

Washington State Criminal Sentencing Task Force
Reentry & Reducing Recidivism Working Group
Meeting Summary: July 27, 2020
Digital Conferencing Technology

Attendees:

- Nick Allen, *Interests of Incarcerated Individuals*
- Russ Brown (alt. for Jon Tunheim), *Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys*
- Suzanne Cook, *Statewide Family Council*
- Representative Roger Goodman, *Washington State House of Representatives, Democratic Caucus*
- Sonja Hallum, *Washington State Office of the Governor*
- Martina Kartman, *Interests of Crime Victims*
- Representative Brad Klippert, *Washington State House of Representatives, Republican Caucus*
- Mac Pevey (alt. for Secretary Sinclair), *Washington State Department of Corrections*
- Chris Poulos (alt. for Lydia Flora Barlow), *Statewide Reentry Council*
- Melody Simle (alt. for Suzanne Cook), *Statewide Family Council*
- Secretary Steve Sinclair, *Washington State Department of Corrections*
- Chief James Schrimpscher, *Washington State Fraternal Order of Police*
- Jon Tunheim, *Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys*

Guests:

- Representative Lauren Davis
- Brittany Lovely

Facilitation Team: Molly Stenovet, Amanda Murphy, Chris Page and Maggie Counihan

WELCOME & AGENDA REVIEW

Molly welcomed Reentry and Reducing Recidivism Working Group members and guests and described how the facilitation team has organized the potential recommendations. The meeting focus would be reviewing and discussing updated potential recommendations around Community Based Involvement in Resources, Programs, & Rehabilitative Services.

POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Bullets below each emerging recommendation capture key discussion points.

Potential Recommendation #17: Support Department of Corrections (DOC) programs and policy changes that increase opportunities and accessibility for family engagement, when appropriate, during reentry planning.

- Chris Poulos noted that based on conversations at the last Reentry working group meeting, the basic takeaway is a desire to see families involved in the process as long as there are no victim concerns.
- Members agreed to bring this recommendation to the full Task Force.

Potential Recommendation #18: Increase DOC's ability to consider proximity to family when determining incarceration and release locations.

- Members expressed concern about county of origin and release locations, agreeing that counties need to be consulted.
- Some noted the importance of proximity to programs and other resources
- Members asked if data could be provided on the total number of county-of-origin requests and how many of those get approved.

Action item: Mac and Chris Poulos will review DOC data related to country of origin and bring the findings back to the working group, including whether those findings suggest that a recommendation is needed; if so, they will draft language for that potential recommendation.

Potential Recommendation #19: Support policy changes and establishment of criteria that allow individuals to engage with faith leaders, mentors, and/or volunteers prior, during, and following release.

- Members noted that DOC is reviewing this policy and they have interest in making some changes.
- Members agreed to bring this recommendation to the full Task Force.

Potential Recommendation #20: Continue to provide resources for the Statewide Reentry Council to partner with community organizations that provide mentorship and credible messaging to individuals prior, during, and following release. Prioritize support to organizations that employ people with lived experience.

- Chris Poulos noted that currently the Statewide Reentry Council and Dept. of Commerce administer funds to community-based organizations to provide services to individuals exiting prisons and jails. They would like to see the funding continue and increase.

Potential Recommendation #21: Support partnerships among DOC, Reentry Council, Dept. of Commerce, and entities delivering vocational/educational programming to increase access to skill-building opportunities and connect individuals with employment opportunities upon release. Increase funding and accessibility for vocational training and education within DOC facilities and jails.

- Members discussed programs in place at various DOC facilities. DOC created a document that lists what is currently available. Members will review before the next meeting.
- The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) is under contract with the Washington Student Achievement Council and DOC to look at Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC)-funded programs. The WSIPP report will be finished later this year.
- Members discussed having DOC present information about current program offerings. It would provide the group with a foundational understanding about what is happening.

Action items:

- Secretary Sinclair will ask Danielle Armbruster to present on current DOC programming at the next working group meeting.
- All working group members will review DOC documentation on current programs.
- Members agreed to combine the below potential recommendation with this one.

Potential recommendation: Increase investment in skills training for persons incarcerated by DOC, and for persons under community supervision. Identify training programs that provide a person skills training that will sustain them after they are no longer DOC responsibility. Once those persons receive that skills training provide a pathway to employment.

- See above action items.

Potential Recommendation #23: Develop incentives for businesses and organizations that hire individuals who complete vocation/educational programming while incarcerated.

- Members discussed possibilities of a tax credit and noted that there currently is a federal tax credit available for employers who hire a formerly incarcerated individual.
- The group also discussed identifying areas of the economy that need employees and how Dept. of Commerce could help forecast those areas.

Action items: Chris Poulos and Secretary Sinclair will rewrite potential recommendation #23 to better address/ account for the current (and future) difficult economic times.

The group agreed the following **potential recommendation** was a repeat and agreed to delete it: Continue to provide resources for the Statewide Reentry Council to partner with community organizations which provide reentry services.

Potential Recommendation #24: Establish performance-based criteria for housing providers.

- Members discussed having a presentation on this at a future meeting.
- Members had questions about zoning challenges around housing individuals released from DOC facilities.

Action item: Mac Pevey is willing to provide a local example of zoning challenges at the next working group meeting.

Potential Recommendation #25: Develop incentives for reentry housing providers, which includes opportunities for vacant buildings/units to become safe and affordable reentry housing.

- Members discussed ideas for building housing while incarcerated.

Potential Recommendation #26: Support partnership between the Reentry Council and Department of Commerce to provide assistance and reduce barriers to accessing reentry housing.

- Members expressed interest in the Reentry Council working with Department of Commerce to understand such barriers and identify ways to address them.

Action item: The Facilitation Team will ask contacts at the Department of Commerce that work on Growth Management and Housing to connect with Chris Poulos to discuss the working group's thinking around potential recommendations 25 and 26, including identifying zoning challenges related to housing and individuals getting released out of DOC facilities.

NEXT STEPS & ACTION ITEMS

- **All working group members:** Your facilitation team has updated the potential recommendations document based on your conversations. Please review to ensure that we've accurately captured your discussions and send comments/questions to Maggie.counihan@wsu.edu or sentencing.taskforce.ruckelshaus@wsu.edu. Green highlighted text = working group has finalized and agreed to put the potential recommendation before the full Task Force in September. Yellow highlights = call attention to the actions/information gathering efforts described in the following bullets.
- **Mac and Chris Poulos** will review DOC data related to country of origin and bring the findings back to the working group, including whether those findings suggest that a recommendation is needed; if so, they will draft language for that potential recommendation.
- **Secretary Sinclair will ask Danielle Armbruster** to present on current DOC programming at the next working group meeting.

- **All working group members** will review DOC documentation on current programs (see attachments).
- **Chris Poulos and Secretary Sinclair** will rewrite potential recommendation #23 to better address/ account for the current (and future) difficult economic times
- **Mac Pevey** is willing to provide a local example of zoning challenges at the next working group meeting.
- The **Facilitation Team** will ask contacts at the Department of Commerce that work on Growth Management and Housing to connect with **Chris Poulos** to discuss the working group's thinking around potential recommendations 25 and 26, including identifying zoning challenges related to housing and individuals getting released out of DOC facilities.

REMINDER: contact the Facilitation Team if members have any suggestions!