

Ohio Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition Meeting
Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction
Franklinton Conference Room
February 25, 2009
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendees: Director Karhlton Moore (OCJS) Cheryl Martinez (RSC)
Director Greg Landsman OFBCI Sally Luken (CSH)
Asst. Director Mike Randle (ODRC) Jamie Blair (ODH)
Beverly Cooper (GOFBCI) Melissa Knopp (Supreme Court)
Scott Layson (ODOA) Fletch Zimpher (ODC)
Brian Misencik (ODC) William Graves (ODD)
Lauren Spero (ODD) Dwight Anstaett (ODOE)
Debbie Nixon-Hughes (ODMH) Kevin Aldridge (ODMRDD)
Vicki Jenkins (ODMRDD) Michele Shipp (ODH)
David Schroot (ODYS) Brad DeCamp (ODADAS)
Kevin Shepherd (ODYS) John Flinn (ODJFS)
Robert Swisher (DPS) Lauren Massie (Board of Regents)
Edward Rhine (ODRC) Tereasa Mooreman (ODRC/ODMH)
Linda Janes (ODRC) Robert Hammond (ODRC)
Irene Lyons (ODRC) Rhonda Johnson (ODRC)
Annette Chambers (ODRC) Chris Yanai (ODRC)
Michael H. Jackson (ODRC) Rod Johnson (ODRC)
John Matthews (ODRC) Sharon Schnelle (ODPS-OCJS)
Alicia Handwerk (ODRC) William Russell (Board of Regents)

Welcome and Introductions

Director Terry Collins opened the meeting with welcoming comments. He left shortly thereafter due to the need to give legislative testimony.

Recap – Inaugural Meeting

Ed Rhine summarized the importance of the Reentry Coalition, and discussed the statutory membership of the committee under House Bill 130. He referenced the discussion at the first meeting regarding the value of the Coalition working in cooperation and with consultation from others who have a commitment to reentry in Ohio.

The work of the Coalition is intended to be supportive of local jurisdictions who are involved in the creation of their own strategic plan for reentry. The goal is to position both the Coalition and communities across the state to be competitive for Second Chance Act, federal, and foundation funding supportive of effective reentry initiatives.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the inaugural meeting on January 23, 2009 were approved.

Committee Report Outs

The attendees were given an update on the tasks assigned to the two committees formed during the inaugural meeting of the Reentry Coalition. The members of the Strategic Planning Committee were charged with revising the comprehensive strategic plan that was presented last month. They will continue to update the document to ensure that it reflects the voice of the membership of the Reentry Coalition.

The Grant Development Committee will develop a single point of contact process for localities to use when submitting grant applications for endorsement, and a review process for them. The screening process will ensure that local applications propose activities that the Reentry Coalition can support. The Coalition will also provide assistance aimed at securing grants that are competitive for grant and other funding.

Review Draft of Comprehensive Five Year Reentry Strategic Plan

Brad Decamp provided the attendees with a review of the Five Year Comprehensive Reentry Strategic Plan. He pointed out that the bulk of the work the committee did is reflected in the back of the document. The committee decided that the most logical starting point would be to use the common framework of the Governor's Flexible Performance Agreements with each of the Cabinet level department directors. They drew from these goals as a launching point for establishing key areas and objectives having an impact of offender reentry.

There are a significant number of data sets missing in this section pertaining to performance measures. Brad asked that the department representatives fill in the data and send it to Angi Lee (Angi.Lee@odrc.state.oh.us) no later than March 11th.

The Reentry Coalition members were asked to make suggestions for additions if there are other areas that need to be addressed. The plan at present is mainly reflective of the work of DRC, DYS, and ODADAS, but should be inclusive of other state level reentry work that is taking place.

Sharon Schnelle asked if the Strategic Reentry Plan should include work taking place at only the state level or if it should include local level work as well. It was suggested that perhaps the local work could be added as links on the website once it is operational.

Mike Randle suggested that the partnership between DRC and RSC should be added to the plan as well.

It was further suggested that a strategy be developed for capturing the partnerships each agency has for inclusion either in the plan or on the Reentry Coalition website (once it is created).

Cheryl Martinez suggested that RSC and ODJFS should add their connections to other initiatives since they are linked and woven throughout a good deal of reentry-related work currently underway.

Other areas of the plan were highlighted, including the:

- Formation of the Coalition;
- Preparation of the annual report by December 1 of each year;
- Lessons learned from the SVORI and the partnerships that resulted; and,
- Insertion of suggested performance measures.

A question was raised regarding the mission statement in the strategic plan. Brad asked that the members of the Reentry Coalition submit any revisions to the mission statement to Angi Lee, along with additions or modifications to the list of goals/objectives no later than March 11th.

Sharon Schnelle proposed a committee to oversee the collection of data to monitor, research, and report on the accomplishment of the performance measures in the strategic plan. She suggested that this data collection will be valuable for securing future funding.

Greg Landsman pointed out that real time feedback that allows for adjustments as the strategic plan is implemented is critical to its long-term success. Data collection and synthesis which is captured reliably allows for appropriate corrective action.

The annual report, which is a responsibility of the Strategic Planning Committee, will require a report to the legislature explaining to what extent the Reentry Coalition met the expectations outlined in the comprehensive strategic plan.

Sharon Schnelle was added as a member of the Strategic Planning Committee for data collection which could become a future sub-committee. She stressed how important it is to get measures established up front.

It was suggested that the Coalition should measure “ultimate goals” rather than processes and activities under the objectives. Intermediate outcomes are important to capture (e.g., number of offenders employed) as they should lead to a reduction in recidivism. The Reentry Coalition must make an ongoing commitment to sustained recidivism reduction.

It is critical that the strategic plan “nail down” the performance measures for each area identified in the body of the report (e.g., Education/Employment, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Mentoring, and Health) early in the development of the Coalition.

A suggestion was made that housing is a critical area of need that is not currently addressed in the plan. A follow-up suggestion was made that the plan should specifically identify the type of housing to be included in the plan.

It was shared that several communities in Ohio are beginning to develop or have developed strategic plans, and waiting to see the final product from the Reentry Coalition.

Bob Swisher was added as a member to the Strategic Plan Committee.

Grant Development Committee

Beverly Cooper and John Matthews provided an update of the work of the Grants Development Committee. A form support letter has been prepared for corresponding with the Ohio delegation whenever the Reentry Coalition submits a competitive grant proposal.

The group sees the anticipated release of Second Chance Act grant dollars as an opportunity to cultivate and coordinate with local jurisdictions and community groups.

The Grant Committee suggests that a single point of contact process for those submitting any reentry grant applications would not only make programs more competitive under other solicitations, but is required for the Second Chance Act funding.

The committee suggested the use of Webinars for training and bringing together localities to learn from one another. It was suggested that the ODJFS site at the Air Center could be used for a videoconference to explain the role of the Reentry Coalition to interested localities and agencies.

The committee is in the process of developing a protocol and screening criteria for applications to make sure they propose activities that the Coalition is willing to support. The grants should be evaluated against the Strategic Plan and will likely use the Office of Criminal Justice Services screening criteria.

It is yet to be determined if the Reentry Coalition will serve as a pass through for SCA funding, or if it will go for funding for direct service. Role delineation is going to be quite important in working with jurisdictions across the state. The Reentry Coalition should be supportive, but not competitive. However, it was pointed out that their might be times when multiple state agencies will be eligible and will submit applications for the same funds making open dialogue and transparency critical to speaking with a shared voice.

The committee has thought about going after some grant funds to support the single point of contact idea, and to provide funds for contracts with grant writers. The committee is in search of good grant writers.

The Supreme Court of Ohio Dockets Newsletter is a good source for funding and training opportunities. The website to sign up for the newsletter is:

http://www.sconet.state.oh.us/spec_dockets/resources/newsletter/default.asp

Sharon Schnelle was added to the Grants Development Committee.

Update on SCA Grants Solicitation

In April 2009, the Directors from ODADAS and DRC will be meeting with the Ohio delegation in Washington, D.C. in support of SCA funding for reentry. Mike Randle asked that the Strategic Plan be completed and available for this meeting.

Status Report: Reentry Coalition Website Design

John Matthews reported that the website would have to follow the Ohio.gov guidelines.

Several websites, one operated by a state, one public and private shared site, and one private site were reviewed by the Coalition. The websites included:

<http://www.familyreentry.org/home/index.php>

<http://www.reentry.net/ny/>

<http://www.wvdoc.com/wvdoc/OffenderReEntry/tabid/118/Default.aspx>

<http://www.cor.state.pa.us/reentry/site/default.asp?portalNav=>

http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/governor_reentry_council/rec_index.shtml

The Prison News Network (PNN) at Marion Correctional Institution can assist with site development as long as the Coalition provides the content.

Another option is to work through The Board of Regents and the university system for development and maintenance. This arrangement might allow for the website to be more interactive and in real time as The Board of Regents is not subject to the Ohio.gov site restrictions.

The website could be layered (operate with different levels of access) depending on the needs of the user.

A decision was made to form a Website Development Committee. The current membership consists of John Matthews, Greg Landsman, Lauren Massey, and Scott Layson.

Non-Statutory Members – Reentry Coalition

The minutes from the Inaugural Meeting include a preliminary list of suggested non-statutory members. The listing is composed of community-based, agencies, and individuals that are involved and/or who should be consulted by the Reentry Coalition as it moves forward to conduct business. Contact information is still needed for the groups. The attendees were asked to forward this information to Angi Lee no later than March 11th.

A decision was made to refer to the non-statutory members as members-at-large.

A suggestion was made to include a labor (AFL-CIO) representative as a member-at-large.

The group discussed ways to include these individuals and other groups in a meaningful way in interacting with and sharing the work of the Reentry Coalition. Several ideas were presented to accomplish this.

- The statutory members of the Reentry Coalition could conduct quarterly or twice yearly meetings with key stakeholders; and,

- As the Reentry Coalition meetings are open each agenda could include an item called “open community” which would allow stakeholders to listen to the meeting, and have a forum at the end to share their information. It would be clear that only statutory members vote, and there would have to be a mechanism developed to allow stakeholders to get their names on the agenda.

Mayor’s Forum Planning Committee – Sharon Schnelle, OCJS

The Mayor’s Forum is a dialogue between local communities, and the state about reentry.

The forum has support from the ACMIC (Advisory Counsel on Mental Illness and the Courts), and the Interagency Counsel on Homelessness. The Ohio Department of Mental Health provided the funds for the planning committee and required a local survey be developed and administered. The survey and cover letter have now been signed by OCJS. The survey is being sent to elected officials and will inform the development of the agenda for the forum.

The purpose of the forum is to attract a broad base of elected officials to engage in peer-to-peer dialogues to share needs and ideas. The forum would be modeled after the highly successful Corporation for Supportive Housing National Forum. The purpose of the presentation today was to ensure that efforts are not being duplicated. The forum will complement the work of the Reentry Coalition and share feedback for its consideration.

The planning committee is working on:

- Defining the primary goals of the forum,
- Funding - because of the closing of a large national foundation that planned to fund the forum, the planning committee is seeking funding to underwrite the cost.

Other Items for Discussion

The proposed funding for reentry in the Second Chance Act is \$25M.

Next Meeting

A notice will be sent with the minutes with the date/time/place of the next meeting.