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Tuesday, April 28, 2020

- BJay Pak, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia
- Nate Brown, Director of Programs, Oklahoma Department of Corrections
- John Wetzel, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

BJay Pak

U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia



BJay Pak is the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia. He was nominated by President Trump on July 21, 2017 and was confirmed by the Senate on September 28, 2017. From 2002 to 2008, he was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Criminal Division of the office that he now leads. Previously, he was in private practice representing clients in high stakes civil litigation and in criminal investigations. BJay also served as a State Representative in the Georgia General Assembly from January 2011 to January 2017, where he was a Deputy Majority Whip, and Vice Chairman of the House Judiciary Non-civil committee. He graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of Illinois College of Law, and is also a CPA. He and his wife, Sandra, have 3 beautiful daughters and live in Lilburn.



U.S. Attorney Byung “BJay” Pak
U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Georgia (USAO-NDGA)
Testimony on Reentry and Prevention
Before the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement
and the Administration of Justice

Background

As part of the reinvigorated PSN focus on reentry and crime prevention, I directed U.S. Attorney’s Office (USAO) staff to research evidence-based practices in that arena. Starting in 2014, our Office had engaged former offenders in prevention efforts with at-risk students because our message (as law enforcement and prosecutors) was even more impactful when delivered alongside a person who had actually experienced the consequences of poor decisions that led to the criminal justice system. Through PSN, we considered whether to engage former offenders to intervene successfully in reentry efforts with incarcerated juveniles and young adults who were facing release back into the community.

Our research showed that this model is not new. Dating back to 1992, the Credible Messenger (CM) Model matches justice-involved (or otherwise at-risk) young people who have a high risk of criminal offending, with “credible messengers”: that is, specially trained adults with relevant life experiences who act as mentors. The idea of a credible messenger is a public health approach to reducing violence. CMs are peer mentors who have experienced what a returning citizen feels and who know the challenges they face. Indeed, CMs are typically people who previously served substantial sentences in state or federal prison and have dedicated themselves to anti-recidivism efforts. Unlike with other mentoring initiatives, CMs are “wounded healers” so they are uniquely qualified to connect with individuals of similar backgrounds and usher them into a new stage of life.

According to the Credible Messenger Justice Center (CMJC), numerous communities and jurisdictions have implemented this model over the past few decades in hospitals, communities, and youth detention centers. Although there is limited research to date, a number of impact studies show promising outcomes. For example, the Arches Transformative Mentoring program in New York City has shown a 69% lower felony arrest rate after 12 months of participation, and a 57% lower felony arrest rate after 24 months of participation in the program. In Boston, Chicago, and Baltimore, programs have mobilized formerly incarcerated individuals to reach the most “hard-to-reach” drivers of violence and rendered significant reductions in shootings and killings (41-73%), re-arrests (33%), and attitudes supporting violence (14%). Overall, CM models have not only deterred crime, but have also reinforced pro-social behaviors, community accountability, and living examples of hope and transformation. Additionally, a 2017 study by the Urban Institute found that the CM approach yields increased engagement with programs and services; increased compliance with court mandates; improved relationships between stakeholders and community members; and a reduction in re-arrests, violations, gun violence, and anti-social behavior. Although CM programs exist across the country, and now are considered a promising evidence-based practice, rarely has the approach been applied to help adults in prison prepare for release.

Considering this information, I authorized the USAO to pay for one NDGA representative (the Community Outreach Specialist) and two local CMs to travel to New York City for the 3-day Credible Messenger Immersion Program in June 2018. I also authorized USAO funds to hire an independent research partner, Applied Research Services (ARS), to help structure our own CM program and contribute to the growing body of research around this promising reentry practice.

Structure and Implementation

Reentry programs that focus on those most at-risk of recidivism can have the biggest impact on violence rates. The “2018 Update on Prisoner Recidivism” by the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that 68% of prisoners nationally are re-arrested within three years. Characteristics related to recidivism that varied across time were sex, race, age, and crime type. ARS computed comparable statistics for Georgia and found the same proportion of re-arrests in 2016 among state releases. Along with multiple arrests before incarceration, 73% of those who were re-arrested in Georgia were arrested more than once after their release (see Table 1 in Supplement). The data show that males, younger individuals, people of color, and those who are undereducated, have a harder time reintegrating (i.e., higher recidivism rates) compared to others who were similarly situated. Additional analyses show that individuals previously charged with a gun crime, and who are known gang members, are most likely to re-offend in Georgia (see Table 1).

In addition to data about those most at risk of recidivism, we learned that CMs who successfully connect with at-risk young people have a common profile:

- Have come from similar communities;
- Were formerly incarcerated or connected to the justice system through other lived experiences;
- Have turned their lives around through similar methods in which support is offered;
- Have demonstrated integrity and transformation;
- Are skilled and trained in mentoring high-risk, high-need younger people.

For this reason, the NDGA PSN program deploys CMs to engage with incarcerated juvenile and young adult males with significant criminal histories and aims to reduce barriers to their reentry (e.g., criminal thinking, the lack of employment, substance abuse/mental health treatment, housing, and other services) (see PSN Prevention/Reentry Logic Model). We recruited CMs who met the aforementioned profile and developed intervention/reentry strategies for youth and adults with direct input from trusted CMs and data from ARS.

The youth program CM lead, Omar Howard, is the founder of Freedom is a Choice, Inc., and the adult program CM lead, Arthur Powell, is the founder of EGRESS Consultants and Services, LLC. Both Howard and Powell began volunteering with NDGA prevention programs in 2014, and later became contractors to continue that work. Howard and Powell served a combined 26 years in the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) and have led anti-recidivism efforts in the decade since their release. Our adult program also incorporates 21 trained CM mentors who are part of the Offender Alumni Association (OAA), a non-profit, grassroots organization that provides support forums that encourage former offenders to establish healthy relationships in their communities and with their families after their release. Vetting for all NDGA CMs included reference checks with other county and state agencies with whom they were already contracting; criminal background checks to ensure individuals have represented themselves accurately; and consistent observation of authentic and appropriate messaging to a variety of audiences as well as commitment to the accountability required for the program. Ongoing vetting includes the CM’s ability to accept

constructive feedback, willingness to grow personally and professionally, observed responses to their own life challenges as they arise, and ongoing compliance with management and reporting requirements.

Of vital importance is our designated point person within the USAO, namely, our Community Outreach Specialist. That person serves as a Project Manager who oversees the administration of the program; acts as a liaison to address program planning, concerns, milestone achievements, and opportunities for growth amongst coordinated partnerships; and engages the community for resource development, asset mapping, capacity building and service delivery. That point person ensures that the USAO is fulfilling our PSN leadership obligation and serves as the convener for other criminal justice agencies that would otherwise restrict or forbid access to facilities based on CM criminal backgrounds. For CMs, specifically, having one designated government liaison helps to mitigate potential issues before they arise. It also reminds CMs of the serious and national nature of the partnership and that the program is a cultivated relationship that they value deeply.

Implementation of the Adult CM Reentry Program

In July 2018, our adult reentry initiative began in the GDC Metro Reentry Facility with young men serving the last 12–18 months of incarceration for a gun-related and/or gang-affiliated criminal offense. For the first six months of the program, each adult reentry group met for two hours weekly, in sessions facilitated by a team of two CM Mentors from EGRESS Consultants and Services and OAA. To date, there have been three cohorts of program participants totaling 87 individuals – 54 men have completed the adult reentry group in two cohorts, with a third cohort of 14 currently enrolled (completion has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

The majority of participants are young, black males, who are at the greatest risk of recidivism. During enrollment, their average age was 30 years old. Twenty-one percent of their previous 669 combined arrests were for violence (65% for felonies). When incarcerated, only 6% were married, more than half (53%) had children, a quarter had graduated high school (only half could read at an 8th grade level), and 35% were employed. They were incarcerated for murder/manslaughter, aggravated assaults, aggravated stalking, armed robbery/robbery, home invasion, aggravated battery, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and/or during the commission of a crime, and many other serious crimes. Fifty-one percent were validated members of violent gangs, including the Crips, Bloods, Gangster Disciples, Ghostface, and GoodFellas.

Among the highest needs that program participants identified for themselves were employment (93%), dental or health care (83%), a support network (80%), transportation (70%), obtaining identification (70%), and housing (51%). A large majority (91%) recognized they need a mentor or life coach to help achieve their goals.

To date, 25 graduates have been released, 60% of whom are doing well and are in regular contact with their CM Mentors. While releases have staggered throughout 2019, most program participants have been out of prison for six months or longer. CMs have facilitated 80 OAA Support Forums with 449 in cumulative attendance (avg. 5-6 people per group). After release, nearly 70% found employment. Nine graduates have passed their first year since release. Four have reoffended but none for violent or gang charges. That is significantly lower than the national and state average.

Implementation of the Youth CM Reentry Program

In February 2019, our PSN youth reentry initiative, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, Atlanta Youth Development Campus, began with nine youths within the last two

months of detention who had been adjudicated for a variety of gun or gang-related criminal activity.¹ Cohort 1 met for 90 minutes weekly, for 10 weeks, in sessions facilitated by a team of two CM Mentors. Nine individuals between 17-20 years old attended between five and eight program sessions between February and April 2019.

All nine youths completed the reentry group, with four of the most defiant youths having perfect attendance. To date, all have been released back into their communities. While three of the youths have reoffended and two never contacted their mentors upon release, two engage with mentors sporadically and four maintain regular contact with CM Mentors. None were terminated or withdrew from the program. Nearly half requested additional support, 67% engaged in mentoring afterwards, and several were connected to housing services. Three have been rearrested for a 66% success rate, more than the national average.

As part of our juvenile intervention/reentry strategy, CMs have also facilitated Forward Thinking Youth Mentoring Groups at a local police department and juvenile court, with 107 participants (seven parents/guardian), and 75 participants (four parents/guardian), respectively.

Prior to release, participants complete classes within the facility in job training, soft skills, and financial literacy. Upon graduation, private sector partners provide each participant with a new business suit, shirt and tie. Once released, CM Mentors help with referring participants for interviews and transportation to local “second chance” employers like Chick-fil-A, CKS Packaging, and Diaz Foods. Additionally, CMs present information on hiring fairs and employment opportunities at the weekly OAA Support Forums.

More broadly, CMs have logged over 1,600 encounters with 104 individuals at risk of reoffending. While contacts lasted from less than a minute to seven hours, there have collectively been approximately 1,000 hours of mentoring. While the largest proportion of encounters involve periodically checking in with the returning citizen, about a third are for support and a quarter for service-linking, motivation, and other times mentors provide advice, counseling, and other aid.

Funding

Prior to the release of PSN funding from the DOJ, I authorized the funding of initial start-up operations through the USAO budget. As a result, the USAO contributed a total of \$107,901 to the Credible Messenger Initiative to cover CM contractors for youth/adult reentry programming, training, ARS, and other expenses.

PSN FY18 grant funds contributed an additional \$219,748 for CM contracts, OAA Support Forum facilitation, Forward Thinking youth mentoring, counseling services, transportation and emergency housing assistance, and supplies for a 2-year period.

The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation also provided OAA with a grant for \$58,100 to provide housing assistance to CM program participants. The NFL and Atlanta Falcons Social Justice Committee provided a reentry support grant of \$11,500 as well.

¹ An ARS study of more than eighty years of DJJ and Georgia criminal history records showed that among the 8% or less of juvenile offenders placed into a YDC, the majority reoffend. Indeed, 60% go on to be adult offenders.

Lessons Learned – Recommendations

- Recruiting and retaining CMs requires developing relationships with trustworthy and reliable CMs who will refer others.
- Establish a formal process with each CM (including an MOU or Partnership Agreement) that outlines potential conflicts of interest with the sponsoring agency, types of conduct that warrant relationship severance, expected behavior, social media expectations).
- CMs need to be paid for their time, commitment and expertise,² given the non-traditional hours and duties required and the enormous amount of contact required between a successful CM Mentor and Mentee.
- Ongoing professional development and training for CMs must include trauma-informed practices (i.e., keeping yourself and your team healthy).
- CMs need the support of their supervisors/program managers, as they also navigate obstacles that can randomly arise for a formerly incarcerated person.
- Opportunities should be available for CM Mentees to become Mentors themselves with appropriate vetting, screening and ongoing attention and support.
- Consider stipends for program participants and/or goal completions.
- Mentoring programs should include hot meals as often as possible, periodic recreational and educational activities and opportunities, and community improvement projects.
- Working with grassroots organizations with limited federal grant experience can be overwhelming and overly limiting (*i.e.*, restrictions on the purchase of food or paying participants stipends as incentives for goal achievement incentives).
- Fund a research partner to serve as an independent evaluator for programming impact and outcomes.
- Invest in systematic data tracking and reviews for continuous quality improvement.

² As an example, the average CM Mentoring program budget for Community Connections for Youth (CCFY) (one of the model CM programs in New York City), is approximately \$350,000 per year to employ one full-time CM as Project Coordinator and 3 to 4 full-time CM mentors. CCFY recommends a minimum starting salary of \$50,000, plus health benefits, for a full-time, seasoned CM. However, if full-time positions are unavailable, no less than \$20 per hour is suggested.

APPENDIX

Additional Resources

- 8-minute video about NDGA Credible Messengers:
<https://youtu.be/q2h4yqXv-fg>
- Website for the Credible Messenger Justice Center (CMJC):
<https://cmjcenter.org/>
- Website for the Offender Alumni Association (OAA):
<https://www.offenderalumniassociation.org/>
- Website for Freedom is a Choice, Inc.:
<http://www.freedomisachoice.net/>

Nate Brown

Director of Program Services, Oklahoma Department of Corrections



Mr. Brown began his career with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections in May 2005 as a Probation and Parole Officer assigned to the South Office of Central District Community Corrections in Oklahoma City. He was selected as Central District Community Correction's Officer of the year in 2009 and was promoted to Team Supervisor in 2010 and later to Administrative Manager in 2015. During his tenure at the district level for probation and parole he supervised a number of caseloads and officer types including: probation, parole, interstate, GPS, Diversion, Weed & Seed, administrative and specialty courts.

Mr. Brown was promoted to Division Support Coordinator for Probation and Parole in February 2017 and was selected as the Director of Programs within Offender Services in January 2018.

Mr. Brown currently oversees Education, Cognitive Behavioral Programming, Substance Abuse Treatment, Reentry Services as well as Religious and Volunteer Services for the state's incarcerated population in the Oklahoma Department of Corrections facilities.

Mr. Brown earned his bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice Administration in 2004 from the University of Phoenix and his Master of Public Administration in 2010 from the University of Oklahoma. Mr. Brown has prior service with the Oklahoma Administrative Offices of the Court, the Oklahoma County Court Clerk and in the United States Army Reserves.

Nate Brown
Director of Programs
Oklahoma Department of Corrections

The Issue:

Prisoner reentry continues to be one of the most significant factors as well as a focus for our state as we continue our dedicated efforts to effectively and safely reduce our high incarceration rates. The complexities surrounding the goal of reducing recidivism while simultaneously returning productive citizens after a period of incarceration are extremely varied and wide ranging.

Many factors contribute to the success of an individual returning to society after prison: housing, employment, transportation, finances, social support, legal issues and obligations, medical needs, mental health needs and substance abuse treatment needs. These are issues affecting all inmates released from prison, further compounded by geographic location and socio-economic status. Many inmates have significant anxiety and fear about their impending release, which can be tough to deal with if they have been incarcerated for a significant period of time. The sudden removal of structure that has guided their everyday activity can be quite daunting and in some cases, insurmountable. Things that are relatively simple for an average citizen, such as obtaining a Driver's License or State ID that allows someone to work, can be exponentially difficult for an inmate that has limited resources while in prison and more roadblocks once they are released. As a former Probation & Parole Officer I have had a firsthand view of the types of environments these inmates come from before prison. I also know the varied environments they will be returning to and the challenge some will face. The stigma of a felony conviction and its long term effects can be crippling. It is the goal of everyone invested in reentry to help these men and women overcome these issues for themselves, their families and their communities.

Employment and education are two of the leading factors that will help determine success on the outside. Not just employment, but sustainable long-term, high paying employment is best achieved through educational growth, either traditionally or vocationally. These two issues, combined with a suitable living environment, family focused support, access to mental health, medical and substance abuse treatment and maintenance, will ultimately make the inmate less likely to reoffend.

Oklahoma Corrections Overview:

As of March 31, 2020, the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (ODOC) had a total of 24,409 inmates incarcerated in 18 state prisons (only 8 of which were designed and built to be prisons), 3 contracted private prisons, 6 community corrections centers, 4 contracted halfway houses and 1 contracted county jail. There are an additional 780 inmates currently in the state's county jails awaiting transfer to the ODOC. In the community, there were 31,659 offenders on probation, parole, GPS or in a community sentencing program for a system total of 57,112 offenders either incarcerated or under the supervision of the ODOC.

In FY 2019 we received a total of 9,384 receptions into incarceration, of which, 1,496 were female and 7,888 were male. In the same year we discharged more than 9,000 inmates from incarceration into the community.

Programming and Reentry in Oklahoma:

With the large volume of inmates leaving our correctional facilities, tailoring reentry programming that is specific enough to deal with all of the issues that an inmate will face once released is a large task. The majority of ODOC's inmate programming focuses on Education, Substance Abuse Treatment, Cognitive Behavioral Programming, Vocational Programming, Reentry Services and Volunteer and Religious Services. These evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and services are provided by department staff, contract staff and volunteers to address the needs of the individual. These programs address the reentry success of individuals that are incarcerated in Oklahoma. Everything we do for an inmate is designed towards their success upon discharge with the goal of not returning to incarceration. All incoming inmates are assessed for criminogenic need, educational level and eligible inmates are assessed for the potential for vocational programming by our partner the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education.

Our Education Unit is the largest component of Program Services in the Department of Corrections. It is recognized as an independent school district by the Oklahoma Department of Education. We employ a superintendent, 3 principals and more than 80 certified teachers distributed throughout the state facilities. Every inmate coming into the system is tested using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and if there is an educational need, they are placed into educational programming at one of three levels: Literacy (grade level 5.9 or lower), pre-high school equivalency/adult basic education (grade level 6.0 through 8.9) and high school equivalency (grade level 9.0 or higher). The average incoming TABE score grade level for FY 2019 was 7.0 (7.7 for females and 6.03 for males). We had 1,100 inmates receive a high school equivalency diploma from the State Department of Education in FY 2019. In addition to the regular educational classes, our teachers provide Life Skills classes (a reentry focused class), leisure library services at some facilities, among other services as needed by each facility. Additionally, they coordinate and facilitate college programs through many of our secondary education partners.

Currently, we have college programming partnerships with Tulsa Community College, Langston University, Conners State College, Rose State College, Western Oklahoma State College, Northwestern Oklahoma State University and Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Tulsa Community, Langston University and Conners State College were approved as Second Chance Pell schools (SCP) in 2016. Rose State, Southwestern and Western Oklahoma State are approved to be on the second round of approvals for Pell expansion funds. We have plans to expand our offerings through our first tablet based curriculum by partnering with Ashland University of Ohio in the fall of 2020. There is no question that the availability and expansion of Pell Grant funding has impacted our inmate population greatly. There is also no question that we need more resources to help continue this expansion.

In our state, prior to discharge, a well-thought-out pre-release plan is developed with the inmate that provides an opportunity for the inmate to review all their accomplishments during incarceration as well address all of the issues they would face upon release. The plan is developed with the case manager and the inmate so that together they could start to think about what life would look like on the outside. Identifying housing (with family or without) and potential employment opportunities are sometimes the most difficult obstacles to overcome and can often change many times up and after discharge.

Kate Barnard Correctional Center:

Kate Barnard Correctional Center (KBCC) is a 250 bed facility located in Oklahoma City directly adjacent to the ODOC Administrative Offices. It was originally opened in 1972 and has had a number of operational missions and titles. It was converted from one of our community corrections centers to a minimum-security facility in 2017 to help alleviate some of our county jail backup totals for female inmates waiting

to be transferred into the system. It houses a fully functional education program, a substance abuse treatment program and offers cognitive behavioral programs such as Thinking for a Change and Associates for Success. As a female facility in a large metro area, it is also served by a healthy contingency of volunteers providing additional services and programming. Like all of our facilities, KBCC does an excellent job at utilizing the available resources for accomplishing its mission. Due to the facility's recent history as a community level facility, it has a strong history of focusing on reentry and its smaller size lends itself to being able to focus on providing programming on multiple fronts.

KBCC receives a lot of its inmate population from our larger female facilities the medium security Mabel Bassett Correctional Center (MBCC) and the minimum security Dr. Eddie Warrior Correctional Center (EWCC). We initially assessed that many of the female inmates completed their high school equivalency at these other institutions but then were transferred to KBCC where there were no college offerings. In fact, after its conversion to a minimum facility, it became the only remaining female facility that did not offer college programming. As a result, we polled and assessed the offender population and found that more than 80 offenders in the 250-bed facility were interested and educationally eligible for college courses. Langston University, a 4 year university, was already operating at one of our larger male facilities but had a local branch not too far from KBCC in Oklahoma City. We decided that it would be mutually beneficial for the inmates at the facility and the university to establish Pell funded college programming at this DOC site. Since we already had a lengthy and successful partnership with the university, adjusting the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to accommodate this operation was facilitated.

The new program began in the fall of 2019 with 27 students in 3 onsite classes. Classes continued into the spring semester; however, with budget constraints, instructor time was limited and only one course was scheduled. We are in discussions to expand course offering in the fall. One of the more exciting pieces of information stemming from this partnership is that one of our inmates having received her high school diploma at EWCC discharged her sentence and is currently a proud full-time student at Langston University.

To continue these examples of success in our communities we must continue the growth of our college offerings at KBCC and all of our facilities by continuing to work with Langston and any other college partner willing to provide services. The addition of college offerings at this female facility has been a boon to the inmate population and is helping us to address the growing needs of these offenders as they become eligible for release. For some, this allows them to expand the college courses they already have and for others this helps give them the sense that they can achieve more than they have ever before.

Impact:

There has been a strong shift to recognize the needs for successful reentry, but this is only part of the puzzle. While investing and concentrating on the factors that aid in successful reentry, we also know the benefit of placing emphasis on dealing with all of the contributing factors of an individual's success, not only after an incarceration, but prior to an incarceration as well. It needs to be a concerted effort to treat the person holistically instead of focusing on singular components such as education or employment. We know that in FY 2019, 64% of the inmate population had either a history of mental health issues or current mental health symptoms. We also know that a large portion of inmates are managing substance abuse issues and in many cases both. We know many inmates have no place to return to and many of those that do have somewhere to go, may not be returning to the best environment. We also know that many of our inmates have additional trauma in their life that was likely a factor that contributed to their incarceration. For many the system may have failed them before they came to prison, with many of them

failing to complete school or growing up in foster care because of a lack of resources or awareness. Correctional programming can be the trajectory for changing their lives with success for them and their families.

As a department, we are maximizing the resources available in to provide the programming opportunities to every inmate. This includes maximizing any available resource, partnership and collaboration to the fullest extent. It is part of our core mission to encourage positive change in offender behavior by providing rehabilitation programs and enabling successful reentry.

Partnerships, like those with Langston University made possible by Second Chance Pell Fund, help us complete this mission.

Recommendations:

- Conduct studies and funding that supports technological advances in providing educational and employment resources to correctional systems for the purposes of reentry.
- Conduct studies on the types of college programs offered to incarcerated individuals versus the needs of business/industry with a focus on increasing high demand fields.
- Support the Experimental Pell Initiative Expansion and consider ways to aid in funding the project.
- Support efforts to reduce restrictive policies and rules regarding licensure relative to the crime especially in high demand areas.
- Study ways that would allow long distance transfers of releasing inmates to high employment demand areas including interstate opportunities.
- Provide more funding for all-inclusive services and community dedicated to reentry incorporating employment, education and treatment services, particularly in rural areas.
- Research and funding for infrastructure and technology that can promote distance learning opportunities for justice involved individuals, particularly in rural areas.
- Research and expand opportunities for technology sector training, education and employment for justice involved individuals such as coding and software development.

John Wetzel

Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections



John Wetzel, widely recognized as one of the thought leaders in and voices of corrections today, was appointed Secretary of Corrections for the PA DOC in January 2011 by Governor Corbett following a 22 year career in county corrections that culminated in a position of warden at Franklin County jail where he oversaw a 20% population reduction during his tenure. After Gov Corbett's defeat, he was reappointed by Governor Wolf in January 2015 and again in January 2019. During his tenure as Secretary, not only did DOC experience the end of a 24-year average growth of 1500 inmates per year, but also the first population reduction in PA in over 4 decades, with a total reduction thus far of over 4,200 inmates. Secretary Wetzel has guided the Department in restructuring Community Corrections, the mental health systems and significant security enhancements while at the same time, significantly reducing spending. With 30 years of experience in the corrections field, he served as Chair of the Council of State Government's Justice Center's Executive Board of which he is now a member. He is currently the President of the CLA (Correctional Leaders

Association) formerly ASCA and a member of Harvard's Executive Session on Community Corrections. On the federal level, he was tapped by the Obama administration to be the corrections expert on the Chuck Colson taskforce – which was a congressionally created group tasked with assessing the Federal Bureau of Prisons and providing the administration and congress with recommendations on improvement. More recently, he was named by the Trump administration to the congressionally created oversight committee to the federal First Step Act. He is graduate of Bloomsburg University, and recipient of honorary Doctorate degrees from both Indiana University of Pennsylvania and Chestnut Hill College.

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

- Tim Johnson, Founder and President, Orlando Serve Foundation
- Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner, Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
- Steven Perkins, Warden, Georgia Department of Corrections Metro Reentry Facility
- H. Jean Wright, II, Psy.D. Director of Behavioral Health and Justice Related Services, Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disability Services

Timothy Johnson

Founder and President, Orlando Serve Foundation



Tim Johnson is the senior pastor of Orlando World Outreach Center, a multi-cultural, multi-generational Christian church whose goal is to reach the people in the Orlando area for Christ, connect them to God and to one another, and then equip them to serve their local community.

An ordained minister, Johnson was inspired to launch Orlando World Outreach Center while serving as senior pastor of a large multicultural, multi-congregational church, Bethel World Outreach Church in Nashville, Tenn. He, along with the elders, oversaw the business and spiritual growth of the church. They led, supervised, ministered and equipped both the church staff and the lay leaders to fulfill the vision of the church.

Tim Johnson's history has given him invaluable experience in pioneering innovative discipleship-based ministries, church planting operations, and leading a thriving congregation.

His passion for seeing communities transformed can be witnessed throughout Johnson's life. During his time in the NFL, Johnson co-sponsored and led football clinics for communities in Washington, DC and in his hometown of Sarasota, Fla. In 1993, he co-founded the Good Samaritan Foundation along with long-time friends Art Monk, Charles Mann and Ernest Byner. The Good Samaritan Foundation established the Student Training Opportunity Program.

After retiring from the NFL, Johnson served as President of the Youth Life Learning Center in Nashville, Tenn. His ties to the NFL remained, as Johnson was the chaplain for the New Orleans Saints from 2005 to 2008.

Johnson's strong desire to build better communities has been passed on and is shared by his congregants. Partnerships with local homeless shelters and homeless support organizations, adopting a local underserved school, football clinics, and city cleanup projects have made a huge impact on the City of Orlando.

Most recently, Johnson founded the Orlando Serve Foundation, which is designed to be a bridge between those in need and the resources available to assist them. On Easter 2016, Orlando Serve Foundation launched the initiative He Got Up, a celebration service and resource fair. Between 2016 and 2017, about 15,000 individuals either volunteered or participated and received much-needed help.

Tim Johnson - Founder, President
Orlando Serve Foundation
Transitioning from Institutions
April 20, 2020

Vision & Mission:

Orlando Serve Foundation's vision and mission are Loving, Healing, Restoring, Transforming, Sharing Eternal Hope – Connecting communities and resources to provide systems of care to individuals and families in need in Central Florida.

History:

We began in 2016 by hosting an annual event called He Got Up! at Orlando's Camping World stadium for the homeless, veterans, working poor and any one in need in our community which brought together some 120 organizations offering their services including free showers, hygiene kits, haircuts, clothing, shoes, accessories, food, various medical screening and services, education and employment opportunities, and legal assistance with unpaid court costs, fees and fines. We served thousands of individuals from Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. Encouraged by our success and armed with lessons learned, we repeated the first in event in 2017 and boasted comparable success.

Evolving and Narrowing:

We identified the greatest need of our guests was within the legal services domain, assisting those with suspended driver's licenses by providing them a pathway to restoration through agreements with the Clerk's office and Chief Judge.

The logistics, cost and manpower of hosting these events surpassed the financial resources and size constraints of our foundation. After two Camping World events, we took the events to smaller, local community centers within Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties, focused primarily on the legal services, and invited community partners to attend so they could offer their services as well.

In 2018 we identified an opportunity to expand the scope of our legal services by developing a partnership with the Orange County Jail. Through our pilot He Got Up ID Assistance program, we assisted qualifying, short-term inmates obtain valid identification with the goal of increasing their likelihood of success upon re-entry and transitioning into the community with less difficulty. In spite of its success, because of limited resources, we are no longer able to offer this service.

Program Description:

Our 'He Got Up!' brand is well known and respected within the communities we serve. We create a compelling environment for our event guests and volunteers at each of the Community Centers that hosts our events. Guests register to determine their eligibility to restore their suspended driver's licenses due to unpaid court costs, fees or fines.

If eligible, they sign up for a reduced-cost payment plan that removes them from collections. The plan considers their ability to pay and offers lower minimum payments than typical. Depending on the county, they will see the Clerk at the event or at the Courthouse the following week. Alternatively, in Orange County, guests can sign up to perform community service hours in lieu of payment. In this case, they register at the event with the Department of Corrections and then see a judge in the weeks

following to have the community service ordered. Upon sign-up for either plan, the suspension from the guest's driver's license is removed, and if they honor their payment plan or community service agreement, their license remains valid.

Lunch and snacks are provided for all guests and volunteers.

Community Partners:

Many agencies participate at our events to offer their services. Examples of these are the Department of Health who provides vaccines and screening for hepatitis, 4C Childcare, Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance providers, Orange County Family Services, Voter's Registration, Catholic Charities, ACLU and various local non-profits.

One of our original community partners is a 7th grade student, who has for four years, collected and distributed thousands of pairs of shoes at our events. Bounce houses and in some cases, childcare, are available at the events.

Students from FAMU and Barry Law schools and members of the Legal Aid Society offer a 'Know Your Rights & Responsibilities' seminar.

Prayer is available to those who wish to receive it.

Program Impact:

Our success is largely driven by a devoted base of volunteers who are passionate about our cause.

Each event has a ratio of approximately one volunteer for every five guests. We average 100 volunteers per event and had over 2,800 volunteer hours in 2019.

In 2018, we held six events in Orange County and one event in Osceola County, serving 2,267 individuals.

Each event was from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. In 2019, we scaled back to four events in a more compressed timeframe (two in Orange County, one in Osceola County and one in Seminole County from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.)

Even with fewer events, we served almost as many, if not more individuals, per event location than in the previous year.

The total of individuals served in 2019 was 1,691.

Key Sponsors:

We have a number of supporters who have remained with us from the inception of our Foundation and the first He Got Up event. The Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints who provide food and a large volunteer base for each of our events. Frito Lay and Pepsi provide snacks and beverages. The City of Orlando, Osceola County Human Services and Harvest Time International provide facilities for each of our events. FAMU and Barry Law School, Legal Aid Society provide legal counsel and education on legal issues.

Primary Areas of Focus:

As stated in our vision – we distinguish ourselves from others by serving in a manner that is loving and healing, with the goal of restoring and transforming our communities through believing and sharing eternal hope.

As a byproduct, through our events and our focus on compassionate restorative social justice, we are influencing change within the criminal justice system, improving the community relations with law enforcement, and helping to lift people out of poverty by facilitating the process of them getting their driver's licenses restored so they can get back to work.

Approach:

Maintaining and expanding relationships with all the partners mentioned are critical to our success and one our key strengths.

Because we have a large volunteer base, it's important to us to create a compelling environment that has a meaningful and personal touch and efficient process.

Leveraging these partnerships and brand reputation has led to our partners advocating for what we do in the community. Leaders of each of Orlando's community centers distribute flyers, and even walk through the neighborhoods to ensure pre-event awareness.

We have seen an increase in our influence to see change in the criminal justice system from just being perceived as punitive to become more restorative. To that end, the City of Orlando has recognized our model as one to leverage in their own community and homeless court initiatives. We stay engaged in matters of importance to the community, looking for opportunities to join forces with and support other like-minded organizations when possible.

At the end of each event year, we host a volunteer appreciation luncheon, where we honor and celebrate our volunteers share the results of our work, and rally support for the following year.

Program Demographics:

80% of those we serve are African American, which is driven by the community centers that have been chose for the events. Our guests range in age from 18-75 years, and 60% are male.

Goals and Objectives:

We want to increase our reach within and beyond the tri-county area of Central Florida. Demand for this type of assistance in other neighboring counties is high. Clerks of Court from Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties each manage their processes differently. We would like to host a summit between the clerks from these counties to discuss process variances and identify best practices. Insights we gain can be leveraged to appeal to other counties to join in our efforts. To start with, we would look at onboarding one additional county.

We will increase our events from four to eight, going into two new cities within Orange County (Apopka and Bithlo), and offer one more event each in Seminole and Osceola counties.

We would like to analyze the customer journey experience to identify issues that the average guest faces before, during and after our event. Based on our learning, this might look like following-up with individuals to ensure they remain accountable to their commitments or by offering them scholarships for reduced cost car insurance. Support to our guests beyond the event date will likely reduce recidivism.

We need to gain additional insights to show post-event follow-through to determine how many people complete the payment plan and/or community service plans for which they register. For this reason, it is important for us to invest in resources that can assist in analyzing the data we collect and maintain about our guests, who can advise on what other data might be beneficial to collect, and the best way to go about collecting it.

Finally, we would like to obtain more sophisticated tools to collect and manage data so that it can be harnessed more efficiently and effectively. This will enable us to better identify and serve the needs of our community and make data-driven decisions.

Recommendations:

As it relates to the need of serving individuals as they make an often difficult transition from jail to mainstream society, Orlando Serve Foundation has both experience and recommendations to offer, and requests consideration for funding to fully expand the pilot program initiated with Orange County Jail.

The fully implemented Jail Program would exist to assist inmates, work release and probation-supervised individuals meeting the criteria to obtain the necessary documentation to get a driver's license or valid identification by providing provisions to fund the following 4-part program:

Part 1 - Pre-Release Orientations:

ID Assistance Teams who will serve at the monthly pre-release orientations for inmates soon to be released.

- Inmates will be provided flyers of the upcoming He Got Up Events in the respective Community Centers so they can attend to receive services offered by community partners.
- Inmates will be educated, screened and scheduled for Court hearings if appropriate to have their court costs, fees and fines converted into Community Service hours, to establish a new payment plan with the Clerk, or to be retrieved from a collection agency.

Part 2 - ID Assistance for Trustee Population:

ID Assistance Teams will offer to inmates individual services to obtain Social Security cards, birth certificates and other relevant documents required to obtain a valid Florida ID or driver's license.

- Inmates should be screened according to the following eligibility criteria:
 - Must be sentenced to a minimum of 60 days or have a consecutive Probation sentence
 - Must be non-real ID compliant according to DMV requirements
 - Must be missing documents such as Social Security card or birth certificate
 - Must have knowledge of their birth place, parents' names
 - Must reside in Orange County, FL upon release
 - Must express willingness and motivation of following up on referrals upon release

Part 3 - Court Hearings For Court Cost, Fees & Fine Conversion, New Payment Plans & Retrieval From Collection Agencies:

- Eligible sentenced inmates must have cases from Orange County
- Eligible inmates will attend a court hearing in the BRC to be held quarterly. At the hearings the court will address the conversion of court cost, fees or fines into Alternative Community Services hours, retrieval from collection agencies and new payment plans.

Part 4 - Community and Work Release Program Supervised Offenders

Offenders under supervision who have had their license suspended because of non-payment of fines, fees and court costs, or who have defaulted on collections court and been transferred to a collections agency, will be extended the opportunity to attend a community event where they will be screened and registered for a court date as appropriate.

Funding resources necessary to administer and build out the He Got Up ID Assistance program will unite Central Florida by bridging the divide in our communities through compassionate restorative justice. Inmates will transition into the community more effectively when provided the necessary documentation required to obtain housing, employment and driving privileges upon release, thereby reducing the likelihood of recidivism and dependence on government assistance.

We recommend allocating funds annually to expand both our He Got Up Event and ID Assistance programs into additional counties within the Central Florida region. Our best-practices in leveraging relationships across a broad spectrum of community, government, and faith-based entities is repeatable given the proper financial resources which include:

- An Executive Director and two full-time support staff members
- Technology hardware and software to manage information about our guests throughout the program

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony of experience with Orlando Serve Foundation and our He Got Up programs, and for considering these recommendations. We appeal to you to provide the funds necessary to expand our model of success throughout Central Florida, a community that is in much need of compassionate, restorative justice. Your investment will go a long way to rebuild broken lives as they transition from hopelessness to hopefulness.

Jay Sanders

Assistant Commissioner, Inmate Services Georgia Department of Corrections



Jay Sanders was appointed to Assistant Commissioner of Inmate Services in November 2016. Mr. Sanders oversees academic and vocational education, chaplaincy, risk reduction, and transitional services. Prior to this position, he served as the Deputy Director of the Governor's Office of Transition Support and Reentry.

Mr. Sanders began his career with the Department in 1992 as a Probation Officer. He served in several capacities to include Regional Training Coordinator, Hearing Officer, Public Safety Training Instructor, and Special Assistant to the Director of Probation Operations.

In 2013, he was appointed by Governor Deal to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and the Juvenile Justice Statewide Advisory Group in 2015 due to his knowledge of the criminal justice processes in Georgia.

Mr. Sanders is a POST certified Master Instructor with certifications in Firearms and Defensive Tactics. He has a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Pensacola Christian College and a Master's Degree in Social Administration from Georgia Southwestern State University. He lives with his wife and two sons in the Central Georgia area.

Georgia Department of Corrections
Jay Sanders, Assistant Commissioner
Reentry and Recidivism Reduction Hearing
Submitted April 24, 2020

Overview

In 2009, The PEW Center on the States released their *One in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections* Report which showed the national average of incarceration or community supervision was one in thirty-one individuals. Georgia had the dubious distinction of leading the nation in the report with one in thirteen under supervision. This means we have a large prison population that will ultimately return to the community under some form of supervision.

Georgia System Overview:

- 8th largest state in the nation with 10.6 million residents
- 4th in overall prison population
- Current prison population is 54,446
 - Additional 3,000+ in probation alternatives
 - 9,376 life sentences (7,788 with parole; 1,588 without parole)
 - 70% of inmates are currently incarcerated for violent/sexual offense
 - FY19 admissions 17,693
 - FY19 releases 18,030
- \$1.2 billion budget
- Over 11,000 employees with 7,000 correctional officers
- 90+ facilities

Problem

Most inmates in state prisons will be released one day, and they are returning to our communities. We as criminal justice agencies, and as a society, must prepare them to live and work in our communities and abide by our norms. This is very difficult to accomplish and takes everyone working together to make individuals successful. “According to the National Institute of Justice, almost 44% of criminals released return before the end of their first year out of prison. In 2005, about 68% of 405,000 prisoners that were released were arrested for a new crime within three years, and 77% were arrested within five years.”¹

Recidivism rates in Georgia currently hover around 27%, down from the almost 40% of the late 80s and early 90s during the “Get Tough on Crime” era. Several measures have been undertaken recently to reduce our recidivism numbers even further and to improve the chance for success for those releasing from our custody.

¹ Unknown. “Recidivism Rates by State 2020”, WorldPopulationReview.com, 4 Apr. 2020, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/recidivism-rates-by-state/>

We know that there are several factors that may influence whether a person may return to prison. Those factors, to name a few, are personal issues, economics, lifestyle, and thinking patterns. Research has shown that “to reduce recidivism, communities need to consider factors such as the threat of homelessness, mental health services, substance abuse programs, adequate health care, education and employment assistance, and family support. In addition, female inmates may need programs and services that are different from male inmates.”²

The 2009 PEW report, along with a number of other factors, led the State of Georgia to take a comprehensive introspective look at our criminal justice system. The Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform was formed in 2011 and spearheaded this effort at the state level. Initially they found that between 1990 and 2011 our prison population doubled to 56,000 inmates, pushing our prisons to 107% of their capacity. We had a recidivism rate of 30% despite falling rates of violent and property crimes, while twenty-five % of our annual admissions were first-time, low-level property and drug offenders. Corrections had a burgeoning annual budget of \$1.2 billion, and it would take an additional \$264 million to fund the growing population over the next five years. We simply had to do something to better the returns on our investment and improve recidivism rates for those leaving our custody.

To focus on reducing the recidivism rates in Georgia, several different approaches were undertaken. With the help of three Bureau of Justice Assistance Grants, we tackled reentry and recidivism head on. The Department of Corrections worked closely with the newly created Department of Community Supervision to implement these grants. There were several different areas that we chose to address with grant- and state-funded dollars that are outlined below.

Risk and Needs Assessment³

Every individual that enters the Georgia prison system is assessed for their risk and needs using the Next Generation Assessment (NGA). The NGA is a proprietary assessment tool that was developed and normed on the Georgia prison population, as well as those released to community supervision. The NGA uses over 300 factors about the offender: legal, personal, medical, mental health, community supervision events, current and past diagnostic classification data as well as historical institutional events, to create a score both in risks and needs. Individuals are scored on three **risk** scales for rearrest within three years of prison release: (1) the arrest for a new crime within 3-years, (2) the arrest for a felony crime within 3-years, and (3) the arrest for a violent or sexual crime within 3-years.

For **needs**, the NGA uses Andrews and Bonta’s “Central 8” criminogenic needs of substance abuse, criminal thinking, peer associates/family stability, education, employment, mental health, and trauma. The scales used are gender specific and allow us to use programming for both male and female inmates.

The NGA is used to inform all programming and case management decisions inside the institution, as well as the initial re-entry/release plan. Once an individual’s needs are identified, they are enrolled in programming based the availability in the program within the system and their estimated date of release. Focusing on the highest risk and highest needs inmates allows the Department to spend scarce treatment funds on those who are most likely to return to prison.

² Unknown. “Recidivism Rates”, California Innocence Project.org, 23 Apr. 2020, <https://californiainnocenceproject.org/issues-we-face/recidivism-rates/>

³ Applied Research Services, Inc. “Description of Georgia’s Next Generation Assessment (NGA), 2014.

Evidence Based Programming

To ensure the programming delivered within our facilities is the best and most appropriate based on an individual's assessed needs, we have moved to all evidence-based programming. For the Department to use a program, it must have been researched and proven to be effective in addressing the underlying needs of our inmates.

Our Department has designated two facilities as completely evidence-based facilities and has given them the appropriate programming and tools to make these facilities successful. In addition, we are utilizing and continue to refine a gang renunciation program at one of these facilities.

The Department closely watches the treatment effect that is gained when inmates complete programming within our facilities and are ultimately released to the outside. While our recidivism rate for the general population based on FY16 released is currently 27.6 %, recidivism rates for those that participated in cognitive programs is 24.3%, GED programs is 19%, and vocational programming is 18.6%. We have focused heavily in these areas that are proven to drive down the recidivism rates, and below is more information on the results.

Behavioral Programming and Educational Focus

The goal of the Department is that every inmate identified with a behavioral health or cognitive need will be enrolled in and complete programming prior to their release. Due to the number of inmates in our system, we triage who attends programming and prioritize those with the highest risk and needs, factored with their anticipated release date, to determine when programming is most effective.

GDC has focused heavily on educating those being released from our institutions. Basic adult education-- in the form of Literacy and Remedial Reading (LRR) and Adult Basic Education (ABE)--is taught with the goal of an inmate obtaining their General Equivalency Diploma (GED) prior to their release. For those inmates that are age 17-25, we have worked with a local charter school system to provide high school education and diplomas at three of our facilities. Since FY15 we have successfully graduated almost 12,000 inmates with a GED and over 300 inmates with charter school diplomas.

Knowing that individuals who leave prison with a vocational or hands-on skill are less likely to recidivate, we have partnered with the Technical College System of Georgia to provide numerous training opportunities areas such as welding, diesel mechanics, HVAC, plumbing, culinary arts, and graphic design to name a few. We also have an extensive On the Job Training (OJT) program that teaches the correct way to perform various skills within a facility, such as sanitation, food service, etc., while receiving credit and hands- on training. Since FY15 we have had over 57,000 vocational, OJT, skills training, and post-secondary completions.

Reentry Assessment Centers (RAC)

Each facility has a RAC that provides tools and support needed to access, inform, and connect the inmate with a plan for reentry during their final months of incarceration. Using Chromebooks and white-listed websites, the inmates access information on housing, transportation, and employment. They also prepare resumes, practice interviewing skills, and take job interest assessments.

Reentry Documents

We know from research that those releasing back to our communities must be able to get on their feet quickly. It is up to us to prepare them for this reentry regardless of how long they have been incarcerated. To do this, we have focused our resources heavily on the personal identification and documents that are needed to reestablish one's self in the community.

The process begins with the **birth certificate**. Over the last several years, the Department has forged a relationship with the Georgia Department of Vital Records (GDVR) where all birth records are housed. Through memorandums of understanding and shared technology, our Department can access the GDVR data base to print official birth certificates for those inmates born in-state. These birth certificates can then be given to an inmate just prior to release. In FY19 we created over 12,000 birth certificates in house for inmates in our system. Since inception we have generated over 40,000 birth certificates.

The **Social Security card** is the next piece of the puzzle. Through an MOU with the Social Security Administration, our facility counselors apply for social security cards just prior to an individual's release so they will also have this very important document in hand.

With the birth certificate and social security card in hand, we have the necessary documents to pursue a **state driver's license or state identification card**. To do this we have established a relationship with the Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS). The very important distinction is that this is not a departmental ID, but a state ID, just like an individual citizen would have. Last fiscal year we obtained 3,384 drivers' licenses and 5,381 state ID cards. Since inception we have issued over 20,000 driver's licenses or IDs.

There are several other documents an inmate may leave with upon release. One is a **Program Treatment Completion Certificate (PTCC)**. This is like a college transcript that shows all programming and work details they completed during their incarceration. The PTCC is available to certain inmates based on their offense and institutional behavior. They may also leave with other certificates of completion from behavioral or educational programming completed while serving their time.

All these documents are stored in a central repository and held until 180 days prior to release. At 180 days, their folders are pulled and delivered to the facility from which they will release. Approximately 75% of inmates that are released each year leave with a folder with some or all these documents in them. The only reason an inmate may not be able to get these documents is that they were born outside of Georgia and we are unable to obtain a birth certificate to begin the process. These documents play a vital role in allowing them to reestablish themselves in the community.

Metro Reentry Facility

In 2018, the Department repurposed a closed prison to the Metro Reentry Facility. This facility currently houses 355 individuals and has taken a heavy programming and community-based approach to reentry for those releasing to the Atlanta Metro area. You have heard about this in the testimony from Metro Reentry Facility Warden Steven Perkins and I invite you to visit this facility if you are ever in the Atlanta area.

Housing

Housing can be an issue sometimes for those that have burned bridges prior to prison and while incarcerated. Our Department, in conjunction with the Department of Community Affairs and the Department of Community Supervision, utilize the Reentry Partnership Housing (RPH) Program. This program will provide up to 6 months of housing for those releasing with no where to live. This program has been very beneficial to those who simply have nowhere to go and provide programming and sustenance for the participants.

Health

We strive to provide the highest level of physical and mental health care possible to those in our custody. When they are released with chronic conditions that require care and medications, we work with local community health care providers to ensure continuity of care. Depending on their needs they are released with anywhere from a 14 to 30-day supply of their medication.

Approximately 20% of our inmates have some form of mental health need. To address this growing population, we also strive to provide the best mental health care possible. We work closely with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, local Community Service Boards and the Department of Community Supervision to ensure that a warm hand off is done which includes an initial appointment and, at minimum, a 30-day supply of their medication.

Recommendations

1. Additional funding and staff education devoted to ensuring that no inmate is released without having completed their prescribed behavioral and educational programming.
2. Additional funding and training to ensure there is a warm hand off from facility to physical and mental health providers in the community.
3. Additional funding and cooperative agreements be developed among state and federal agencies promoting the ability to provide the necessary personal identification and documents to individuals as they release.
4. Additional funding and programming be devoted to training and educating staff in the culture that is conducive to programming such as that which is delivered at Georgia's Metro Reentry Facility.

Attachment

As an attachment I have submitted the Inmate Services Impact Report. This is a report that is legislatively mandated to be created each year and is submitted to the Governors Office, the Office of Planning and Budget as well as the State Legislature. It has much more information than I could deliver during this testimony about all we are doing to help inmates successfully transition back into society.



Georgia Department of Corrections

INMATE SERVICES IMPACT REPORT

Fiscal Year 2019

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



MISSION

The Georgia Department of Corrections protects the public by operating safe and secure facilities through the development of professional staff and effective offender management.

VISION

We set the exceptional standard for protecting the public through our people, processes and infrastructure.

CORE VALUES

*Courage
Determination
Teamwork*

www.gdc.ga.gov

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Timothy C. Ward
Commissioner

On behalf of the entire team at the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC), it is with great pleasure that I present to you the Georgia Department of Corrections' Impact Services report. This report highlights our progress toward effective offender management through education and evidence-based programming, implemented by our team of Inmate Services professionals.

GDC has continued to develop educational programs, job skills training, and evidence-based programs for offenders by cultivating partnerships with multiple agencies. In FY 19, our Academic Education Unit exceeded their goal by awarding more than 3,000 high school diplomas and equivalencies. In addition, our partnerships with outside agencies have contributed to the 161% increase in the Career, Technical, and Higher Education (CTHE) program enrollments, while successful program completions almost tripled in the last two years, from 6,090 to 18,659.

A structured, statewide offender mentoring program was deployed in FY 19 to allow for better selection of offender mentors. Through the process, offenders must apply, interview, complete seven to 14 week standardized training written by Central Georgia Technical College, and be evaluated annually for mentorship consideration. Upon completion of the training, offenders are equipped with developmental, interpersonal and facilitation skills which will provide them the tools necessary to train others on how to develop the skills needed to be successful during incarceration, as well as in society once released.

GDC Chaplaincy Services was successful in providing worship programs and pastoral counseling to offenders around the state. A new branch of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary program was established at Whitworth Women's Facility for the female inmate population in conjunction with Heartbound Ministries. It is a two-year program that grants graduates a degree in Christian Ministry.

In addition to offender focused programs, a new volunteer certification process was developed, allowing for greater efficiency, security, and functionality for individuals interested in volunteering within GDC facilities. Now, volunteers can complete and submit a secure application online prior to attending the required training class. More than 1,200 volunteers were certified and trained in FY 19.

Our agency is committed to providing effective offender management through offender education, and evidence-based programming. I am proud of the achievements our Inmate Services team has made this fiscal year, and I am looking forward to seeing them accomplish even more successes as we enter 2020 with a continued commitment to assisting offenders with successful reentry into their communities upon release.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy C. Ward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning of the first name.

Timothy C. Ward, Commissioner

BENEFITS OF CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMMING AND EDUCATION

Benefits of Correctional Programming and Education

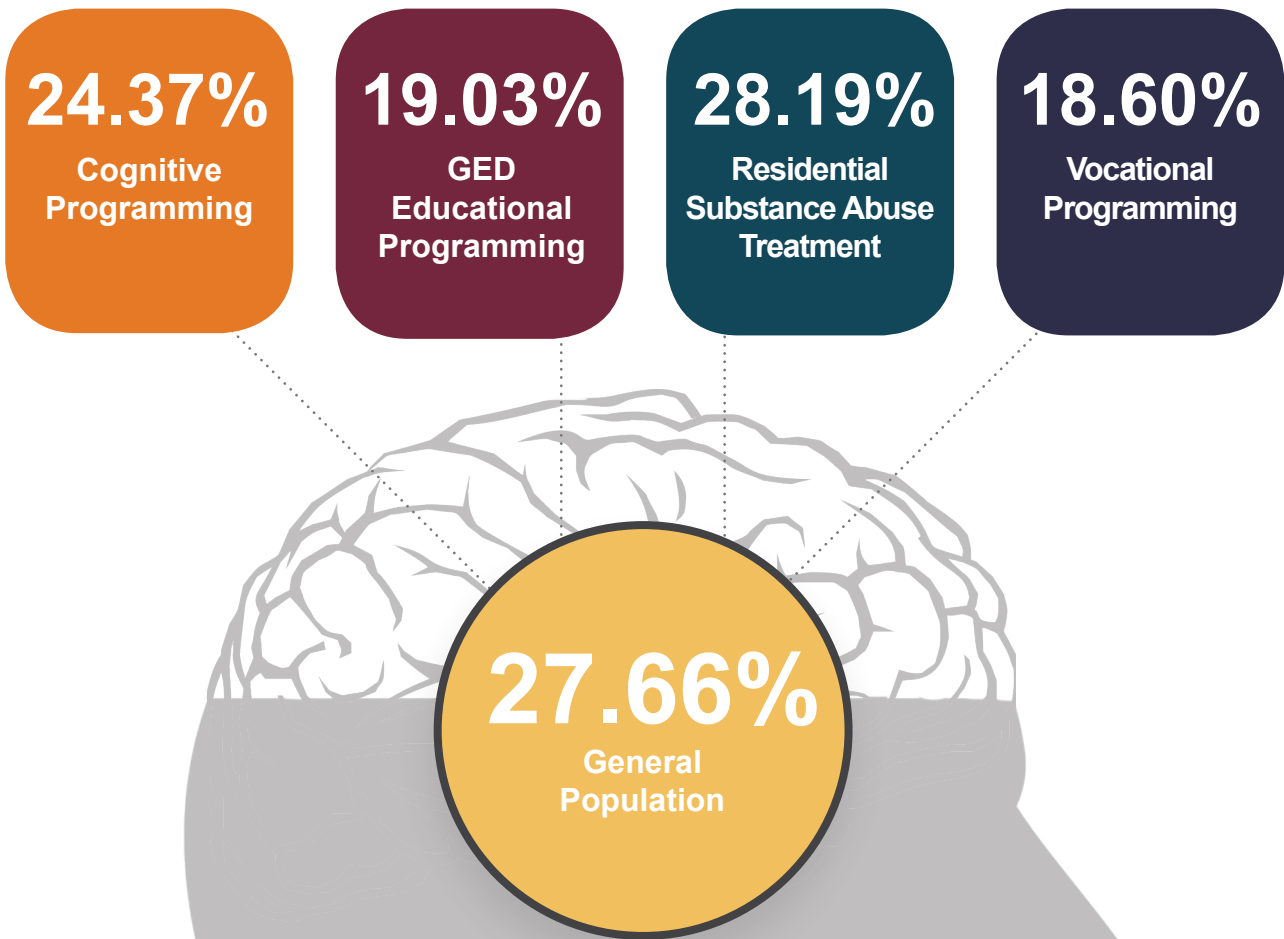
In 2014, the Rand Corporation and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) conducted a study entitled “How Effective is Correctional Education, and Where Do We Go from Here?”. Denise O’ Donnell, former BJA Director, stated “...the study shows that correctional education for incarcerated adults reduces the risk of post-release, re-incarceration by 13%, and does so cost-effectively, a savings of \$5 on re-incarceration cost for every dollar spent on correctional education.”

Overall, this study shows that the debate should no longer be about whether correctional education is effective or cost-effective, but on where the gaps in our knowledge are, and opportunities to move the field forward.

TREATMENT EFFECTS FROM PROGRAMS

Three-Year Felony Reconviction Rates for Program Completers vs. General Population

Based on FY 16 Releases

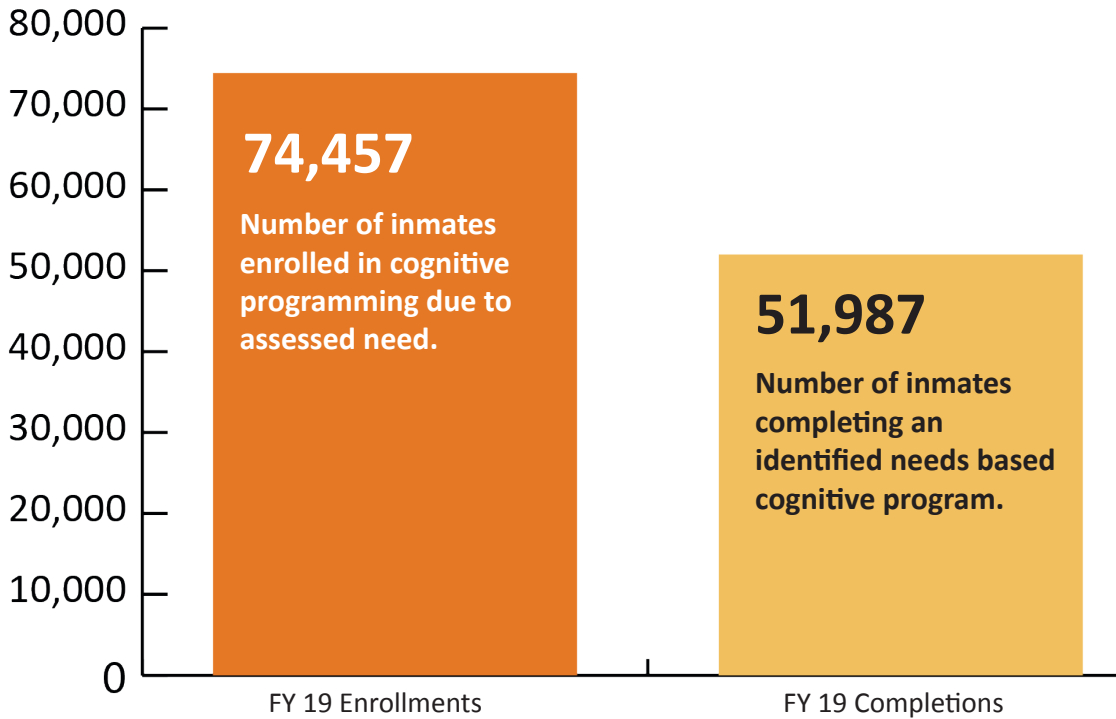


Three-year felony reconviction rates for inmates who have successfully completed GDC programming, versus the inmate population who did not participate in programs offered by GDC.

RISK REDUCTION SERVICES

Initial Correctional Counseling Training

Initial Correctional Counseling Training (ICCT) is a seven-day comprehensive training designed to introduce and provide entry level Counselors and Multi-Functional Officers (MFO) with basic knowledge and skills to better understand their responsibilities and the inmate population to whom they are providing services. During FY 19, 142 newly hired Counselors and MFOs completed this training, which is required, within 12 months of their hire date.



Program Counselor Testimonial

“When inmates complete their case plan, they feel that they have accomplished a lot and are looking forward to more educational and program opportunities that will help them advance before their release. We are hopeful that our impact with programs will help the inmates become productive citizens in their communities when released and work towards a positive change while they are still serving their sentences.”

449

Facility Site Visits
conducted by Social Service
Program Consultants

38

Audits

40

Regional Inspections

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment

The Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program is mandated to reduce recidivism by providing research-based programs. GDC partners with federal, state and county agencies, non-profit and community-based organizations to provide these services. The GDC RSAT program is one of the largest in the country with almost 2,500 beds. RSAT implements evidence-based programs which target crime producing behavior and focus on changing criminal thinking and reducing actions associated with the criminal mindset.

RSAT Program Overview

RSAT Facilities

Bainbridge PSATC*	Lee Arrendale State Prison
Bleckley PSATC*	Northwest RSAT
Coastal State Prison	Paulding PSATC*
Coastal PSATC*	Pulaski State Prison
Johnson RSAT (A)	Turner RSAT
Johnson RSAT (B)	Valdosta State Prison

*Probation Substance Abuse Treatment Center

- Evidenced based cognitive-behavioral curriculum
- Goal is to learn real-life ways to help live a pro-social, productive life free of alcohol, drugs, and crime
- All RSAT participants are housed separately from the general population
- Based on Modified Therapeutic Community Model

2,428

Capacity

3,313

Enrolled

9 months

Program Duration

3,409

Completions

92%

Completion Rate

Research, Evaluation, Assessment, and Development Unit

In support of the GDC's mission, the Research, Evaluation, Assessment, and Development Unit (READ) strives to provide supportive services that enhance staff members' professional development and develop new methods to effectively manage inmates. Through a combination of support services, their roles in facility audits, regional inspections, program overrides, and the revamp of Transitional Center (TC) programming (Odyssey), the READ Unit continues to be proactive in risk reduction service delivery.

- R** - Research emerging trends and evidence-based correctional practices
- E** - Evaluate program effectiveness and support the needs of the staff in the field
- A** - Assess inmate programming for strengths and areas of improvement
- D** - Develop new inmate programs and training opportunities to enhance staff professional development

Odyssey Program Development and Implementation

The Odyssey program was based on a Georgia Program Assessment Inventory conducted at each TC. Odyssey helps inmates focus on relevant life skills needed for successful transition back to their communities. The Odyssey program development and implementation included Process Action Team (PAT) meetings to discuss transitional center needs, staff training on the new program, as well as culture change training with staff in their use of effective communication skills. TC staff across 14 facilities were trained to facilitate the Odyssey program and have been a critical part of the program's success.

13

PAT
Meetings
Conducted

95

TC Staff
Member
Trained

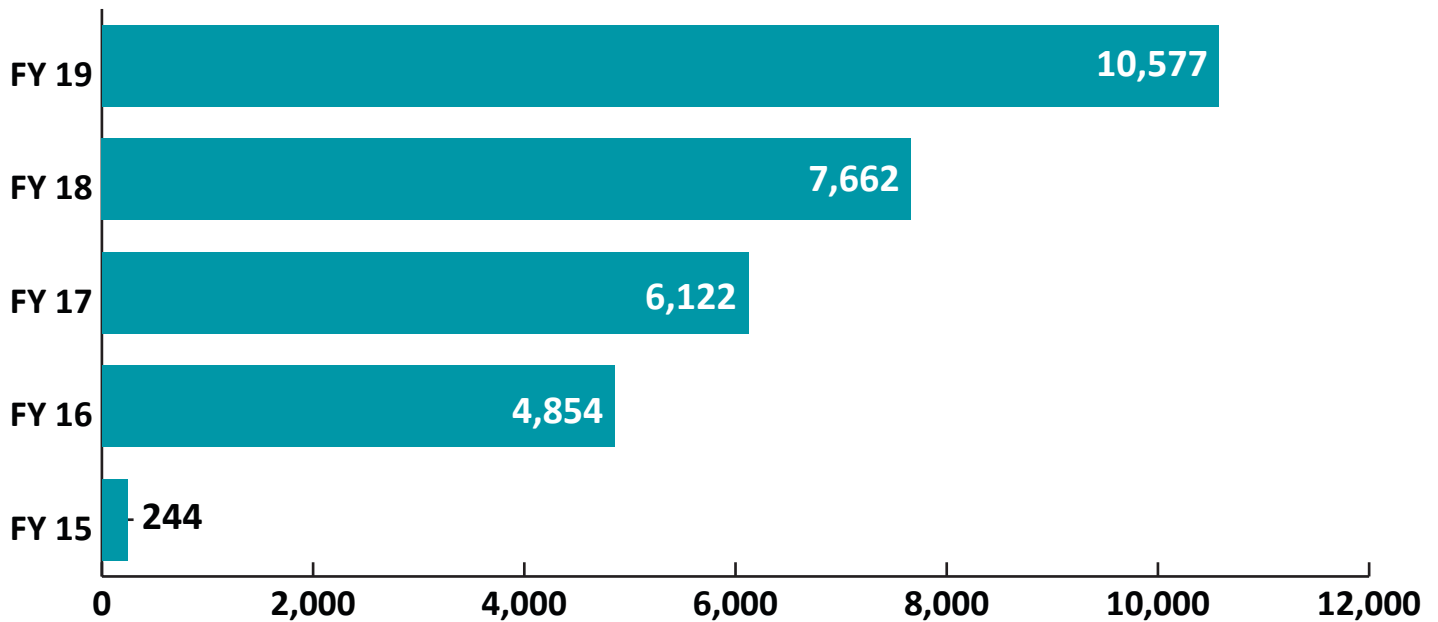
1,547

Transitional Center
Residents Completed

Program Treatment Completion Certificate

The Program and Treatment Completion Certificate (PTCC) is a reentry tool issued to inmates who meet the established criteria. This certificate provides the inmates with a historical account of the accomplishments/programs they have completed while incarcerated. Upon their release, inmates are able to use the PTCC as a tool to highlight their programming accomplishments during their incarceration.

PTCCs Issued by Fiscal Year

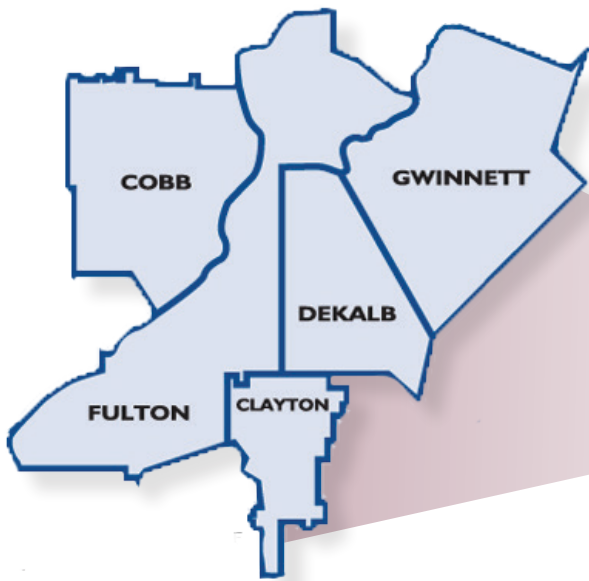


*Per OCGA 42-2-5.2(c) – Not all inmates released are eligible to have a Program Treatment Completion Certificate awarded to them. An inmate who was convicted of a serious violent felony, as such term is defined in Code Section 17-10-6.1, is not eligible for a PTCC.

TRANSITIONAL SERVICES

Metro Reentry Facility

The Metro Reentry Facility (RF) opened in May 2018 and utilizes a comprehensive behavioral health and substance use curriculum to address the criminogenic needs of returning citizens. All returning citizens within the program are high-risk and high-need and receive a minimum of 20 hours of programming each week. The program is 12 months long and has four levels that prepare the returning citizens for successful reentry into the community. After returning citizens complete a level of the program, a graduation ceremony is held to congratulate them and continue to motivate the participants. The program utilizes mentors to assist with community meetings, family day events, peer-mentoring, groups, program organization, and more.



355 Metro RF
Returning Citizens

**Returning citizens will
return to these five
metropolitan counties**



Pictured: Returning citizen housed at MRF painting a mural of the iconic The Varsity restaurant in Atlanta, Georgia.

Reentry Assessment Center

Located within Georgia's prisons and Transitional Centers (TC), Reentry Assessment Centers (RAC), formerly known as Career Centers, provide tools and support needed to assess, inform, prepare, and connect the returning citizen with a solid plan of reentry during their final months of incarceration.

By providing relevant and up-to-date information and resources, peers guide and assist the returning citizen in building a solid reentry plan in the following areas:



IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

- birth certificate
- social security card
- driver's license
- identification cards



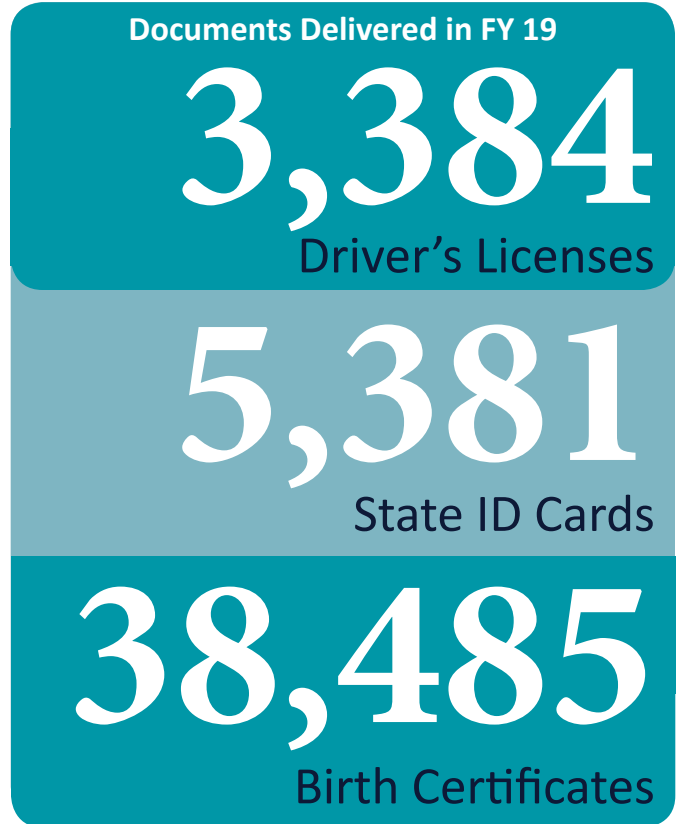
CAREER EXPLORATION TOOLS & ASSESSMENTS

- resume preparation
- practicing interviewing skills
- job market trends
- location of outside career centers
- job interest and skills matching assessments
- development of typing and computer skills

Release Document Repository

The repository provides a secure location for GDC to collect and store reentry related documents vital to inmates at release such as Department of Driver Services (DDS) identification cards, driver’s licenses, and birth certificates. The documents are sent to the releasing facility 180 days before the inmate’s release. During FY 19, the repository staff delivered 12,822 packets containing these documents to facilities to be given to inmates.

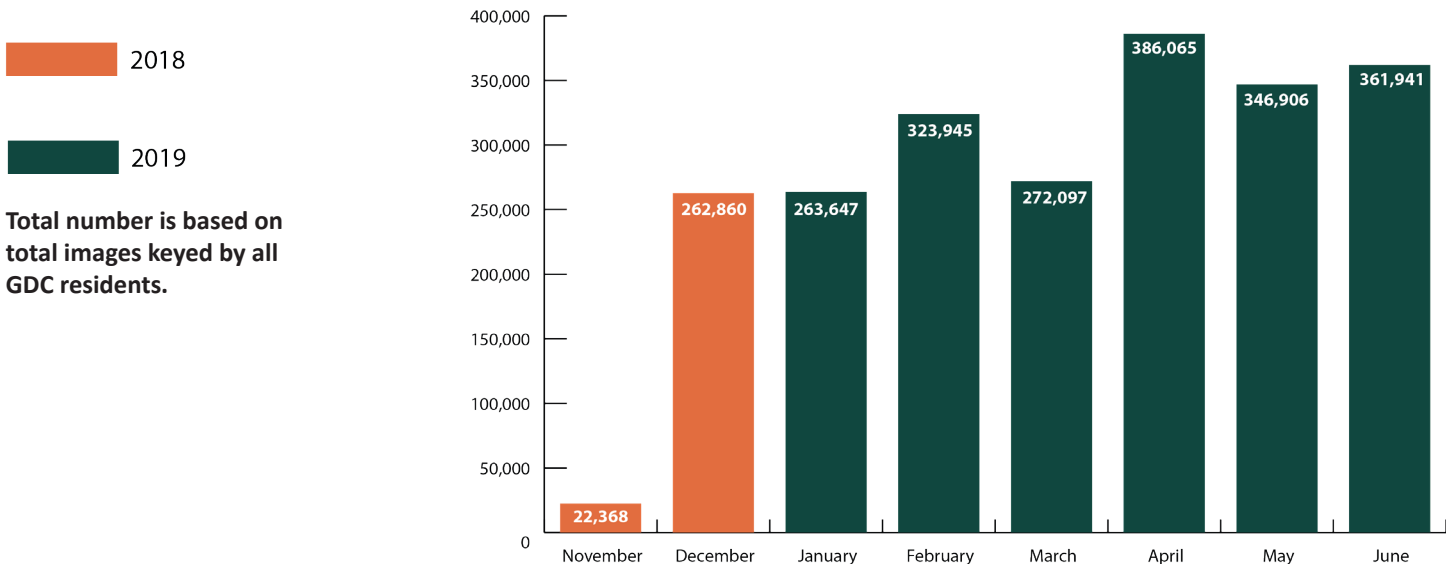
Since the process began in 2016, more than 23,200 identification cards or driver’s licenses have been issued. Annually, GDC’s TC facilitated an issuance of over 1,678 additional identification cards or driver’s licenses.



Peach Pass Partnership

The GDC and the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) entered into an agreement to provide employment opportunities to returning citizens housed at Metro TC. The program was implemented in November 2018 and focused on image review for the Peach Pass Lanes. During FY 19, the program employed 10 returning citizens and reviewed almost 2 million images!

Total Images Reviewed Per Month



VOLUNTEER AND CHAPLAINCY SERVICES

Volunteer Services

Volunteer Services incorporates both religious and secular activities through, community stakeholders, concerned citizens, civic organizations, and business partnerships that support services presently offered and others not provided to inmates throughout all facilities by traditional agency programming. The goal for Volunteer Services is to educate the community on how to best support inmates as they transition back into their lives post-release.

Volunteer Services has over 9,200 trained volunteers to assist the inmates and returning citizens inside and outside correctional facilities statewide.

Volunteer Services implemented changes to their Recruitment and Training Processes in FY 19.

- Website Improvements
- Standardized Training
- Developed Training Curriculum
- Updated Standard Operating Procedures
 - Data Collection
 - Documentation
 - Information Sharing
- Identifying Staffing Needs
 - Oversight and Accountability
- Developed an Implementation Plan

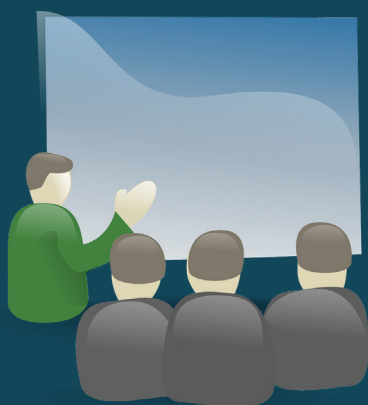


GDC Volunteer Testimonial

“It was so easy to complete the application process at home, online. I am excited that I will get my ID today at training.”

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

AT-A-GLANCE



1,283

Volunteers trained
in 21 training events
during FY 19

Gideon
Volunteers
are utilized
in Tier
Facilities

3,563

monthly
volunteers
across the state

8,211

Inmates attend weekly
volunteer services

36,950

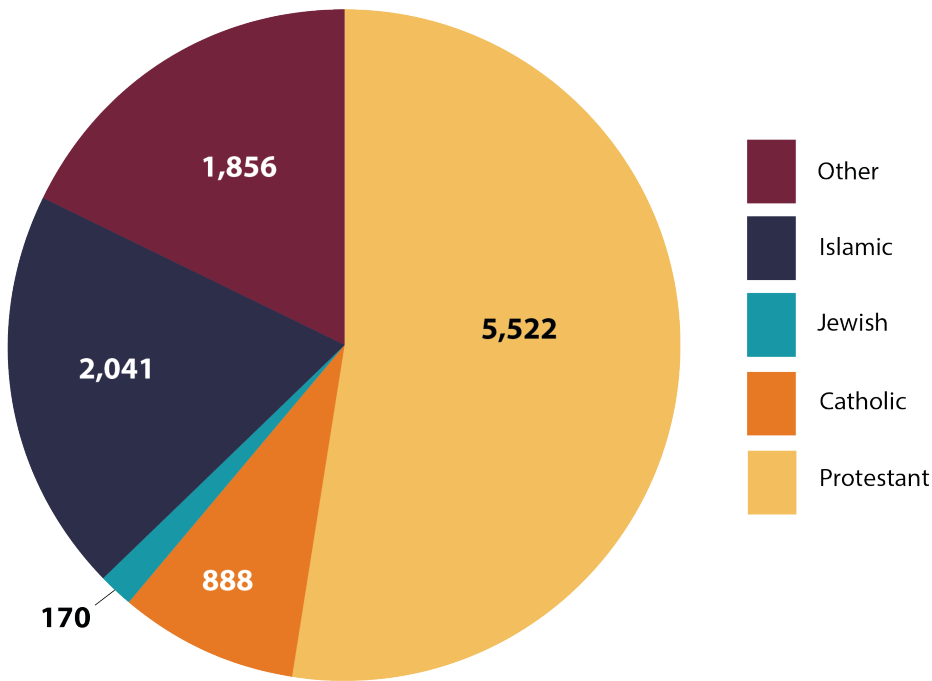
*Inmates attend
monthly services on
an average basis

*Cumulative totals - an individual may have
attended service more than once in the same month

Chaplaincy Services

The mission of the GDC Chaplaincy Services is to provide and facilitate access to pastoral care for inmates and staff as appropriate in order to promote and establish a community of peace, hope, safety, and mutual respect, and ensure inmates' First Amendment religious rights. Chaplaincy Services support the mission and vision of the agency through professional leadership providing pastoral care to inmates and staff on an individual and corporate basis.

FY 19 Chaplaincy Services Offered



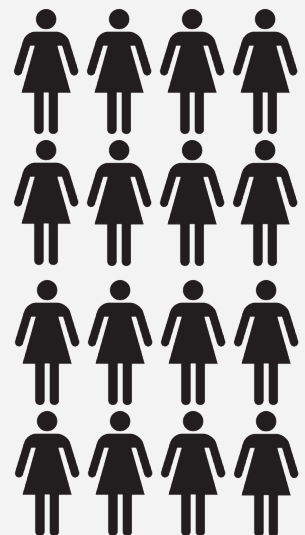
- Facilitating Worship
- Education
- Counseling
- Spiritual Direction
- Support
- Crisis Intervention



GDC Chaplain Testimonial

“Working within the Chaplaincy Program at GDC has been an uplifting experience. Hearing about the offenders I helped that are now back at home with their loved ones and are model citizens, means I am doing something right.”

Since the inception of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) on January 15, 2019, 16 Female inmates have completed the 1st semester at Whitworth Womens Facility.



ACADEMIC EDUCATION

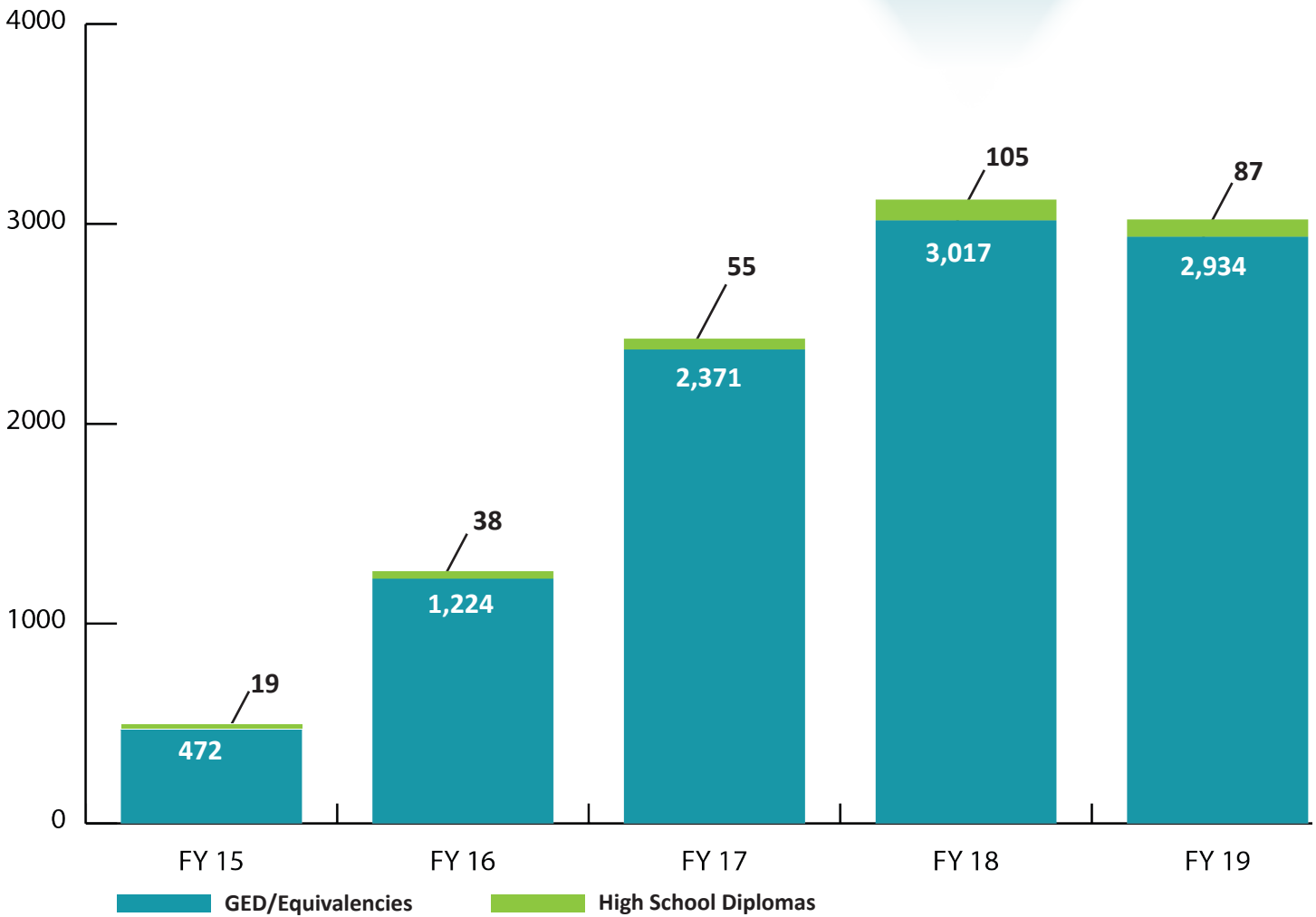
Academic Education

3,021

 High School Equivalencies & Diplomas earned in FY 19

DID YOU KNOW...
Since FY 15, inmates have earned 10,019 high school equivalencies and diplomas.

High School Equivalencies and Diplomas




Special Populations Served

GDC works in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Education to ensure that students who are eligible for Special Education and/or Neglected and Delinquent Youth Services are served per federal mandate. Additionally, education staff provide education services to incarcerated individuals who are housed in the Tier Program.

Special Populations who completed their high school equivalencies

141	Neglected & Delinquent Youth
22	Juvenile
4	Special Education
43	Tier Program



Facilities earning 100+ GED completions

- Coastal State Prison
- Coffee Correctional Facility
- Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison
- Wheeler Correctional Facility
- Whitworth Women’s Facility

GDC recognizes the top academic performers each year. In FY 19, 33 facilities exceeded the education goals established. Additionally, five facilities earned over 100 General Education Diplomas (GEDs) at each site. The GDC education staff has worked diligently at achieving this benchmark.

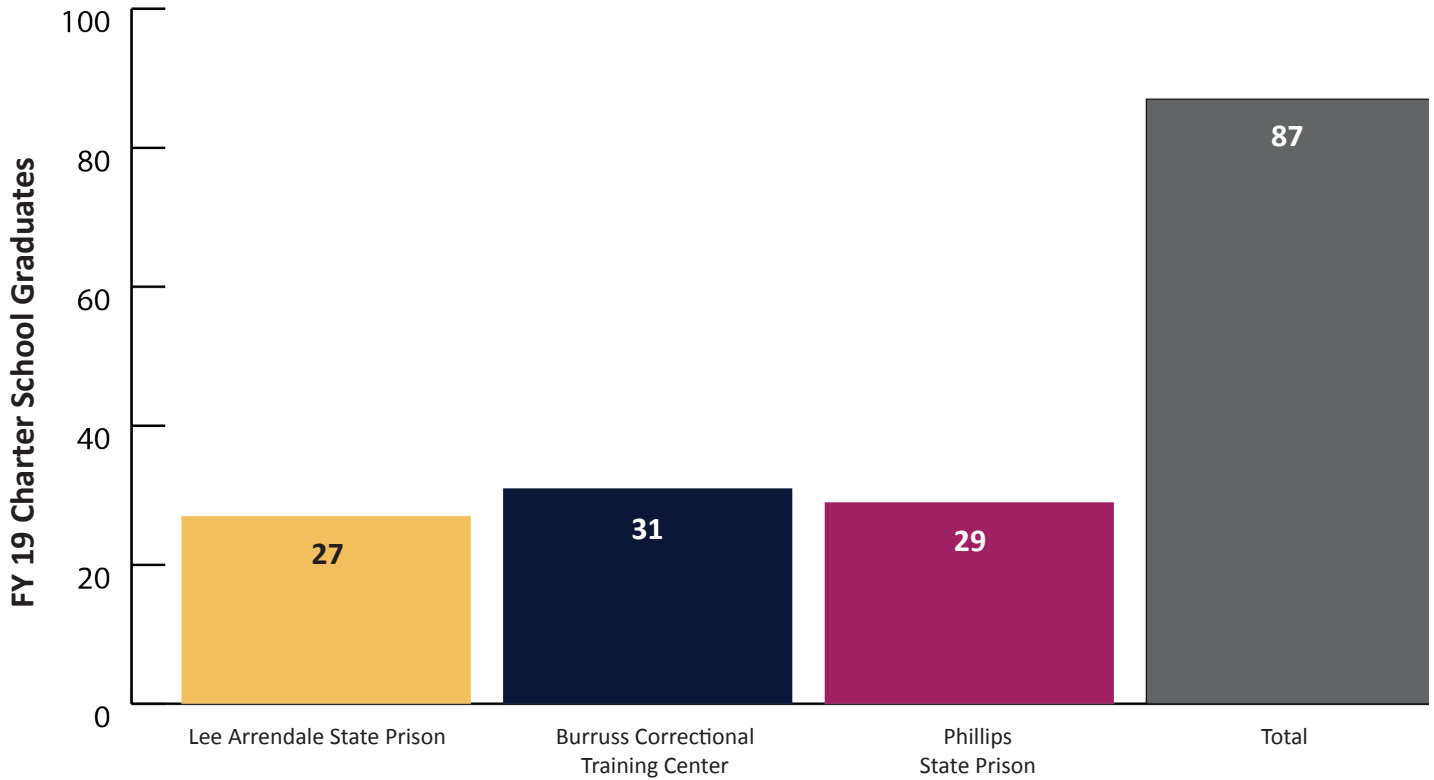
Lifers who have successfully earned their GED or high school diploma for FY 19

	Life without Parole	Life with Parole	Total
Charter High School	0	4	4
GED	19	118	137
Total	19	122	141

Foothills Charter High School

GDC began a partnership with Foothills Charter High School in July 2015. Charter schools offer high school diplomas to inmates ages 18 to 21.

DID YOU KNOW...
 300 high school diplomas have been earned through our charter school partnership.



Successful Academic Completions for FY 19

	County Correctional Institution	Private Prison	Probation Detention Center	RSAT Center	State Prison	Transitional Center	Total
Literacy/Remedial Reading	6	71	21	33	538	16	685
Adult Basic Education	69	391	112	44	1,789	78	2,483
GED Prep	213	358	155	171	2,447	138	3,482
GED Testing	239	348	210	188	1,884	65	2,934
Charter School	0	0	0	0	87	0	87
Total	527	1,168	498	436	6,745	297	9,671

Library Services and Book Donations

GDC is engaged in a strong partnership with the Georgia Public Library System to allow inmates to check out books using the Pines System. Additionally, GDC librarians have received statewide training on Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) in order to provide accessibility to visually challenged inmates.

GDC Libraries continue to receive book donations from individuals and organizations around the state. This increase in donations has provided inmates with over 50% more library materials.



Pictured: Walker State Prison Library

35,000+

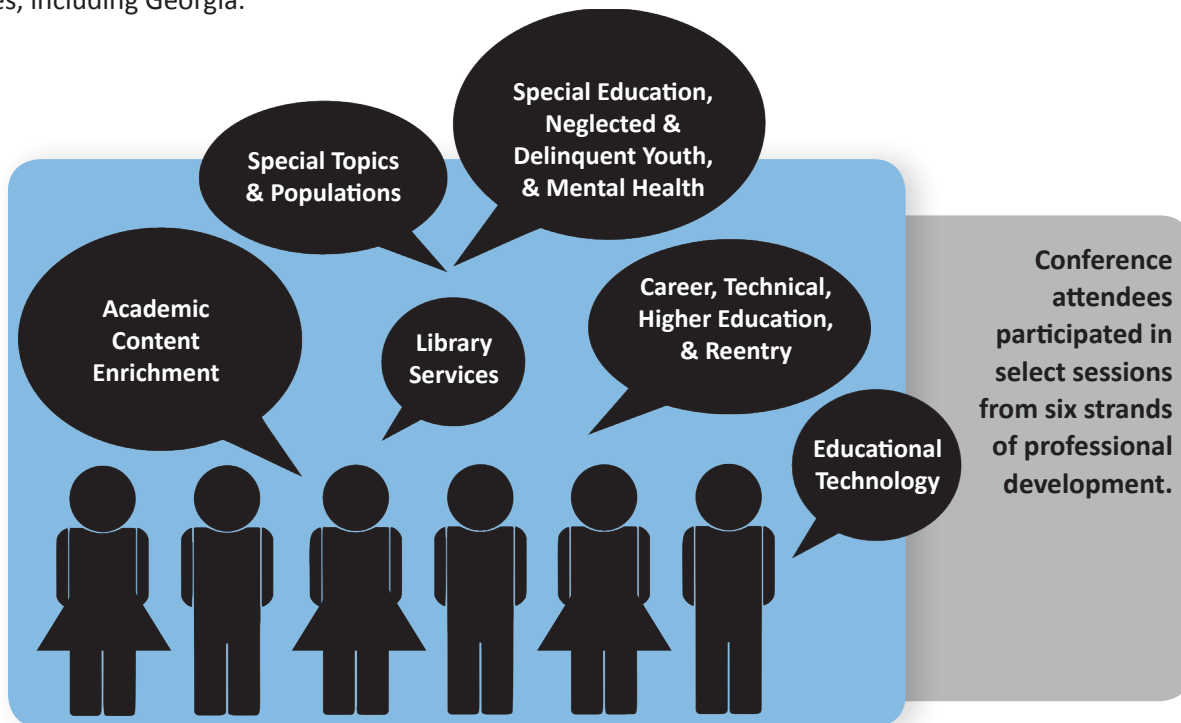
Books have been processed and placed in facility libraries



Pictured: Metro RF Library

GDC Education Conference

The GDC Education Conference was held in Augusta, Georgia in August 2019. The conference was held in collaboration with Region VIII of the Correctional Education Association. Attendees represented correctional education agencies from eight states, including Georgia.



320

Registrants Attended



Pictured: GDC Education Conference



GDC Teacher Testimonial

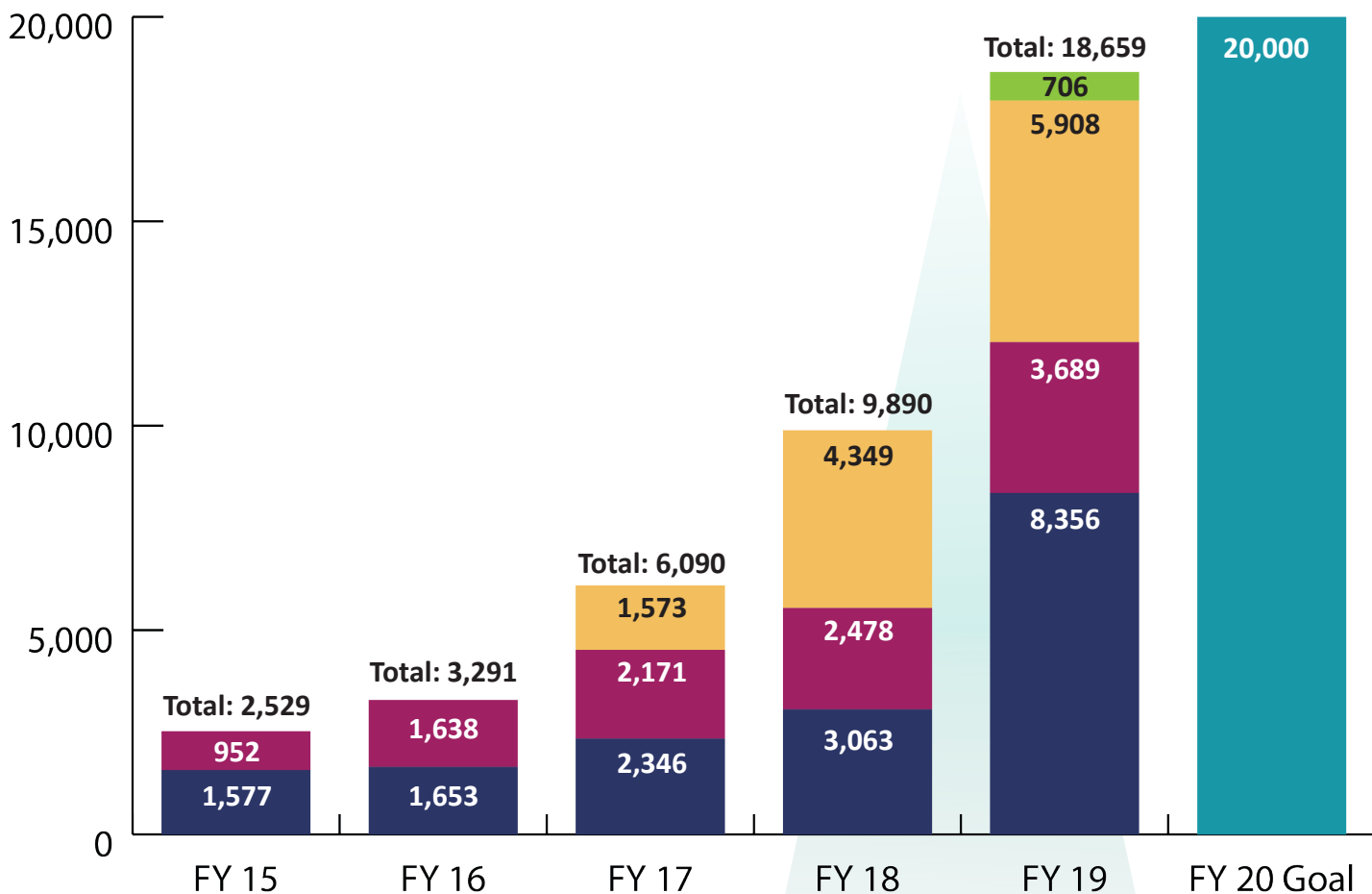
“The annual education conference refreshes my motivation and gives me new ideas for teaching my students every year! I appreciate the focus on all areas of teaching in corrections from security to instructional methods.”

**CAREER,
TECHNICAL,
AND HIGHER
EDUCATION**

Career, Technical, and Higher Education

Successful Career, Technical, and Higher Education (CTHE) completions have exponentially increased from 9,890 to 18,659 in the last two years.

Career, Technical, and Higher Education Completions FY 19



- OJT
- Skills/Trade
- Post-Secondary
- Vocational

189%

Increase of completions from FY 18 to FY 19

Available programs in FY 19 CTHE Services, which is an increase of 37 programs offered since FY 18

239

CTHE FY 19 Program Completions



Safety, Health & Recreation
3,896



Food Service
3,597



Technology & Design
1,730



Maintenance & Custodial
2,563



Horticulture & Landscape
1,491



Administrative & Office
1,120



Welding & Metal Works
684



Construction Career
684



Diesel & Auto Mechanics
365



Warehouse & Manufacturing
456



Animal Care
232



Carpentry & Wood Working
220



Barbering & Cosmetology
121



CDL, Forklift & Heavy Equipment
521

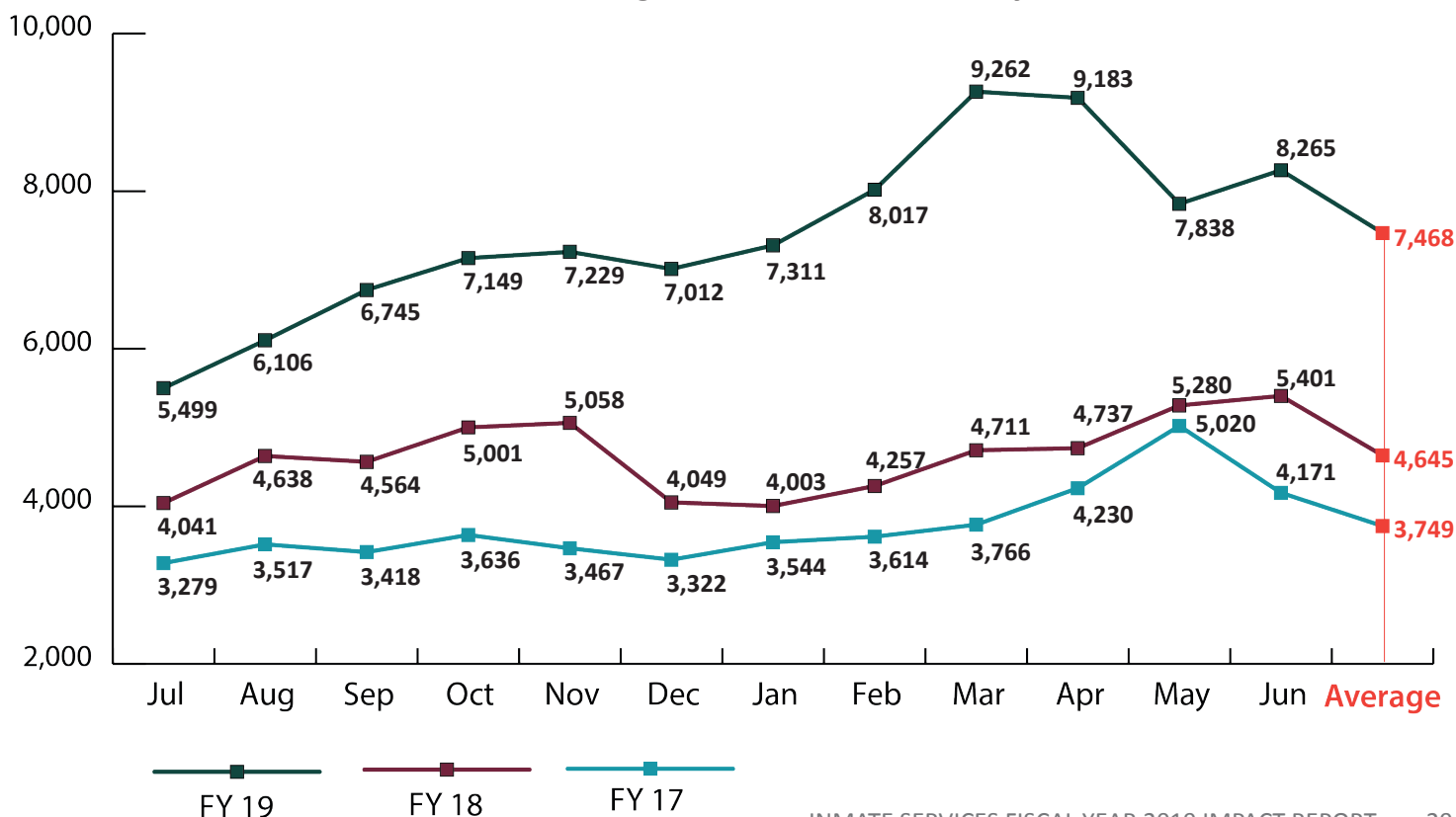


Fire Fighting
50



Post-Secondary
602

Career, Technical, and Higher Education Monthly Enrollment



Ashland University Partnership

In FY 19, GDC began a valuable educational partnership with Ashland University. This post-secondary program utilizes only federal funds and helps GDC to create a safer and more educated citizen by expanding learning opportunities for inmates. Ashland University is a recipient of the Second Chance Pell Pilot Experimental Site Initiative, in which more than 300 inmates have enrolled in fully accredited college classes.

Ashland University

- Employs a Site Director at each facility
- Site Directors meet with students on a weekly basis
- Professors provide instruction through a secure platform on the Georgia Offender Alternative Learning (G.O.A.L.) device

Founded in 1878, the fully accredited university offers the longest continuously operational post-secondary correctional education program in the U.S.



4,851

completed credit hours of coursework completed by inmates

300+

Inmates located in these facilities qualify for the Federal Pell Grant

GDC Facilities Offering Ashland University Program

- Calhoun State Prison
- Coffee Correctional Facility
- Dodge State Prison
- Dooly State Prison
- Georgia State Prison
- Hancock State Prison
- Jenkins Correctional Facility
- Metro Reentry Facility
- Pulaski State Prison
- Riverbend Correctional Facility
- Smith State Prison
- Wheeler Correctional Facility
- Whitworth Women's Facility

Preparing Inmates for Employment

- The average monthly enrollment in CTHE programs increased **161%** since FY 18, and **199%** from FY 17.
- In two years, average monthly enrollment increased from an average of **3,749** to **7,748**.
- TC have access to the CTHE programming such as Forklift, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), ServSafe, and Commercial Driver’s License (CDL).
- GDC implemented a mobile training classroom designed for inmates to earn Electrician Assistant Certification through Wiregrass Technical College.
- The newly implemented mobile welding lab through the Technical College System of Georgia was also utilized at Riverbend Correctional Facility.
- Inmates enrolled in this program have the potential to earn national certification from the American Welding Society (AWS).
- Common Good Atlanta expanded accredited college courses to the Metro RF.
- Reforming Arts, a non-profit based out of Atlanta, began offering programming at Whitworth Women’s Facility.



Pictured: Inmates participating in AWS program

Animal Care Programs

Through partnerships with Mostly Mutts dog program, City of Augusta, Guide Dog Federation, and Auburn University, GDC expanded rescue and dog training programs to correctional facilities across the state. The goals of these programs are to provide inmates with the education and training needed to facilitate employment and successful return to the community, improve inmate behavior and expand the inmates’ sense of responsibility and care towards others, as well as, provide socialization and training of the dogs to increase their adoptability.

Animal Care Programs

- Veterinary Helper
- Dog Groomer
- Animal Caretaker
- Guide Dog Trainer
- Vapor Wake (Explosive Device Detection)

143

Completions of animal related programs in FY 19

Braille Transcribers Program

The Georgia Prison Braille program, known as the Georgia Braille Transcribers located at Central State Prison, continues to provide benefits even after incarceration. Several former Georgia Prison Braille Transcribers have found promising careers as transcribers, while others are leading productive lives using the soft skills they learned while producing books for Georgia's blind and visually challenged students.

The Braille transcribing program is operating at full capacity, and the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) seeks independent contractors to meet the demand. Currently, five former Braille transcribers from the program work as independent contractors for GaDOE and other organizations as well. Others are employed as full-time transcribers in highly regarded institutions such as the American Printing House for the Blind and Georgia Institute of Technology Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation.

GDC's Braille program has now expanded to include Emanuel Women's Facility as of July 2018. Inmates that successfully complete the Braille program are certified National Braille Transcribers, certified through the Library of Congress.

Georgia Braille Transcriber Success Stories



One gentleman has developed a network among the former transcribers to subcontract their services in order to fill critical time-sensitive deadlines and proofread original works. Additionally, he provided technical training via Webcast to the current program participants during their recent 2-day professional learning mini-conference.



Another former member not only runs his own Braille transcription business, but actively supports reentry efforts and has become a certified Mental Health Peer Specialist at Metro RF.



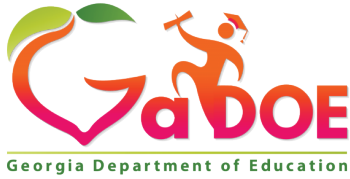
Pictured: Inmate using Brailier to transcribe literature



Pictured: Braille Embossing Press



Partnerships



Technical College
System of Georgia



THE ARTHUR M. BLANK
FAMILY FOUNDATION



Urban League of
Greater Atlanta



REGIONS



PEACHTREE ROAD
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
ATLANTA



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF DRIVER SERVICES



CKS
PACKAGING, INC.



FOOTHILLS
EDUCATION
CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
OF GEORGIA



The Gideons
International



CITY OF REFUGE



ASHLAND
UNIVERSITY



**INMATE SERVICES
IMPACT REPORT**
Fiscal Year 2019

Steven L. Perkins

Warden



Steven L. Perkins began his career with the Georgia Department of Corrections in April of 1989, as a correctional officer at Atlanta Diversion Center. In 1991, he was promoted to sergeant at JC Larmore Probation Detention Center. He served as sergeant at JC Larmore until he accepted a position as a probation officer at the same facility, in May of 1998. In 2002, Mr. Perkins decided to venture into a different sector of the Georgia Department of Corrections, and thus accepted a position as senior counselor at JC Larmore. However, due to the closure of JC Larmore In Oct, 2005, Mr. Perkins transferred to Clayton Transitional center as a counselor, where he remained until he was promoted to the position of assistant superintendent at Jimmy Helms Transitional Center, In July of 2010. In April of 2011, Mr. Perkins was promoted to superintendent of Helms Facility and remained there until he was promoted to warden of Atlanta TC/Metro Atlanta Complex on June 01, 2013. He served as warden of ATC/Metro Atlanta Complex until Dec 01, 2017, whereas he then accepted his current position as warden of Metro Re-Entry Facility/Metro Atlanta Complex. Mr. Perkins graduated from Langston University in 1986 with a Bachelor's degree in Corrections. Throughout his career with the Georgia Department of Corrections, he has acquired many certifications, to include the following: BCOT (Jun, 1989), Intensive Substance Abuse Training (Oct, 1992), Mental Health Training (Apr, 1994), POST IT (May, 1994), Georgia Gain Performance Management Training (July, 1995), Supervisor Development Training MD1 & MD2 (Sept, 1995), BPOT (May, 1998), and Hostage negotiation (Oct, 2000).

Warden Steven Perkins
Georgia Department of Corrections
Metro Reentry Facility
Transitioning from Institutions
April 22, 2020

The Issue:

The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) manages an offender population of approximately 54,000, comprised of violent as well as non-violent offenders. As an agency, we strive to reduce recidivism throughout our state by providing the offender population with the tools essential to success prior to release. These tools consist of Academic and Vocational Education programs, personal development, extracurricular activities, and community service, along with counseling, cognitive, and substance abuse programming. Research has shown that offenders return to prison “due to a combination of personal, sociological, economic, and lifestyle factors.” The GDC strives to build offenders up in order to successfully identify factors that may negatively impact their overall success and reset before negative results begin. The Metro Reentry Facility (RF) is one of our many components used to meet this goal. The Metro Reentry program was designed to enhance and promote the success of returning citizens in the metro Atlanta area, and address the basic needs related to the successful reentry into the community. Access to housing, employment opportunities, family engagement and proper identification was the core focus of the plan. One third of inmates that are released each year call the Metro Atlanta area home, yet the GDC had no facilities in the Metro area from which to release these inmates. We believed with the help of the community we could improve the chances for success for those inmates returning home to metro Atlanta. With that in mind, the GDC identified the previously shuttered Metro State Prison for renovation and re-opening as the Metro Reentry Facility.

The Facility:

On May 1, 2018, the GDC opened the newly re-missioned Metro Reentry Facility in Atlanta, Ga. Originally opened in 1980 as a male facility, Metro State Prison was converted to house females in 1993, and ultimately closed in 2011. Currently, the facility has the capacity to house 355 male medium security offenders. The program initially accepted offenders from the Metro Atlanta counties of Clayton, Cobb, Dekalb, Fulton and Gwinnett. However, due to increased requests and success from community partnerships, the program has been expanded to include Fayette, Henry, Rockdale, and Douglas Counties. The Metro RF program addresses the offenders needs as it relates to physical, social, intellectual, environmental, emotional, and spiritual through evidence-based practices and community collaboration. All offenders identified for the program have 12-24 months remaining on their current prison sentence, a High/Moderate risk for

arrest/recidivism, and some are classified as Mental Health Level II. In 2019, 4,355 offenders released back to the nine counties served by Metro RF. One of the most important aspects of the Metro RF program is the verbiage utilized to describe what is known in society as an “inmate” or an “offender.” The men housed at Metro RF are instead referred to as “returning citizens,” to identify their first step in preparing to return to their communities as productive citizens.

Best Practices:

All staff at Metro RF are trained in the following evidence-based programs: Motivational Interviewing, Effective Communication, Cognitive Leadership and Franklin Covey’s 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Each of these courses provide staff with a dual role perspective of thinking as it relates to the care and treatment of returning citizens, and the security operations of the facility.

Additionally, the GDC has learned through evidence-based practices that family reunification plays a major role in the Returning Citizen’s success upon release. Focusing on building stronger family bonds provides a sense of stability. Metro RF accomplishes this goal through the following programs:

Little Readers – allows Returning Citizens an opportunity to connect with their children and grandchildren

Family Day – a day where Returning Citizens can freely spend a day with their loved ones sharing a meal and socializing with several bonding activities such as playing games, listening to music, and other forms of entertainment

One Day with God – a day dedicated to the fathers, allowing them one on-one-time with their children working on projects, games, reading, and as a father/daughter dance and father/son walk and talk

Program support and integrity are also important best practices. A twelve-month program the Metro RF model is comprised of four levels of progression that includes core curriculum and elective courses. The four levels are as follows:

Level I – Two-month Orientation. During this phase, the returning citizens receive information about structure and purpose. They meet with the staff and community partners to develop a life plan and set goals and objectives for themselves.

Level II – Five-month Treatment. In this phase, the returning citizens actively participate in programming and job training that supports their reentry goals. Strong focus is dedicated to work-ready and pro-social thinking.

Level III – Two-month Maintenance. The returning citizens focus on putting their plan into action. They work with staff and community partners to identify a residence plan, potential employment, and family reunification.

Level IV – Three-month Reentry/Transitioning. During this final phase of the program the returning citizens confirm their release plan for housing, mentoring, employment, and any other

essential resources needed to ensure a seamless transition into the community. We have learned that oversight of the program is critical to the program's success as well as community and executive leadership support. The Metro RF program also offers both vocational and on-the-job training programs to provide offenders with practical work skills that will allow them to obtain a job that will provide a livable wage upon their release. Additionally, they have an opportunity to continue their education through Ashland University and Common Good – a volunteer group of college professors who dedicate their time and wisdom to assist the returning citizens with earning college credit. A very important key to our success is the outside volunteers that come in and provide vocational programs and additional resources for our offenders.

Metro RF also utilizes mentors to bridge the gap between staff and returning citizens. The mentors help the returning citizens understand their strengths, and their greatest values not only for careers but in themselves for a successful life upon reentry. These mentors have been incarcerated for many years and were individually selected to come to Metro RF and serve as a model for the community-based environment. The mentors have four primary responsibilities: life mentors, life coaches, success coaches, and peer facilitators. They help returning citizens with day-to-day situations and coach them along the way to maximize their potential. The reentry program, through its 'university' style approach and housing environment, empowers the population through self-efficacy and prepares them for "real life" by taking them out of the mode of negative thinking that is often fostered by incarceration. In addition, a Faith Enrichment aspect is also available through chaplaincy services and volunteer programs.

Community involvement has been essential to the program's success. Project Safe Neighborhoods, sponsored by the Northern District of Georgia United States Attorney's Office, utilizes the Credible Messenger Program to reach gang members and returning citizens convicted of weapons charges in Fulton, Clayton and DeKalb counties. The program duration is six months and meets once a week. It provides the returning citizens with resources related to child support, various attorney needs, family reunification, and job readiness.

Those enrolled are followed and supported for three years after release with educational & vocational needs. Metro RF partner with more than 150 community partners that deliver a wide variety of courses/training and assistance to the returning citizens. Some of the services provided are business development/entrepreneurship, financial planning, public speaking, computer literacy, housing assistance, horticulture, parenting classes, driver services, vital records, and pro-bono legal aid. The partners also focus on the following soft skills: organization, identification, housing, employment clothing, transportation, parenting skills, selective service, alcohol and drug recovery, social networking/internet, restoration of rights and living under supervision. An example of community involvement is that the returning citizens are fitted for suits tailored by Men's Warehouse and issued a suit upon release.

The cultural dynamics of the facility provide the returning citizens with a positive overview of themselves. Instilling the mindset that they are men, fathers, brothers, sons, and husbands during their incarceration and upon release is an important component. Staff express and exemplify positive support and forward thinking daily. Overall encouragement and support during their transition from prison to society and after, provides motivation and hope for a successful future.

Metro RF allows the returning citizens to earn opportunities by implementing the following components: slightly relaxed institutional structure, increased freedom of movement within the facility, community outreach program participation, maintain low mentor-to-participants ratio as well as a returning citizen governance program which supports community living and offender accountability. The returning citizens utilize a token economy, allowing for “purchase” of rewards for positive behavior. The community living environment promotes trust and safety and as a result, locks are not used to secure personal property.

It is important to positively affect thinking patterns and behaviors prior to release in order to help them these individuals refrain from recidivating. Reentry begins at the time of sentencing and the purpose of Metro RF is to put into play the best practices and enhance them as we prepare these men to reenter society - ready to face the challenges that may come, knowing that they can handle whatever they may face and do so successfully.

Recommendations:

The development and support of more facilities like the Metro Reentry Facility with federal funds and grants.

The support and encouragement, at the federal level, of more community-based partners who are willing to participate in reentry programming at facilities like Metro Reentry Facility.

H. Jean Wright, II, Psy.D.

Director of Behavioral Health and Justice Related Services, Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disability Services



H. Jean Wright II, PsyD, is a transformational, highly experienced and professionally trained Clinical and Forensic Psychologist with over 20 years of experience in behavioral health and proven success in passionately leading people and managing projects and initiatives in government; in private practice; in academia, as Assistant Professor and Clinical Faculty for Temple University; and in rehabilitation and correction. As a clinical consultant,

facilitator and trainer, Dr. Wright teaches the subtleties of human interaction to successfully embrace and celebrate the variety of personalities in the workforce and community. His extensive research in human behavior and skill in delivering mission-critical results in direct clinical care, supervision and management have contributed to his success in contributing as a subject matter expert for media such as WDAS FM in Philadelphia, where he is a regular contributor on “Headlines” with Frankie Darcell, a weekly radio program; and on cable TV programs such as “A Multitude of Counselors,” which is in its third season on faith network, Three Angels Broadcast Network (3ABN), providing content on behavioral health and faith. Dr. Wright is a regular contributor to journals, educational newsletters, and faith-based magazines, where his focus is on the connection between psychology, faith and spirituality.

Dr. Wright recently completed his book: *Find Strength in Your Struggle: Discover The Miracle in You*, which highlights his concept of “spiritual depression” and how it impacts the spiritual core of people from all walks of life. He conducts interactive and highly charged seminars, workshops and trainings on a variety of topics related to behavioral health and wellness, population health education, and trauma-informed care for a diverse group of clientele throughout the United States, including law enforcement, rehabilitation and correction, academic institutions, judicial appointees, faith-based organizations, and community service agencies providing behavioral health resources and support to people in recovery.

H. Jean Wright II, PsyD
Director, Behavioral Health and Justice-Related Services
Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services
“Transitioning from Institution to Community: Reentry to Reintegration”
President’s Commission on Law Enforcement
April 29, 2020

Statement of Problem

Much has been written regarding the public health epidemic caused by over incarceration. There are a vast array of private foundations, public health systems, and government agencies that fund, and/or, support research geared toward identifying the etiology of over incarceration, the impact on the lives of individuals, and more recently, the impact on the life and stability of neighborhoods and communities as a result of the disproportionate minority confinement at the core of this epidemic (Alexander, 2010; Sered, 2019).

There seem to be reentry programs, initiatives, and curriculums coming online every few months; each promising to reduce recidivism, promote jobs, and improve education. Although all these ideas are needed and valuable; most of these programs neglect a major area of need that outcome studies state would make an important difference: the need to support children and families negatively impacted by over incarceration. What is often lost in the traditional reentry models is that the men and women returning to their communities often have children. This fact requires us to reframe our concept of “reentry” into a vision of “reintegration.”

Reentry into community focuses on the requisite necessity to develop a marketable skill/vocation, etc. Whereas, reintegration into community requires we focus on more “quality of life” skills to assist returning citizens to develop a more well-rounded (i.e. “holistic”) approach to include aspects of being that will anchor the returning citizen into community life. It is important to get a GED, and other education resources. It is important to learn a skill to support gaining viable employment upon release. It is important to educate returning citizens to understand the impact of their criminal activities on their communities. It is also important to include multiple stakeholders to support reentry programs with the goal of reducing recidivism and increasing public safety. However, although needed; these programs are all focused on the returning citizen and transformation for the individual alone, as opposed to recognizing the necessity and utility in including education and skills in these programs specific to supporting returning citizens to successfully reconnect with their children and families. It is this reconnection, or reintegration into the pillar of community life (children and family) that will anchor returning citizens and act as an additional motivational factor to successfully remain in the community, thereby reducing recidivism. A few statistics to demonstrate this point:

- In 2015, it was estimated that the U.S. incarcerated approximately 2.17 Million people in state and federal prisons and in local jail¹. Based on the data identifying how many of those incarcerated people have children; that is approximately 1 in 28 children with an incarcerated parent⁴.
- Broken down demographically; one in 9 African American children (11.4%), 1 in 28 Hispanic children (3.5%), and 1 in 57 white children (1.8%) in the U.S. has an incarcerated parent⁴.
- Approximately 92% of people in prison are male⁴.
- Nationally, there are 1.1 million incarcerated fathers who are parents of minor children (ages 0-17)⁴.
- Since 1991, the number of children with a father in prison has grown by 77%⁵.
- The ratio of children in poverty with an incarcerated father is 1 in 7⁷.
- More than half of incarcerated men reported having children under the age of 18 and many of these fathers reported living with and being active in their children's life before incarceration¹.
- There are 2.7 million children with a parent in prison or jail⁶. At least 10 million children have experienced parental incarceration in their life-times¹⁶.
- Western and Wildeman (2010) noted that the impact of a father's incarceration on the child and family can vary depending on whether the father lived with the child before incarceration².
- Glaze and Maruschak (2007) reported that 54% of incarcerated fathers ported to providing financial support to their children³.
- Many incarcerated individuals in the U. S. have minor children and 45 percent were living with children before they were imprisoned (Bureau of Justice Statistics) 2010¹⁵.
- In state and federal prisons, about 45 percent of men age 24 or younger are fathers¹⁴.
- The number of children with a father in prison rose by more than half between 1991 and 2007¹⁴.
- More than 15 percent of children with parents in federal prison, and more than 20 percent with parents in state prison, are 4 years of age or younger¹⁴.

Those are the national data on how widespread and common it is for incarcerated men to have children in the communities to which they will return. It seems clear that any reentry program focused on successful reentry, sustainability, and positive impact beyond just the returning citizen coming home; would also focus on reintegration and include education and training to prepare these men to resume their role as father, in addition to all the other responsibilities and necessities of successful reentry/reintegration.

Philadelphia County

Compared to national data about 27.9% of the total males incarcerated in the commonwealth are in Philadelphia alone⁸. There are 22.59 admits per 10,000 Philadelphia County Residents⁹. In 2016, there were 3,424 males incarcerated compared to only 117 females⁹. There are also examples of multiple generations (father's, son's, and grandfather's) incarcerated. Some within the same prison. Looking at just one example; SCI Graterford (now SCI Phoenix); at the time of this writing are 41 father-son pairs counted, including 17 sets of cellmates. Additionally, seven families were found in which a father, son and grandson were all locked up together¹⁰. The tragedy of having multiple generations of males incarcerated is devastating to families and communities. Pennsylvania is certainly not alone in this regard. Clearly, we need reentry/reintegration programs that go beyond the traditional focus of securing driver's licenses, vocational training, resume building, etc. Again, all of those things are necessary, but having a driver's license, job skills, and a resume are not enough to successfully reenter, maintain, and sustain successful reintegration.

Reentry/Reintegration Programs that Work

Philadelphia has several programs that support reentry/reintegration by promoting a holistic approach to reintegrating returning citizens into community. I will share one program that has demonstrated success and shows great promise to reduce recidivism.

PA-Fathers and Children Together Program Inc. (PA-FACT) services children throughout the Philadelphia region. PA-FACT Inc. is a unique program because while it provides services and supports to children and their families in the community; it also reconnects children to their father while he is incarcerated. This unique fatherhood program is designed to heal relationships between fathers and their children. The program teaches incarcerated fathers the importance of developing positive relationships with their children through one-to-one visitation and intensive parenting classes, and also provides individual and group counseling for incarcerated fathers, for the children, and for the primary caregiver (most often, mother). PA-FACT strives to end the generational cycle of incarceration and recidivism that plagues children of incarcerated parents.

PA-FACT consists of an internal team and an external team. The internal team inside the prison consists of a group of team members and staff who are responsible for the recruitment and the internal workshop process. All fathers are screened through the institution for any serious crimes or family dynamics that would be detrimental to the program.

The external team is a group of trained professionals who are responsible for the operations of the outside programs and development of services. The external team is in place to help the fathers and children when they return as a family to the community. The importance of the internal/external relationship is so that the fathers and children can be properly supported across both community environments.

The following data highlights the potential of using a model like PA-FACT to develop a more creative holistic approach to reentry/reintegration:

- Between 10/6/14 and 4/18/20; 176 fathers participated in FACT at SCI Graterford prison. During that period, 27 fathers were released to the community.
- These fathers had two (2) children each, which meant 54 children participated in the program and needed “aftercare” programming, which are services provided in the community.
- In this six-year period, two (2) fathers were arrested for non-violent offenses (1%).
- 90% of the father participants really enjoyed being a dad and consider being father the most exciting thing in their life.
- 85% of fathers consider being a dad the best job in the world.
- 73% did not even think their life began until the day they returned home.
- 62% of dads are hungry for more info on how they can be a better Father to their kids.
- 52% said they are more affectionate with their kids than their dads were with them.
- Even when it comes to saying the dreaded “Love You” 90% of the fathers are saying it more than their parents said it to them.
- 47% of fathers said they are more involved in their kid’s playtime than their dad was with them.
- 46% of fathers surveyed said they are reading to their kids more than their parents did for them.

Vocational/Educational Outcomes

- 100% of the fathers returning home in our program receive employment opportunities.
- 92% Maintained employment and or opened their own businesses.
- 2% Went back to school/trade school/college.
- 40% Volunteered with the PA-FACT organization when they returned home.

Aftercare Program for Children

In 2016, PA-FACT developed a partnership between New Options More Opportunities (NOMO).NOMO is a program for youth in Philadelphia whose mission is to provide children and teens with information and supports toward prevention, early intervention, and promoting healthy lifestyle. The information provided helps them make healthy lifestyle decisions. Decisions about nutrition, bullying, hygiene, substance abuse, and physical education must start when children are impressionable during the school age years of K-12. NOMO provides the aftercare services for children of incarcerated parents who graduated from the fathers and children together program (FACT).

Conclusion/Recommendations

Young men who grow up in homes without fathers are twice as likely to end up in jail as those who come from traditional two-parent families. Boys whose fathers were absent from the

home had double the odds of being incarcerated—even when other factors such as race, income, parent education and urban residence were held constant (Harper, McLanahan, 2004).¹⁷

Forty percent of all children do not live with their natural father, and the number is growing. Research repeatedly indicates that father neglect is the most significant factor towards delinquency and crime (Blankenfor, 1995).¹⁸ We need to develop more creative reentry/reintegration programs that address the myriad of social determinants that impact whether a child has access to both parents, especially access to fathers, even if/when incarceration plays a key role in the reason for separation. The following recommendations should be considered:

- Support development of reentry programs that start behind the walls that go beyond traditional training: i.e. vocational, resume building, etc., and in addition to basic necessities: i.e. acquiring driver's license, etc.; reintegration involves implementing programs that teach "quality of life" skills: i.e. parenting, emotional intelligence (EI), problem-solving, conflict resolution, communication, etc.
- Create a task force whose function and purpose is to research, design, and recommend best practices for reentry/reintegration programs. This task force would consist of academicians, public servants, local grass root organizations, private foundations, certified peer specialists (CPS), and individuals reintegrating from incarceration.
- Provide funding to those organizations that demonstrate the ability to implement successful programs that reduce recidivism and improve quality of life for the returning citizen and his/her family.
- Simplify grant applications for organizations that do great work, but cannot afford the expense of grant writers, and/or, provide enhanced technical assistance for these organizations that would otherwise qualify for grant funding if not for invisible barriers.
- Utilize the current and prevailing research that identifies and describes the impact of social determinants: i.e. poverty, unemployment, under employment, food insecurity, over incarceration, etc. on children and communities of color, which nullifies many of the protective factors that support children and communities that do not experience these social determinants as prominently.

We know what to do to support returning citizens before they are released and after they are released from incarceration. Partnerships between grass root organizations and government to align, integrate, and coordinate our efforts can improve outcomes for individuals reentering and reintegrating into community. Thank you.

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Thursday, April 30, 2020

- Jennifer Brinkman, Director, Criminal Justice Programs, Tennessee Department of Administration and Finance
- A.J. Louderback, Sheriff, Jackson County (Texas) Sheriff's Office
- Keith Kauffman, Chief of Police, Redondo Beach (California) Police Department

Jennifer Brinkman

Director, Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs in the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration



Jennifer brings her expertise working in the field of victim services to the Department of Finance and Administration, Office of Criminal Justice Programs (OCJP), with over twenty years of professional experience working in the grants management and criminal justice field. As the Director of OCJP, Tennessee's State Administering Agency, she is responsible for obligating over \$65 million in federal funds for criminal justice initiatives, annually. Her office oversees 11 different federal grant programs, including the Department of Justice Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), the Victims of Crime Act grant Program (VOCA), and the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Grant Program (RSAT), the Office on Violence Against Women STOP and SASP Grant Programs, and the Department of Health and Human Services Family Violence Prevention Services Grant Program.

She has been with the state for over ten years. Before coming to OCJP, Jennifer's work with the Tennessee Board of Probation and Parole gave her the opportunity to implement evidence-based programming for offenders under the supervision of the Board. Jennifer started at OCJP to work on projects which were a part of Governor Haslam's Public Safety Action Plan, which focused on violent crime and domestic violence. She brings her past experiences and knowledge of the criminal justice system to OCJP strategic planning by the identification of gaps and available resources to meet those gaps. She accomplishes this through the coordination of local government, state government, and community agencies across the state to leverage available resources to better serve the citizens of Tennessee.

In her time at OCJP, Jennifer has been responsible for implementing initiatives to decrease crime in the state. Her work includes: coordinating and implementing Tennessee Targeted Community Crime Reduction Projects statewide, increasing the number of family justice centers from 2 in 2012 to 13 in 2020; implementing a statewide lethality assessment program with law enforcement; and coordinating statewide stakeholder meetings on violence against women, and implementing pilot pre-trial assessment projects. As a part of Governor Lee's Executive Order #6 establishing the Tennessee Criminal Justice Investment Task Force, Jennifer attends committee meetings of the Education, Workforce Development and Re-entry Subcommittee and worked with stakeholders on the Victim Services Roundtables to gather information on the needs of crime victims. Her work in multiple levels of the criminal justice system demonstrates her commitment to improving outcomes for all the citizens of this State.