

COMMUNITY WIDE EX-OFFENDERS RE-ENTRY TASK FORCE – FINAL REPORT

SUBCOMMITTEE: Housing Group

Summary of Findings and Recommendations August 2009

**Co-Chairs: Gregory D. Johnson, Executive Director, DMHA
Quincy Pope, Police Chief, Trotwood, Ohio**

Housing Group Committee

Name	Organization
Judy Cook, Mayor	City of Oakwood
Peggy Lehner	Ohio House Representative
Joe Stan	PowerNet
Joyce Probst MacAlpine	Montgomery County
Dr. Robert Walker	Wesley Community Center
Conrad Goode	Salvation Army Booth House
Jane Benner	Salvation Army Booth House
Various Ex-Offenders	Salvation Army Booth House
Dale Nieberding	Good Shepherd Ministries

A. PLAN BACKGROUND

In an effort to reduce recidivism and properly address the issue around decent, safe, affordable housing for individuals returning to Montgomery County after being incarcerated and after receiving some preliminary recommendations around re-entry, a community-wide task force was created to look at some of the previous recommendations and to breakdown certain elements of the overall recommendations.

The housing work group was developed to look at strategies to provide equal and fair access to safe and appropriate housing for ex-offenders in Montgomery County. As well as creating pathways and planning processes to assure that all returning ex-offenders can transition to permanent, sustainable housing in Montgomery County.

Affordable housing is defined for the purpose of this sub-committee as rental housing targeting landlords and specialty program housing that will rent to ex-offenders that may have some major violations in their past history as well as individuals that have minor violations. These violations may consist of sex offender, meth labs, murder and arson. Along with these major impediments, the issue of individuals paying no more than 30 percent of their income for rent and utilities is a major concern.

B. POPULATION IN NEED OF HOUSING

The population that has the greatest need for immediate housing recommendations is the individuals returning to our community that have been diagnosed with mental illness issues, alcohol/drug issues, sex offenders and individuals with children or spouse.

C. POPULATION TO BE HOUSED UNDER THESE RECOMMENDATIONS

The units/beds to be provided under these recommendations should seek to target individuals that have been diagnosed with previously stated situations that are in Part B of this document.

Information from Montgomery County Intake in 2007 shows the following percentages as it pertains to the different diagnosis of individuals that are being released from incarceration. This data is a sample of 5.9 percent of the total that is done through intake. Even though this is a small sample it illustrates high percentages as it pertains to drug abuse, alcohol abuse, sexual abuse (child) and mental illness.

Employment	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Marital Status at Arrest	Education	Living Arrangements at Arrest
Unemployed 57.7%	Male 85.3%	African American 55%	Single 65.6%	HS/GED 60.7%	DP/Child 17.6%
Employed 19.5%	Female 14.7%	Caucasian 45%	Married 6.6%	College Grad 2.8%	DP 14.8%
			Other 27.8%	Less than HS 36.4%	Lived Alone 16.2%
					Parent or Guardian 26.2%

Mental Illness	Sexual Abuse	Alcohol Abuse	Drug Abuse	Prior Incarceration	Substance Abuse when Arrested
34%	Physical 14%	65%	93.4%	None 43%	Drugs 27.1%
	Sexual 7%			1-2 Years 33.9%	Alcohol 8.3%
				3 or more 23%	Drugs/Alcohol 14%

(*Only State statistics – does not include Federal. Federal is estimated that 200 will return to Montgomery County and of that 200 – 85 percent will be supervised.)

Along with the “Specialty Housing” needs there are a large number of non-supportive housing needs that go along with this re-entry population.

In 2007 alone, there were over 28,000 individuals released in Ohio and 1,700 of those individuals returned to Montgomery County*. An estimated 50 percent of the 1,700 released are without additional parole supervision or do not have to check in with any program. Thus shows the need for additional units/beds that does not necessarily need supportive services to help house these individuals.

NOTE: We recognized the figures do not add up to 100 percent. That sample used was small in size.

D. TYPE, SIZE AND LOCATION OF HOUSING

In Montgomery County there has been a huge push for affordable housing although the preference of community leaders and developers has been smaller development are better. As the data has been reviewed from reentry housing providers and from reviewing the demographics of the individuals returning to our community it is clear that this population needs a wide range of affordable housing starting with singles all the way to three or four and possibly five bedrooms for individuals that has families waiting on them to return to the community. (Majority of units/beds are needed for single individuals – 70 percent.)

It will be imperative that this housing is spread throughout Montgomery County to try to increase the success of individuals not slipping back into recidivism as they return to the community.

E. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Financing the housing for this population can be accomplished in a variety of ways:

- Set aside HOME dollars for this population for potential developers of “Specialty Units;”
- Set aside CDBG Funds for this population for potential developers of “Specialty Units;”
- Target NSP dollars for development;
- Private foundations and individual donors;
- Second Chance ACT dollars;
- OCRC Rental Assistance dollars
- Faith Based – RFP (State)
- DRC – Independent/Transitional Housing (small amount)
- United Way
- Church

These funding sources are primarily used for development of affordable housing in our community. Although the funding is for the development for affordable housing a lot of management efforts are put into excluding ex-offenders from being housed in these developments. There are over 12,000 affordable housing units in Montgomery County and over 5,000 do not allow ex-offenders to reside in their complexes and or housing units. As you can see these are not new funding sources but a change in the way the funds are given to develop housing in our community which can accommodate all individuals needing affordable housing.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Housing Work Group has met several times over the last year in developing these recommendations for the overall community of Montgomery County.

1. Legislative Recommendation

- a. We recommend that all Local, State and Federal dollars that are used to fund affordable housing projects have some mandate around letting ex-offenders reside in the housing. The process for which this should be accomplished is a group should lobby the State Legislators and Federal Legislators to include this language in the award of the funding to each particular organization receiving funds.
- b. We also recommend these Legislators require a quality control process or assessment on making sure that this requirement is followed by making it part of their monitoring tools when they are assessing whether the funding was spent appropriately.

2. Number of Transitional Properties Needed in Montgomery County

- a. After numerous meetings with previously incarcerated individuals, obtaining information from various social service organizations and the ADAMHS Board for Montgomery County, the group has come up with the following recommendations on the number of additional units/beds needed to address multiple issues as it pertains to **supportive ex-offender housing**.

According to information provided by ADAMHS Board for Montgomery County from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2008 there were 115 individuals referred to Montgomery County from State prisons. These individuals have completed their sentences and have been diagnosed with behavioral health issues. The breakdown of these individuals is as follows:

- 19 out of 115 had diagnoses of Severe Mental Health Disorders (SMD, SPMI)
- 10 out of 115 had diagnoses of General Mental Health Disorders (Non-severe)
- 72 out of 115 had diagnoses of Severe Mental Health Disorder with co-occurring Disorders of Substance Abuse (SAMI)
- 10 had diagnoses of Alcohol and other Drugs with co-occurring Disorders of Mental Health (CAMI)

Out of this small sample, two of the individuals were sex offenders returning to Montgomery County.

Although this was a small sample of individuals that were diagnosed with having some type of Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health Issues and Sex Offenders, through our numerous meetings we found a high number of individuals have mental illness and are still using drugs and alcohol and have not been diagnosed while incarcerated. The small samples of information we used to make assumptions show a higher need for supportive re-entry housing for different groups. The particular groups and number of units and or transitional housing is as follows:

- Sex Offender – We are recommending the development of at least 50 to 100 additional units of this type of transitional housing along with this recommendation of the number of beds/units the programming/housing has to be for at least two to four years for these individuals to obtain long term permanent housing in our community.
 - Mental Health – **(Meeting people were they are housing first)** We are recommending the development of at least 700 additional bed/units of this type of transitional housing along with this recommendation, there needs to be supportive services for at least two to four years for these individuals to obtain permanent affordable housing in our community.
 - Drug and Alcohol - **(Meeting people were they are housing first)** We are recommending the development of at least 700 additional bed/units of this type of transitional housing, there needs to be supportive services for at least two to four years for these individuals to obtain affordable permanent housing in our community.
- b. Families with Children – We are recommending a few different housing opportunities for these individuals.
- i. Negotiate with the local housing authority to recommend making these individuals a preference on the waiting list
 - ii. Develop supportive housing in the amount of 50 units that will supply needed services and appropriate transitional housing for up to one year.

3. Affordable Housing

Pertaining to this segment of re-entry individuals what we have found is most individuals need transitional housing first to help stabilize their lives. There have been recommendations made by the Homeless Solutions Policy Board around

developing 1,800 units over a ten year period. We feel this recommendation that has already been made would supply enough affordable housing for our targeted reentry group. If certain barriers are removed specifically to our very first barrier as it pertains to the eligibility issue.

4. Develop a Communication Resource for Ex-Offenders before they are released
Through numerous meetings with ex-offenders and case workers, we have found there is a great disconnect between the information that ex-offenders are receiving and actual organizations/housing information. This lack of accurate information is creating a huge barrier for ex-offenders to find transitional and/or permanent housing in Montgomery County.

We are recommending an information data base and an organization(s) is assigned or developed to create and maintain accurate information on community organizations and potential housing opportunities. This information is vital to ex-offenders as they are released from incarceration. The following pieces of information are a necessity for ex-offenders to be successful in finding adequate transitional, supportive and permanent housing in Montgomery County.

- a. Information Packet

- i. Housing locator – This information would show ex-offenders who and where all types of housing is located and would indicate whether or not ex-offenders would be eligible to apply. This would also link potential private owners/landlords with ex-offenders for easy access to housing in the community. This information could be displayed as follows:
 1. Web based
 2. TDY
 3. Organization that would actually give the information over the phone and do mailings to offenders while incarcerated
 4. Given to individuals being released from incarceration by DRC

References

ADAMHS Board for Montgomery County

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC)

Booth House – Clients

Dismas House

Greater Dayton Real Estate Investment Group

PowerNet

Re-Entry Ex-Offender Employment Groups