



# RE-ENTRY

## Advisory Council

### 2010 Report



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
STATE OF FLORIDA

**I**N June 2008, the Florida Department of Corrections took steps to develop a coordinated approach to reducing recidivism in Florida. As a part of this focused effort, I established a volunteer advisory council to assist in the development of a statewide strategy. The recommendations in this report reflect the passionate commitment of the three work groups of the Re-Entry Advisory Council, who worked with diligence to address barriers for ex-offenders as they reenter into the free world to begin life anew. The Council's charge was to ensure and improve public safety by making recommendations to maximize existing resources by creating interdisciplinary approaches that will support ex-offender's successful re-integration into the community and reduce recidivism.

All indications are that there is a desire by not only our Legislative leaders, but also supported by the business community, to work smarter in utilizing our resources to more effectively address the many needs of the people who return to prison each year with an overall outcome to further reduce the revolving door cycle of recidivism. We must continue to move toward a more proactive commitment to prevent ex-offenders from returning to prison a second or even a third time. We must provide appropriate training and educational opportunities that focus on rehabilitation while reserving serious sanctions for violent and habitual offenders.

Public safety is always our first mission but we also must balance that by providing services to help those who leave our institutions to become productive members of society and to positively assimilate into their families and their communities.

The work of the Council is the result of collaboration with the Department of Corrections' staff, community providers, key stakeholders, community leaders, law enforcement and court officials. I especially want to thank each of these groups for their concern and commitment to the issues facing ex-offenders.

These recommendations validate this group's commitment to ensure public safety through successful, well-managed reentry of ex-offenders into society. Recognizing that there may be limitations in committing to all of the recommendations in this report and that many of them fall within the purview of other agencies or refer to legislative authority or policy decisions; I am looking forward to working with the incoming Governor and Legislative leadership to continue discussions on the most appropriate and effective ways to ensure a safer Florida and reduce the revolving-door cycles of crime.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Walter McNeil'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Chief Walter McNeil, Secretary  
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# Executive Summary

Eighty-eight percent of all inmates incarcerated in Florida will eventually be released.<sup>1</sup> On June 30, 2010, there were 102,232 persons incarcerated by the Department of Corrections. During fiscal year 2009-2010, 36,463 inmates completed their sentences and were released back into our communities. Approximately one-third of those released inmates are projected to return to prison within three years.<sup>2</sup> Over the past decade, the number of offenders supervised in the community has increased by 10 percent. On July 31, 2010, 152,182 offenders in our communities were being supervised by Probation Officers. During fiscal year 2008-2009, 17,023 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 (OPPAGA) 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.<sup>3</sup> 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. Effective reentry is the key to reducing recidivism and subsequently increasing public safety.

In June 2008, the Florida Department of Corrections took the initial steps to develop a coordinated systems approach to offender reentry. To achieve this goal, Secretary McNeil formed the Re-Entry Advisory Council to assist in the development of a statewide strategy to improve reentry efforts and reduce recidivism in the State of Florida. In early 2009, the Council submitted recommendations to address barriers to successful reentry to Secretary McNeil.

The Department used those recommendations to craft its five-year Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan, released in June 2009. In October 2009, the Department of Corrections received a \$750,000 Second Chance Act grant to provide comprehensive reentry services to inmates returning to Jacksonville, Florida. A portion of the grant allocated funds to continue the Re-Entry Advisory Council and support its efforts.

Based on the requirements of the Second Chance Act grant, the Re-Entry Advisory Council's mission is to prepare a report that includes an analysis of best practices in offender reentry as it relates to statewide reentry, examine ways to more efficiently utilize resources that promote lower recidivism rates for releasing inmates; and assist the Office of Re-Entry in monitoring the progress being made on the Recidivism Reduction Plan.

To facilitate the Re-Entry Advisory Council assignment, Secretary McNeil created three workgroups based on the Council members' geographic location. Each workgroup was assigned a chapter of the Governor Bush's Ex-Offender Task Force report to review and for which to center their discussions. The three workgroups met throughout the summer 2010 discussing the state of reentry in Florida since the Task Force Report was published in 2006. The results of the Council's hard working summer are recommendations encompassing thirteen areas that effect inmate and offender reentry found in Chapter 3 of this report.

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# Introduction

## About the Council

In June 2008, the Florida Department of Corrections took the initial steps to develop a coordinated systems approach to offender reentry. To this end, Secretary McNeil appointed various individuals to the Re-Entry Advisory Council to assist in the development of a statewide strategy to improve reentry efforts and reduce recidivism in the State of Florida. Members of the council include representatives from state agencies, the branches of the criminal justice system, and community-based service providers. In early 2009, the Council submitted a list of 32 barriers to successful reentry and potential solutions to Secretary McNeil. The Department used those recommendations to create a five-year Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan, which it released in June 2009. During the summer of 2009, members of the Council worked in partnership with the Department's Legislative Affairs staff to develop reentry legislation for the 2010 Legislative Session. In October 2009, the Department of Justice awarded the Department of Corrections, in partnership with the City of Jacksonville \$750,000 to provide comprehensive reentry services to inmates returning to Jacksonville, Florida. The grant also allocated funds to continue the Re-Entry Advisory Council and support its efforts.

## Council Mission

The Re-Entry Advisory Council's mission was to prepare a report that includes an analysis of best practices in offender reentry as it relates to statewide reentry, examine ways to more efficiently utilize resources that promote lower recidivism rates for releasing inmates; and assist the Office of Re-Entry in monitoring the progress being made on the Recidivism Reduction Plan.

## Council Roles and Expectations

Secretary McNeil, recognizing the important role the Re-Entry Advisory Council plays in the Department's reentry efforts, expanded the role of the Council in June 2010 to include:

- Preparation of a report that includes an analysis of barriers that impede successful reentry, recommended solutions to more effectively utilize resources that lower recidivism, while promoting public safety, and identifies potential funding sources to further reentry in Florida. The report will be used as a catalyst to guide the Department of Corrections' future reentry efforts.
- Monitoring the progress the Department of Corrections makes in implementing the five-year Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan. The status of the Department's implementation of the plan is included as Appendix one of this report.

## Council Plan of Action

In order to complete the assigned report, the Re-Entry Advisory Council reviewed the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Report that was published in November 2006. Governor Bush's Ex-Offender Task Force (Task Force) was created in February 2005 to help improve the effectiveness of the State of Florida in facilitating the reentry of ex-offenders into their communities in order to reduce recidivism. The Task Force's report provided a valuable starting place for the Council's work in 2010 as it succinctly identifies the needs of Florida's inmate and offender population and barriers to their successful reintegration into their home communities.

The Task Force's report is broken into three chapters: Chapter 1: The Prison Experience; Chapter 2: Coming Home; and Chapter 3: Organizing Reentry Reform Work in 2007 and Beyond. To facilitate the Re-Entry Advisory Council assignment and using the Task Force report as a guide, Secretary McNeil created three workgroups based on the Council members' geographic location. Each workgroup was assigned a chapter of the Task Force report to review and for which to center their discussions. The three workgroups met throughout the summer 2010 discussing the state of reentry in Florida since the Task Force Report was published in 2006. The result of the Council's hard working summer is presented in this report.

# Barriers that Impede Successful Reentry

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 2009-10, only 34 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.

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 are 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.

The barriers described in the paragraphs above are not new. They hold true across the country. It is important to note that the State of Florida and the Department of Corrections have made great strides in combating existing barriers and better enabling successful reentry statewide. The following paragraphs describe specific barriers in Florida, but they also show the many efforts that have been made to remove these barriers.

## Academic Education

Studies have found that participation in prison education, job training, and placement programs are associated with improved outcomes, including reduced recidivism.<sup>4</sup> In a study of corrections-based education, vocation, and work programs, recidivism was 29 percent lower among education program participants than among nonparticipants.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, that same research also found that individuals who participated in prison education programs earned higher wages upon release than nonparticipants.<sup>7</sup>

The number of Florida state inmates earning Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) certificates has nearly doubled in three years, increasing from 1,313 GEDs awarded in FY 2006-07 to 2,603 awarded in fiscal year 2009-10. Florida inmates who have a GED when they're released from prison recidivate at a rate 7.9 percent less than inmates overall, and their recidivism rate is 14 percent less for those with a vocational certificate.

### **Vocational Programming**

The Department has 84 career and technical education courses in 36 distinct career and technical education trades. These courses are offered at 36 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 35 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 at 8 institutions.

### **Substance Abuse**

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 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 (DCF). 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.<sup>12</sup> In FY 2008-09 drug related offenses accounted for 31.4 percent of 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.<sup>13</sup>

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.<sup>14</sup> 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 percent) 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 percent) less than that of drug offenders who did not receive treatment.

### **Health and Mental Health**

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.

### **Faith and Character-based Institutions**

Faith and character-based programming is a vital part of the Department's overall reentry initiative. Currently, the Department provides faith and character-based programs to inmates through dedicated dormitories or entire faith and character-based institutions. The Department has seven dedicated dormitories and four institutions.

In October 2009, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability (OPPAGA) reviewed the Department's Faith and Character Based programs and their effect on recidivism. In Report #09-38, OPPAGA noted that the prison-wide programs have a demonstrated positive effect on inmate institutional adjustment and institutional security, and a modest but positive effect on reducing the likelihood that inmates will reoffend. The dorm-based programs also have a positive effect on institutional adjustment and security; however, they do not have a demonstrated effect on inmate recidivism.

### **Family Ties and Reunification**

The Vera Institute of Justice has stated, "supportive families were an indicator of success across the board, correlating with lower drug use, greater likelihood of finding jobs, and reduced criminal activity."<sup>15</sup> 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.

### **Identification**

Lack of proper identification is one of the most common barriers in Florida. Identification is necessary for virtually all employment and many housing options require valid identification. Additionally, proper identification is required to obtain various forms of public assistance and transportation. The Real ID Act requires that individuals provide a *social security card, birth certificate* and *two proofs of address* to obtain an identification card. This is a trying process for the average law-abiding citizen. For the inmate it is almost impossible. The Department is working in collaboration with the Florida Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics to obtain a copy of birth certificates for inmates born in Florida. Furthermore, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles agrees to accept a letter from the Department listing the inmate's release address, which will satisfy the two proofs of residency requirement. The only remaining requirement for an identification card is a copy of the birth certificate. The Department is in the process of developing a Memorandum of Agreement with the Florida Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics to create a seamless system for inmates born in Florida to obtain a copy of their birth certificate. However not all inmates were born in Florida and there is a cost associated with obtaining the copy.

Approximately 55 percent of the inmate population incarcerated on January 1, 2010 was born in the State of Florida. The cost to obtain a Florida birth certificate is \$9.00. Florida's cost for a birth certificate is one of the lowest in the United States and territories – the average cost is \$15.60. New York has

the highest fee at \$30.00 and Puerto Rico has the lowest at \$5.00. If every inmate that is released from the Florida Department of Corrections during FY 2010-11 (based on forecasted release date) needed a birth certificate it would cost \$356,709.25.

The Department is implementing a pilot identification project at Demilly C.I., Lowell C.I. (females), and Baker C.I. In cooperation with the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and the Department of Health, Office of Vital Statistics the Department of Corrections will identify the documents that inmates nearing release need to obtain valid identification and assist the inmates in obtaining both the needed documentation (social security card, birth certificate) and the identification card prior to being released.

### **Employment**

It is an accepted fact that employment is an important need of most individuals; it provides income, social connection, feelings of societal contribution, and self worth. The barriers prisoners face upon reentering the community are well documented. For releasing offenders, employment can make the difference between succeeding and returning to prison. Research shows that employment is associated with reduced recidivism. Yet ex-offenders face significant barriers to employment after release from prison. Barriers include employer attitudes toward individuals with criminal records, legal barriers, educational and financial obstacles, substance abuse and health issues, and lack of stable housing. Therefore, these individuals have comparatively limited access to jobs offering career ladders, mobility, training, or job security. Historically, the lowest-paying, lowest-skilled jobs are the easiest for ex-offenders to secure.

The Urban Institute (2007) further reports that service providers felt that there are insufficient employment opportunities available to ex-offenders, because their skills are not compatible with jobs available in the community. Several stakeholders felt that job training available to prisoners or former prisoners does not reflect current employment opportunities and that the job training that does exist is often inadequate. Furthermore, more training opportunities should

be available in prison and that prisons should make available more certificate programs that train individuals in fields where job opportunities are available.

### **State and National Coordination**

There is only so much that can be done while an inmate is incarcerated or an offender is under the supervision of the Florida Department of Corrections. Therefore, community coordination and partnerships are vital to successful reentry. The Department has established many strong working relationships with community groups and other government agencies to enhance reentry and ensure a smooth transition back into the community. 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. The Department currently has existing agreements, partnerships and working relationships with approximately 14 Federal agencies, 57 Florida counties, more than 100 Florida cities, more than 20 other states and a large number of community based organizations. Following is a list of some existing agreements related directly to inmate reentry:

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

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.

# Recommendations

The recommendations contained in this report are the culmination of years of discussion, research, and hard work. Many of the barriers to successful reentry run the gamut and often overlap areas, agencies, and branches of government. As such, some of the recommendations below fall outside the purview of the Department of Corrections. ***Behind each recommendation there is a notation regarding the branch of government that would have primary responsibility for reviewing, accepting, and implementing the recommendation.***

## Academic Education Programs

- Focus on improving literacy and increasing the number of General Equivalency Diplomas statewide. ***Executive***
- Leverage technology to improve inmate education through virtual learning. ***Executive***
- Explore alternative education (i.e. local education district responsible for inmates within their respective districts similar to the Department of Juvenile Justice's practice). ***Executive***

## Vocation Programs

- Continue to align and expand the Department of Corrections' vocational programs with current labor market statistics to increase ex-offender employment potential. ***Executive***

## Mental Health and Substance Abuse

- Develop and implement a community mental health and substance abuse forensic treatment system through collaboration between the Department of Children and Families and the Agency for Health Care Administration. ***Executive***
- Continue to expand substance abuse through:
  - » increasing slots statewide both in prison and for offenders on community supervision ; and
  - » increasing the number of inmate facilitated 12 Step programs. ***Executive***

## Faith and Character-based Institutions

- Consider program needs and building design when siting new faith and character-based institutions. ***Executive***
- Move faith and character-based prisons toward a unique operational model and to ensure the consistency and standardization in selection criteria and program curriculum throughout the state. ***Executive***

## Family Ties/Reunification

- Use varied media technologies to expand communication between inmates and their families. ***Executive***

## Identification

- Review and consider repeal of laws that automatically suspend driver's licenses for non-driving related offenses. ***Executive & Legislative***

## Employment

- Require State vendors to give full and fair consideration in employment to those ex-offenders:
  - » who otherwise qualify in all respects for the position sought; and
  - » who do not impose a special risk to the city, fellow workers, or citizens, by virtue of the nature of the offense as it directly relates to the position sought; and
  - » who have demonstrated rehabilitation through documented work experience or having completed a rehabilitation program conducted for ex-offenders in regard to entrance employment skills and transition to the workforce. **Executive & Legislative**
- Require state agencies and regulatory boards to prepare reports that identify and evaluate restrictions on licensing and employment. **Executive**
- Decouple civil rights restoration from public employment and licensure. This would require legislation to decouple civil rights as a condition of eligibility for public employment or obtaining a license, permit, or certificate. Provisions would also be needed to allow a person to be disqualified from employment for conviction of a felony or first-degree misdemeanor if the offense was directly related to the job, license, permit, or certificate sought. **Legislative**

## Statewide Reentry Effort

- Establish a Governor's Reentry Task Force to review and coordinate efforts that reduce recidivism throughout the state of Florida. **Executive**
- Appoint a Special Advisor to the Governor to oversee the implementation of recommendations, interface with the legislature and coordinate statewide efforts of local reentry networks and identification of issues for consideration to ensure a seamless reentry process for all offenders returning to society. **Executive**

- Continue the Department of Corrections' Reentry Advisory Council and its efforts as required as part of the Second Chance Act grant awarded to the Department of Corrections. **Executive**
- Support the creation of an entity to conduct a comprehensive review of the criminal justice system. **Executive & Legislative**
- Continue the reentry program within the Department of Corrections, that includes post release treatment planning, special employee training, performance-based contracts supply services to program. Allow the Department to establish incentives to promote participation in rehabilitative programs, track recidivism and recommitment of participating inmates, and requires an annual report. **Executive**

## Public Safety Coordinating Councils

- Revise Section 951.26, F.S. to include a reentry subject matter expert on Public Safety Coordinating Councils. **Legislative**
- Establish and continue to support existing local reentry councils in Florida's judicial circuits.

## Memorandum of Agreements

- Allow the Re-Entry Advisory Council to suggest potential organizations the Department of Corrections may explore for future Memorandum of Agreements to further the reentry initiative. **Executive**

## Sentencing

- Explore sentencing laws that act as a barrier to reentry. Particularly focus on alternative sanctions. **Executive, Legislative, & Judicial**

## Data

- The Department of Corrections should release quarterly performance data related to its reentry program. **Executive**

## Funding Sources that Provide Solutions to Reentry Barriers

Funding Authority	Specific Source	Funding Topics	Overview
U.S. Department of Justice	Second Chance Act	Reentry; Mentoring; Reentry Courts;	The Second Chance Act furthers the commitment to providing services and programs to help facilitate the successful reintegration of offenders as they return to their communities.
U.S. Department of Labor	Employment, Labor and Training (ETA); Agency for Workforce Innovation	Job Training; Homelessness; Veterans; Apprenticeships; Green Jobs/Technology	Grants under the Department of Labor are designed to be flexible in addressing the national, regional, and/or local issues that prevent individuals from reintegrating back into the workforce.
U.S. Department of Education	Title I; Innovation & Improvement; Vocational Rehabilitation	Literacy; GED; Technology; Libraries;	Grants under the Department of Education are designed to support education, special education and research issues.
Annie E. Casey Foundation		Child Welfare; Community Change; Economic Securities; Justice; Leadership Development	The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization, dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States.
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation			The Knight Foundation invests in bright ideas and organizations with the potential for achieving transformational change. They help nurture an environment where social innovators can thrive.
Wal-Mart Foundation			Through the State Giving Program, the Wal-Mart Foundation supports organizations with programs that align with our mission to create opportunities so people can live better. The State Giving Program awards grants starting at \$25,000 to nonprofit organizations that serve a particular state or region.
The Pew Charitable Trusts			This project, operated by Pew, helps states advance fiscally sound, data-driven policies and practices in sentencing and corrections that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable and control costs.
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation			The Foundation is supporting efforts in key states to bring about changes in law, policy, and practice, thereby heightening interest and providing models for juvenile justice reform across the country. Specific areas of reform include greater use of evidence-based practices, improving aftercare and mental health services and increasing community-based alternatives to secure confinement. All sites are working to improve data collection and analysis for decision-making and to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities.
Costco Wholesale			For local organizations and groups, which focus on children, education or health and human services.
Collins Center for Public Policy		Justice Reform Issue Area	Facilitating dialog and advancing public policies for better ways to achieve a safer, more just, and more effective criminal justice system that is both fiscally and socially responsible and results in less crime, less public costs, and greater rehabilitative effect on offenders.

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# Comparison Chart of Recommendations

Recommendations from the following reports are charted for comparison below: Governor Bush's Ex-Offender Task Force Final Report, the Secretary's Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations and the Florida Department of Corrections Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan for Fiscal Year 2009-2014. The current status of these report recommendations are provided in the last column.

Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Recommendations	Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations	Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan	Status Update
<p><b>1</b>   The FDC mission statement should be revised to explicitly address successful reentry. To assess performance in achieving the goal of successful reentry, performance measures should be adopted for FDC, its facilities, and wardens and staff.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>In May 2008, FDC mission was changed to include reentry.</p>
<p><b>2</b>   A minimum of six more facilities should be transformed into faith- and character-based facilities with three completed by December 31, 2007 and three more by December 31, 2008.</p>	<p><b>17</b>   Expand faith- and character-based institutions and/or dorms, to maximum extent possible.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>In 2009, Glades CI was converted to faith- and character-based institution. Implementation of the "feeder" concept under development. As of May 2010, there are four FCBI, 7 FCB Dorms. Implementation of the self-study workbook has been launched.</p>
<p><b>3</b>   FDC should use a validated instrument for evaluation and assessment at reception for both security classification and reentry programming needs and develop an inmate program handbook describing available FDC inmate programs, and the rules and guidelines governing selection and eligibility and termination from programs.</p>	<p><b>26</b>   Improve and maintain the Computer Assisted Reception Process (CARP) and Inmate Based Information System (OBIS) that assesses inmate for transition/reentry program needs and assigns inmate accordingly.</p> <p><b>3</b>   Improve screening and assessment procedures, at reception, to ensure early identification of inmates with mental health and/or substance abuse treatment needs.</p>	<p><b>1</b>   Develop a validated, automated, integrated classification system that identifies risk, needs and strengths for all inmates/offenders at intake.</p>	<p>CINAS is operational; as of 8/22/10, 34,950 inmates have been assessed. RI/CINAS is under the purview of Classification; Brad Locke is the project director.</p>

Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Recommendations	Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations	Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan	Status Update
<p>4   FDC's capacity for basic and functional literacy, GED preparedness and vocational education should be expanded.</p>	<p>11   Increase the number of General Educational Development (GED) certificates received by inmates.</p>	<p>4   Provide inmates who do not have GEDs with opportunities to enroll in academic education programs prior to release.</p>	<p>During FY09-10, 2,603 GED Certificates were awarded. There were 17,961 inmates participating in correctional education classes in FY09-10.</p>
	<p>12   Increase the number of post-release employment opportunities through pre-release vocational programming.</p>	<p>5   Increase and document referrals that address offender needs (employment, education and other self-improvement programming).</p>	<p>During FY09-10, 1,850 Vocational Certificates were awarded. There were 4,524 inmates participating in correctional vocation classes in FY09-10.</p>
<p>5   FDC's capacity for the treatment of substance abuse and of co-occurring disorders should be expanded.</p>	<p>6   Reduce recidivism by supporting the creation of additional treatment capacity targeted to serve offenders with mental illnesses and/or substance abuse disorders.</p>	<p>3   Increase the number of offenders who successfully complete court ordered treatment (substance abuse, mental health, sex offender and Probation Restitution Centers).</p>	<p>Ongoing meetings and initiatives (e.g., E-Therapy in Circuit 2). The E-Therapy Pilot in Monticello began September 1, 2009.</p>
	<p>4   Provide necessary pre- and post-release services to ensure adequate availability of appropriate mental health and /or substance abuse treatment.</p>	<p>4   Increase effectiveness of slot utilization by targeting inmates closer to release for substance abuse treatment.</p>	<p>As of 8/22/2010, 22,309 inmates are in need of substance abuse services.</p>
<p>6   FDC should improve and expand job training through the maximization of third-party resources.</p>	<p>13   Align PRIDE mission with the Florida Department of Corrections Re-Entry Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>4   Provide inmates who do not have current economy-based employment skills with opportunities to secure career and technical education training prior to release.</p>	<p>During FY09-10, 1,850 Vocational Certificates were awarded. There were 4,524 inmates participating in correctional vocation classes in FY09-10.</p>
	<p>14   Increase the number of successful post-release employment placements.</p>		
<p>7   FDC should help inmates increase family contact and reduce financial strain on inmates' families.</p>	<p>25   Establish programs that increase pre-release family involvement including connections with children of the incarcerated.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>8   FDC should expand work release by outsourcing additional work release facilities.</p>	<p>15   Increase the number of inmate's eligible for Work Release.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>As of 8/27/2010, there are 3,992 work release beds, 600 work release beds are proposed.</p>

Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Recommendations	Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations	Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan	Status Update
<p>9   FDC should begin pre-release planning with inmates starting on their first day of incarceration and develop individualized reentry plans for each inmate.</p>	<p>24   Develop and implement to ensure a seamless and successful transition/reentry system for offenders under supervision and ex-offenders.</p>	<p>2   Ensure inmates are identified and placed in appropriate program slots.</p>	<p>As of 8/22/2010, 34,950 has been assessed through CINAS. Breakdown: RI1 - 13%, RI2 - 13%, RI3 - 13%, RI4 - 34%, RI5 - 27%.</p>
<p>9   Assist inmates being released from prison in obtaining Social Security cards and state identification cards or driver licenses.</p>	<p>14   Assist inmates with obtaining Florida Identification Cards and Social Security Cards prior to release.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>In 2009, MOA established with SSA to facilitate processing of applications from certain inmates for replacement Social Security number (SSN) cards.</p>
<p>9   Assist disabled inmates in applying for disability and Medicaid benefits prior to their release.</p>	<p>5   Provide early and efficient linkages to community based services for inmates with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders returning to the community.</p>	<p>4   Complete and submit SSI/SSDI application for at least 90% of inmates with severe and persistent mental illnesses and psychotic disorders.</p>	<p>Training provided successfully to staff by September 2009; Updated training program offered periodically for new Release Officers and Mental Health Staff; Applications for SSI/SSDI are an ongoing process.</p>
		<p>4   For those inmates with mental illness, schedule aftercare appointment for at least 95% of inmates.</p>	<p>Primary responsibility is Office of Health Services; Admission &amp; Release works closely with them and will continue to follow-up on their progress; Ongoing Process.</p>
	<p>10   Develop a continuum of care for inmates transitioning back into the community with complex medical issues.</p>	<p>5   Enhance continuity of care and services to address offenders' needs after release from prison/jail.</p>	<p>The Sex Offender Workgroup includes Office of Community Corrections, Release Management, Legal, Regional Operations Managers, Support Staff, Assistant Secretary of OCC, CP Supervisors, Circuit Administrators, PBA Reps, and Officers.</p>
<p>9   Develop an inmate discharge handbook that contains the inmate's individualized reentry plan and the programs and services available in his home community.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>4   Enhance current Resource Directory(s) and develop web-based utilizations.</p>	<p>As of 8/27/2010, there are 2,471 resources listed in the new directory.</p>

Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Recommendations	Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations	Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan	Status Update
<p><b>10</b> FDC should transform existing facilities in the communities to which the most inmates will be released into transition release centers that comprehensively prepare inmates for release; and as prisoners near the end of their sentence, FDC should transfer prisoners to facilities closer to their homes.</p>	<p><b>30</b> Establish regional Re-Entry Centers to provide comprehensive transitional services, including, but not limited to, faith- and character-based components.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Increase the number of Re-Entry Centers / Dorms.</p>	<p>Baker CI and DeMilly CI are operational; Polk CI and Sago Palm will be operational by the end of the year.</p>
<p><b>11</b> The State should create a "transition authority" that coordinates a seamless planning process and a continuum of services from FDC custody to the community to facilitate the successful reentry of people leaving FDC custody; it would develop policies and interagency agreements that spell out the roles of state agencies in this process and help coordinate the work of reentry at the community level.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>In September 2008, the Department created the Office of Re-Entry. The mission of the Office of Institutions and Re-Entry is to provide inmates and offenders with comprehensive programs and services that will assist in their successful re-entry into the community, thereby reducing recidivism while enhancing public safety, and promoting post-release success.</p>

Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Recommendations	Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations	Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan	Status Update
<p>12   The State should support the development and work of reentry at the community level to help local reentry planning and service delivery, test new ideas and approaches, and promote and replicate what is found to work in producing measurable outcomes, such as reduced recidivism.</p>	<p>24   Develop and implement to ensure a seamless and successful transition/reentry system for offenders under supervision and ex-offenders.</p>	<p>1   Increase successful outcomes by using evidenced-based practices.</p>	<p>Motivational Interviewing training completed 1/15/09; Refresher training was developed by OCC staff and submitted to Staff Development to post as elective online training for staff interested in additional Motivational Interviewing training.</p>
		<p>2   Expand outreach and partnership efforts with community (volunteers, mentors and office interns).</p>	<p>Each circuit has worked towards expanding partnerships and resources needed to assist offenders.</p>
		<p>5   Enhance continuity of care and services to address offenders' needs after release from prison/jail.</p>	<p>Approximately 500 release staff and sex offender officers statewide have been trained on the placement process.</p>
		<p>4   Review current literature and practices to determine best approaches to programming and performance outcomes.</p>	<p>Completed / Ongoing - As of August 2010; 2400 Community Corrections staff have been trained in Motivational Interviewing.</p>
		<p>4   Increase the number of Re-Entry Seminars.</p>	<p>Since January 2010, 685 inmates have participated in a Re-Entry Seminar; Outside Transition Fairs 188; Institutional Transition Fairs 58.</p>

Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Recommendations	Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations	Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan	Status Update
<p>12   Partnering and collaborating with Florida communities in the development of local reentry councils to coordinate reentry planning and services at the local level.</p>	<p>28   Coordinate and encourage FDC staff to participate in: Statewide, City or County reentry 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.</p>	<p>5   Coordinate efforts with state agencies whose responsibilities intersect with reentry.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>4   Foster partnerships to assist in providing prevention, intervention and diversionary services to at-risk individuals, offenders and ex-offenders.</p>	<p>Executive Leadership determined the Department had a sufficient number of partnership agreements in place. However, staff continues to develop partnership agreements as needed.</p> <p>As of 8/27/2010, there are 41,956 volunteers in the database, estimate that around 20,000 have been active within the last 12 months.</p> <p>Exploring changes needed to advocate for statutory changes regarding alternative sentences.</p>
<p>12   The Governor's Office appointing a reentry point-person charged with coordinating, with the transition authority and relevant state agencies, the continuum of services from FDC facilities through release to the community.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>13   The Legislature should prohibit the requirement that one have their civil rights restored as a condition for employment or licensing and instead create a single background check law, such as Chapter 435, with lists of disqualifying offenses relevant to the occupation, license or place of employment.</p>	<p>20   Reduce the timeframe for processing Restoration of Civil Rights cases (RCR).</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>14   The Legislature or Governor should re-commission the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force to continue the work it began in 2005.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Recommendations	Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations	Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan	Status Update
<p>15   The re-commissioned Task Force should study critical populations such as sex offenders, females, juvenile and mentally ill inmates and ex-offenders such as community supervision, graduated sanctions, the loss of civil rights upon conviction of a felony, and the over representation of African Americans among the inmate population with the aim of additional reform recommendations.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A
	<p>1   Increase victim safety through comprehensive inmate planning that includes victims issues.</p>	N/A	N/A
	<p>2   Create sentencing structures and reentry programs to more effectively transition offenders with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders from prison to the community.</p>	<p>3   Increase the number of offenders who successfully complete court ordered treatment (substance abuse, mental health, sex offender and Probation Restitution Centers).</p>	<p>Providing ongoing field staff enhancement regarding treatment systems and procedures (e.g., E-Therapy in Circuit 2). Each circuit participates in Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils and other committees to coordinate reentry resources and discuss alternative sanctions.</p>
	<p>7   Increase available funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment through the Criminal Justice Mental Health and Substance Abuse Reinvestment Act.</p>	N/A	N/A
	<p>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.</p>	<p>3   Increase the number of offenders who successfully complete court ordered treatment (substance abuse, mental health, sex offender and Probation Restitution Centers).</p>	<p>The successful completion rate trend for those under supervision has increased over the last four years. In FY06-07 the successful completion rate was 29.7%; however in FY09-10 the rate was 44.6%.</p>

Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Recommendations	Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations	Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan	Status Update	
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.	N/A	N/A	
16	Develop mandatory minimum standard for the 100-Hour Transition Training program and alternative programs.	4	Revise and enhance the 100-Hour Transition Training Program curriculum.	Curriculum update completed in February 2010. Curriculum sections have been sent to corresponding Bureau's for review. Once revisions have been received Legal will review. Implementation scheduled for July 2010.
18	Develop Departmental policy that incorporates mentors into the pre-release planning for inmates.	N/A	N/A	
19	Establish a Faith-Based Consortium to coordinate mentors for inmates and offenders reentering the community.	N/A	N/A	
21	Increase the percentage of offenders who successfully complete supervision.	5	Enhance continuity of care and services to address offenders' needs after release from prison/jail.	The successful completion rate trend for those under supervision has increased over the last four years. In FY06-07 the successful completion rate was 29.7%; however in FY09-10 the rate was 44.6%.
22	Propose legislation that authorizes probation/parole officers to employ/impose graduated sanctions in lieu of filing a violation of probation/parole.	N/A	N/A	
23	Increase housing resources available for offenders on supervision and/or ex-offenders.	4	Enhance current Resource Directory(s) and develop web-based utilizations.	As of 8/27/2010, there are 2,471 resources listed in the new directory.

Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force Recommendations	Re-Entry Advisory Council Recommendations	Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan	Status Update	
27	Educate the public regarding offender needs during reentry, and the value of community support to impact public safety, save tax dollars, and reduce recidivism.	1	Market and expand opportunities for media outlets to highlight and articulate the work of recidivism reduction.	Created several informational handouts and brochures for the Legislature and public website.
29	Educate State and Local leaders to obtain and/or enhance their support for reentry programs.	2	Increase legislative and public support for recidivism reduction efforts.	Continually update Legislature and their staff that reentry is a Department priority. The Legislative Affairs Office makes presentations to the Legislature as needed.
31	Restore funding for Transition Assistant Specialists (TAS) at each institution to ensure coordination and continuity of reentry services.	N/A		N/A
32	Support efforts to reduce the effect of court associated fees on individuals reentering their community.	N/A		N/A
		3	Maintain a well-trained and effective workforce.	Developed internal staff awareness and training about reentry. During FY09-10, 28,299 staff received the reentry training. Reentry measures have been incorporated into staff performance evaluations and position descriptions.



# **RE-ENTRY**

## **Advisory Council**

### **2010 Report**



**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
**STATE OF FLORIDA**

*This report satisfies one of the requirements of Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance Award 2009-CZBX-0050.*

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