewide timeframe for allowing volunteers and mentors into the institutions (i.e., any policy would be dependent on available staff to escort inmates safely to program areas).

- d. Revise Departmental policy to allow former inmates to mentor and be used as motivational speakers to current inmates, as is the case with the Florida International University (FIU) Transition Program.

Recommendation 19: Establish a Faith-Based Consortium to coordinate mentors for inmates and offenders reentering the community.

Workgroup 4: Housing, Offender Supervision / Programs & Civil Rights Restoration Workgroup

Civil Rights Restoration

Recommendation 20: Reduce the timeframe for processing Restoration of Civil Rights cases (RCR).

- a. Request additional positions to address the pending RCR cases.
- b. Network with Universities and Community Colleges to utilize interns for additional assistance in processing RCR cases.
- c. Disseminate RCR information and provide training to county jails, Community Corrections field offices, community-based organizations, and federal, state and county agencies.
- d. Restore funding for two bilingual employees to answer the RCR toll free number.

Supervision

Recommendation 21: Increase the percentage of offenders who successfully complete supervision.

- a. Revise FDC procedures to include early termination criteria similar to provisions in Section 948.04, Florida Statutes. Use early termination and reduced reporting requirements to the court or Parole Commission as incentives for offenders to comply with conditions of supervision.
- b. Expand existing programs (i.e. Probation and Restitution Center, Day Reporting Centers, other community programs) to incorporate non-residential services to provide the judiciary a means to address offenders who do not require residential services, but may need other programming.
- c. Train all Community Corrections staff and selected community-based organizations on Motivational Interviewing techniques.
- d. Increase information sharing between community-based programs and FDC relating to offenders under supervision and ex-offenders.
- e. Implement an Individualized Supervision Plan (ISP) for all offenders who are admitted to supervision.
- f. Measure ISP completion as it relates to the outcome of supervision and identify the key elements necessary for successful reintegration.

Recommendation 22: Propose legislation that authorizes probation/parole officers to employ/impose graduated sanctions in lieu of filing a violation of probation/parole.

Housing

Recommendation 23: Increase housing resources available for offenders on supervision and/or ex-offenders.

- a. Request funding for additional 300 beds in Faith- and Character-Based Residential Programs.
- b. Expand FDC outreach to include a variety of Faith Based Organizations to provide residential programming.
- c. Request funding for a pilot project to develop a re-entry strategy with communities that have the most need for ex-offender housing by collaborating with State, County, and community agencies.
- d. Conduct a study to identify barriers to housing for ex-offenders (e.g., including up-front costs, rent subsidies, exclusionary housing policies, and mental and physical disabilities) and provide recommendations to eliminate those barriers.
- e. Conduct a study on the impact of housing restrictions for sex offenders and recommend solutions.
- f. Enact a law that establishes residency distance limitations for sex offenders which supersedes those included in any municipal or county ordinances.

Programs

Recommendation 24: Develop and implement to ensure a seamless and successful transition/re-entry system for offenders under supervision and ex-offenders.

- a. Provide evidence based transition/re-entry programs that foster personal growth, accountability, self-reliance, education, treatment, life skills, work place skills, and the maintenance of family and community relationships.
- b. Develop and strengthen formal partnerships with state, county, and community stakeholders to coordinate re-entry efforts and provide a linkage for inmates prior to release.
- c. Establish virtual case managers that will be available, via phone or e-mail, to assist the ex-offenders with specific questions regarding services in their community.

Recommendation 25: Establish programs that increase pre-release family involvement including connections with children of the incarcerated.

- a. Develop a procedure at intake for those inmates with current child support orders that will allow them to suspend / modify child support obligations during incarceration.
- b. Consolidate debt, fines and fees (along with child support) into reasonable payment schedules.
 - i. Consider revising the Court Ordered Payment System to permit payments upon on conclusion of regular supervision period for costs other than restitution, which should be paid prior to end of supervision.

- ii. Establish an advisory role with the courts to share employment challenges that ex-offenders face that prohibit them from paying substantial awards that create false hope to victims of re-payment.
- c. Develop a set of correctional and re-entry results and a set of outcomes to measure systems performance.

Recommendation 26: Improve and maintain the Computer Assisted Reception Process (CARP) and Inmate Based Information System (OBIS) that assesses inmates for transition/re-entry program needs and assign inmates accordingly.

Public Relations / Community Education

Recommendation 27: Educate the public regarding offender needs during re-entry, and the value of community support to impact public safety, save tax dollars, and reduce recidivism.

Recommendation 28: Coordinate and encourage FDC staff to participate in: Statewide, City or County re-entry coalitions or task forces, neighborhood crime watch meetings, local law enforcement intelligence meetings, and criminal justice coordinating council meetings to discuss reentry issues, offender issues and ways to prevent crime.

Recommendation 29: Educate State and Local leaders to obtain and or enhance their support for re-entry programs.

Other

Recommendation 30: Establish regional Re-Entry Centers to provide comprehensive transitional services, including, but not limited to, faith- and character-based components.

Recommendation 31: Restore funding for Transition Assistant Specialists (TAS) at each institution to ensure coordination and continuity of re-entry services.

- i. Require TAS to provide specified resources and assistance to inmates being released to the community. Inmates preparing to return to the community need extensive assistance with valid identification, employment skills, education skills, job placement, food, clothes, housing, appropriate medical/mental health care, substance abuse treatment along with many other vital links to the community at large.

Recommendation 32: Support efforts to reduce the effect of court associated fees on individuals re-entering their community.

- a. Support a proposal that would impose a moratorium on new court fees levied against criminal defendants until their impact on reentry is fully understood.
- b. Support a proposal that permits a waiver of financial obligations based on indigence.
- c. Support a proposal that limits the use of driver's license suspension to enforce court debt obligations.

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