

Status of Prisoner Reentry Programming

Senate Finance – Public Safety
Subcommittee

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Key Statistics

- In calendar 2008, 13,164 state inmates were released from prisons and jails
- Up from 12,675 in 2007
- There were 38,387 state responsible inmates on June 30, 2009
 - 439 fewer than on June 30, 2008
 - Commitments to prison declined 4.7% between 2008 and 2009
- Local responsible population was 19,671 in FY2009
 - Drop of 951 in past 2 years

Inmate Forecasts

- Number of state responsible inmates is expected to increase a total of 470 from June 2009 through June 2012 (from 38,387 to 38,857)
- Number of local responsible inmates is expected to remain essentially flat from FY2009 (19,671) through FY2012 (19,564)

Prison Capacity

- As a result of budget reductions in Fall, 2008, DOC capacity declined by 1,400 beds
- September 2009 reductions resulted in closing of 2 additional facilities, with capacity loss of 1,100 beds
- 800 beds completed over 2 years ago at St. Brides remain vacant due to budget reductions – plan to open using revenues from new out of state inmate contract
- Construction will be completed on Grayson County facility with just over 1,000 beds this coming Spring (operational funding not included in current budget)
- As of January 15, 2010 there were 3,928 out-of-compliance state inmates in local and regional jails

Declining Resources

- Successful reentry requires coordinated efforts between state level correctional and other agencies, as well as local, non-profit and faith-based organizations
- Reality is that state resources are declining, state aid to localities and local revenues are stressed, and foundation/corporate support of non-profits has been reduced as result of recession
- Good preparation for release will result in successful outcomes for offenders only if there are community based components that continue positive changes/treatment that take place while institutionalized

Continuing and New Efforts

- While resource reductions at all levels have impacted ability to deliver services, a number of programs continue to produce
- Efforts focus on preparing offenders for release beginning at point of entry into prison, initial transition period following release, and preparing them for the longer haul in their communities
- Working with offenders to reduce technical violations that result in return to prison or jail

Program Reductions Due to Budget

- Closure of day reporting centers
- Funding for transitional therapeutic community halfway house beds ended
- Recent closure of Botetourt Correctional Center
 - 380 therapeutic community beds
- Reduction in DCE teaching positions
- Reduction in funding for PAPIS
- Closure of Diversion/Detention Centers
- And more

But Progress Continues

- A number of programs continue and some have expanded, even without additional resources
- Examples of ongoing efforts follow...

Community Reentry Program

- Currently operating in 7 areas of the state
 - Richmond
 - Norfolk
 - King George
 - SW Virginia
 - Charlottesville/Albemarle
 - Culpeper
 - Greensville/Emporia
- Includes total of 30 localities
- Interest elsewhere in beginning program

Community Reentry Program (continued)

- Developed around four primary principles:
- Pre-release planning
- Interagency/governmental level coordination
- Integrated service delivery
- Positive links to community with system of family and community support

Community Reentry Program (continued)

- Communities establish local reentry council
- Local DSS directors and/or community partner agencies serve as conveners
- Bring together law enforcement, local DSS, CSB, WIB, non-profits and faith based, business community, along with Probation office and others

Reentry Starts at Entry

- DOC adopted COMPAS risk and needs assessment instrument
 - Assesses risk/criminogenic factors and treatment needs to be address during incarceration
 - Reentry version will provide P&P Districts assessments for period following release

During Incarceration and Prior to Release

- DOC has 3 positions developing reentry plans for those with mental and medical disabilities and work to find community placements; 5 to develop community plans for those without homes to return to
- Cognitive Communities established at Powhatan CC and Brunswick Work Center for Women for those with 6 months remaining
- Reentry units established at Dillwyn, Wallens Ridge, Lunenburg and Sussex I and II
 - Concentrate on preparing for life after prison
 - Partner with Goodwill to prepare for employment, assist in search, and provide job counseling following release
 - VEC/WIB assists with employment search training
 - Life skills and personal financial management

Preparation for Release (continued)

- Prison Fellowship operates faith-based reentry program at James River CC
 - Offenders may volunteer for program 18 months prior to release
 - Community volunteers assist in planning for support services and continue as mentors after release
 - Program for females beginning this month
- Require birth certificate at entry and Social Security Card prior to release – P&P verifies resident on release so DMV can issue ID
- Transportation to correctional centers for family visitation through Assisting Families of Inmates
- Continue jail-based community reentry transitional program (14 local and regional jails)
- Maintain family ties through video visitation program (Wallens Ridge and New Jubilee Church in Richmond)
 - Will expand to 8 additional prisons and will include sponsorship b Assisting Families of Inmates (non-profit)

Mental Health Issues

- Mental Health Release Summary sent from prisons to P&P District 30-45 days prior to release
- MOU with CSBs continues, aiding in planning
- DOC and DRS working together to speed up process of qualifying for rehabilitation services and SSI
- Commonwealth Consortium for MH and Criminal Justice Transformation (EO #62 – 2008)
 - Brings together law enforcement, DOC, jails, social services and CSBs to improve planning for MH services
 - 33 communities completed workshops last year
- Behavioral Health and Developmental Services funding for 10 jail diversion programs

Improving Employment Opportunities

- VASAVOR (Va. Serious and Violent Offender Reentry – Fairfax and Newport News)
- Reminder - Va. Tech study evaluated impact of education/vocational training in prisons
 - 6.5% lower recidivism
 - 24% increased incomes
 - Higher employment rates and stability
- One-Stops Behind Walls
- Mock Job Fairs
- Expansion of Industry Based Certifications (1,104 in FY2009, plus 1,770 OSHA certifications)
- Career Readiness Certificates

Many Non-Governmental Programs

- A few examples:
- Several Pre and Post Incarceration Programs (PAPIS) around state – including Offender Aid and Restoration
- Boaz and Ruth – Richmond program that assists with housing, job search and experience, substance abuse counseling
- Drive-to-Work – legal community assisting offenders in regaining driving privileges for transportation to work
- Onesimus Ministries of Norfolk – operates four structured living programs in Tidewater area for men released from prisons and jails

Reducing Hiring Barriers

- Change in ABC regulations reducing restrictions for hiring former offenders in businesses with ABC licenses (such as convenience stores, restaurants and supermarkets)
- Modified state application to clarify that prior offenses may not restrict hiring

Reducing Technical Violations

- Evidence Based Programming – Motivational Interviewing/Effective Communications
 - 9 P&P Districts fully trained
 - Some in remaining Districts – training continues
 - 20 of 39 Community Corrections agencies currently participating (DCJS received BJA grant to implement)
- Beginning to see improvements in numbers of technical violators being returned to prison

Concerns for the Future

- While some programmatic improvements continue with no new resources, reductions in resources at state and local levels limit progress
- Unknown what final impact will be for services after offenders return home
- Uncertainties in where the resource bottom lies make planning more difficult
- **But** – measured progress continues
- Meeting with state, local, non-profit and faith-based representatives to continue forward movement
 - Last meeting October 29, 2009