

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION NO. 08-164

Establishing a Council on Successful Reentry from Jail to Community (Reentry Council)

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. Multnomah County is responsible for the operation of the Multnomah County Detention Center (MCDC), Inverness Jail and the Juvenile Justice Center. Each year literally thousands of people are released from these corrections facilities back into the community. Multnomah County is also responsible for the supervision of people upon their release.
- b. A publication released this fall by the National Association of Counties states, "73 percent of jail inmates [have] been previously sentenced to probation or incarceration [making it] clear that recidivism is playing a major role in the core population of jails across the country."
- c. Research on inmates released from jails, and on prisoners released from federal and state prisons shows:
 - (1) Expenditures on corrections alone increased more than five-fold from 1982 to 2002 – not including the cost of arrest and prosecution, and the cost to victims – according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.
 - (2) Between 1991 and 1999, the number of children with a parent in a federal or state correctional facility increased by more than 100 percent. The Bureau of Prisons suggests there is evidence that inmates who are connected to their children and families are more likely to avoid negative incidents and have reduced sentences.
 - (3) Released prisoners cite family support as the most important factor in helping them stay out of prison.
 - (4) Studies have shown that between 15 and 27 percent of prisoners expect to go to homeless shelters upon release from prison.
 - (5) The Bureau of Justice estimates that drug or alcohol use at the time of an offense resulting in incarceration is as high as 84 percent.
 - (6) Family-based treatment programs have proven results for serving the special populations of female offenders and substance abusers with children.
 - (7) Over one-third of all jail inmates have some physical or mental disability and 25 percent of jail inmates have been treated at some time for a mental or emotional problem.

- (8) According to the National Institute of Literacy, 70 percent of all prisoners function at the lowest literacy levels.
 - (9) Less than 32 percent of state prison inmates have a high school diploma or a higher level of education, compared to 82 percent of the general population.
 - (10) Approximately 38 percent of inmates who completed 11 years or less of school were not working before entry into prison.
 - (11) The National Institute of Justice has found that one year after release, up to 60 percent of former inmates are not employed. Transition jobs programs have proven to help people with criminal records to successfully return to the workplace and to the community, and therefore can reduce recidivism.
- d. In recent years, federal focus has been on assisting prisoners released from federal and state prisons, not inmates released from local jails. With the passage of PL 110-199, The Second Chance Act of 2007: Community Safety Through Recidivism Prevention,” local units of government are now eligible for federal financial assistance to reduce the rate of recidivism consistent with the research on offender reentry undertaken by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. As a condition of receiving this federal financial assistance, local government applicants –
- (1) “Shall establish or empower a Reentry Task Force, or other relevant convening authority, to [in part] examine ways to pool resources and funding streams to promote lower recidivism rates for returning offenders and minimize the harmful effects of offenders’ time in prison, jail, or a juvenile facility on families and communities...
 - (2) “The task force...shall be comprised of relevant...local leaders; and...representatives of relevant agencies; service providers; non-profit organizations; and stakeholders.”
- e. More recently, in May 2008 the Urban Institute released the most comprehensive to-date report on *Life After Lockup: Improving Reentry from Jail to the Community* providing a look forward to transforming reentry practices at the local level. As described by Multnomah County Commissioner Lisa Naito, a participant in the Urban Institute’s preparation of the report, 80% of inmates are incarcerated for less than a month giving jails little time or capacity to address the deep-rooted issues that stem from substance addiction, job and housing instability, mental illness and the host of problems that are part of the day-to-day realities for recently released persons.
- f. An informal work group formed by Commissioner Lisa Naito with the leadership of Sheriff Bob Skipper and Department of Justice Director Scott Taylor – and including the efforts of Kathleen Treb (DCJ), Truls Neal (DCJ), Christine Kirk (Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office), Joyce Hall (MCSO), Adam Levine (MCSO), Byron Moore (MCSO), Tressa Kovachevich (MCSO), Bobbi Luna (MCSO), Kathy McCullough, Public Safety Director Peter Ozanne, and Local Public Safety Coordinating Council Director Carol Wessinger – presented their report, *Transition from Jail to Community: Improving Reentry Outcomes in Multnomah County*, to the Board of Commissioners on October 20, 2008 which called for the Board to establish a

Reentry Council to be organized under the auspices of the Multnomah County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC).

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Resolves:

1. The Board expresses its thanks and gratitude to the work group for its many hours of work and field study; and for the forward thinking solutions presented in the report.
2. The County will build upon and implement the recommendations detailed in the report by first establishing a Council on Successful Reentry from Jail to Community (Reentry Council).
3. The Reentry Council will –
 - (a) operate to meet the conditions of receiving financial assistance under the Federal Second Chance Act;
 - (b) collaborate with the Multnomah County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council;
 - (c) collaborate and bridge the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office's in-jail reentry programs with the out-of-jail reentry programs by the Department of Community Justice and services by community partners;
 - (d) identify gaps in programs and services and recommend changes to address those gaps;
 - (e) make quarterly reports to the Board of Commissioners;
 - (f) be structured in two tiers, with a Policy Team and an Operations Team –
 - i. the Policy Team will meet quarterly and as needed to guide policy;
 - ii. the Operations Team will meet monthly and as needed to address inter-agency coordination.
4. The Board will appoint the members of the Reentry Council Policy Team for a term of one year, commencing on February 1, 2009. Policy team members shall be appointed and/or reappointed by the Board annually. Members shall include:
 - (a) the Sheriff who will serve as Co-Chair;
 - (b) the Director of the Department of Community Justice who will serve as Co-Chair;
 - (c) the District Attorney;
 - (d) the Public Safety Advisor to the Board of County Commissioners;
 - (e) the Public Defender;

- (f) the Presiding Circuit Court Criminal Judge;
- (g) a representative of ROAR (Reentry Organizations and Resources);
- (h) representatives from relevant community service providers;
- (i) representatives from relevant faith-based organizations;
- (j) and relevant others.

5. The Reentry Council Policy Team Co-Chairs will appoint members of the Reentry Council Operations Team who will serve at the discretion of the Co-Chairs. Members shall include:

- (a) relevant line staff and managers from the Department of Community Justice;
- (b) relevant line staff and managers from the Sheriff's Office;
- (c) representatives from relevant community service providers.

ADOPTED this 18th of December, 2008.



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON


Ted Wheeler, Chair

REVIEWED:

AGNES SOWLE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By 
Agnes Sowle, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY:
Commissioner Lisa Naito, District 3