

Criminal Justice Collaborative Council (Inmate Reintegration Subcommittee)

Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2005

220 N. Main, Lower Level Conference Room

Ann Arbor, MI

12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Scott Patton (CJCC Staff), Michael Echlin (22nd Circuit Court Probation), Ruth Shabazz (Shelter Association of Washtenaw County), Ruby Smith (ETCS Community Programs), Barbara Levin Bergman (Community Corrections Board Advisory Chair), Deb Pippins (Supervisor Project Outreach, CSTS), Kirk Filsinger (Jail Commander), George Siasoco (CJCC Intern), Julie M. Chaffee (Director, Community Corrections), Delphia Simpson (Public Defender Manager), Sheila Blakney (Senior Assistant, Public Defender), Mike Echlin (22nd Circuit Court Probation Officer)

Convened: 12:30 p.m.

I. Elect Chair

The motion to have Barbara Levin Bergman serve as chair of the Inmate Reintegration Committee was supported and approved unanimously by members.

II. Discussion Topics for Inmate Reintegration

Kirk Filsinger indicated that the Sheriff's Department had been exploring a number of options in order to alleviate jail overcrowding before the establishment of the CJCC. Their staff focused on developing a reintegration plan for inmates transitioning back into the community.

Gary Greenfield reported that they had looked at successful models around the country in order to duplicate those efforts with some adjustments to Washtenaw County. At initial intake, an assessment tool used by booking officers would identify individuals which may be channeled to these programs. An assessment review officer would then determine needs or obstacles and how the inmate would fit into the program. This process would be similar to the current assessment for inmates with mental health needs or injury, who would then be attended by a Correctional Services officer.

To facilitate delivery of services, Gary Greenfield added that inmates placed in the same program will be housed in the same unit. These inmates would then undergo a series of intensive programs in job skills, life skills opportunities, developing action plans for their success, identifying individual needs or barriers to success once in the community.

Gary Greenfield then described three diversion options out of the jail: 1) Re-entry program or Probation Residential Program (less restrictive means of supervision) to assist in de-institutionalizing inmates, 2) Michigan Works or other types of community-based programs that would help them through the process, 3) Mentoring with former inmates who demonstrate skills, follow up on action plans, assist in working through various obstacles such as education, establishing checking accounts, and documentation.

Gary Greenfield indicated that the jail staff is working very closely with various community colleges to assist in certification in trades. He noted that the goals of this program will depend on the assigned scope. For instance, job skills could incorporate small assembly of wheelchairs (an opportunity which is not currently done in Michigan), computer repair, work with labor unions,

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contracted work within the county to reduce budgetary constraints, repair/refurbishing with HUD homes. Kirk Filsinger said that as the target population has not been defined, the present group and the judicial bench may be able to offer some guidance.

Julie Chaffee noted that the current proposal appears to duplicate programs for a population of offenders already assisted by Community Corrections, with the exception of domestic violence offenders (the largest divertible group in the jail). She suggested identifying groups that Community Corrections cannot serve because of eligibility requirements, and developing programs for these groups.

Kirk Filsinger clarified that they would be looking at these target populations that are not Public Act 511 eligible (non-violent offenders). He added that these are preliminary discussion points which were meant to initiate conversation. He noted also that there are counties around the country which receive significant amounts of funding for these types of programs. Kirk Filsinger welcomed suggestions, like the use of the state-model assessment instrument during intake (to identify ties to the community, employment, etc.).

Julie Chaffee acknowledged that the proposal fills the gap in providing services after inmate release, the lack of which currently causes much recidivism. She also applauded the initiative to partner with the Ministerial Alliance in a mentoring program. However, she cautioned that duplication of effort could lead to both the Jail and Community Corrections vying for the same funding.

Discussion ensued on issues surrounding the proposal: 1) need for space in the current jail for these programs, 2) the issue of governance, 3) possibility of funding through a Probation Residential Center diversion program (if this alternative is built). Kirk Filsinger will check on whether the County Jail Reimbursement funds can be used for these programs. Julie Chaffee invited members to attend the Community Corrections Advisory Board meetings, as a way to facilitate communication and collaboration. Deb Pippins stressed that having well-trained staff during the intake process in the jail is critical to ensuring the success of these inmate reintegration programs.

Barbara Levin Bergman advised that the jail staff work closely with Community Corrections and Probation to study the state model, reconfigure for Washtenaw County, identify in- and out-of-county resources, and report back to the subcommittee. This closer collaboration should also elicit innovative program and funding solutions to address jail overcrowding and reduce recidivism. The committee will continue studying how the state's MPRI pilot program can open program and funding opportunities for local inmate reintegration through Community Corrections.

Julie Chaffee will keep members informed of developments related to the MPRI program's reach into Washtenaw County. She advised an assessment of the gaps in inmate reintegration services before the pilot program can be successfully implemented in the community. Ruth Shabazz recommended that the group: 1) do a comprehensive assessment, 2) generate a list of issues that need to be addressed, 3) identify what interventions need to be applied. Julie Chaffee will send to members the process map of the county's criminal justice system for their review and comment on possible gaps and interventions by specific departments.

III. Committee Charter

Scott Patton suggested writing a committee charter to facilitate the development of a more structured operation between the various CJCC subcommittees. Aside from identifying

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membership, team charge, and meeting standards and operations, the charter will assist in program scope and keep members on the same page. This will then be approved by the CJCC. Members agreed that Scott Patton would draft a document and circulate it to members for comment and review. At the next meeting, members will discuss revisions for final draft.

IV. Grant Application

Ruth Shabazz reported on a possible federal funding stream that would help local counties with jail inmate reintegration efforts. Deb Pippins has passed on the grant information to Donna Sabourin (Director, CSTS) and Kathy Reynolds (Executive Director, WCHO). She added that they are currently studying the grant information and will probably agree to forward an application before the May 28, 2005 deadline. Deb Pippins will follow up with them by tomorrow for their decision. Scott Patton will study what the federal office may be able to provide technical assistance to the county.

V. Other Issues

Barbara Levin Bergman recommended that Scott Patton or George Siasoco continue to do minutes for the committee. George Siasoco will schedule the committee meetings for the rest of the year.

Adjourned : 1:45 p.m.

Next Inmate Reintegration Subcommittee meeting will be on 5/04/05, **2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.**, at Annex Large Conference Room.