

CJCC Inmate Reintegration Committee

Inmate Reintegration Committee Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2005

Annex Building, First Floor Conference Room

Ann Arbor, MI

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Members Present: Julie Chaffee, Scott Patton, George Siasoco, Barbara Levin Bergman, Mike Echlin, Sheila Blakney, Delphia Simpson, Ruby Smith, Deb Pippins, Ruth Shabazz, Diane Davidson, Gary Greenfield, Penny Ryder

Meeting called to order at 12:30 p.m.

I. Approve Minutes

Diane Davidson noted a correction on the second page, third paragraph: “She also clarified that prison inmates will be released into the Probation Department” should be changed to “will be released into the Parole Department.” On the last page on last bullet item, Scott Patton clarified that he has not emailed the group on next steps.

Sheila Blakney moved, Diane Davidson seconded, and members approved the previous meeting minutes with corrections as stated above.

II. Timeline/Format for Final Recommendations

Scott Patton referred members to the Inmate Reintegration Committee Draft Report, which will present the committee’s recommendations to the CJCC. He asked members to review the format for the draft. The content will be compiled from previous meeting minutes. It will also incorporate current committee discussions and recommendations. The gap analysis will be attached in the appendix section. Scott Patton clarified that members should send their comments and revisions to him.

III. Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI) Conference Debrief

Ruth Shabazz reported that the MPRI conference presented some interesting information, although it was not targeted for Washtenaw County. Ruby Smith noted that there was no break out room for networking so that the pilot program groups could meet with those county representatives that are going on line and still had questions. It was designed to have Department of Corrections departments to seem like a team, but it was not as helpful for the counties. Barbara Levin Bergman said that there were still outstanding issues regarding funding for the coordinators position after a year, how many inmates will be returning to the participating counties, and where these individuals will be placed.

Sheila Blakney said that the feedback from the community group meeting was very positive about the meeting. Representatives from Kent and Kalamazoo counties reported some impressive and encouraging developments on their pilot programs. She noted that the huge influx of inmates from the state did not proceed. For example, only fifteen people were processed in one county. Some fairly elaborate systems were in place, like employment (by contracting with Salvation Army, which minimized costs). Giving the identification papers was identified as being the most important service for inmates, followed by training. Their coordinator has done prison outreach, and involved with the faith-based community by providing mentors. The program had achieved success because it received funding. They were taking their own pace and serving only as much as they can receive. There was some confusion initially, but the process has been worked out at least in those counties.

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Sheila Blakney clarified that the DOC continues to have a connection with the inmates in the county. They try to find out whom really needs the services since some inmates already have resources. Penny Ryder noted that a tape of the meeting is available for members interested in hearing the program presentation. She clarified that the first fifteen inmates in Kalamazoo County had undergone the intensive reentry program, and not the full blown full year that the county will be receiving. Barbara Levin Bergman said that the main questions still are not answered: How many inmates are coming? What are the resources to be given at the local level? How long is the coordinator going to be in place? Discussion ensued on the value of the committee and whether it should continue to meet regularly in order to tackle the issues presented by the MPRI.

Sheila Blakney said that there is an existing community group that is more broad and focused than the present committee. She feels that this group can coordinate with them so there is no duplication of effort. There are people in this committee already involved in that committee. The committee can share its gap analysis with the community group to arrive at collaborative solutions to these gaps. The focus in terms of MPRI should be with the existing community group. The process of bridging between the committee and the community group does not need to be formalized.

Diane Davidson indicated that the local jail situation should be the focus of the committee. This committee may not need to meet on a regular basis but the jail's needs must be heard. The local jail population is a chronic situation that has gone on for years. Ruth Shabazz advised looking at how the county can provide services at the local level that have an impact. For example, when the Probation Residential Center gets built, some form of transportation to the PRC helps with inmate reintegration. This type of solution can be offered by the committee to the general community. George Siasoco will find out the transportation rates offered by the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority.

Delphia Simpson moved, Deb Pippins seconded, and members voted unanimously in favor: 1) to have the inmate reintegration committee no longer assume a formal relationship with the state's MPRI efforts, 2) to collaborate with the larger community group for help with the local inmate integration initiatives, 3) to remain open to conversation and sharing of knowledge base about community resources with the Department of Corrections and the larger community group in order to prevent duplication of efforts.

IV. Finalize Gap Analysis

Diane Davidson referred members to the draft gap analysis chart. Sheila Blakney said that the gap analysis is an encouraging start to defining community resources for inmate reintegration. She noted that currently, the process to refer offenders to these services is informal, such as the use of phone calls to community resource staff who may or may not be able to help with connecting inmates to services. Where do I start in the referral process? How do I get that person referred to that person with the services?

The following changes were discussed and made:

- Acronyms need to be expanded in the chart.
- For the "Benefits" row, Delphia Simpson clarified that she had contacted the Managing Attorney of Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM) about benefits and not about mentoring.
- For "Mentoring" row, clarify "Best practices? Use 12-step program for substance abuse."
- Julie Chaffee reported that Community Corrections will offer a new service starting October 1, 2005, when two court liaisons will collect information on all inmates. As

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- members review the gap analysis, the committee should consider that the information can be shared with all the resource providers, such as correctional services and mental health. For example, the offenders are asked about housing needs, so her staff can refer them to housing agencies while the person is still incarcerated. Julie Chaffee will forward a copy of the assessment tool to the committee.
- For Substance Abuse Services Deb Pippins clarified that YMCA and the Shelter do not offer substance abuse services, but are locations where CSTS provide information. Sheila Blakney noted that who provides the resources and where it is done will be given in the comprehensive resource list. Remove Steve Wiland lectures from existing community resource column since he is a member of CSTS. Insert a separate row for Substance Abuse “Treatment Resources” after Substance Abuse “Referrals, Eligibility, Determination.”
 - Insert a “Gap to be Filled” column to indicate what the system is missing (e.g., space at the Delonis Center for housing).
 - For “Identification” row, Rick Visel clarified that the “Gap to be Filled” should include “personnel to implement program, funding if inmate is from outside county, logistical issues (gathering of material, sending material to offender after release, turnaround time).”
 - Insert a separate row for “Booking Fee” from “Identification.” “No indigency consideration” is identified as a gap. Gary Greenfield said that there is a process whereby inmates (including those that meet the indigency criteria) are assisted with booking fees. The processing of these tickets involves court and county resources and the success rate of collection is very high. Usually the inmate is given enough time by the court to pay this fee. Members discussed the rationale and policy for the fees, and agreed that this is a huge gap.
 - The “Process to Connect Resource to Inmate” column should be relabeled as “Notes.” Diane Davidson said that “Process to Connect Resource to Inmate” is not complete, and needs to be revised in order to incorporate specific steps. Mike Echlin said that originally, the proposed process was to get a mentoring program that would involve a volunteer mentor/assistant advocate at the jail who would sit with the offender before release to determine their needs, use available resources and make the appropriate referrals.
 - Identifying the “Process to connect Resource to Inmate” should be postponed because it will be a more complex discussion. Diane Davidson advised developing a flow diagram which should describe the process of connecting services to offenders. For instance for a person appearing at the Public Defender’s Office with a mandatory requirement for substance abuse services and have mental health needs, the office staff needs to know where are the co-occurring groups for people who are indigent and don’t have the funds.

IV. Next Steps

- Julie Chaffee advised that it would be best to work on finalizing the gap analysis individually.
- George Siasoco will send out the revised form with the column for “Gap to be Filled.”
- Members will review and revise the content according to what they know before the next meeting.
- The committee will then work on the identifying the process for connecting inmates with services.

Adjourned at 2:00 p.m.