CUYAHOGA COUNTY   EDWARD FITZGERALD, EXECUTIVE
OFFICE OF REENTRY   LUIS VAZQUEZ, DIRECTOR

Reentry
Strategic Action Plan

A Community-Wide Commitment

Submitted by Elsie Day, Consultant

2012-2013

Improving the quality of life in Cuyahoga County by supporting successful reentry

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy was released by the City of Cleveland in July 2005. The purpose of the strategy was to focus community efforts to improve outcomes associated with the transition from prison to the community. One of the recommendations, establishment of an Office of Reentry, was considered pivotal to the success of the entire plan. Cuyahoga County agreed to take over the leadership role in reentry locally and officially established the Office of Reentry in January 2009. Recognizing that the reentry landscape has evolved and changed over the last several years and the need for a broad range of stakeholders to agree on the direction for reentry activities in the community, the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry began a structured review of achievements and development of priority strategies. The Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry began the six-month planning process in 2012 to:

- Identify and assess current reentry services/activities in Cuyahoga County
- Document current and projected needs and the magnitude of the reentry population
- Identify and review national reentry research and best practices
- Develop strategic action areas

Three community sessions were designed to obtain community-wide stakeholder participation in learning about the state of reentry locally and nationally and to set strategic priorities for Cuyahoga County over the next 18 - 24 months. Participants agreed on the following eight strategic action areas:

• Transition	• Local Incarceration
• Transportation	• Community Awareness
• Housing	• Research & Evaluation
• Education, Training, & Employment	• Funding

Behavioral health and health are not specifically listed above as strategic priorities, but given the potential negative effect on successful reentry if not addressed; they will be considered and incorporated into the responses of all of the relevant strategic priorities.

The key ingredients to ensure successful implementation of the preliminary plans for each action area are:

- Maintain focus on the strategic priorities identified
- Develop detailed implementation plans for each strategic priority, identifying what needs to be done, who needs to be involved, and timing for completion

- Develop a structured reporting system that communicates progress and barriers to successful implementation

BACKGROUND

The Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy was released by the City of Cleveland in July 2005. The purpose of the strategy was to focus community efforts to improve outcomes associated with the transition from prison to the community. The George Gund Foundation provided funding to support the planning process that was conducted over nine months, to reach a community consensus on a reentry strategic plan. The Reentry Strategy that was endorsed included thirteen major components. One of the recommendations, establishment of an Office of Reentry, was considered pivotal to the success of the entire plan since a primary role of the Office of Reentry was to oversee implementation of the Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy.

After more planning and development activities, which were funded by The Cleveland Foundation and Cuyahoga County, Cuyahoga County officially established the Office of Reentry in January 2009. It was a long and challenging process to formally install the Office of Reentry as a unit of County government, requiring years of education, advocacy, negotiation, and mostly perseverance by a dedicated group of individuals. Since that time, the majority of the original components of the Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy have been fully or partially implemented, along with other important reentry initiatives. In June 2011, the Office of Reentry revised the original Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy and issued a Five Year Comprehensive Strategic Plan. Recognizing that the reentry landscape has evolved and changed over the last several years and the need for a broad range of stakeholders to agree on the direction for reentry activities in the community, the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry determined that a structured review of achievements and development of priority strategies around reentry would be conducted providing the following benefits:

- Accountability for the work of the Office of Reentry
- Current data upon which to formulate future direction
- Focused, organized efforts
- More effective and efficient use of resources
- Continued recognition of Cuyahoga County's leadership in reentry

PLANNING PROCESS

In the later part of 2011, Luis Vazquez, Director of the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry, began discussions with Elsie Day, the consultant who had facilitated the process that resulted in the original Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy, about assisting with the development of a community consensus on priority reentry strategies to be implemented over the next 18-24

months. To achieve that, the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry began a focused, six-month planning process to:

- Identify and assess current reentry services/activities in Cuyahoga County
- Document current and projected needs and the magnitude of the reentry population
- Identify and review national reentry research and best practices
- Develop strategic action areas

A Core Team (composed of Office of Reentry staff, Leadership Coalition Chairpersons, university researchers, the planning consultant, and a representative from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction) was established to oversee the planning process concentrating on information gathering and analysis and stakeholder engagement. Five meetings were conducted to achieve this objective, with the initial focus on identification of existing Cuyahoga County reentry services, defining a target population, current data on the reentry population, and a literature review of published reentry research. To ensure that a broad range of community stakeholders had an opportunity to participate, the Office of Reentry circulated an invitation to approximately 360 individuals to attend three sessions as follows:

- April 2, 2012
- May 24, 2012
- June 25, 2012 (original date changed to coordinate with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio reentry summit)

In an effort to be as inclusive and transparent as possible, those receiving invitations were encouraged to extend the invitation to these sessions to all of their colleagues and their full mailing lists.

The Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry convened the first community stakeholders' session on April 2, 2012, to:

- Understand the magnitude and needs of the reentry population and effective practices
- Identify current reentry services in Cuyahoga County
- Develop guiding principles related to reentry planning and service provision
- Reach a consensus on areas of focus that require further action to improve the outcomes associated with the transition from prison to the community

Fifty-seven (57) people representative of various segments of the community attended the all-day session at Trinity Commons.

The underlying principles or values to guide reentry activities in Cuyahoga County and eight reentry action areas were agreed to by the session participants. Small group discussions were

led by a facilitator in each action area to understand the nature of the issue, current efforts to address the issue, and additional strategies to pursue.

After the April session, the eight facilitators continued to convene their participants to further develop and refine the recommendations in their action areas.   They were charged with identifying no more than three priority strategies in their respective areas so that the activities around each strategy could be accomplished within the 18-24 months timeframe.
The Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry convened the second community stakeholder's session on May 24, 2012 to:

- Listen to recommendations from each action area and reach consensus on the strategic priorities
- Discuss implementation
- Discuss common language when referring to individuals returning to the community from prison or juvenile institutions

Seventy-four (74) people representative of various segments of the community attended the four-hour session at Trinity Commons. After reviewing the purpose of and process for planning, the facilitators for each action area presented their recommendations and all participants addressed the following questions:

- Is there anything that you cannot agree to? If so, what changes would you make?
- What additions would you make?
- What can we finally reach consensus on?

The final session on June 25, 2012, is an all-day summit on reentry, where the strategic action plan will be released. The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio is co-sponsoring this event with Cuyahoga County at Corporate College East. The issues around reentry will be addressed from a federal, state, county, and community perspective.

UNDERSTANDING THE POPULATION & WHAT WORKS

Drs. David Hussey of Kent State University and Lynn Falletta of Case Western Reserve University gathered data and reviewed current literature on reentry to provide a framework for the planning process. Definitions of reentry included:

- The process of leaving the adult state prison system and returning to society (Urban Institute)

- A holistic and systematic approach that seeks to reduce the likelihood of additional criminal behavior; beginning at sentencing and extending beyond release, reentry will assess, identify and link offenders with services specific to their needs; accomplished through associations with community partners, families, justice professionals and victims of crime (ODRC)
- "Reentry Means Going Home to Stay"

For the purposes of data collection and the establishment of priority strategies, it was agreed that the target population would be individuals returning from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) and the Ohio Department of Youth Services (ODYS). A Cuyahoga County ODRC snapshot follows:

- In 2011 (July), Cuyahoga had an ODRC census of 9,044, or 17.9% of total population
- Cuyahoga County incarceration rate per 100,000 is 706
- 58% of FY2011 commitments have a prior ODRC#
- 48.5% serve over 365 days
- Cuyahoga County has a 36.8% 3-year return to prison recidivism rate

The 2010 ODRC intake study of 661 Cuyahoga County commitments showed a predominately male (88.7%) and African American (65.5%) population who was single (77.8%), living with a parent or guardian (26.9%), and unemployed (56.1%) at time of arrest. In addition, 51% had a juvenile record (either indicated or found) and 74.5% had one or more felonies in their adult record.

The Cuyahoga County population in ODYS institutions has been decreasing significantly since 2009.

ODYS Institutional Census & Parole on March 15th

YEAR	INSTITUTION	PAROLE
2009	314	506
2010	249	450
2011	167	366
2012	143	238

Ohio Department of Youth Services data from 2010 and 2011 showed a predominately male (95.5%) and African American (87.8%) population with a mean age of 17.84 years at time of release.

Beyond a description of the population is the essential consideration of how to effectively address the needs of the population and reduce recidivism. Evidence-based practices provide a helpful roadmap for selecting effective interventions; but one must recognize that this is an evolving continuum that can be divided into best practices, promising and emerging practices, and innovative practices. Some of the fundamental principles of evidence-based adult correctional practices are:

- Objectively assess criminogenic risks and needs; match interventions to risk, responsivity, and need
- Enhance intrinsic motivation
- Target medium- to high-risk offenders
- Address offenders' greatest criminogenic needs
- Use cognitive-behavioral interventions; CBT with other services (mental health, employment/vocational/educational) larger effect sizes than CBT alone
- Use separate prison settings to start treatment 6-12 months prior to release
- Determine dosage and intensity of service; greater number of sessions, hours, total hours larger effect sizes; retention (vs. dropouts) critical for success
- Use effective parole/community supervision
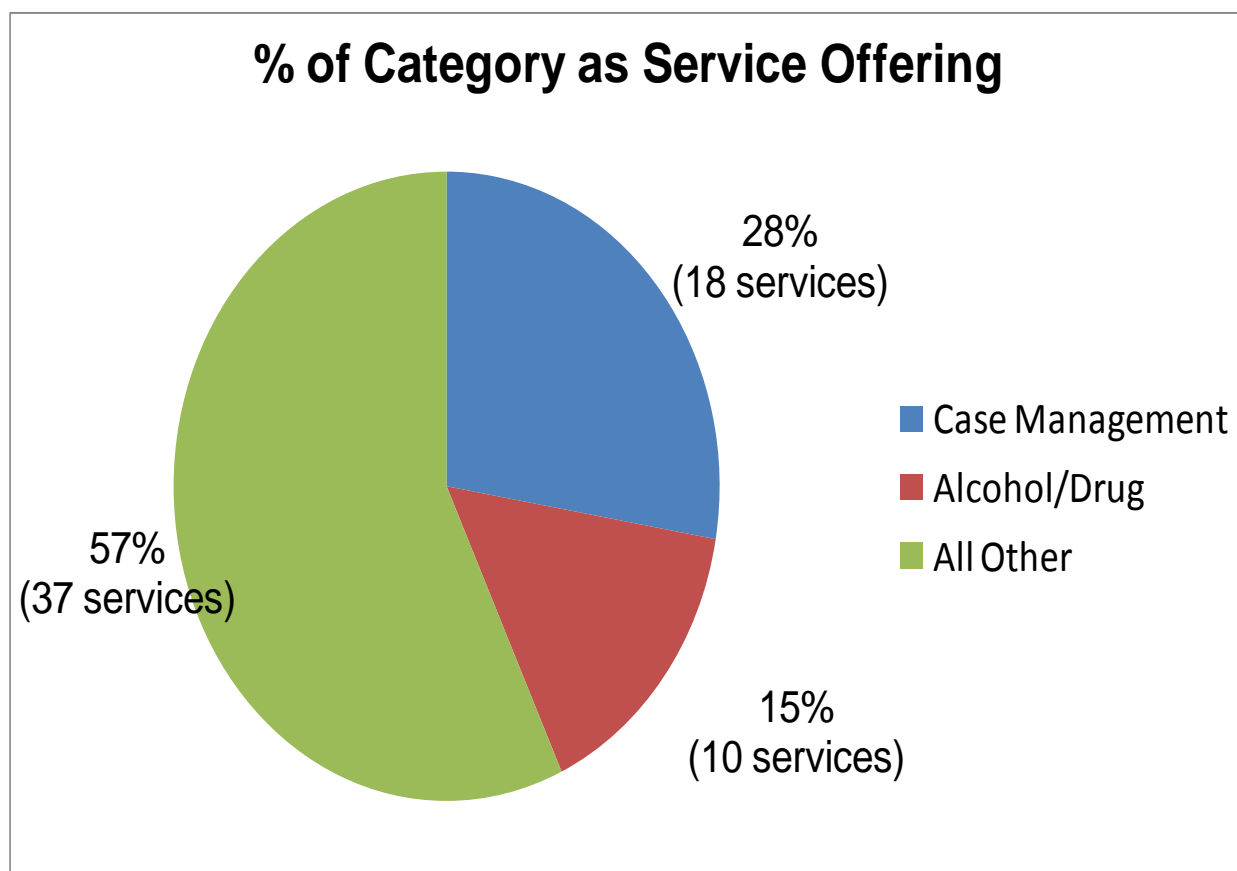- Higher quality implementation yields larger effects

Though the above listing applies to adults, many of the same concepts also apply to juveniles. By using the most effective strategies and implementing them with fidelity to the models, positive results can be maximized and even modest effects can bring cost savings.

REENTRY SERVICES IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY

As part of the planning process Mary Kelley, Programmatic Services Coordinator for the Office of Reentry, undertook an assessment of available services in Cuyahoga County that are specifically designed to serve the reentry population. She enlisted assistance from transition specialists from North Star Reentry Resource Center (a one-stop service provider dedicated to providing a wide variety of resources, information, and service linkages to reentry clients) and case managers from the Greater Cleveland Integrated Reentry Project (two agencies, Center for Children and Families and Community Reentry, that provide comprehensive wraparound services and case management to clients beginning before a client's release from prison and continuing after release). In addition, North Star's database provided through United Way 211 First Call for Help was also reviewed.

Reentry clients can access services based upon multiple needs. For instance, a reentrant may participate in a mental health program or a job training program based upon that need alone,

irrespective of their reentry status. This assessment considered only those service providers or programs that had specific reentry service offerings. As of April, 2012, 65 services or programs were available to reentry clients. The largest category of services provided was case management and multi-service referrals with 18 programs. This category represents programming with a strong case management component, inclusive of behavioral health, where a reentry client works with a case manager who assesses the multi-systemic needs a client may have and provides assessment, ongoing treatment and linkages to other community services. The second largest category was alcohol and substance abuse treatment or group-based programs with 10 offerings. The rest of the service offerings spanned a wide variety of needs covering the following topics: advocacy, child support, clothing, education, employment, entrepreneurial instruction, family/fatherhood, financial literacy, food, housing, legal assistance, medical, mental health, personal (ID and community voicemail), resource fair, support group, and transportation. The following chart depicts the distribution of these services:

% of Category as Service Offering

28%
(18 services)

■ Case Management
■ Alcohol/Drug
■ All Other

57%
(37 services)

15%
(10 services)

During the planning process, it was acknowledged that there are probably reentry programs operating in Cuyahoga County that are not widely known and should be identified and integrated into a more comprehensive system of services that can be monitored and evaluated.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Given the magnitude and wide-ranging needs of the reentry population, it is essential to coordinate and concentrate community efforts so that progress can be maximized and achieved in an efficient manner. The following eight action areas will be addressed from July 2012 through December 2013 and potentially into the first half of 2014 depending on the speed with which implementation can occur:

- Transition
- Transportation
- Housing
- Education, Training, & Employment
- Local Incarceration
- Community Awareness
- Research & Evaluation
- Funding

Behavioral health and health are not specifically listed above as strategic priorities, but given the potential negative effect on successful reentry if not addressed; they will be considered and incorporated into the responses of all of the relevant strategic priorities. In addition, advocacy will be pursued as needed in each of the strategic priority areas where subject matter experts have the knowledge and expertise to identify the issues, key decision makers, and approaches designed to result in desired changes. The strategic priority of Community Awareness supports advocacy in all areas by providing universal messages and education.

Transition

Though Cuyahoga County has a number of effective programs providing services within ODRC prisons and ODYS institutions, they lack the necessary integration, coordination, and a mechanism to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. In addition, though both ODRC and ODYS recognize the importance of strong reentry programming, some policies limit both community organizations' and family members' from providing assistance that will increase the likelihood of successful reentry. With implementation of the following strategies, the transition from prison to the community will be reinforced:

1. **Strengthen ODRC and ODYS programming, policies, and staff investment so local agencies and families are able to provide enhanced support to individuals returning to the community as early as possible**
   a. Conduct standardized pre-entry activities
   b. Understand and connect to programming that supports reentry (i.e., ODRC One Stop model, ODYS use of TASC)
   c. Review and advocate for improvements, when necessary, in relevant policies
      1) Family orientation and visitation
      2) Contractor access
      3) Training and supervision of volunteers
      4) Medication policies
      5) Obtaining benefits
      6) Assignment to prisons/institutions close to Cuyahoga County (i.e., three tier system)
   d. Identify who is returning to Cuyahoga County
      1) Address release of information issues
      2) Receive information on all returning to Cuyahoga County with needs and risks (understand unique needs of different populations, i.e. transition to adulthood, elderly, sex offenders, veterans, etc.)
      3) Develop and show video on programming available in the community
      4) Develop/update and circulate resource guide to all returning to Cuyahoga County
   e. Educate prison/institution staff about Cuyahoga County services for returning individuals

2. **Standardize local organizations' orientation, assessment, and service provision model in prison and upon return, ensuring quality service provision, accountability, and reporting on results**
   a. Connect with every individual returning to Cuyahoga County; if resource limitations exist, focus on populations with the least services and highest risks/needs
   b. Obtain information on all organizations from Cuyahoga County that are currently providing services
      1) Target population
      2) Objectives/purpose
      3) Services provided in prison/institution and community
      4) Define who does what best and develop integrated system of services
      5) Educate community agencies' staff
   c. Partner with ODRC/ODYS to develop and implement statewide pilot reentry partnership between the community and prison/institutions resulting in a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach

1) Group orientation
2) Individual assessment
3) Provision of culturally sensitive and gender specific services, as needed, addressing daily living, cognitive restructuring, legal issues, medical, financial literacy, etc.
4) Individual meeting just prior to release, and within days after release
5) Community orientation and linkage to services and staffing agencies
6) Connection to parole
   d. Develop system of reporting, monitoring, and accountability

3. **Provide support to family members (both children and adults) and opportunities that enable appropriate family reunification**
   a. Identify family members of individuals currently in prisons or institutions
   b. Make presentations in community about resources for family members and those returning (i.e. at City of Cleveland monthly Council meetings, churches, etc.)
   c. Orientation and assessment of needs at central location in community (i.e., North Star)
   d. Provision of culturally sensitive and gender specific services, as needed, such as training in coping/expectations, anger management, counseling, transportation for visitation, Family Matters curriculum, family mentors, etc.
   e. Fatherhood programming
   f. Utilize churches to provide support to family members, address feelings of shame
   g. Make visitation more accessible and offer alternative methods of interaction (i.e., video visitation, Skype, phone calls at no cost, e-mailing, transportation provided, family-friendly environment)

Transportation

When returning to the community, access to transportation is limited by a number of factors including financial resources, distance from public transportation, and lack of a car or drivers license. This in turn negatively impacts employment opportunities and an individual's ability to access services that support successful reentry. With implementation of the following strategies, current barriers to transportation will be minimized.

1. **Identify and arrange for a variety of transportation options**
   a. Institute bicycle rental/ownership program
   b. Make cars more accessible
      1) Obtain donated cars from auto dealerships, churches, and other
      2) Promote car pooling and car sharing programs
      3) Establish volunteer driver service

4) Address insurance issues

   c. Establish low-cost van service

   d. Provide assistance in obtaining a drivers license

2. **Establish a partnership with RTA for non-profits and reentry service providers for reduced cost of bus tickets**
   a. Determine current RTA discounts, if any, received by Office of Reentry
   b. Review survey data on transportation, determine status of agencies who did not participate in survey in relation to their discounts
   c. Determine most effective individuals to advocate with RTA Board of Directors and General Manager to implement a model program for no cost or discounted bus tickets

3. **Provide help with cost or communicating transportation options**
   a. Target specific faith based groups who currently have forums or organizations where they meet regularly (Cleveland Council of Rabbis, Baptist Ministries Council Cleveland Catholic Diocese, United Presbyterian Council, United Churches of Christ, United Pastors in Mission, Muslim Council, Methodist Council) and are currently doing outreach through advertising (i.e., organizations who are advertising in the Call & Post)
   b. Arrange for provision of information at reentry events explaining options for transportation
   c. Provide opportunities to earn or provide funds for transportation

Housing

According to the 2010 Council of State Governments' "Reentry Housing Options: The Policy Makers Guide", "When individuals are released from prison or jail, the ability to access safe and secure housing within the community is crucial to their successful reentry. Studies have shown that the first month after release is a vulnerable period during which the risk of becoming homeless and/or returning to criminal justice involvement is high." It is widely recognized that the emergency shelter system is not an acceptable housing option for individuals returning from prison, despite its frequent use over the years due to the challenges in obtaining adequate private and federally assisted housing. With implementation of the following strategies, appropriate immediate and permanent housing will become available to those reentering the community.

1. **Advocate for permanent/affordable housing**
   a. Expand admission and Tenant Selection Criteria for HUD-Assisted housing (Project-based Section 8 housing)

1) Gather more information
2) Adopt an advocacy strategy

b. Monitor and continue advocating for expansion of public housing admissions criteria

c. Continue to advocate for a shortened no "look-back" period for the Housing Choice Voucher Program

d. Frame the issue as and use the tools of Fair Housing, coordinating with the Housing Research and Advocacy Center and its work on reentry issues

2. **Investigate/coordinate/collaborate on the creation of centralized intake for individuals returning that are in need of housing**

a. Determine whether this could be part of Office of Homeless Services centralized intake system

b. Integrate with North Star Reentry Resource Center services

3. **Create a full range of housing options that assist in obtaining permanent/affordable housing**

a. Offer emergency housing options other than the homeless shelter system that move individuals to permanent housing

b. Continue funding for successful reentry housing programs such as Open Door and Cleveland Transition Center

c. Establish new housing options such as the pilot voucher program that offers the full range of supports needed

d. Develop a comprehensive approach to providing adequate and appropriate housing to sex offenders given the unique challenges presented by this population due to special requirements and community attitudes

Education, Employment, & Training

According to "Reentry Facts" provided by the National Reentry Resource Center "Employment rates and earnings histories of people in prisons and jails are often low before incarceration as a result of limited education experiences, low skill levels, and the prevalence of physical and mental health problems; incarceration only exacerbates these challenges". Further, "A large, three-state recidivism study found that less than half of released prisoners had secured a job upon their return to the community." With implementation of the following strategies, current barriers to employment will be minimized:

1. **Enhance employer awareness**

a. Create an Employer's Tool Kit to be posted on the Office of Reentry website that will include information on:
   1) Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)
   2) Federal Bonding Program
   3) Updated Title VII/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidance
   4) Employment readiness service providers
   5) Retention and supportive services for new and entry-level employees
   6) Services available to employers
   7) Background check providers
b. Conduct annual employer education sessions
c. Recruit corporate champions that have hired restored citizens
d. Engage restored citizens that have been successful in the workplace to share stories with employers
e. Promote program to buy services or products from employers that hire individuals that were formerly incarcerated

2. **Support holistic models that offer a menu of services that include a balance of evidence based, as well as innovative pilot programs for individuals who already live in the community, those returning from an institution, and those who would benefit from alternative employment methods such as entrepreneurship**
   a. Align services in the community to develop a comprehensive menu of services to include:
      1) Voluntary participation from restored citizens
      2) Job readiness (include use of computer and appropriate communication/wording)
      3) Strong case management with 2 year follow up
      4) Supportive services, including behavioral health
      5) Scholarship funding for
         a) Credentialed training
         b) On-the-job training, transitional employment, or apprenticeship
      6) Education remediation (i.e., GED or math)
      7) Employer engagement, focusing on industries that are more likely to hire and require the skills that formerly incarcerated individuals will have
      8) Front-end risk and employment readiness assessments
      9) Contracted linkages between service providers
   b. Influence work-readiness programs in ODRC and Community Based Corrections Facilities pre-release activities leveraged by federal funding sources like DOL and BJA grants
   c. Explore the use and development of innovative or promising pilot programs such as entrepreneurial programs and linkages

     d. Develop a funding strategy which includes a diverse portfolio of funders to ensure the implementation of these models

3. **Continue advocacy that promotes criminal justice reform specific to employment**
   a. Increase community awareness of the employment barriers faced by people with criminal records
   b. Build a broad based coalition to work towards eliminating or reducing these barriers
      1) Fair hiring
      2) Reduce employment related collateral sanctions
      3) Create policies that support career pathways in growing industries providing a voice and a vehicle for participation by the people most impacted by these policies that preclude restored citizens from entering the workforce
      4) Address search engines conducting background checks that do not have current information (i.e., charges identified and later dismissed or reduced)

Local Incarceration

It is recognized that reentry is one component of the larger criminal and juvenile justice systems and as such is affected by the laws, services, policies, and procedures of those systems. It is therefore important for reentry practitioners and advocates to participate in activities that help to eliminate unnecessary removal of individuals from their communities and to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of those systems. The primary target populations to be addressed through the strategic priorities in this plan are those individuals returning to Cuyahoga County from ODRC prisons and ODYS institutions; but with implementation of the following strategies, an expansion of the population to those in the Cuyahoga County Jail Local Incarceration Program and the Community Based Corrections Facility in Cuyahoga County constitute an appropriate expansion into the larger criminal justice system without losing the needed focus on the established reentry target population.

1. **Support and enhance reentry focus in Cuyahoga County Jail Local Incarceration Program and Community Based Corrections Facility in Cuyahoga County**
   a. Sustain and increase funding
   b. Replicate the ODRC reintegration experience in these programs including employment, substance abuse, and cognitive behavioral programming

2. **Link to local community reentry resources while in these programs and at the time release**
   a. Conduct a needs assessment during incarceration period

b. Provide information to the offender about community employment and other programs

c. Provide information about the North Star Reentry Resource Center

d. Create and implement discharge plan, including any necessary community linkage

3. **Establish effective medication and treatment protocols for program participants**

   a. Develop local and state partnership to provide prescription medications to inmates leaving programming by billing central pharmacy in the same way that medication prescriptions will be handled through the ODRC allowing for a more seamless, efficient and protective process for the offender and the community

   b. Make appropriate connections for on-going mental health and health services

Community Awareness

In order to advance the programmatic and policy changes envisioned in this Strategic Action Plan, it is necessary to gain the support and participation of a wide range of key traditional and non-traditional stakeholders. Communicating regularly with information and messages that help these stakeholders to understand the significance of reentry to them and the larger community will increase the likelihood of moving them to action in a way that removes barriers to successful reentry.

1. **Develop a unified message**

   a. Create a county-wide vision statement such as "To improve the quality of life in the community by having formerly incarcerated individuals become productive citizens and successfully reenter the local community"

   b. Use words that are understandable and respectful to those involved (agree on how to refer to individuals who have been incarcerated, i.e., returning citizen, restored citizens, etc.) – language matters

   c. Create an on-line centralized website for all reentry information

      1) North Star's website serves as the portal initially

      2) Research further options

2. **Educate decision makers and other stakeholders**

   a. Continue to research "smart on crime" policies nationally (i.e., increase the usage of alternative to incarceration programs, such as specialized courts, diversion, community based corrections)

   b. Develop Reentry 101 series (both live and online)

      1) Educate stakeholders on the reentry issues facing Cuyahoga County using data, offering resources, and presenting solutions (GCRLC) and how to join/participate in activities that support successful reentry (i.e., Citizen Circles)

      2) Challenge negative stereotypes

c. Implement multi-site visits for key stakeholders showing them where our county/city resources going, who they are serving, why it is important

d. Host briefings

      1) Historical disenfranchisement impact on communities economically and politically; status of reentry population; updates on the levels of service being provided in the community; testimonials from those who have received service and have been "rehabilitated"; how you can be involved

      2) Conduct quarterly evening General Body meetings for all stakeholders such as those individuals formerly incarcerated and their family members, service providers, advocates, funders, etc.

      3) Host quarterly roundtable discussions with County stakeholders; semi-annual roundtable with State and County representation

3. Identify media outlets and create a brand for reentry

a. Create a toolkit for engaging media

b. Develop solid contacts

      1) Reentry specific contacts (media)

         a) How best to leverage

         b) News/magazine format

         c) News paper article series

         d) TV series, "a month in the life of…"

         e) Special events

c. Create an awareness campaign

      1) Enlist the participation of a public relations firm to assist

      2) Explore as many no cost/low cost engagement strategies

      3) Create a message

         a) Develop talking points for stakeholders

         b) How do we get more positive hits in the media

         c) Consistency and redundancy is key

Research & Evaluation

A strong system of data collection, program evaluation, and research is necessary to ensure effective use of limited resources and services are truly promoting successful reentry. Research

that identifies evidence-based and promising practices should guide the selection of program models and implementation of these models should maintain fidelity to the design. Expected outcomes from programming should be defined and a system of data collection that allows for evaluation and reporting should assist in modifications that improve outcomes. With implementation of the following strategies, the infrastructure for such a system will be in place.

1. **Understand and optimize data already collected (e.g., agency level data reported to funders, ORAS/OYAS, ODRC/ODYS profile data)**
   a. Include data from clients (demographic/outcome/recidivism), agencies (organizational efficiency/effectiveness), and families/children
   b. Assess adequacy and completeness of these data
   c. Make these data accessible for analysis on a real-time basis
   d. Examine data at the aggregate level, but also make individual data available for planning

2. **Create standardized definitions of recidivism and factors that might predict recidivism; utilize comprehensive recidivism analysis protocols correlating data from multiple data sources; use appropriate multivariate statistical approaches to examine key outcomes that link client and service data to predict outcomes**
   a. Identify stakeholders available from each domain to commit to research and evaluation
   b. Determine current and desired evaluation capacity based on projected resources
   c. Develop and implement a common sharing of information form/capacities/protocols so that all relevant information can be aggregated across domains
   d. Consider developing a centralized database
   e. Build the collection of a common set of core indicators into contracts that include performance-based accountability, as well as more specific indicators on a by contract basis

3. **Provide opportunities for ongoing dissemination of information about the reentry population, bringing people together for education, development, and training; include the reentry population and faith-based providers in the process**
   a. Share information and arrange for training on evidence-based and promising practices
   b. Provide reports on results of local and national evaluations and research
   c. Present data on the reentry population

Funding

Moving the strategic priorities identified in the community planning process to action requires efficient use of existing resources and a more organized and coordinated approach in obtaining new funding. Recognizing that competition for limited resources both within and beyond the issue of reentry is a reality, a system that has the capability of identifying funding opportunities that support priorities and best practices, addressing concerns related to resource distribution, and making the process transparent to stakeholders will maximize fundraising opportunities.

1. **Fund what works**
   a. Models supported by research to reduce recidivism - RFP requires Department of Justice or Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration approved evidence-based practice models
   b. Match services to risk/need - RFP requires standardized risk/needs instrument (ORAS/OYAS/GAIN) for program screening/eligibility determination

2. **Funding/grant applications focus on ensuring that programming match State and local priorities**
   a. Funding requests/grant applications support implementation of local priorities established in this strategic action plan
   b. Funding requests/grant applications follow policy and legislative mandates

3. **Central coordination of grant applications**
   a. Establish organizational structure and capacity for review of grants for purposes of support letters from the Office of Reentry; determine criterion and system to determine who applies for grant solicitations
   b. Remove barriers created by governmental authorities that limit the ability to submit the strongest, most competitive applications for funding
   c. Establish organizational structure and capacity to assist with preparation of grants, writing of proposals, dissemination of information, identification of agencies that may collaborate in grant initiatives
   d. Serve as clearing house of information

ACTION STEPS

Stakeholders' participating in the planning process successfully identified strategic priorities for the next 18-24 months; but now an effective and efficient implementation process must be established. The key ingredients in successful implementation are:

- Maintain focus on the strategic priorities identified

- Develop detailed implementation plans for each strategic priority, identifying what needs to be done, who needs to be involved, and timing for completion
- Develop a structured reporting system that communicates progress and barriers to successful implementation

In order to achieve this, a re-structuring of existing committees under The Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy and staff assignments in the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry is necessary to support implementation of strategic priorities identified by the community-wide reentry stakeholders.

Focus on Strategic Priorities

It was necessary to conduct a planning process to establish strategic priorities because fiscal resources are limited; to a large degree, there is a logical progression or evolution of what needs to done to improve the reentry system of services; and the commitment and contributions of a large number of stakeholders will be required to institute desired improvements. It is important to maintain a focus on these priorities in order to maximize the progress that is possible. That is not to say that there will not be emergent issues and opportunities that must be addressed, but there must be thoughtful consideration and justification for diverging from the established strategic priorities. A new funding source or a strong advocate for their particular service should not necessarily divert fiscal and human resources from the strategic priorities established by this community process.

Action Step: Establish criteria and a process to review emergent issues and opportunities that are inconsistent with established priorities so that needed focus is appropriately maintained.

Implementation Plans

The eight strategic priorities present a challenging agenda to accomplish in no more than 24 months. In order to be successful, an organized and efficient approach must be utilized. In each strategic priority, work was begun on what needs to occur to address that area; but additional delineation of tasks and responsibilities is required. In addition, it may be necessary to further focus efforts due to resource limitations and identify the strategic priorities that are most important to accomplish.

Action Step: Complete a detailed implementation plan for each priority as follows.

Strategic Priority/Ranking	Activities	Leadership Responsibility	Participants	Timeline	Completion/ Impediments

Reporting

Accountability was identified as one of the benefits of pursuing a community planning process to establish strategic priorities. Biannual reporting in a standard format at an open community meeting on progress in implementation of the strategic priorities will support this accountability. A more thorough discussion at the end of year one on possible modifications should also be instituted

Action Step: Publicize dates and locations of biannual meetings and develop reporting format for these sessions.

The Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry will begin the implementation process by preparing detailed recommendations for each action step and re-structuring of committees and staff assignments for presentation at the August 2012 meeting of the Leadership Coalition.