

Establishing and Sustaining Local Community Support to Enhance Offender Reentry

**Reentry in the State of Connecticut:
Partners in Progress**

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Today, We Will Talk about...

- Why it is important to build local community partnerships
- Critical tasks of local reentry teams
- Lessons from local reentry partnerships in other states
- Strategies for engaging and sustaining local reentry partnerships that support successful offender transition
- Next steps needed in Connecticut to encourage the development of local community reentry teams

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Why Engage Community Support?

- Enhance public safety and reduce victimization through the management, coordination and provision of services to individuals transitioning from prison to the community.
- Identify and develop community services and supports that address the criminogenic needs of offenders.
- Build public knowledge of and support and for Connecticut's reentry initiative
- Corrections can't do it all!

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Creating Local Teams

Who are your community partners?

- Local Corrections and Probation/Parole
- Human and Social Service Providers (Housing, Workforce Development, Substance Abuse, Mental Health, Public Health)
- Community Action Agencies
- Political and Community Leaders
- Victim Advocates
- Other Advocacy Groups
- Faith-based Organizations

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Creating Local Teams

Other "Natural" Allies

- Local businesses
- Trade unions
- Service clubs and civic organizations
- Schools
- Landlords
- Other?

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Critical Tasks

Agree on Common Goals and Team Responsibility

- Develop consensus concerning a few large goals on which the local team will work
- Create a "charter" statement that spells out the specific responsibilities the team will take to advance these large goals

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Critical Tasks

Understand the Characteristics of Individual Offenders Transitioning into the Community

- What risk do offenders pose? How many are high, medium, low risk?
- What criminogenic needs must be addressed through supervision and services to reduce risk?
- What survival needs exist that will impact stability?

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Critical Tasks

Conduct a "Resource Inventory" of Services and Supports in the Community

- Identify existing community services – what kind, how many
- Determine how well existing services can address criminogenic needs
- Identify gaps in needed services and supports to address criminogenic need
- Develop strategies to fill gaps

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Critical Tasks

Assess Strengths and Barriers in Key Service Areas

- Housing
- Workforce Development
- Transportation
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Mental Health
- Healthcare
- Family Support
- Life Skills
- Adult Education
- Domestic Violence
- Faith-based Support
- Sex Offender Services
- Victim Services
- Entitlement Programs
- Law Enforcement
- Gender-specific Services

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Local Community Partnerships

Examples from Other States

- Michigan – Local Community Partners and Governance Structure
- New York – Community Reentry Task Forces

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Michigan Prisoner Reentry Initiative (MPRI)

Community Partners

- “Community input and collaboration is the heart of the work that must be done to improve inmate reentry.”

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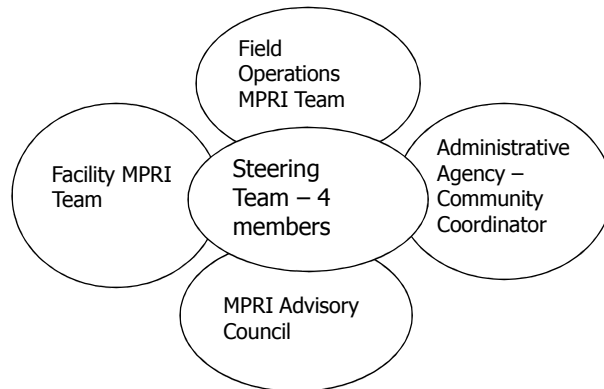
MPRI

Elements of Local Partnership Structure

- **Local Reentry Advisory Council**
Advises and supports local reentry plans and services, as many as 150 members
- **Steering Team – 4 members:**
Warden of local prison, parole supervision rep from local DOC field operations, 2 community representatives
- **Transition Team**
Group supports offenders in transition through case management approach

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MPRI Governance Structure



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MPRI

Goals of Local Governance Structure

- Consistency with statewide reentry model while protecting local control
- Protection from legal liability of local stakeholders thru formal administrative structure
- Local comprehensive plan
- Public education

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Local Community Coordinators

- Coordinate community input and representation
- Organize community assessment (assets, barriers and gaps)
- Facilitate meetings
- Help develop comprehensive plan

Critical Skills: Communication, community organizing, brokering, system building (and communication again)

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New York State Community Reentry Task Forces

- Funded through state grants to county governments or agencies
- Three Goals
 - Individual focus – Help individual offenders successfully transition from prison to the local community
 - System focus – Develop effective, evidence-based local services and resources that address criminogenic needs
 - Public focus – Develop community support for reentry efforts through public education

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New York State Community Reentry Task Forces

- Team Structure
 - CRTF Chair
 - CRTF Community Resource Coordinator
 - CRTF Large Team
 - CRTF Committees

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New York State Community Reentry Task Forces

- Team Members
 - Parole
 - Local Human Service Providers
 - Substance Abuse
 - Mental Health
 - Temporary and Disability Assistance
 - Employment Services
 - Faith-based community
 - Business community

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New York State Community Reentry Task Forces

- Goal 1 – Help individual offenders successfully transition from prison to the local community
 - Target high risk populations as priority
 - Develop and implement case management plan with parole
 - Broker/coordinate delivery of treatment and supportive services
 - Foster supportive networks

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New York State Community Reentry Task Forces

- Goal 2 – Develop effective, evidence-based local services and resources that address criminogenic needs
 - Assess current services and resources to determine where evidence-based services exist and are needed
 - Develop and implement strategies to build and utilize evidence-based services that address criminogenic needs
 - Monitor effectiveness of services, hold services accountable for effective programming through contractual agreements

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New York State Community Reentry Task Forces

- Goal 3 – Develop community support for reentry efforts through public education
 - Develop and implement ongoing activities that reach into the community, inform citizens about reentry as a public safety initiative
 - Outreach to individual citizens, politicians, community/business leaders and established groups to gain support for reentry goals and activities
 - In-reach to prisons to inform transitioning individuals and their families about the Task Force services and responsibilities

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Attributes of Successful Local Teams

- Successful teams thrive when they **pay attention to process** by:
 - Establishing a formal charter
 - Establishing concrete operating norms
 - Clarifying team member roles and responsibilities
 - Taking time to get to know individual members and the agencies they represent

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Attributes of Successful Local Teams

- Successful teams thrive when they **pay attention to process** by:
 - Developing a regular schedule of meeting dates/times, goals/agenda
 - Establishing clear communications lines
 - Reflecting on accomplishments, work activities, membership at key intervals
 - Educating each other about offender management, transition and reentry and the surrounding community

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Considerations for Connecticut

- Who needs to play a role in fostering local reentry partnerships, and what should those roles be?
- What conditions must be present to advance and sustain community reentry partnerships in Connecticut?
- Which community stakeholders should be directly involved in helping individual offenders transition successfully?

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