

Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio Strategic Plan

REENTRY PLAN – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the United States today, there are more than 2.3 million men and women incarcerated behind bars compared to 200,000 in 1970. This represents a 1,050% increase in the number of persons incarcerated. When including all persons currently involved in corrections across the country – those incarcerated and those involved in community monitoring and parole, there are a total of nearly 6.9 million persons involved in corrections. In Ohio, as of December 2008 there were 51,197 persons incarcerated. At an average annual cost of \$24,000 per inmate, this translates to a little over \$1.2 billion that Ohio is spending on incarceration – this does not include additional costs of community monitoring, parole, and recidivism (on law enforcement and judicial).

The costs to communities across the United States are staggering both in terms of actual and opportunity costs that are incurred. With recidivism rates generally reported at higher than 60%, it is critical that in order to have an impact on reducing the number of persons involved in corrections, communities must develop effective reentry strategies that build community wide collaboration and improved coordination.

The **Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio** is a collaboration of public agencies, not-for-profit organizations, citizens, businesses, faith-based partners and community stakeholders who are united in and committed to reducing recidivism among ex-offenders returning to West Central Ohio. The Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio operates under rules and procedures established by the membership, as embodied in the Coalition's Bylaws, in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations. Membership is open to all sectors of the community who are committed to successful reentry for ex-offenders and their families and/or significant others.

Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio's Goal

The Coalitions' overarching goal is to reduce recidivism in West Central Ohio by 50 percent within a five-year period.

Our Mission

It is the mission of the **Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio** to provide leadership, oversight and implementation guidance in the following:

- *Assisting individuals released from prison and returning home to West Central Ohio to succeed in our community.*
- *Building a safer community and reducing the cost of crime –Reducing recidivism by 50 percent within a five-year time period.*

- *Providing coordinated opportunities through a network of services that those individuals can access to succeed.*
- *Promoting and utilizing evidence-based practices of frontloading services, engaging family members; adhering to risk and needs principals, and using positive incentives.*

Primary roles of the Coalition:

- Working to enhance resources available to local reentry partners to support local reentry efforts.
- Promoting public understanding of Reentry by presenting opportunities to reduce recidivism.
- Providing workshops, forums, symposiums, meetings, trainings to ex-offenders and their families or significant others, Members of the Coalition, Faith Partners, Agencies, Services, Employers and other Community stakeholders.
- Promoting Service Coordination as a core strategy to effectively connect those persons transitioning from incarceration to needed services and supports. This may also include connecting other family members or significant others to needed services or supports.
- Coordinating efforts with Coalition Membership to address employment, education, marital/family stability, personal/emotional, community functioning, legal issues, child support, housing issues, financial barriers, health, and substance abuse.
- Coordination and support of a mentoring program to aid offenders to successfully return home.
- Provide Family Support and Reentry Resource Workshops, which focus on empowering individuals and strengthening families and/or significant others. Offering real solutions and resources to address many of the challenges our ex-offenders and their families face.
- Advocate for services and develop recommendations for legislative and administrative remedies to eliminate or reduce unnecessary barriers confronting offenders once they leave incarceration.
- Consult and collaborate with individuals and/or representatives from service providers, housing associations, community advocacy groups, faith communities, and other relevant stakeholders engaged in offender transition issues.
- Continually seeking to expand partnerships to build capacity with organizations whose efforts advance the Coalition's mission.
- **Addressing outstanding warrants:** One major goal the coalition intends to address is the issue of outstanding warrants.

Local Goals and Strategies to Promote Successful Reentry

In order to effectively promote reentry in West Central Ohio, we recognize that there are goals that we need to work toward to ensure a strong and effective coalition and strategic focus areas, which are directly related to effective reentry for persons returning from incarceration. Key goals related to the coalition include the following:

1. Effective community communication, coordination and collaboration.
2. Increased utilization of evidence-based practices of frontloading services, engaging family members; adhere to risk and needs principals, and use of positive incentives.
3. Increased resources to direct toward reentry in the community.
4. Improved community support for reentry efforts.

The Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio has identified the following as our core strategic focus for reentry over the next five-year period:

<i>Strategic Focus</i>			
<i>Self Worth</i>	<i>Foundational Issues</i>	<i>Services/ Programs</i>	<i>Legal</i>

The table on the following page outlines goals/strategies and objectives for each of these identified strategic focus areas. There is a lot of positive energy and direction among the Coalition membership to have a positive impact upon reentry, which will greatly benefit our local community in terms of safety and resources over the coming years.

STRATEGIC FOCUS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES FOR REENTRY IN WEST CENTRAL OHIO

Strategic Focus	Goals/Strategies	Objectives
Self Worth / Belonging	Create prosocial activities and develop an holistic approach that includes attention to body, mind, and spirit. Getting community buy in and support	Increase the number of prosocial and holistic activities that welcome ex-offenders.
Foundational Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to safe and affordable housing 2. Engagement in Meaningful activities / volunteering 3. Employment and Employment readiness 4. Education Opportunities 	Over the next five (5) years establish a Case Management Program that is a comprehensive solution-based assessment and support to systematically assess and provide supportive services appropriate to the family
Programs / Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental Health Services 2. Substance Abuse Treatment 3. Family Supports 4. Benefits 5. Health / Primary Care 	Over the next 5 years establish a system whereby all ex-offenders can obtain mental health treatment including medications and substance abuse treatment within 14 days of their release
Legal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To reduce recidivism by early identification and intervention to resolve legal issues which will interfere with a re-entering prisoner’s ability to maintain stable employment and housing. 2. To develop forms, checklists and other resource materials to help re-entering prisoners, their mentors and their families understand how to prevent or mitigate frequently occurring legal problems 3. To recruit and support volunteer attorneys and law students who will assist re-entering prisoners, their mentors and their families in resolving legal issues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit, train and support a panel of lawyers and students who would assist re-entering prisoners in dealing with common civil law problems 2. Increase by 50% over 5 years the number of re-entering prisoners who successfully resolve the following types of civil legal problems during their first year of release: 3. Child Visitation; Protection Orders; Divorce Proceedings; etc.

STATEMENT OF NEED – WHY REENTRY IS IMPORTANT

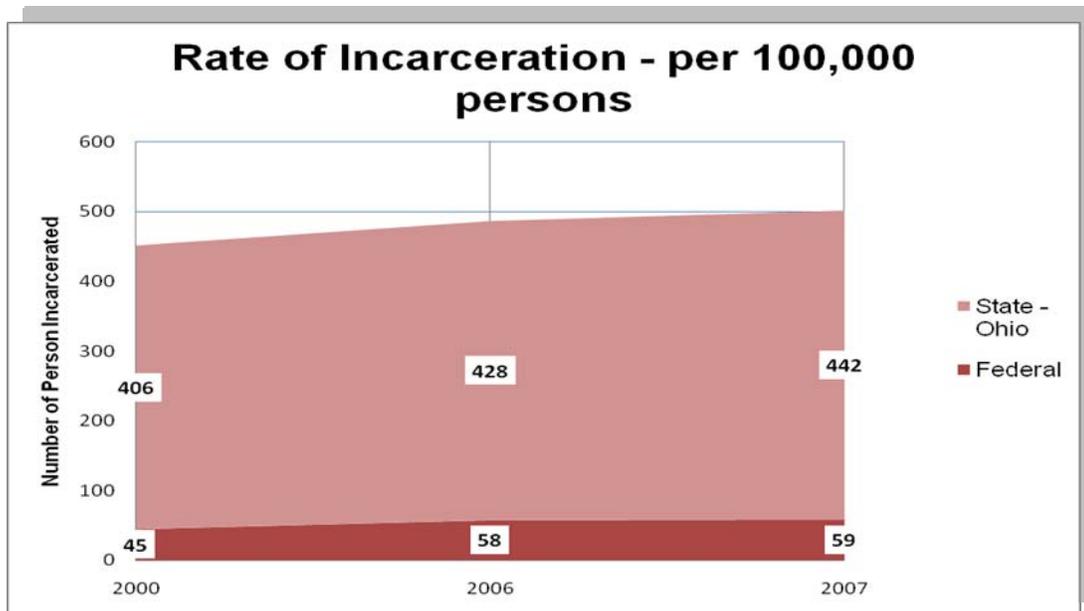
The United States

Reentry is affecting each and every part of the country. The number of individuals that are incarcerated each year continues to grow: the number of federal admissions in 2000 was 43,732, and increased to 53,618 in 2007, a year when about 1 U.S. resident of 198 was imprisoned with a sentence of more than 1 year in a federal or state prison. And it is expected that 95% of all the prisoners currently incarcerated will be released. The number of men and women released from federal jurisdictions was 35,259 in 2000 and grew to 48,411 in 2007, an increase of more than 5%. In addition, more than 700,000 inmates were released from federal and state prisons in 2007, which is a 20% increase from 2000. To put these numbers into perspective, more than five million people across the U.S. were on probation or parole in 2007.

When planning an offender's release, the reentry programs need to take into account the ways in which society changes and the effects of being incarcerated. Having a reentry program available for offenders can offer them not only a helping hand, but also hope in a time when they might not have any for their situation. Communities that have agencies and service providers who coordinate and collaborate with one another to provide the services and resources that ex-offenders need to prevent further incarceration will provide safer and more stable communities by helping ex-offenders become valuable members of society.

Ohio

Compared to the federal imprisonment rates of sentenced prisoners, Ohio is incarcerating offenders at a much higher rate per 100,000 in the population. The graph below illustrates this fact:



Ohio admitted 28,178 offenders in 2007 resulting in a total of 51,197 inmates that year. The same year, 29,014 prisoners were released back into Ohio’s communities in 2007, many of whom were in need of housing, employment, education, mental health and substance abuse treatment, mentoring, and help with legal issues.

In Ohio in 2007, the average annual cost for a prisoner was \$24,000 and Ohio housed 51,197 prisoners. That turns into an annual cost of more than \$1.2 Billion annually to house those persons incarcerated in prison. This is a great deal of money that is not helping to reduce the number of individuals who are incarcerated or who recidivate each year, as each year the number of ex-offenders who recidivate increases. Since February 2005, there has been a 13.3% increase in the number of people housed in the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections institutions, which totals an increase of more than 5,800 offenders. The current rate of incarceration is greater than the capacity to house and effectively ‘rehabilitate and correct’ the offenders. Reentry programs will provide an opportunity to change that through their coordinated efforts with community organizations and service providers to address issues and reduce barriers for ex-offenders to successfully reintegrate into the community.

West Central Ohio

The following table shows a profile of Allen County Ohio’s releases from 2008. This profile is based on 219 releases.

Characteristic	Percentage
Male	86.8%
Female	13.2%
African American	57.5%
Caucasian	42%
Average Time Served	2.54 years
Crime: Persons	20.5%
Crime: Sex Offenses	9.6%
Crime: Drug Offenses	27.9%
Low Risk	42.8%
Intensive	17.2%
Mental Health Caseload	16.9%
Education Need	62.5%
Marital / Family Need	32.7%
Substance Abuse Need	72.1%
Personal Emotional Need	44.7%
Employment Need	50%

Characteristic	Percentage
Community Functioning Need	42.3%

After serving their sentences, these ex-offenders are often released into the same situations that they were in prior to their arrest. Reentry programs need to be involved in moving ex-offenders into areas that promote and reward positive and law-abiding behavior. Securing housing is a vital component in the stability of the reentry process and reducing the recidivism rates of ex-offenders.

In addition, many ex-offenders have unresolved legal issues that may cause added complications for them if not handled prior to, or immediately after, release. Civil law issues that are typically encountered by ex-offenders include debt collection or child support cases which lead to wage garnishments; driver's license suspensions due to unpaid court fines or unpaid child support; identity theft issues which lead to inaccurate credit reports or government records; access to public benefits, including medical assistance, food stamps, disability benefits and job training programs; access to public housing or subsidized apartments; family law disputes which cause difficulty in maintaining housing or employment.

Family support during an inmate's incarceration is crucial to a lower rate of recidivism once released. Since most of those who are incarcerated are men, many children are without a father at home. In the State of Ohio, 23% of children live in single-parent homes with the mother as the head of the household. Furthermore, a child with a nonresident father is significantly more likely to be in poverty than children with a father present in the home. Additionally, research indicates that children in fatherless homes are also at a higher risk to be incarcerated. In support of family and community connections with ex-offenders, a 2007 study done by Professor Byron Johnson of Baylor University (The Role of Religion) shows that if the religious community, in partnering with a number of other social programs, would engage the offenders prior to their release, there would be a great potential to reduce recidivism by as much as 17%.

Another challenge that ex-offenders face is the lack of healthcare for them during and after their release. Since most are unemployed when they return home, ex-offenders are also less likely to have any health coverage, which means that any minor health issues that are neglected can become more serious and thus, more costly. In 2000, 10% of adults in West Central Ohio did not have healthcare coverage, which is higher than state and national averages. Reentry programs are needed to address the gap between healthcare coverage during and after release, and the lack of affordable healthcare for ex-offenders. Similarly, mental health issues are also in need of attention.

Reentry is a critically important piece of the community's success. Collaborative efforts such as the Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio are working to reduce costly recidivism rates and address the significant needs of those returning from jails and prisons as well as their families. Successful reintegration benefits the entire community as formerly incarcerated individuals become better able to successfully support themselves and their families/significant others; becoming law-abiding and productive members of society.

REENTRY COALITION OF WEST CENTRAL OHIO

BACKGROUND and HISTORY

In 2004, a task force comprised of law enforcement, corrections, probation/parole, courts, prisons, and behavioral health providers came together to form the Criminal Justice Task Force. The purpose of the task force was to begin a conversation among the various agencies to better coordinate care for returning inmates and to identify opportunities to intervene at various points in the process to offer treatment options instead of incarceration. The task force used the Consensus Project as its guide and began to explore opportunities in the judicial process for intervention. The task force accomplished the following:

- Greatly improved communication among the various criminal justice entities that normally did not “talk” to one another in a planning environment
- Greatly improved communication between the criminal justice system and the behavioral health system that had been at odds for decades
- Identification of the need for coordinated release times from jail for those inmates who had case managers in the behavioral health system
- The development of domestic violence programming to deal with the explosion of domestic violence calls law enforcement were now responding to
- Early identification of prisoners being released into the community, especially those with “C1” status and coordination of care
- The funding of a Criminal Justice Coordinator that acted as a “system spanner” between criminal justice and behavioral health.

This work was done through community partnership and was not funded by any grant or outside entity. Much of the funding came from the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Allen, Auglaize, and Hardin Counties.

In 2004 the West Central Ohio Drug Court was formed under the auspices of Judge Jeffrey Reed of the Common Pleas Court. The Criminal Justice Coordinator was assigned to assist in coordinating this new program and the behavioral health system literally reorganized its programs and services to meet the needs of this new court. From the outset the court and behavioral health providers worked with probation and parole to assist participants in the drug court to successfully graduate. From that moment a new partnership was born among the court, probation, and the provider community. All efforts were focused on the client’s success in the community and avoiding incarceration.

In 2005, the Criminal Justice Task Force focused attention on the creation of a new service in the community – The We Care Regional Crisis Center. This crisis center was collaboration between St. Rita’s Medical Center and the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board. The purpose was to implement a staffed 24/7 center with psychiatric oversight to address the needs of the community for services after normal business hours and on weekends. The goal was to alleviate the traffic going to the emergency department to address these behavioral health issues.

In April 2005, The We Care Regional Crisis Center opened its doors. It was quickly identified by law enforcement as a safe place to bring people identified with a mental illness. Protocols were developed to “hand off” individuals to the St. Rita’s Police Force thus allowing community police agencies the ability to get back on the street without the protracted waiting that usually occurred when bringing someone for evaluation to the emergency room.

Through 2005 and 2006 the task force focused its entire attention on the crisis center and ensuring that its processes met the needs of clients and families as well as the law enforcement community. Law enforcement agencies quickly adopted this new service as one that was targeted to deal with a problem that they had faced for decades. A real bond began to develop between law enforcement and the behavioral health system with a real sense that for the first time each was offering the other mutual aid.

The task force continued to meet monthly. In 2008 the behavioral health system agreed to participate in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). Many providers were trained in the protocol and volunteered to go out to debriefings. A new and deeper bond continued to grow.

In 2009 the We Care Regional Crisis Center was asked to move from its location near the emergency room at St. Rita’s. The new location was identified as being on the campus of the adult behavioral health provider, Lutheran Social Services. Law enforcement rallied around the move and the addition of a Crisis Stabilization Unit which meant that once an individual was transported to the crisis center that individual could stay overnight if need be. The Lima Police assisted in providing security for the center as needed.

During these past 7 years, the task force has continued to expand its membership to include Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (DRC), Juvenile Court, Children’s Services Board, Board of Developmental Disabilities in an effort to include other agencies in the conversation.

In 2010 the task force began to explore the possibility of becoming a Reentry Coalition based on the strong relationships that had been formed between the criminal justice community and the behavioral health system.

In 2011 the members of the task force reorganized themselves into a Reentry Coalition with and overall mission:

To provide leadership, oversight and implementation guidance:

- *To assist individuals released from prison and returning home to NW Ohio to succeed in our community*
- *To build a safer community and reduce the cost of crime –Reducing recidivism by 50 percent within a five year time period.*
- *To provide coordinated opportunities through a network of services those individuals can access to succeed*
- *Utilize evidence-based practices of frontloading services, engaging family members; adhere to risk and needs principals, and use positive incentives.*

With the following priorities:

1. Facilitate Communications
2. Facilitate Interagency Coordination
3. Manage Outcomes/Evaluate
4. Educate our Community
5. Monitor System
6. Secure Financial Stability
7. Build Family Engagement
8. Empower the Community
9. Build Political Will
10. Share Information
11. Build the Network
12. Develop Mentoring
13. Evaluate the experience of participants

The overarching goal for the Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio is to reduce recidivism by 50 percent within a five-year period thereby making safer communities.

STRUCTURE

The Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio has an executive committee, which consists of the Officers of the organization: the Chairperson, Chair-Elect, Secretary, and each of the standing committee chairs. Also included are three at-large members of the coalition, one of whom must have been formerly incarcerated. Standing Committees are those committees that require long-term efforts (more than one year) to accomplish the work of the coalition. Ad Hoc Committees and Tasks Forces may be formed to accomplish more time-limited goals or projects (less than one year). Each Committee's Chairperson will convene and preside over their committee meetings and report back to the Coalition on the status of the work to be accomplished by the committee. Each member of the Coalition has an opportunity to be represented in the executive committee by participating in one or more of the standing committees and taking part in the issues being faced by those committees. Furthermore, committees shall be formed as needed to accomplish the work of the Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio. The membership of each standing committee shall choose its chair to represent them in the executive committee.

Membership

Membership is open to all sectors of the community who are committed to successful reentry for ex-offenders and their families and/or significant others. We invite agencies providing direct governmental oversight of this population, non-profit service providers, community advocates,

members of the faith-based community and key community leaders to our meetings for participation. See ATTACHMENT A for list of Coalition Member Agencies.

The Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio has members from a wide array of service providers. They are equipped, able, and ready to face the many challenges that ex-offenders meet after their release. These partners are involved in the areas of housing, family support, substance abuse and mental health, as well as education, employment, community functioning, and legal aid. The Coalition has also partnered with a correctional institution, the court system, and the Parole Authority.

The service providers that make up the membership of the Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio include agencies that are working in the fields of education and employment, physical health and safety, legal issues, housing, family relations and community development, substance abuse, and mental health. By working together to create an alliance that is both effective and efficient, the agencies are better able to work towards achieving the goals of the Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio as a collaborative initiative to address the many issues that ex-offenders face.

LOCAL PLAN

There are several key goals that the Coalition seeks to work towards:

1. Developing effective community communication, coordination and collaboration among the membership agencies and organizations of the Coalition and community agencies and service providers.
2. Increasing the utilization of evidence-based practices of frontloading services, engaging family members.
3. Adhering to risk and needs principals, and the use of positive incentives.
4. Increasing the number of resources to direct toward reentry in the community.
5. Improving community support for reentry efforts.

The Coalition's overarching goal is to reduce recidivism in West Central Ohio by 50 percent within a five-year period. In order to do that, the coalition is utilizing a multi-sector approach and developing committees to work on issues which are challenging ex-offenders and their families. These issues include: housing, mental health, substance abuse, family support, health, education and employment, mentoring, and legal issues.

SELF WORTH / BELONGING / CONTRIBUTION

Statement of the Problem

Individuals returning from confinement often face the daunting challenge of not having the right friends, family, and natural supports that will assist them in making a successful reentry into the community. Having been cut off from the community for an average of 3 years and not having had access to more holistic supports they find themselves easily slipping back into old patterns of behavior.

Strategic Performance Goal

Create prosocial activities and develop a holistic approach that includes attention to body, mind, and spirit. Get community buy-in and support.

Objective

Increase the number of prosocial and holistic activities that welcome ex-offenders.

Strategic Performance Outcome (e.g., mentoring, spiritual, social connectedness, community education, prosocial supports, etc.)

1. Adult Strategies
 - a. Prioritize Spirituality for all reentering individuals by developing a collaboration of at least 4 churches willing to welcome individuals coming out of confinement. Support efforts to engage individuals while still in confinement using strategies such as Celebrate Recovery.

- b. Conduct an annual awareness campaign to communities regarding: “Reentry Works” initially focused on educating neighborhood associations
 - c. Create and implement a mentorship program that begins while incarcerated and present during the transition. To allow the relationship to be established and for the inmate to coordinate his release needs we would ask that the county create a way (speed dial) that inmates could call agencies’ 1-800 numbers. Teaches responsibility and makes connection at no cost to the county.
2. Youth Strategies:
- a. *Identify Family Reunification issues (parent, victim, and youth’s children when youth is a parent)
 - b. *Identify methods for monitoring pro-social activities (encourage attendance& provide a link to those activities)
 - c. * Identify advocacy& mentoring services to guide youth to positive associations/activities (church, mentors, etc.)

FOUNDATIONAL ISSUES / NUTS & BOLTS

Statement of the Problem

Most individuals coming back into the community from confinement face a host of living issues that face them. Among the most crucial is access to affordable housing, education, meaningful activities like work or volunteering. Many of these individuals do not feel wanted, needed, or that they can contribute anything of value to the community to which they return. As a result, many turn to the only activities that they know and eventually return to confinement.

Strategic Performance Goal

Create a supportive structure for all individuals returning from confinement that links each individual to ensure that everyone is able to live and contribute meaningfully to the community.

Objective

Over the next five (5) years establish a Case Management Program that is a comprehensive solution-based assessment and support to systematically assess and provide supportive services appropriate to the family

Strategic Performance Outcomes (Access to safe and affordable housing; Engagement in Meaningful activities / volunteering; Employment and Employment readiness; Education Opportunities, etc)

Adult Strategies

1. Identify emergency shelters who will take male and female ex-offenders with any applicable criteria for each shelter.
2. Identify 10 – 15 employers/employment agencies who will consider hiring ex-offenders.

3. Develop criteria with potential employers to apply to ex-offenders before they could be interviewed. A document signed by Re-entry task force could be provided to employers before interview on a case by case basis.
4. Identify a few landlords who rent or would be willing to rent to ex-offenders.
5. Work with these landlords to develop similar document as for employment.
6. Approach AMHA about consideration of changes to their policy regarding vouchers for ex-offenders.
7. Apply for grants that could provide rental assistance for ex-offenders.

Youth Strategies

1. Identify gaps in transfer of school transcripts & processing of school credit
2. Identify methods of dropout reduction and increased credit recovery
3. Identify job training/ pre-employment programs available to reentering youth in the area
4. Identify foundational service gaps that are present for youth released when transitioning from ages 18-21

PROGRAMMING / SERVICES / SUPPORTS

Statement of the Problem

Access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, education, and supports impacts well over 50% of individuals returning from confinement to West Central Ohio. Funding available to provide services has shrunk to an all time low making this a challenge both for the communities receiving these individuals as the institutions preparing them for release. Frustrations caused by delayed access to needed services create suffering for these individuals and their families. The challenge is for the local community to create new paths for treatment utilizing nontraditional programs and services that can support these men and women as they try to reintegrate into the community. The Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio seeks to improve access to treatment services and medication for all ex-offenders thereby improving public health and safety.

Strategic Performance Goal

Enhance the accessibility of mental health and substance abuse treatment, education, and supportive services and medications for all ex-offenders after release.

Objective

Over the next 5 years establish a system whereby all ex-offenders can obtain mental health and substance abuse treatment including medications within 14 days of their release.

Strategic Performance Outcomes (Mental Health Services; Substance Abuse Treatment; Family Supports; Benefits; Health / Primary Care, Aftercare, Positive Community Environment, etc)

Adult Strategies

1. Having the Diagnostic Assessment completed prior to the inmates release. To avoid complications for space at the jail and law enforcement time, we would advocate that the judge would place inmate on furlough allowing him/her to come to the agency. This would allow inmate to know where to go as well as avoid the agency from having to spend time traveling and navigating the jail/prison system.
2. Develop family systems treatment prior to release. Encouraging juvenile systems to make this a condition for reunification and encourage the adult system to implement an "early release" option if family successfully completes treatment and inmate completes programming in the prison/jail.
3. Assess services / gaps in the programming needed for individuals returning from confinement. Identify the array of services needed.
4. Develop "Trauma Informed Care."
5. Ensure that individuals returning to the community receive a comprehensive evaluation.

Youth Strategies

1. Pursue feasibility of intensive home based services upon reentry
2. Establish primary care medical home upon reentry
3. Identify opportunities for seamless case management transfers prior to youth release

LEGAL ISSUES

Statement of the Problem

Many ex-offenders face substantial civil legal problems after release. Such legal issues often have been left unresolved for months or years while the prisoner was incarcerated. These legal problems often prevent the ex-offender from maintaining stable housing and employment, two of the biggest predictive factors for whether an ex-offender is likely to return to prison or face homelessness or other severe hardships. Without legal assistance from a volunteer private attorney or a local legal aid organization, many of these problems are virtually impossible for an ex-offender to solve on his or her own.

Strategic Performance Goal

To reduce recidivism by early identification and intervention to resolve legal issues that will interfere with an ex-offender's ability to maintain stable employment and housing.

To develop forms, checklists and other resource materials to help ex-offenders, their mentors and their families understand how to prevent or mitigate frequently occurring legal problems.

To recruit and support volunteer attorneys and law students who will assist ex-offenders, their mentors and their families in resolving legal issues.

Objective

Recruit, train and support a panel of lawyers and students who would assist re-entering ex-offenders in dealing with common civil law problems.

Increase by 50% over 5 years the number of ex-offenders who successfully resolve the following types of civil legal problems during their first year of release: debt collection or child support cases which lead to wage garnishments; driver's license suspensions due to unpaid court fines or unpaid child support; identity theft issues which lead to inaccurate credit reports or government records; access to public benefits, including medical assistance, food stamps, disability benefits and job training programs; access to public housing or subsidized apartments; family law disputes which cause difficulty in maintaining housing or employment.

Strategic Performance Outcome

Adult Strategies:

Increase the number of ex-offenders successfully resolving common legal problems during the first year of release:

FY 2011:	60 cases resolved
FY 2012:	100 cases resolved
FY 2013:	125 cases resolved
FY 2014:	150 cases resolved
FY 2015:	180 cases resolved

1. Volunteer attorneys and law students will meet at least once every two months with prisoners inside selected correctional facilities to evaluate legal needs prior to release.
2. The volunteer lawyers, assisted by law students, would meet with prisoners inside correctional institutions prior to release and evaluate the most significant legal issues the ex-offenders are likely to face after release. Volunteer attorneys then would directly represent ex-offenders in dealing with these problems in court, or assist them in resolving the problems through negotiation or mediation programs. Where the ex-offender gives permission, attorneys involved in the project also would work closely with ex-offenders' mentors and family members to identify and resolve legal issues.
3. To be developed: a legal needs checklist, and a reference manual and training curriculum for attorneys and students who participate in the project; self-help forms and instruction packets to assist re-entering ex-offenders in dealing with routine legal matters on their own; educational materials and forms also would be developed in a web-based format, so the materials can be easily accessible to mentors and family members as well as ex-offenders.

Youth Strategies

1. Identify opportunities to minimize outstanding legal issues upon release
2. Identify theft and misuse of identification for the reentering offender during incarceration
3. Identify specific teen parent issues (child support, custody.etc

TASK FORCES

In addition to the work of the four task teams identified above there are four task forces that come under the umbrella of the Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio. These task forces draw their membership from the coalition as well as other key stakeholders and members of the community.

1. Law Enforcement Task Force

- a. Purpose: To create a networking and problem solving environment focused on issues related to law enforcement across the life span.
- b. Membership: Law Enforcement, Courts, Providers, Hospitals, Children's Services, Board of DD, Mental Health and Recovery Services Board

2. Building Partnerships Initiative

- a. Purpose: To create information, education, and collaboration focused on the safety and well being of people with various disabilities
- b. Membership: Law Enforcement, Citizens, Provider Agencies, Board of DD, Crime Victim's Services, and others

3. Opiate Task Force

- a. Purpose: Not yet formed, the goal of this task force will be to address the exploding problem of opiate addiction especially among young adults
- b. Membership: TBD

CONCLUSION

It is becoming more and more important that reentry be recognized as a critical part of our society. By taking initiative and developing a solid coordinated effort, the Reentry Coalition of West Central Ohio is already working towards improving the collaborative endeavors in West Central Ohio and the surrounding areas through networking and communication between organizations and agencies that would help to correct the challenges that ex-offenders face upon their release. The Coalition's structure allows its membership to have valued input in decisions and to be a part of the process. The Coalition has membership partners, organizations, and agencies that are prepared to work towards lowering rates of recidivism in West Central Ohio by facing the challenges of ex-offenders in the crucial areas of housing, employment, education, health, family support, legal issues, mental health, substance abuse, and mentoring. By taking on these issues, the Coalition expects to reduce rates of recidivism by 50% within a five-year period.