

A Safer Missouri and the Standard of Excellence in Corrections

# Missouri Department of Corrections

## Missouri Reentry Process Report to the Governor 2015

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## **Introduction**

*97% of Missouri incarcerated offenders will be released back into the community. The most recent Missouri Department of Corrections recidivism rate is 45.5% for all releases and 37.1% for first time releases for offenders released in 2013(as calculated on June 30, 2015). Department of Corrections and partnering agencies continue in working towards reducing this rate of recidivism further. As stated in previous years, for each new crime there is a new victim and new costs to Missouri's communities. The Missouri Reentry Process continues to work with partners to change this course and enhance reentry efforts so that offenders are better prepared to reintegrate back into the community and to be more successful in their community supervision and to lead positive, productive lives. The Department of Corrections continues to be devoted to building on the groundwork of the collaborative efforts that have taken place since the Missouri Reentry Process Initiative began.*

As directed by Executive Order 09-16 signed by Governor Jay Nixon on March 23rd, 2009, the Missouri Department of Corrections continues to lead an interagency steering team for the Missouri Reentry Process.

The Missouri Reentry Process Steering Team continues to meet regularly to work toward integrating successful offender reentry principles and practices into state agencies and communities throughout Missouri, resulting in partnerships that enhance offender self-sufficiency, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety. The report to follow provides the history of the Missouri Reentry Process, a summary of the accomplishments made through collaborative initiatives in 2015, a summary of challenges the team faced during the year, a discussion of outcomes to date, and a brief summary of the work that the team will pursue in 2016.

## **History**

Missouri was chosen as the first state to implement a model created by the National Institute of Corrections in 2002. This philosophical framework is designed to improve the offender transition process during incarceration in an effort to increase public safety, diminish new victimization, make efficient use of state and local resources, and to ensure offenders are prepared to be productive, law-abiding citizens. Based upon analysis of Missouri's quantitative and qualitative baseline data, the Missouri Reentry Process Steering Team identified factors that are highly correlated with successful transition or recidivism and developed strategies to address these factors. These factors included substance abuse, medical and mental health, transportation, education, employment, housing, family, and information sharing. Data reflects that when these factors are addressed by a comprehensive case management plan with links to the community, offenders are more likely to be successful, thus, communities are safer.

The model indicates the Department of Corrections alone cannot effectively address all issues offenders face upon release into the community. Therefore, by forming strategic and tactical partnerships that enhance offender self-sufficiency and public safety, the mission of the Missouri Reentry Process Steering Team is making a difference in the number of successful offenders in our communities.

The MRP Steering Team continues to demonstrate one of the most extraordinary collaborations in state government and is comprised of the Department of Corrections, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Economic Development, the Department of Revenue, the Department of Health and Senior Services, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Transportation, US Probation, and the Office of State Courts Administrator. Future membership may also include crime victim advocates, law enforcement, the

faith-based community, children of incarcerated parents and any others deemed necessary to accomplish the mission set forth. We continue work in expanding the membership representation on the MRP Steering Team during the upcoming year.

The Team recognizes that without assistance, many ex-offenders will fail at leading law-abiding lives when they return home. This can result in new crimes being committed with a huge cost to taxpayers and their communities. Through identified shared resources, the team continues to become more knowledgeable on barriers faced by offenders in their transition back to the community and to identify and implement strategies to keep them from returning to prison. These partnerships enhance offender self-sufficiency, reduce re-incarceration and improve public safety.

## **Accomplishments**

### **1. The Missouri Reentry Process (MRP) continues as a national model**

The Missouri Department of Corrections, along with the MRP Steering Team, has provided consultation on best practices for many states throughout the past several years. Director Lombardi continues to be called upon to present best reentry practices to states across the nation. Our Department representatives, as well as other members of the Missouri Reentry Process Steering Team, have assisted numerous states in reentry initiatives and efforts. The Department of Corrections and members of the MRP Steering Team continue to be called upon by other states and organizations for presentations, sharing of best practices and brainstorming of solutions to barriers. In the past year, we have assisted Alabama, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Texas and Wisconsin in expanding knowledge regarding Missouri reentry efforts and partnerships to assist in more successful offender transition.

### **2. Missouri Puppies for Parole continues to surpass expectations**

Since the inception of the Missouri Puppies for Parole program in 2010 as a restorative justice initiative, it has adopted more than 3,500 dogs and expanded to 19 correctional centers in Missouri. In 2015, the program, which does not use any taxpayer money in an effort to help find suitable homes for unadoptable dogs while teaching offenders about compassion and altruistic behavior, was chosen as a semifinalist in the prestigious Innovations in American Government Awards competition sponsored by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation in the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. With this prestigious award, the program continues to surpass its early expectations of reducing euthanasia among dogs while offering positive offender programming by creating a more positive and safer institutional environment. Offenders enrolled in the program take pride when the dogs they have trained are adopted, especially when those have been specifically trained for individuals with special needs, long-term care facilities, veterans' homes, facilities within the Department of Mental Health or other organizations that utilize canine therapy. In 2013, the Puppies for Parole program entered into a partnership with COMTREA Comprehensive Health to begin the Advanced Puppies for Parole program to help identify individuals and organizations that could benefit from dogs with advanced training. The program's role in the reentry process is important because offenders in the program can earn a certificate in animal handling from the U.S. Department of Labor that is recognized in all 50 states. Several offender handlers have taken advantage of that aspect of the program upon their release from incarceration, as well as the value of working together with other individuals within a group to accomplish a set of goals.

### **3. MRP Community Teams expanded across the State of Missouri**

Local community MRP teams across the state of Missouri continue working together to identify barriers to reentry in their communities, such as housing, employment, transportation, substance abuse, medical and behavioral health treatment needs, etc., in order to meet the needs of reentering citizens, making local communities stronger and safer. Twenty-six community teams comprised of community organizations, local and state agencies, faith-based organizations, Probation and Parole staff, Division of Adult Institution staff, local law enforcement, judiciary representatives, local businesses, treatment providers, victims, offender family members and ex-offenders continue to work together strengthening local community reentry efforts and addressing reentry barriers. These teams collaborated together organizing twenty-two local community reentry conferences and resource fairs across the State of Missouri to connect offenders with local reentry service providers and to promote networking.

### **4. Transition of the Kansas City Community Release Center (KCCRC) to the Kansas City Reentry Center (KCRC)**

On September 1, 2015 Missouri Department of Corrections transitioned the Kansas City Community Release and Supervision Center (KCCRC) located at 651 Mulberry Street, Kansas City, MO, from its role as a release center under the authority of the Division of Probation and Parole to the Division of Adult Institutions, to a minimum security facility within the Division of Adult Institutions. The maximum population capacity is approximately 410 offenders. The mission of the facility will be to prepare offenders for successful reintegration back to their communities. The offender population includes offenders from Jackson County and the surrounding counties; they are minimum security and slated for release within fifteen months. In preparation for release, the offenders are provided with intensive pre-release services and program opportunities based on the offenders' specific needs. Through work of the KCRC Transition Sub-Committee, a Reentry Intake Panel was developed to assist offenders in planning for successful reintegration into the local community. The Reentry Intake Panel is composed of Case Management Staff, Medical and Mental Health Staff, Reentry Activities Coordinators and the offender. The panel meets with each offender within the first 30 days of arrival, followed by other panels at intervals deemed necessary during completion of programming, and then again, within 30 days of release. The panel identifies criminogenic needs and addresses those needs through core reentry programming and specialized pre-release services. By assessing and re-assessing the assets and liabilities of each offender in a personalized case management setting, a unified reentry plan is developed and strengthens the likelihood of productive living upon the offender's release.

### **5. Department of Corrections partnered with the U.S. Department of Labor Apprenticeship Program**

This initiative has resulted in Missouri Vocational Enterprises (MVE) positions qualifying for official apprenticeships. Approximately fifty (50) positions within MVE qualify for the U.S. Department of Labor's Apprenticeship Program. Since 2009, MVE has issued 1277 Certificates to offenders that are recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor. MVE has 362 offenders currently pursuing an apprenticeship.

**6. Department of Corrections partnered with reentry providers to implement U.S. Department of Labor apprenticeship programs in the community**

The Missouri Department of Corrections, in collaboration with the Father Support Center in St. Louis, has identified high risk–high need offenders who need to secure training and certification for employment in the industry and manufacturing fields. A Department of Labor grant, secured by the Father Support Center, provides the means to assist offenders in securing fulltime employment and to reduce recidivism. This collaborative effort started two years ago and will continue through 2016.

A partnership between the Missouri Department of Corrections and State Technical College of Missouri offers Department of Labor assistance to unemployed and under-employed offenders searching for employment. Through the MOWINS program, released offenders are able to receive training and certification in the growing and diverse fields of healthcare, manufacturing and information technology.

**7. Department of Corrections partnered with the Missouri Department of Economic Development—Division of Workforce Development to address pre and post release services**

Representatives from the Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development enter correctional facilities to provide appropriate career training services, including labor exchange services, as defined by the Wagner-Peyser Act, and employment and training services in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) to incarcerated offenders. The Division of Workforce Development utilizes the Next Generation Career Center model, which allows the job seeker to enhance interviewing skills and resume building at minimum and medium security prisons. Offenders are connected with local Missouri Career Center staff to secure additional training and job search assistance prior to release.

Division of Workforce Development staff participates in resource/job fairs organized at minimum and medium security prisons for offenders who are six-twelve months from release.

The Division of Workforce Development staff is also assisting offenders in finding employment in agriculture. The Agricultural Employment Services program is utilizing the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program, Foreign Labor Certification Program and other Agriculture Services that includes all other agricultural farm, ranch or production employers and employment opportunities to assist ex-offenders. The services include: Job-searching assistance, Resume Assistance, Career Counseling, Training opportunities, Skills assessments, Job fair access, job referrals, and Agricultural labor law information.

**8. Department of Corrections partnered with the Department of Social Services to implement and enhance the pre-release Medicaid application process**

This process allows the Department of Corrections staff to assist offenders in applying for Medicaid prior to release. The targeted groups are age 65 and older, pregnant, serious/chronic medical or mental health issues, developmentally disabled, blind, or under age 19. The offenders will be notified within 3 days of their release from prison if they qualify for Medicaid benefits and will have access to both medical and mental health services without interruption of treatment plans. Department of Corrections staff submitted 627 pre-release applications in 2015.

**9. Department of Corrections partnered with Social Security Administration to implement and enhance the pre-release Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) application or reinstatement process**

This process allows Missouri Department of Corrections staff to assist disabled offenders to apply for benefits prior to release. The process can also assist offenders in getting benefits reinstated upon release. An application filed before release allows SSA to make a determination based on what the situation will be after the offender is released. This allows eligible individuals to receive payments shortly after they reenter the community.

**10. Department of Corrections partnered with the Department of Social Services--Family Support Division to implement a personalized case management system to address child support issues**

A pilot program allows representatives from the Family Support Division of the Department of Social Services to enter correctional facilities and make monthly presentations to offenders who are nine months from release. Offenders who need more personalized assistance in addressing specific child support issues are allowed to meet personally with Child Support Enforcement representatives to begin planning and strategizing for reentry. The Department of Corrections and the Family Support Division have worked together to allow electronic information to be accessed from one department to another. Services, which could have only been provided after release, are now able to be planned prior to release. This allows for the direct communication between representative and offender, for payment plans to be established or modified, and for the coordination of future meetings and hearings. The Department hopes to extend this program to other correctional facilities in 2016.

**11. Department of Corrections partnered with Missouri Veterans Commission and the Department of Veterans Affairs**

Incarcerated Veterans Reentry Coordinators provide educational and informative presentations to incarcerated veterans during the transitional phase of reentry before reentering Missouri communities. Incarcerated veterans are informed and educated on the services and resources available to them after release, as well as provided the opportunity to complete applications for benefits and services before release. The partnerships ensure that incarcerated veterans are able to receive the reentry services necessary for successful transition into Missouri communities.

**12. Department of Corrections partnered with the Department of Health and Senior Services, Social Security Administration, and the Department of Revenue to assist offenders in obtaining birth certificates, social security replacement cards and Missouri non-drivers license identification cards prior to release**

Offenders who are released from prison with proper identification are able to obtain employment, rent an apartment or apply for benefits with fewer barriers. The Department of Corrections has established partnerships with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Social Security Administration and the Missouri Department of Revenue in order for staff to assist offenders in obtaining the necessary documentation to secure birth certificates, social security replacement cards and Missouri non-drivers license identification cards before release. In 2015, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services secured 3,955 Birth Certificates for incarcerated offenders. In 2015, the Missouri Department of

Revenue secured 1,596 Missouri non-drivers license identification cards for offenders prior to release. These documents allow reentering citizens a smoother transition to life after incarceration.

**13. Department of Corrections has partnered with the Department of Mental Health to provide continuity of care for offenders with mental illness**

For offenders with severe mental illness, Department of Corrections mental health staff, through the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare, link offenders to mental health services in the community where they will be residing. Department of Corrections mental health staff conducts pre-release screenings and share assessment and treatment information with the receiving community mental health center. The Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) Offender Program helps guarantee that the most severely mentally ill will have access to treatment, medication, and community support services. Another initiative, the Community Mental Health Treatment program (CMHT), allows probation and parole officers to refer offenders under supervision to community mental health centers for treatment. The CMHT program provides limited subsidies to ensure access to treatment with the goal of reducing recidivism and improving functioning within the community. Both of these programs operate at no cost to the taxpayers, with funding provided from supervision fees paid by all offenders on probation and/or parole.

**14. Department of Corrections partnered with the Department of Mental Health to provide pre-release medication to reduce risk of relapse for offenders completing institutional treatment and who are returning to the St. Louis area**

Missouri was the first state to provide the opportunity for pre-release medication assisted recovery in state prison settings. Women's Eastern Treatment Center (located in WERDCC), Chillicothe Women's Treatment Center (located in CCC), Cremer Therapeutic Community Center (CTCC), Ozark Correctional Center (OCC), Maryville Treatment Center (MTC), Northeast Treatment Center (located in NECC) and Farmington Treatment Center (located in FCC) are providing to offenders in treatment a unique opportunity to address their opiate and alcohol addictions. Eligible offenders at these treatment centers who will be released to St. Louis and Kansas City may volunteer to participate in one of several Medication Assisted Treatment projects. Offenders in institutional treatment are screened for opiate and alcohol addictions, as well as mental health and medical eligibility. Those who wish to participate and are eligible receive a pre-release injection of Vivitrol (an injectable form of Naltrexone) and then continue with medication assisted recovery and outpatient treatment in St. Louis and Kansas City. The projects are a culmination of effective partnerships among the Department of Corrections, Gateway Foundation Inc, the Department of Mental Health, Corizon Healthcare within the institutions, and New Beginnings Alt-Care, Gateway Free & Clean, Heartland Center for Behavioral Change Free & Clean and Rediscover Alt-Care. The funding for this program will expire at the end of fiscal year 2016 with hopes of continued funding.

**15. Department of Corrections partnered with the Department of Mental Health to identify a new substance abuse treatment service referral process for high risk individuals**

A referral process was implemented in 2012 for individuals under supervision in the community and those completing institutional substance abuse treatment. The offenders served by this referral process will receive an expedited clinical assessment and placement in an appropriate level of care with a community provider. Research indicates that high risk offenders who receive immediate, ongoing services in the community have a greater likelihood for successful reentry. From January through December of 2015, there were 489 high risk offenders scheduled for appointments with community providers. Department of Mental Health data, for the individuals graduating from institutional treatment, reveals that

this referral process has reduced, by a few weeks or more, the waiting period for community services for these high risk offenders.

**16. Department of Corrections partnered with the Department of Mental Health, Probation and Parole and SEMO Behavioral Health to implement a pilot program that reduces wait time between the releases from institutional treatment to community treatment**

The NIATx integrated handoff pilot was implemented in 2013 and includes 3 District Probation & Parole offices (D12, D25, and D11). Offenders are referred to group education services at offices for SEMO Behavioral Health. The pilot allows the offenders to become engaged in aftercare shortly after release and provides access to support services while waiting for an assessment for treatment services. In 2015, 182 offenders were referred to groups within one week after their releases. Research indicates that offenders who receive immediate, ongoing services in the community have a greater likelihood for successful reentry.

**17. Department of Corrections--Division of Offender Rehabilitative Services (DORS) received assistance through collaboration with Corizon in the development of a program for mentally ill offenders residing in restrictive housing**

DORS approached Corizon to develop a program for mentally ill offenders in restrictive housing. Corizon developed the E.A.G.L.E Program: Emotions, Attitudes, Growth, Learning, Excelling. This is an intensive in-cell cognitive-behavioral treatment program designed to improve and enhance communication, thinking processes, positive reaction to anger, self-esteem, behaviors, and an overall understanding of self through various topics in addition to overall living conditions. The program can be customized to different learning styles and abilities and is also appropriate for offenders with no previous mental health needs.

**18. Department of Corrections partnered with the Department of Mental Health through the Missouri Governor's Committee to End Homelessness (GCEH) to develop a website for suitable housing resources**

The Missouri Governor's Committee to End Homelessness (GCEH) and the Missouri Reentry Process (MRP) steering team created the Joint Committee for Reentry Housing between the Missouri Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to address the issue of assisting justice-involved Missourians in locating suitable housing. The Joint Committee has developed a web-based interactive map that will assist caseworkers in finding housing resources for ex-offenders. Caseworkers understand the resources in their communities, but as ex-offenders look to move outside the area, it can be time consuming connecting to those resources. The requirements/disqualifiers for the numerous housing programs vary across the state and searching for that one housing resource to fit the ex-offender's need can be challenging. This new resource will be beneficial to both offenders and staff.

**19. Department of Corrections contracts with Kansas City Crime Commission**

Contracted services are provided, during post-release community reintegration, for support to offenders returning to the Kansas City area. These services include individualized Evidence Based Practice assistance from experienced case managers. These services provide resource assistance in the areas of employment, housing, and personalized goal planning. Clients are also provided access to classroom training regarding social maturity, workforce readiness and obtaining referral assistance to other critically needed resources such as substance abuse treatment, general and mental health services, cognitive behavioral training, legal and family reconciliation matters, etc. Staff meetings with Parole officers, the

participating client, the Kansas City Police Department, Second Chance Staff, and other relevant parties are regularly scheduled.

**20. Department of Corrections partnered with the Kansas City No Violence Alliance to assist offenders in obtaining services, needs, and support in an effort to reduce violent crime and recidivism**

The Kansas City No Violence Alliance (KC NoVA) is a collaborative effort that focuses on the most violent social groups in the KC area. These violent groups are responsible for 40% – 60% of the homicides annually in Kansas City. The Department of Correction's Board of Probation and Parole, Division of Adult Institutions (DAI), Office of The Inspector General, and Central Office Reentry Unit, through the partnership with KC NoVA, have engaged 350+ violent group members under Department of Corrections' authority to develop individualized plans to address Criminogenic Needs. Through KC NoVA, each Offender is assigned a Client Advocate to help navigate obstacles and provide support during this transitional phase, while working toward becoming productive citizens. The Kansas City No Violence Alliance is actively servicing 220 violent group members, thus reducing violent behavior and recidivism. Offenders, who are released from prison, when offered a support team, have a greater chance to reduce re-offending. The Department of Corrections has established a partnership with KC NoVA Reentry to help guide offenders through the reentry process and support them with life choice/style changes for the foreseeable future. The NoVA Reentry Team consists of a Detective from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department, a Department Of Corrections Parole Officer, and a Client Advocate from Jackson County Social Service Department. The Team completes Home Plan Investigations developing relationships with the Offender's support group, engages the Offender prior to release to help plan a future for success, and continues guidance and support through various means post release. 2015 was the inaugural year for the evidenced based NoVA Reentry Project. The partnership allowed the NoVA Reentry team access inside DAI facilities, where they engaged with 34 Offenders at 10 different institutions, preparing those Offenders to stay safe, alive and out of prison.

**21. Department of Corrections contracts with Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi**

For 12 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters has been building a systemic relationship with the Missouri Department of Corrections around children of incarcerated parents. Through an initiative called Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi Missouri (BBBSAM), current inmates are able to refer their children to the Big Brothers Big Sisters program – thereby aiming to break the cycle of incarceration by providing responsible mentors for their kids. 100% of Amachi Littles avoided the Juvenile Justice system. In -2015, 1,078 children affected by incarceration were served statewide and 98.3% of the Amachi Missouri matches celebrated their one year anniversary. In addition to being committed to NO ENTRY of Little Brothers and Little Sisters into the correctional system, BBBSAM is committed to NO RETURN of parents to prisons.

**22. Department of Corrections partnered with the Department of Social Services, Family and Community Trust (FACT) and ARCHS for sponsorship of the annual Missouri Reentry Process (MRP) Conference**

Continued positive and productive working relationships among the Department of Social Services, Family and Community Trust, ARCHS and Department of Corrections continue to enhance efforts in developing, promoting and presenting the annual MRP conference. This year marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conference, which started in St. Louis in 2005 with only 75 participants. The 2015 conference featured 330 attendees, 60 speakers, 4 keynote presentations, and 25 breakout training sessions with 3,778 individual training hours. Participants were awarded 10 contact hours via Missouri Substance Abuse

Professional Credentialing Board (MSAPCB) and 1 CEU (10 contact hours) via University of Missouri-St. Louis. Best Practices are often shared at these conferences and insight is gained in ways to enhance reentry efforts in communities throughout the state, resulting in safer communities for everyone.

### **23. Department of Corrections continues to support faith-based reentry programs, among many others, as an option for interested offenders**

Faith-based organizations in Missouri continue to support offenders in successful reentry. The Beauty For Ashes program, located at the Women's Eastern Reception and Diagnostic Correctional Center, continues to rehabilitate, encourage, and assist female offenders during incarceration in preparation for reentry into Missouri communities. Through intensive case management, quality employment services, and healthy support systems, the Beauty For Ashes program continues to be successful with a recidivism rate of less than 10%.

Catholic Charities Turnaround program continues to provide post release services for offenders returning to Jackson, Clay, Platte and Cass Counties in Missouri. Incarcerated offenders at the Western Missouri Correctional Center, Western Reception Diagnostic Correctional Center, Chillicothe Correctional Center and Women's Eastern Reception Diagnostic Correctional Center are interviewed and screened for this voluntary program. Through intensive case management, job development, employment preparation, education and mentoring, offenders are equipped with the support and tools necessary to assimilate successfully back into society. Catholic Charities is successful with a recidivism rate of less than 13%.

The Department continues to assist in the planning and coordination of the "Open Gates, Open Hearts Annual Faith-based Reentry Conference" in Columbia, Missouri. Over 120 persons from Missouri, Kansas, Colorado and Illinois attended the conference. With a focus on family reunification and its importance in reducing recidivism, multiple faith-based organizations came together to share information and best practices in reentry. Faith-based organizations from all over the state were able to share program information, network with others and build relationships, as well as hear from offenders who have benefited from faith-based programming during their reentry journey. Many organizations in the faith-based community partner with the Department of Corrections in providing vital reentry services which assist offenders in successful reentry.

### **24. Department of Corrections has initiated an offender video resume project**

The Video Resume program has been successfully expanded and enhanced during this calendar year. The Video Resume program has been coupled with a new Employability Skills curriculum developed by the Department of Corrections. While the Employability Skills program trains offenders in finding the right job, interviewing for the job, and successfully sustaining employment and professionalism, the Video Resume program provides the means to apply those skills and demonstrate them to potential employers. After successfully completing the eight-week Employability Skills program, offenders will be given the option to develop a video resume. Before the end of the 2016 calendar year, the Video Resume program will be expanded to include all Division of Adult Institutions.

### **25. Department of Corrections developed and implemented a new reentry curriculum for staff**

The Missouri Department of Corrections Reentry Unit successfully worked with the Division of Human Services Central Region Training Academy Administrative Staff to develop a new Reentry curriculum for Basic Training. Via this new learning and performance module, all staff hired into the department will experience the fact that offenders leaving prison have many challenges that create barriers to their success, (i.e. substance abuse issues, lack of family support, mental health issues, medical issues, lack of education and skills, lack of housing). With this increased awareness of each offender's unique

criminogenic needs, this class is a philosophical change that includes the examination of organizational priorities, practices and culture with the ultimate goal being public safety. All staff are taught that within the department's underlying challenges of safety and security, we must have a mindset of preparing offenders to be successful, productive, taxpaying citizens upon their release from prison.

## **26. Restorative Justice Efforts**

In 2015, the Restorative Justice Program donated 1,715,011 hours to projects with 31,302 offenders working on those efforts. Over 529,256 items were donated to non-profits, charities and victims around the state to include, but not limited to: schools, veterans, veterans' homes, shelters, hospitals, community events, foster care children, food banks and long term care facilities. ParentLink has continued to receive numerous crocheted hats for their Shaken Baby program.

Additionally, items continue to be donated to an organization called KidSmart. As donated items are located in the KidSmart warehouse, teachers in the St. Louis area, have the ability to come in and shop, free of charge, for classroom materials. 14,627 offenders donated 544,363 hours to this organization during 2015.

Donated items, from the restorative justice gardens, totaled 115,732 pounds, which is the equivalent of 58 tons of produce, to local shelters, food banks, nursing homes and schools around the state.

## **27. Department of Corrections developed and implemented an MRP publication**

In order to address previous challenges of sharing information across the state on best practices, new and enhanced reentry programming, as well as updated community resources, an MRP FLASH publication was created to increase knowledge in these areas with staff, MRP Steering Team members and community partners. This publication is an electronic document that is distributed on a quarterly basis and provides opportunity for information sharing across the State of Missouri.

## **CHALLENGES**

While the Missouri Reentry Process continues to develop important collaborative relationships within local communities and state agencies, significant barriers and hurdles remain in the areas of offender employment, housing, medical and mental health issues, transportation and treatment needs. Through the strategic work of the MRP Steering Team, barriers to offender reentry continue to be reviewed and goals are established on how to create solutions to these barriers.

1. As in previous years, the current economic climate remains a challenge to all stakeholders. The MRP Steering Team must develop goals which address the criminogenic needs of offenders and the economic climate in our state. An offender seeking to reenter society must secure sustainable employment, stable housing, consistent and affordable transportation, as well as fulfill medical and treatment needs. The current economy makes meeting these needs difficult. The MRP Steering Team must continue to work with stakeholders to create opportunities for offenders reentering Missouri communities.

2. The inability to share information electronically with our partnering state agencies continues to present barriers. As mentioned in the past, offenders who are under supervision of the Department of Corrections are also receiving or have received services from our partnering agencies. Duplicate efforts continue to occur in the assessment and planning stages when agencies cannot effectively share information. Information sharing is hindered due to advanced technological recourse and databases not being

compatible. The MRP Steering team will continue to work on individual strategies to address these challenges.

3. Fiscal challenges continue to be present. Resources available to provide education, vocational training, employability skills training, and necessary substance abuse treatment, and mental health services to offenders while incarcerated, while on community supervision and after completion of their sentences are vital for successful reentry back into society. The consequences of the economic decline on the Department of Corrections and partnering agencies impacted offender reentry efforts. The MRP Steering team will continue to pursue problem solving techniques to overcome these fiscal barriers in order to sustain and restore various resource and treatment options.

### **Outcome Measures**

An outcome study of offenders released after spending five months or more in a Transitional Housing Unit where intense pre-release services are provided is completed annually by the Department of Corrections Research Unit. The studies have found that since the reentry process began in 2005, the two year recidivism rate of offenders who complete the reentry process in Transitional Housing Units is 38.3% compared to 45.7% by offenders who do not complete the full reentry process. In fiscal year 2015, there were 1833 offenders released after completing the reentry process in a transitional housing unit. For all offenders who complete the reentry process the average reduction in recidivism is 7.4% after two years. For high risk parole violators who complete the reentry process, the average reduction in recidivism after completing the reentry process is 11.2%. These data again affirm that the services are more impactful for those who have had more challenges to success and indicate that the offenders who are receiving the transitional services are not committing new crimes and are not receiving violations while on parole at the rate of those who are not receiving these services. Since the reentry process began there have been 3,744 offenders released after completing the reentry process. With an average reduction in recidivism of 7.4% that means that 1,757 offenders have been diverted from a prison stay because of the reentry process.

The Department is also providing reentry programs outside of the transitional housing units because the number of offenders needing the core reentry programs exceeds the capacity of the transitional housing units. In fiscal year 2015 there were 5,122 offenders who completed at least one core reentry program and the average difference in recidivism after two years between those offenders who completed at least one core program is 6.1%. For offenders who complete two core reentry programs the reduction in recidivism is 9.8% and for those who complete three core reentry programs the reduction is 15%. The core reentry programs comprise of Pathway to Change (PTC), Impact of Crime on Victims (ICVC), Anger Management and Parenting classes.

### **Goals for 2015**

1. The MRP Steering Team will promote membership expansion for a larger representation of MRP partnering agencies and will pursue more involvement with Community Partnerships to learn more about community barriers and potential solutions to those barriers.
2. The MRP Steering Team will seek to further identify best practices and promote those at the regional and local levels through development of a new reporting process for those entities to share the positive work that is being accomplished through various community groups/organizations.
3. Include Local MRP team presentations in the MRP Steering team meetings on a regular basis.

4. Include more community, treatment and resource programming presentations in the MRP Steering Team meetings.
5. Research possibilities of how Peer Support Specialists could be implemented into the work that is done in Department of Corrections.
6. Update and continue data reviews to ensure the Missouri Reentry Process is successfully reducing recidivism.
7. Continue to further identify barriers to reentry and recommend system, policy and practice reforms to make reentry more successful for individuals returning home from incarceration and/or community supervision with the Missouri Department of Corrections.
8. Pursue new and creative evidenced-based strategies, which seek to overcome reentry barriers.
9. Continue to educate employers on the benefits of utilizing the Federal Bonding Program and Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program as a benefit and incentive to hire ex-felons so that the number of employers taking advantage of this benefit can increase.
10. Develop a Life Skills program for offenders prior to release. The goal of the program is to reduce the high-levels of anxiety experienced by offenders immediately prior to release. By exposing them to societal and culture changes pre-release, the reduction of anxiety may prohibit offenders from returning to the previously self-destructive behaviors exhibited before incarceration. Through specifically designed curriculum and videos, stressful events can be addressed before release. Topics include, pumping gas, washing and drying clothes at a laundry mat, opening a checking account, securing insurance (car, home, renters, etc.), social media formats, etc.
11. Implement new and update reentry curriculum through collaboration with the Division of Human Services/Training Academy, to educate, inform and equip staff with necessary skills to assist offenders in gaining more tools and opportunity for preparation in returning home, for gaining and enhancing skills to assist offenders in becoming productive citizens, and to maintain success in their reentry efforts.
12. Continue to develop opportunities and venues to deliver information to communities on how their work towards collaboration in reentry efforts could save lives. This will be accomplished through presentations, meetings, community committee work, and site visits, to educate community members on the importance of changing cultures and attitudes towards reentry and the benefits of providing opportunities to lessen the number of victims and to create a safer place to reside.
13. Continue to efficiently utilize federal, state and local resources, thereby enhancing public safety and providing the highest quality of reentry services.
14. Direct and influence the quality of reentry services offered through implementing Reentry Intake Panels, Difficult Discharge Planning Teams and other Reentry Related Services.
15. Pilot the expansion of the Reentry Intake Panel into 3 or more Division of Adult Institution facilities.

16. Continue developing collaborative relationships with state agencies, local reentry organizations, and faith-based communities.
17. Enhance reentry initiatives through collaborative work with other states and corrections agencies.
18. Continue to provide technical assistance to other states as they incorporate reentry into their Department of Corrections.
19. Expand the number of Division of Adult Institutions in which offenders are able to obtain the National Career Readiness Certificate prior to release.
20. Develop a mentoring program model with Connections to Success, out of Kansas City, which can be replicated across the State of Missouri.
21. Increase/enhance our partnerships with Missouri Veterans Commission and the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to provide more resources to identify incarcerated veterans and their families.
22. Boost the Restorative Justice Program to expand projects through more community presentations and written publications.

## **Closing**

The Missouri Reentry Process (MRP) Steering Team member agencies continue to expand collaborative partnerships to address barriers to successful offender reentry. The MRP Steering team is forging ahead to examine existing reentry barriers, to expand knowledge in those areas, as well as to dialogue and create possible solutions to identified obstacles. As noted in the narrative of this report, many partnerships have been created, continued, enhanced and /or have moved into higher levels of service. Addressing barriers associated with identified criminogenic needs in order to find more ways to reduce recidivism, lessen the number of victims and create safer communities continues to be among the top priorities of the MRP Steering Team member agencies. The MRP Steering team remains strong and in the upcoming year will expand membership in order to address even more statewide and agency work in reentry. These tasks are being accomplished through the formation of MRP Steering team sub-committees, presentations, increased attendance at reentry related meetings and facilitation of information sharing events. Enhancements to the meeting agendas and increased communication among members has significantly impacted the work of the team in a successful manner. Reviewing criminogenic needs is a continued effort. Ensuring that best practices in addressing these needs are expanded throughout the state is of the utmost importance.

Housing and transportation continue to be ongoing barriers to successful reentry. However, steps are being made to increase the collaboration among state agencies and community partners to address these hurdles. We have partnered with the Department of Mental Health and received input from the Pettis County Community Partnership in developing an online suitable housing resource database. This was accomplished through work with the Governor's Committee to End Homelessness (GCEH). We continue to attempt to develop strategies to address the transportation issues. To address the criminogenic needs related to education, we have partnered with Missouri Vocational Enterprises to offer incarcerated offenders 21 vocational training programs and receive assistance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for offenders to obtain their High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) Diploma. It should be noted that 1,617 offenders obtained their HiSet in fiscal year 2015. To address the

criminogenic needs related to employment, we have partnered with the Missouri Community College Association in implementing its federally funded MOWINS program designed to assist underemployed and unemployed individuals in work ready industries such as manufacturing, medical services, and information technology. We have partnered with the Cole County Work Ready Community Committee to provide the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) to incarcerated offenders seeking employment upon release. We also partnered with the Father Support Center in implementing a Department of Labor Grant to assist high risk-high need offenders, residing at the Saint Louis Community Release Center, to receive their work ready certificates. To address the criminogenic needs related to pro-social needs, we have partnered with Beauty for Ashes, Catholic Charities of Kansas City, the Missouri Conference of the United Methodist Church-Reentry Circles, among many other faith-based entities, to assist offenders in establishing positive pro-social relationships pre and post release. It should also be noted that the Puppies for Parole Program and Prison Performing Arts program assist offenders in gaining compassion and altruism, and allows them to expand their skills in self expression which they may not have previously been accustomed to. To address the criminogenic needs related to medical and behavioral health as well as substance abuse, we have partnered with Corizon, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Social Services, Social Security Administration, treatment providers, and others to assist offenders in obtaining appropriate services in a timely manner and to identify and assist them in applying for financial benefits, when requirements are met and services are needed. To address the criminogenic needs related to financial planning and preparation, we have implemented a new Employability Skills curriculum, partnered with the Division of Workforce Development to teach budgeting, continued with production of Video Resumes and with the implemented financial programming opportunities in various institutions. To address the criminogenic needs related to family, we have partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters/AMACHI, Parents and Their Children (PATCH) , 4-H for Life, StoryLink, and others to assist offenders in family reunification, parenting and other skills necessary to transition back into the family setting. We continue to partner with the Department of Health and Senior Services--Bureau of Vital Statistics, Social Security Administration and the Department of Revenue to secure birth certificates, social security replacement cards and Missouri non-drivers identification cards for offenders prior to release. As noted previously, these source documents are paramount to assisting offenders in securing employment, as well as housing. There will be a continued effort to educate resource entities, community organizations, staff, offenders and their families in regards to the steps necessary to make positive changes, reduce crime, lessen victimization and create safer communities.

The Missouri Department of Corrections continues to assist many states in their reentry efforts. Assistance was provided to the states of Alabama, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Texas and Wisconsin. Information was shared in the areas of Family Reunification programming, parenting, Transitional Housing Units, Video Resume production and utilization, networking with Legal Aid on denied Medicaid application processes, as well as Reentry Simulation materials and educational resources.

There are many more collaborative partnerships that provide unique and vital resources for successful reentry than what is included in this report. It is crucial to acknowledge our appreciation to each and every entity that works towards enhancing the Missouri Reentry Process and we will continue to foster those partnerships in order to pursue ongoing strides in promoting public safety.

The next report on progress of the Missouri Reentry Process will be submitted in January 2017.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Director of the Department of Corrections, George Lombardi at (573)751-2389.

## Missouri Department of Corrections

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*Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon, Governor*  
*George A. Lombardi, Director*

