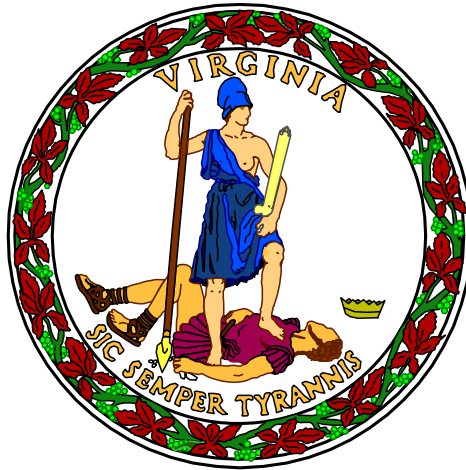


Status Report on Offender Transitional and Re-entry Services



Office of the Secretary of Public Safety
November 15, 2010

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Executive Summary

The Status Report on Offender Transitional and Re-entry Services has been prepared in compliance with Item 370, Paragraph B of the 2010 Appropriation Act (Chapter 874, 2010 Acts of Assembly), which requires the Secretary of Public Safety to provide a status report on actions taken to improve offender transitional and re-entry services, as provided in §2.2-221.1 of the Code of Virginia, including: (1) improvement to the preparation and provision for employment; (2) treatment; and (3) housing opportunities for those being released from incarceration.

Re-entry refers to the time and sequence of events that begin when an offender is incarcerated and continues through the release and return to the community. The confinement portion of the re-entry continuum includes risk and needs assessment, vocational and educational programs, and evidence-based treatment services. The transition sequence focuses on providing continued evidence-based treatment for offenders with identified re-entry needs. In addition, research has identified other important issues in the re-entry process, including housing needs, job attainment and maintenance, educational needs, medical concerns, mental health concerns, and social support processes that are focuses of reentry programming.

Virginia's three-year recommitment rate for released offenders is 27.3 percent. Although this rate is low in comparison with most other states, each recommitted offender places a significant cost burden on Virginia's taxpayers. Research also has demonstrated that the experience of incarceration introduces significant barriers in each of these areas, including unstable housing and employment, decreased wages, poor physical and mental health, and broken social relationships. When these critical issues are not addressed appropriately by the offender, the resulting lack of stability can lead to new crime or to a lack of compliance with community-based legal supervision. An increasing number of state-responsible offenders are being released from Virginia prisons and correctional centers each year; from FY 2005 through FY 2009, there was a 5.3 percent increase in the number of state-responsible releases. The majority of these offenders require community supervision and assistance with personal and professional barriers to successful re-entry.

In recent years, both federal and state governments have created new initiatives to support improved re-entry services for offenders. In 2009, the federal Second Chance Act established the National Re-entry Resource Center through the Bureau of Justice Assistance to provide funding for innovative programs and research. In addition, the Second Chance Act provided millions of dollars in federal grant money for re-entry initiatives in state governments,

localities, tribes and non-profit organizations. Virginia agencies received 2.6 million dollars in Second Chance Act grants for re-entry programs.

In May 2010, Governor Robert F. McDonnell issued Executive Order 11, which established the Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-Entry Council. Under the direction of Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker, the Re-Entry Council is directed to: (1) identify barriers to re-entry; (2) establish and improve collaboration and coordination among the efforts of re-entry stakeholders; (3) engage non-profit, locality, and faith-based programs in the community; and (4) improve business and community college partnerships to provide more educational and employment opportunities for released offenders. In addition, the Re-Entry Council and Re-Entry Coordinator are directed to collaborate in the development of a re-entry strategic plan for Virginia. The Re-Entry Council is comprised of stakeholders from nearly every Secretariat in the Governor's Cabinet, as well as representatives of multiple agencies under each Secretary. Members of faith-based communities, non-profit organizations, and victims' associations also were invited to participate.

The Re-Entry Council has made significant progress since their establishment in May 2010. The Council designated three focus area committees to deal with populations of offenders with special needs. The focus area committees include the Juvenile Re-entry Committee, the Women's Re-entry Committee, and the Veterans' Re-entry Committee. Each of these committees prepared a set of recommendations for addressing the unique needs of its target population. The Council also designated seven Re-entry Issue Work Groups in the following areas: Employment/Education/Workforce; Housing; Mental Health/Substance Abuse; Financial Obligations; Health/Family Reintegration; Offender Re-entry Preparation; and Local/Regional Jails. Focus Committees and Work Groups involved several state leaders and representatives of organizations that impact re-entry, including group homes, faith groups, and residential treatment programs.

Secretary Decker also appointed an Evaluation Committee to monitor activities and report on the progress of Governor McDonnell's re-entry initiative. This Committee is composed of technical experts from collaborating agencies.

A number of Virginia's state agencies operate programs dedicated to promoting positive offender re-entry. Agencies listed in the current report include: Department of Corrections; Department of Correctional Education; Department of Criminal Justice Services; Department of Juvenile Justice; Department of Social Services; Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services; Department of Health; Department of Rehabilitative Services; Virginia

Employment Commission, Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation and the Virginia Indigent Defense Commission. This report also highlights the efforts of service providers across the state.

The Commonwealth is moving forward with strong re-entry initiatives and is making efforts to identify barriers that can be addressed through collaborative efforts and partnership within the state and local communities.

These re-entry efforts have been achieved during a period of significant budget cuts. With federal and state support, further progress is expected for 2011 in collaboration and program coordination among all stakeholder agencies.

Introduction: Re-entry in Virginia 2010

Re-entry refers to the time and sequence of events that begin when an offender is incarcerated and continues through the release and return to the community. In the broader perspective, re-entry encompasses the efforts of state, local, and community-based agencies to promote stability and a pro-social lifestyle for offenders with risks and needs that could lead to recidivism.

An integrated re-entry approach provides offenders programs and services that have the best chance of assisting in their transformation to a law-abiding and pro-social lifestyle. Research has demonstrated that satisfactory re-entry in key areas of an offender's life is critical for preventing future crime and a return to the criminal justice system. Housing and employment are two of the most essential re-entry issues that affect future recidivism. Educational services are important for increasing offenders' abilities to find jobs that pay well enough to provide stability. Life skills courses teach offenders about important and often poorly understood skills such as financial management. In addition, it is important that offenders receive effective, evidence-based treatment for mental and physical issues that affect their ability to maintain stable housing and employment, such as substance abuse problems and mental illness.

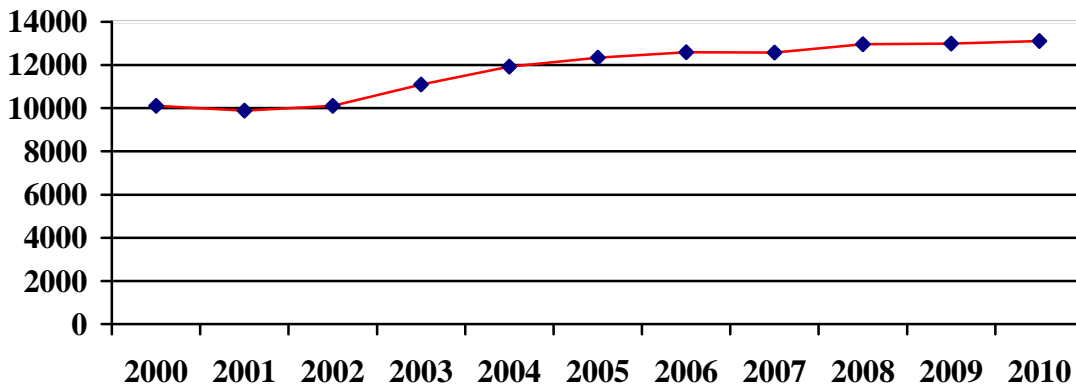
Re-entry also includes services that impact the offender by forwarding progress toward the primary goal of stability. These services include identification services (i.e., assisting offenders to obtain legal identification from the Department of Motor Vehicles and other resources), transportation, and medical services. Frequently offenders who are released from incarceration have neither funding to obtain these services, nor an adequate knowledge of how they might be obtained for low or no cost in the community. Without such services, the instability that naturally occurs after release from incarceration may lead offenders to commit new crimes or violate conditions of community-based supervision. State and local community supervision agencies provide these services in an evidence-based practices (EBP) approach that relies upon risk and needs assessment and EBP compliant case plans. Supervision, when done properly through evidence-based approaches, is essential to success.

The Need for Re-entry Services in Virginia

For Virginia prisoners released in 2006, the recommitment rate three years after release is 27.3 percent, or 3,439 offenders (6th lowest in a list of 38 reporting states). Reccommitments represent significant cost to the public through law enforcement costs, court costs, incarceration and offender supervision costs, as well as individual and societal victim costs. A recent publication from the Pew Charitable Trusts (2010) demonstrates the overwhelming costs of incarceration to society. Prior to incarceration, approximately two-thirds of incarcerated males were employed and provided financial support to their families. After incarceration, male inmates released to the community lose, on average, approximately 40 percent of their annual wages and an average of nine weeks of employment compared to men who have never been incarcerated. The Pew report also demonstrated that the economic depression resulting from incarceration spreads to multiple generations, such that children with incarcerated parents earn lower wages, and work less frequently, than children whose parents have never been incarcerated.

Over 90 percent of offenders will eventually return to the community. An increasing number of state-responsible offenders are being released from Virginia prisons each year, requiring community supervision and assistance with personal and professional barriers to successful re-entry.

Chart 1. State Responsible Releases, FY2000 – FY2010

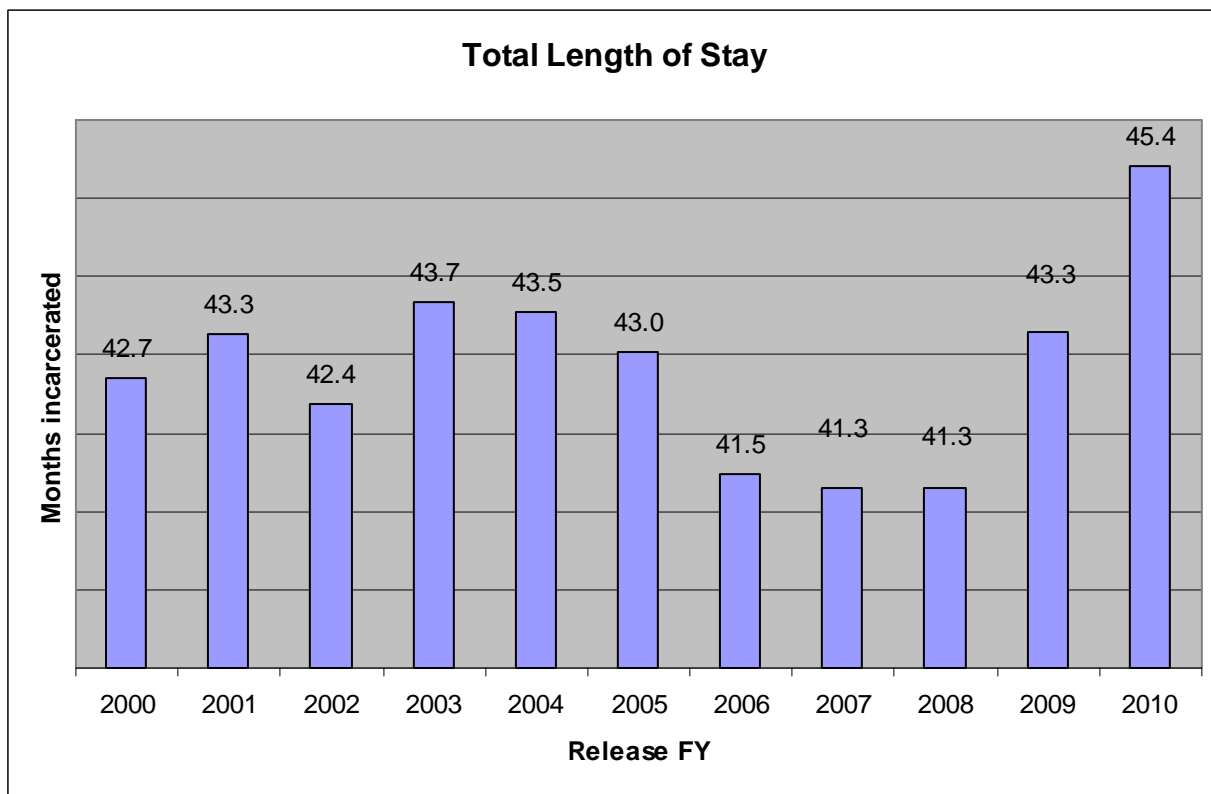


The recidivism rate has remained relatively stable in the past decade. However, as the number of offenders being released to the community increases, the number of recommitted offenders will increase as well. Per capita costs to incarcerate an offender for a year are approximately \$25,000. Thus, each individual recommitment is costly to the Virginia taxpayer. The average time served for state responsible prisoners released in FY2010 is 45.4 months.

Table 1. Total Releases, Recidivists and Recidivism Rate – 2000 to 2006

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total Releases	10,105	9,880	10,114	11,098	11,926	12,338	12,599
Recidivism Rate		25.70%	27.20%	27.40%	27.90%	27.60%	27.30%

Chart 2. Average Length of Time Served for Virginia State Responsible Inmates



In recent years, both federal and state governments have created new initiatives to support improved re-entry services for offenders. In 2007, Congress passed the Second Chance Act, designed to improve re-entry efforts nationwide. The Second Chance Act reauthorized a re-

entry grant program that was initially authorized by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. It also established a National Re-entry Resource Center for the collection and dissemination of information relating to re-entry practices at the state and federal and tribal level, and provided significant funding for specific evidence-based re-entry programs, including substance abuse treatment aftercare, community-based mentoring programs, and re-entry courts.

Federal funding for grants administered under the Second Chance Act has increased steadily since the Act passed in 2007. In FY2010, a total of \$100 million was appropriated for Second Chance Act grants, many of which are available for state agencies as well as localities and non-profit organizations. In 2010, Virginia received over \$2.6 million in grant funding for offender programs in the following agencies: Department of Corrections \$300,000; Department of Correctional Education \$750,000; Department of Social Services \$750,000; Department of Juvenile Justice \$675,000 and \$136,000 for the re-entry court in Norfolk. Funding was provided by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Prevention through the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. In partnership with the Governor's Office, Verizon Wireless provided a \$10,000 to support counseling and support services for female offenders returning to the southwestern Virginia counties of Tazewell, Russell and Buchanan. These funds will be for women are victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse. For women identified to need recovery and support for domestic violence or sexual abuse issues, the Verizon Wireless grant will provide specialized trauma/domestic violence counseling services and limited temporary housing.

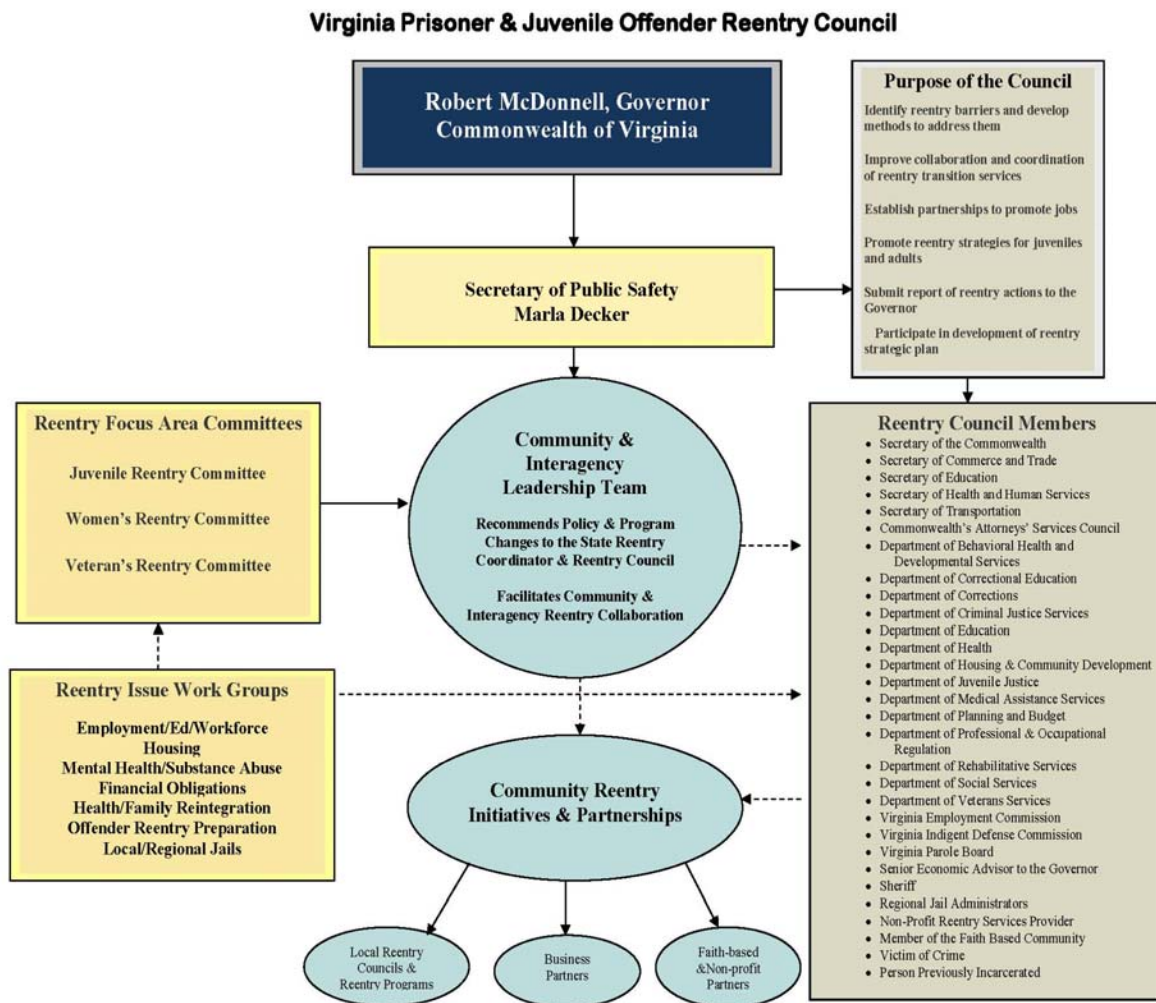
In addition to receiving five Second Chance Act grants, Virginia will also be receiving technical assistance from the Council of State Governments (CSG) National Reentry Resource Center related to those grants. CSG's National Reentry Resource Center is the primary national technical assistance provider for Second Chance Act grants, through funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and provides ongoing technical assistance to grantees as needed for the duration of their respective grants. The focus of the technical assistance will be on the grants received by the Department of Social Services (in partnership with the Department of Corrections) and the Department of Juvenile Justice. CSG has initiated its work with the Department of Social Services/Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenile Justice through preliminary conference calls, and in mid-November 2010 will have staff in Virginia to meet with all stakeholders involved with the respective grants to initiate the technical assistance.

In addition to the technical assistance on the Second Chance Act grants, CSG will also be providing technical assistance to the Department of Juvenile Justice on further development and implementation of the agency's reentry strategic plan.

State Re-entry Initiatives: Virginia's Efforts to Improve Prisoner Re-entry

In May 2010, Governor McDonnell issued Executive Order 11, which established the Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-Entry Council. The Re-Entry Council is comprised of stakeholders from nearly every Secretariat in the Governor's Cabinet, as well as representatives of multiple agencies under each Secretary. Members of faith-based communities, non-profit organizations, and victims' associations were also invited to participate. The following graph displays the organization and purpose of the Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-Entry Council.

Chart 3: Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-entry Council Structure



The Council designated three focus area committees to deal with populations of offenders with special needs. The focus area committees include the Juvenile Re-entry Committee, the Women's Re-entry Committee, and the Veterans' Re-entry Committee. Each of these committees provided a set of recommendations for addressing the unique needs of its target population. The Council also designated seven Re-entry Issue Work Groups in the following areas: Employment/Education/Workforce; Housing; Mental Health/Substance Abuse; Financial Obligations; Health/Family Reintegration; Offender Re-entry Preparation; and Local/Regional Jails. Focus Committees and Work Groups have involved a myriad number of state employees and leaders and employees of other organizations that impact re-entry, including group homes, faith groups, and residential treatment programs. The Re-entry Council finalized its recommendations on November 8, 2010. The Re-entry Council, workgroups and committees will continue to review implementation of the recommendations in 2011.

Prisoner and Juvenile Re-entry Inventory: Capturing Agency Collaboration

An important effort initiated by the Prisoner and Juvenile Re-entry Council was an inventory of services, conducted through the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety, to determine the level of re-entry services provided by other agencies and how to further improve collaborations. Based upon the responses there is extensive collaboration among many agencies, to include the Commonwealth's Attorney's Services Council (CASC), Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), Department of Correctional Education (DCE), Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Education (DOE), Department of Forestry (DOF), Department of Health (VDH), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM), Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), Parole Board, Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), Virginia Indigent Defense Commission (IDC), and the Virginia State Police (VSP).

State agencies have made efforts to obtain federal grant support to bolster resources in the current climate. In addition, many of the barriers and gaps acknowledged by state agencies in

the re-entry inventory are currently being addressed by the initiation of the Prisoner and Juvenile Re-entry Council, whose aim is to improve collaborative re-entry efforts within the Commonwealth.

Assets

On the re-entry inventory, responding agencies were asked to identify assets, gaps, and barriers in collaborative efforts, public safety efforts, and human services programs. Agencies were consistent in identifying commonalities within all three categories. The most common assets identified included strong existing pre-release programs, education and work programs from a variety of agencies, and strong collaborating partners. Several agencies noted that contracts and extensive service agreements helped to clarify the roles of each collaborating partner so that work was not duplicated within programs. Cross-training between agencies was identified as an asset in some collaborations and a service gap in others.

Barriers

Communication was the most frequently identified barrier across all program types. Agencies noted that insufficient information from other state agencies delayed direct services to offenders or prevented offenders from accessing more comprehensive services, particularly in mental health and medical programs. Communication barriers included a lack of integrated technology and a lack of coordination among federal, state, and local policies. Some agencies also noted that the lack of established communication channels with other agencies made it difficult to maintain regular contact. The second most common barrier was the lack of community resources, especially housing and employment for offenders. Agencies with work programs noted that the current job market and ongoing biases toward ex-offenders have led to fewer job opportunities for offenders than in past years. Transitional housing is also in higher demand, resulting in less bed space open to re-entering offenders. Multiple agencies noted that without these two critical aspects of re-entry, offenders have very little chance of attaining stability.

Gaps

The primary gap noted by all agencies was funding. Although each agency referred to a lack of funding with its own programs or collaborative efforts, all agencies noted that the recent budget cuts have strained resources for all offender reentry programs. As with the barriers listed by respondents, many agencies listed funding for housing programs as a top priority. Several

agencies also noted a lack of funding for staff training on offender programs. Multiple agencies also noted that there is a gap in service that frequently occurs when offenders leave DJJ or DOC institutions and enter into communities. Tight time frames for paperwork, a lack of timely communication, and restrictive institutional policies were all mentioned as reasons why a gap in services might occur. Gaps in service were noted as being particularly problematic when offenders enter the community with mental illness or medical needs.

Victim Services

The Department of Corrections has a Victim Services Unit that provides release, transfer, and name change updates of offenders to their victims. The Unit provides immediate notification to victims in the case of an inmate escape. In addition, the Victim Services Unit provides safety information and explanations of community supervision to concerned victims.

The biggest barrier noted by DOC staff was that sentencing for many offenders does not address victim contact, thus requiring the victim to seek protective orders or other services without assistance. Another barrier noted was the lack of victim impact programming for offenders. A service gap identified was the lack of regional coordination within the Victim Service Unit. DOC staff noted that regional representatives might be able to establish faster and more regular contact with victims, as well as help victims identify recovery services in their communities. DOC will explore ways to enhance these services and gaps identified.

Data and Information Systems

Ten agencies provided information on how data management systems at the case and system levels might be used to collaborate on offender re-entry. At present, six agencies (DOC, DCE, DOE, VDH, IDC and VSP) have the capability to share some parts of their data management systems. Agencies with multiple data points relating to offender re-entry included the DBHDS, DOC, DCE, DJJ, DPOR, DRS and VSP.

As with other sections of the inventory, agencies were asked to list assets, barriers, and gaps within their data management systems. The ability to share information and increased re-entry variables were common assets noted by agencies. Barriers included federal and state regulations that limit the sharing of information, as well as internal problems with data entry and missing data. One agency noted that data management upgrades at one agency can interfere with databases and information sharing at other agencies. As with other areas of the survey, the

primary gap noted was funding. Agencies noted that additional staff and equipment are necessary in order to improve data entry and address fragmented data issues.

Collaborative Efforts Identified by State Agencies

The following paragraphs contain collaborative re-entry efforts that were identified by state agencies on the Prisoner and Juvenile Re-entry Inventory. Collaborations that include another state agency as a partner are listed in this section. As this report is focused on the efforts of state agencies, collaborations that are led by one agency and include localities, non-profit and faith-based organizations, or private businesses are included in the agencies' individual efforts.

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS)

DBHDS identified several re-entry collaborations with other state agencies. One of the agency's strongest partners is the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). DBHDS and DCJS lead the Commonwealth Consortium for Mental Health and Criminal Justice Transformation. DBHDS has a lead coordinator for the Consortium, and both agencies have provided one and a half day Community Cross Systems Mapping workshops across the Commonwealth. These community stakeholder trainings, which include criminal justice partners, Community Services Boards, non-profit organizations, court systems, and behavioral health providers, use the Sequential Intercept Model as a framework. Trainings enable localities to: 1) gain a common understanding of their local criminal justice and behavioral health interface; 2) map the flow of individuals with behavioral health disorders going through their local criminal justice systems; 3) identify gaps and resources within these systems; 4) set no cost, low cost, and long-term priorities for systemic changes; and 5) create a detailed action plan to effect the prioritized changes.

DBHDS also collaborates with DCJS on Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) programs. These programs are local mental health/ criminal justice collaborations which train law enforcement first responders to work in partnership with local mental health agencies to provide a police-based mental health response for persons with behavioral health issues at risk for involvement in the criminal justice system. CIT officers receive 40 hours of specialized training which enable them to identify behavioral health related issues, de-escalate any volatile situations, and divert appropriate individuals from the criminal justice system and into treatment. Interventions include those with individuals on parole and probation and enhance outcomes for these individuals by increasing the recognition of their behavioral health based actions, enhancing their understanding

of available therapeutic or community-based alternatives to arrest and reducing the likelihood of reincarceration.

DBHDS also has a collaborative program with the Department of Veterans' Services, the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP). This program identifies veterans with behavioral health and traumatic brain injury issues and provides case management services, access to VA services and other veteran benefits, community education, and outreach for all veterans. Veterans re-entering the community from prison are eligible for this program.

Department of Correctional Education (DCE)

DCE listed a total of five (5) re-entry collaborations with other state agencies. Partner agencies include the Department of Corrections, the Virginia Community College System, the Department of Juvenile Justice, Virginia Commonwealth University, and the Department of Education.

The primary collaborative program with the Department of Corrections is the Productive Citizenship Program. The goal of Productive Citizenship is to equip offenders with the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary to making successful transitions to their communities. Productive Citizenship is delivered in a classroom format with a number of guest speakers from community agencies. Pre-test and post-test assessments are used to measure the increase in participants' skills and abilities relating to transition. In FY 2008-2009, over 5000 students participated in Productive Citizenship classes. Thus far, participants' post-test scores have averaged 10.55 percent higher than their pre-test scores.

Collaborations with the Virginia Community College System include Workplace and Community Transition Training, the Concurrent Enrollment Program, Virginia Education Wizard, and the Career Readiness Certificate Program. Several of these programs are run in collaboration with a specific Virginia community college. DCE has received a federal grant, Workplace & Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Individuals, in the amount of \$415,309 for FY 2010-2011. The grant provides funding for community college classes at a number of institutions. DCE partners with the following Virginia community colleges: Southside Virginia, Southwest Virginia, Wytheville, Piedmont, and Germanna. The goal of the program is to assist and encourage incarcerated offenders to acquire functional literacy, and life skills through the pursuit of a post-secondary education certificate, or associates of arts or bachelors

degree while in prison. In FY 2008-09, 429 students participated in the program. Four received associate degrees and 87 percent of these adult offenders completed their courses successfully.

DCE, received a \$750,000 Second Chance Act grant, in partnership with Southside Virginia Community College and the Virginia Goodwill Network. The grant will support a technology training demonstration project designed to enhance employment opportunities for offenders returning to the community.

Also in partnership with Southside Virginia Community College, DCE will pilot a college program at Greensville Correctional Center called “College behind Walls.” The focus of this program is to provide college level classes to offenders in a “fast track” to a general education certificate followed by an associate’s degree before release. The offenders will also be housed in a pod at the facility to better enable them to continue their studies outside the classroom setting. The program also provides funding for 30 students at five other facilities (Haynesville Correctional Center, Augusta Correctional Center, Fluvanna Correctional Center, Coffeewood Correctional Center, and Sussex II State Prison).

The Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) program provides offenders with a recognized credential that verifies that the offender possesses core academic skills to perform entry level and above work. This program assesses work readiness skills through the WorkKeys job assessment. Students may earn a gold, silver or bronze certificate. The program provides a portable, nationally recognized, employability credential for returning offenders. Offenders achieved an overall 93 percent passing rate with approximately 67 percent of the CRC recipients earning a gold or silver Certificate. To date, DCE has assessed approximately 7,827 inmates with the WorkKeys tests.

Partnerships with the DJJ include the Juvenile Correctional Centers College Program, the Re-entry to Education and Employment Program, and the Reenrollment of Students Committed to DJJ. The Juvenile Correctional Centers College Program provides correspondence courses to juvenile residents who have completed a high school diploma or GED and are qualified for college level classes. Currently 35 to 40 juveniles are enrolled in college classes each semester. The Reentry to Educational and Employment Program is a grant-funded program that provides employment and vocational training support for older youth being released from Beaumont Juvenile Correctional Center. Eligible youth return to the Hampton and Newport News communities.

The Reenrollment of Students programs are a collaborative effort among DCE, DJJ, and the Department of Education. This collaboration has established a standardized process by which students are reenrolled back in public schools within two days of release from a juvenile detention center.

DCE, in collaboration with Virginia Commonwealth University, developed the Parenting Children of Promise program. This program teaches incarcerated parents effective parenting skills to prepare them for uniting with their children after release. The program is taught by graduate students from VCU and is provided at a small number of DOC institutions.

Department of Corrections (DOC)

The recent climate of declining resources and budget cuts created an opportunity for more collaboration with re-entry service providers in the community. A primary focus of DOC has been on partnering with other stakeholders and determining how existing resources can be shared in new ways to support offender re-entry and reduce duplication. DOC has partnerships with the Department of Correctional Education, Social Services, Motor Vehicles, Veterans Services, Rehabilitative Services, Medical Assistance Services and Behavioral Health and Developmental Services as well the Virginia Employment Commission.

The collaboration between DOC and the DMV established in 2002 a process for offenders to obtain State identification cards after release. ID cards are needed for various reasons including employment, admission to shelters, and travel. This collaboration helps offenders leaving prison who do not have the documents required by DMV to establish identity and citizenship (such as a Passport). The agreement involves use of a “Criminal Justice Agency Identification Form” jointly developed by DMV and DOC. The Form includes the inmate’s name, date of birth, social security number, and address where the offender will be living. For security purposes, the Identification Form is printed by DOC on secure watermarked paper, and includes a color digitized image of the offender and the original signature of the DOC official. The Identification Form is provided to offenders after release because Probation and Parole Officers must visit the offender’s residence to verify the address. Per the agreement with DMV and DOC, offenders can take the completed Criminal Justice Information Form along with a true copy of their birth certificate to the DMV to obtain state identification or a driver’s license.

Additionally, the DOC has an agreement with the Department of Health whereby DOC can obtain true copies of birth certificates for Virginia born offenders. The process requires use

of the same form used with the DMV, the Criminal Justice Offender Information Form but without verification of residence. Upon reception into DOC all offenders are required to apply to Vital Statistics for a copy of their birth certificate, unless they can have family members submit a photocopy of one from home. The Birth Certificate is used by DOC to provide citizenship (for ICE) and is needed by offenders to obtain identity documents upon release from prison. The Birth Certificate is not given to offenders during incarceration but is held in a secure file and provided to them upon release.

The DOC partners with DVA so that incarcerated veterans can be informed of their rights and benefits.

The purpose of the agreement among the Social Security Administration (SSA), DOC, and DRS is to identify and formalize procedures which will facilitate the timely entitlement to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for disabled and aged offenders in the DOC system. Pre-release application procedures allow inmates to file for SSI benefits prior to their release to provide a smoother transition back into the community.

The partnership with the DMS has defined procedures for incarcerated offenders to apply for Medicaid before release. When applications are completed correctly, offenders can get a Medicaid number the day of release, qualifying them for services upon release.

At Wallens Ridge State Prison located in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, the local branch of the Virginia Employment Commission enters prison and provides offenders with training in job seeking skills. The VEC supervises and assists offenders with internet job searches in areas of the state to which they will be released.

DOC has an agreement with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Association of Community Services Boards to address re-entry appointments for incarcerated offenders who are in need of continuing mental health services after release. Qualified mental health professionals provide assessment to the local Community Services Board and make appointments for care prior to the offender's release. Many local Probation and Parole Districts have local agreements with Community Services Boards for offender treatment services. The DOC is also discussing with DBHDS the feasibility of using Piedmont Geriatric Hospital for re-entry transition and nursing home services for geriatric offenders needing medical care.

Department of Education (DOE)

The Department of Education has two collaborative programs with the Department of Correctional Education and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Please see the Department of Correctional Education's collaborative efforts for more information.

Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

The Virginia Department of Health acknowledged partnerships with the Department of Corrections, the Department of Medical Assistance Services, and Virginia Commonwealth University. The Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Resources and Linkages Program for Inmates (CHARLI) is a partnership with DOC that is designed to reduce the incidence of HIV within the offender population. This program provides pre-release and post-release prevention and education, for up to one year following release from a Virginia institution. HIV testing is also available pre-release for individuals who are not known to be HIV positive. VDH partners with other locality organizations to provide testing and other services.

VDH, in collaboration with Virginia Commonwealth University, has developed the Bridge Program, which also targets the HIV/AIDS inmate population. The Bridge Program seeks to provide seamless care to individuals who are known to have HIV or AIDS at discharge. VCU provides both on-site and telemedicine services to this population in order to reduce costs and improve facility security.

VDH also has a partnership with the Department of Medical Assistance Services to conduct pre-admission nursing home screenings for individuals who are eligible for community waiver services or nursing home placement. This program is not targeted specifically to the offender population, but offenders are eligible for participation if they meet medical requirements.

Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)

The Department of Juvenile Justice has state-level re-entry collaborations with the Department of Correctional Education and the Virginia Department of Education. Reenrollment and educational re-entry programs are detailed above in DCE's collaborative programs.

Juvenile re-entry programs begin with the premise that planning for release starts at intake. Recognizing that many of the youth released to the community from the JCCs are not prepared to enter the work force, the Youth Industries Program was created to help participants overcome barriers to employment and was designed as a partnership with the Department of

Correctional Education (DCE) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). DJJ manages its programs so that juveniles are offered meaningful opportunities to learn employable skills and to practice those skills in a constructive environment.

Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR)

The Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation works with the Department of Correctional Education to facilitate licensure for applicants in correctional apprenticeship programs. Those DPOR related apprenticeship programs which are approved by the Department of Labor and Industry include barbers and cosmetologists, water and wastewater works operators, opticians, and tradesmen (e.g., electricians, plumbers, HVAC repair).

Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)

The Virginia Employment Commission works with the Department of Corrections to provide job-related information and services prior to release from prison. Information includes the state of the job market, how to prepare for interviews, resume-writing and application completion techniques, and where to obtain training. Referrals are provided to pre-employment services and workshops in the community.

Indigent Defense Commission (IDC)

The Indigent Defense Commission is composed of 25 public defenders' offices throughout the Commonwealth. Public defenders' offices vary as to the collaborations they have developed in order to assist with offender re-entry. A total of seven offices identified the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Criminal Justice Services, and the Department of Corrections as state-level collaborators in varying areas. Most of these collaborations are at the locality level, and include participation in re-entry associations along with local agencies, non-profit organizations, treatment providers, faith-based groups, and the courts, as well as individual Commonwealth's Attorneys offices.

Programs include:

- Community Jail Diversion Alliance in Lynchburg, which seeks to provide alternative options for offenders with mental illness;
- Central Virginia Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention, which seeks to create options for prevention, treatment, and recovery for those with addiction issues;

- Mental Health/Criminal Justice Task Force for Winchester, Frederick, Clarke, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren, which meets to exchange information about mental illness resources for ex-offenders;
- Community Criminal Justice Board for the City of Richmond, which brings together law enforcement, mental health clinicians, academics, and public safety professionals to create a biennial plan for reducing crime within the City;
- Criminal Justice and Mental Health Collaborative in Martinsville, which seeks to establish coordinated services for offenders with mental health and substance abuse issues in the community, as well as training for all agency representatives on the needs of the mentally ill offender population;
- Collaborative with DOC in Danville, in which the public defender's office works with Probation and Parole District 14 to identify appropriate services that could serve as alternatives to incarceration for mentally ill and substance-abusing offenders;
- Collaboratives with Court Services, the Department of Social Services, and the Commonwealth's Attorney in Fredericksburg to examine alternatives to detention for juvenile defendants; and
- Correctional Service Advisory Board in Alexandria, which advises Alexandria's Sheriff on jail programming and transitional services, including jail diversion programs for offenders with mental illness.

An Example of Collaboration Among Agencies

Executive Order 11, issued by Governor McDonnell on May 11, 2010, authorized the Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-entry Council to improve collaboration and coordination of transitional services. Department of Social Services Commissioner Martin D. Brown captures the spirit of the Governor McDonnell's initiative in the following Prisoner Re-entry Communiqué.



A Message From
Commissioner Martin D. Brown



September 27, 2010

Goal: Supporting Prisoner Re-Entry

Hello, Everyone-

Do our programs make a difference to someone in prison? Consider that 75 percent of incarcerated women are mothers. In the Richmond area, 91 percent of ex-offenders were unemployed either prior to their incarceration or at their post-release intake. Programs such as Foster Care, TANF and Child Support Enforcement routinely impact family units during or post incarceration.

Supporting prisoner re-entry programs is a priority for Governor McDonnell and one of the Department's seven targeted goals for FY 2011. Led by Secretary of Public Safety Marla Decker and the Virginia Department of Corrections, VDSS and our entire social services delivery system will play a vital role in insuring the success of the initiative.

The Virginia Community Re-entry Program (VCRP) is administered through our Division of Community & Volunteer Services. VCRP targets recidivism through pre-release planning and developing a system of family and community supports. These help ex-offenders find employment, housing and health services to assist with their transition.

Recently, Governor McDonnell announced that Virginia has been selected to receive grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice under the Second Chance Act Prisoner Re-entry Initiative. This will help us:

- *Support the six areas currently piloting prisoner re-entry programs in Charlottesville/Albemarle, Culpeper, King George, Norfolk, Richmond and Southwest Va. All six areas have unique challenges; for instance, former inmates in the King George region have very little access to public transportation.*
- *Provide for a new component of VCRP, which will work with 200 offenders at high risk of recidivism. These are men and women with limited job skills, scheduled to be released in six to 12 months. The outcomes of the mentoring and re-integration services will be carefully monitored.*

The challenge of fitting back into "normal" life is one of the main reasons ex-offenders return to prison. Many had a spotty work history to begin with, and, once out, they're competing in today's job market with a prison record. Re-integration services must prepare the person (practically and emotionally) to return to a high-risk environment – and it needs to happen within about six months. If not, the probability of re-arrest increases, and with it, another household disrupted.

This is where we come in. Our partnerships with Community Action Agencies (CAA), faith-based organizations, sister agencies and each other will be critically important as the Commonwealth works to reduce our recidivism rate, which hovers around 30 percent for adults. There are fantastic programs (i.e. Virginia CARES) through the Community Action Network that help us connect services to ex-offenders, their children and families.

Using our individual job responsibilities to support prisoner re-entry equips the system with a diverse set of skills and program resources. At the state level, managers will be working with staff to develop performance measurements based on this goal and the six others. How could your talents and ideas improve our efforts? Please keep this agency goal in mind as projects develop within your unit.

Thanks for your attention. Have a terrific and productive week!

*Martin D. Brown
Commissioner*

Virginia Programs and Services

The section below describes individual state agency efforts in re-entry programming. Individual agency efforts may include collaborations with localities, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, and other community groups.

Department of Corrections

The Department of Corrections offers multiple offenders re-entry programs under new leadership, described below.

Establishment of Re-entry and Programs Unit

Following the issue of Executive Order 11, the DOC created a position for an Assistant Director for Re-entry and Programs. The newly appointed Assistant Director of Re-entry and Programs, H. Scott Richeson, will serve as Chief Programs Officer directing the Department's re-entry initiative through offender programming and services. Ms. Richeson will also serve as the DOC liaison with the Governor's Office to meet executive and legislative mandates related to offender re-entry.

The Virginia Adult Re-entry Initiative (VARI)

The DOC developed a four year re-entry strategic plan to incorporate re-entry into its business model. The Virginia Adult Re-entry Initiative (VARI) was developed under the leadership of the Secretary of Public Safety and a committee of representatives from multiple divisions within DOC, as well as representatives from the Department of Correctional Education. VARI provides recommendations and strategies that, when implemented, will aid in the transition of offenders from prison to the community. Primary recommendations making public safety a priority include:

- Establish within each Community Corrections operation unit and each prison facility a primary contact person for re-entry to improve re-entry communication between DOC divisions and community stakeholders;
- Expansion of the evidence-based practices paradigm in Operations and Community Corrections;
- Increased collaboration with other state, local, and non-profit agencies;
- Development of Re-entry Case Plans at intake, based on the COMPAS risk/needs assessment system;

- Placement of offenders in facilities according to their risks/needs profiles;
- Proposed establishment of a Re-entry Savings Plan program to ensure adequate funds to offenders upon release;
- Inclusion of application, interview, feedback, and certification processes in prison work and apprenticeship programs;
- Prioritization of vocational training for offenders within five years of release;
- Increased opportunities and incentives for educational and vocational programs;
- Eight Re-entry Specialist positions focused on “hard to place” cases, including medical cases, mental health cases, and sex offenders;
- Policy to mandate evidence based practices program criteria in the prisons to ensure services are effective based on research;
- Provide consistent re-entry programming from the offender’s first contact with DOC;
- Implement Thinking for A Change cognitive-behavioral change program for all offenders at various stages into the system to help them overcome criminal thinking habits and establish pro-social habits. Points at which programming will be delivered include: when offenders are first received at their first prison assignment, peer support groups offender throughout the term of incarceration to reinforce learning and practices change, booster sessions in the last six months before release, and peer support groups in Community Corrections after release to address continuing challenges;
- In addition to Thinking for A Change, provide a range of mental health and treatment programs to assist with special needs, including: individual and group therapy; intensive substance abuse treatment; anger management; sex offender treatment; therapeutic recreation; life skills training; and family reunification services;
- Intensive Re-entry Programs in ten minimum-medium security facilities that will allow offenders to finish sentences close to their release location, to the extent possible;
- Ninety-day Pre-release programs in five prisons, to be established at Security Level 2 and 3 Intensive Re-entry Programs to provide immediate re-entry services

- Development and utilization of offender social history screens, an automated offender re-entry case plan, and shared case notes within VACORIS to enhance information sharing between institutions and community corrections;
- Improved communication with the Department of Correctional Education and the Virginia State Police via VACORIS;
- Development and maintenance of community resource lists, targeted to each Probation and Parole District and available on DOC's internal and external websites;
- Write into the Employee Performance Measure of each DOC executive and senior staff, including Wardens and Chief Probation and Parole Officers, the requirement to develop and support the re-entry business model;
- Requirement for Wardens and Chief Probation and Parole Officers to reach out to local communities and provide leadership on Local Re-entry Councils as co-conveners with local Social Services Offices;
- Requirement for wardens to convene Re-entry Advisory Boards at each prison comprised of local community leaders to advise on re-entry efforts within the prison;
- VARI requires further study and review of national best practices for special populations including sex offenders and gang members; and
- Interwoven into VARI is extensive collaboration with non-correctional re-entry stakeholders including other state and local agencies, local non-profit organizations, faith based groups and offender families.

The VARI is a comprehensive strategic plan that presents a vision, goals, and objectives to enhance public safety by offenders successfully returning to and reintegrating into local communities. The VARI pulls together program and re-entry services within DOC into a unified

comprehensive approach. It includes over 140 recommendations, each with a benchmark for implementation, performance measure, and assigned responsible parties to oversee completion.

Evaluation of VARI is essential to determining effectiveness and updating the agencies practices and program, and is incorporated into the plan. A Governor's Re-entry Scorecard that includes performance indicators will be submitted every six months to update the Governor and the Secretary of Public Safety on implementation progress. Longer term evaluation of VARI will include measurement of system change (policies and business practice changes), re-entry indicators (individual offender re-entry service provision improvements), and public safety measures (reduced recidivism).

The successful implementation of VARI will require some additional staff resources, inter-agency collaboration and communication, intra-department collaboration and the support of community stakeholders. The Re-entry and Programs Unit is currently involved in implementing plan components at this time.

Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) in Community Corrections

In 2005, implementation of the evidence-based practices paradigm began in several Probation and Parole districts, as well as Detention and Diversion centers. EBP refers to the use of empirically researched programs and policies that are known to reduce offender recidivism. Components of the EBP paradigm in Community Corrections include: deportment; motivational interviewing; risk/needs assessment (COMPAS); case planning; use of incentives and sanctions; referral to evidence-based treatment; fidelity reviews; and program evaluation. Significant changes to organizational development and community collaboration are required within the implementation process.

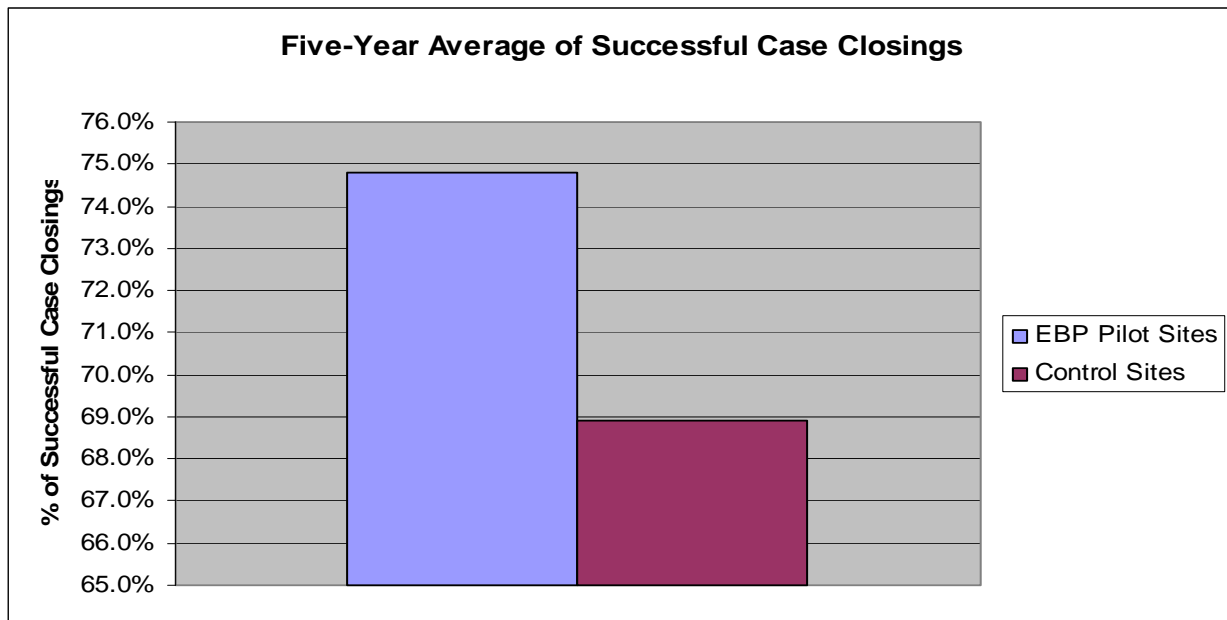
As of FY 2010, 17 probation and parole districts [Richmond (District 1); Norfolk (District 2); Portsmouth (District 3); Petersburg (District 7); Charlottesville (District 9); Winchester (District 11); Lynchburg (District 13); Roanoke (District 15); Newport News (District 19); Bedford (District 20); Fredericksburg (District 21); Chesapeake (District 31); Henrico (District 32); Williamsburg (District 34); Alexandria (District 36); Harrisonburg (District 39); and Tazewell (District 43)]are implementing EBP in their offices. Two of Virginia's largest districts, Richmond and Norfolk, were added in 2010 at the request of the Secretary of Public Safety to increase the impact of reentry efforts. An additional four detention

and diversion centers are also implementing EBP. EBP sites are spread evenly throughout all three geographical regions.

The implementation of EBP in Community Corrections requires extensive changes to supervision and to collaboration with stakeholder agencies and groups in the community. The courts are particularly important to successful EBP implementation because judicial support of EBP allows for more timely assessment and intervention with offenders. At present, a number of EBP sites have discussed EBP with their judges, and some sites have worked with their judges to streamline workloads and promote evidence-based sentencing practices. These EBP sites include: District 9 (Charlottesville); District 11 (Winchester); District 13 (Lynchburg); District 15 (Roanoke); District 34 (Williamsburg); and District 43 (Tazewell). Districts 2 (Norfolk) and 7 (Petersburg) are planning to contact their judges with EBP information in the near future. In the past year, two trainings have been held in Virginia to educate judges about evidence-based sentencing. Judges from Norfolk, Portsmouth, Lynchburg, Roanoke, Henrico, Williamsburg, Alexandria, and Tazewell attended these trainings. It is expected that additional training for judges in other jurisdictions will be held in collaboration with the Office of the Executive Secretary.

At DOC, the EBP effort is spearheaded by the Program Development and Evaluation Unit, which provides EBP training and consulting and conducts research on EBP progress. A 2008 study by the unit showed a significant increase in successful case closings for EBP pilot sites (74.8 percent) compared to matched control group sites (68.9 percent).

Chart 4. Successful Case Closings for Evidence-Based Practices and Control Group Sites



Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) in Operations

Implementation of evidence-based practices in DOC prisons began in 2006. The goal of evidence-based practices is to devote limited correctional resources on services that prepare offenders for re-entry and reduce recidivism. Evidence-based practices within DOC means correctional decision making derived from research findings about practices proven to change offender behavior. The concept is derived from a study of hundreds of research studies conducted over 30 years with correctional populations. From the research, common elements of successful programs were identified and also common elements of unsuccessful programs. The successful elements led to a set of principles that are collectively called Evidence-Based Practices.

Evidence-Based Practices provides the prison system with a strategic framework for organizational development, staff training, interaction with offenders, and programming. It requires a paradigm shift from only using traditional correctional control practices (guns, handcuffs, canines) to training correctional staff in new professional skills so they can role model and teach appropriate behavior through each interaction. A basic example is correctional officers using evidence-based practices communication techniques to diffuse a situation by having the offender “stop and think.” The correctional officer is trained to diffuse potentially aggressive situations with offenders by using questions to encourage the offender to make a positive

behavior choice rather than reacting out of anger or impulsivity. When all staff within the prison practice role modeling techniques with offenders, the prison culture becomes one of correcting and changing offender behavior for long term recidivism reduction. Included in the Evidence Based Practices model are the following practices:

- Assessing offender actuarial criminal risks and programming needs through a validated instrument;
- Enhancing motivation for change through use of strategic and proven communication and interviewing techniques;
- Targeting interventions on the criminal factors of higher risk offenders to best utilize limited resources and reduce significant risks;
- Utilize cognitive-behavioral programming with opportunities for offenders to practice what they learn and receive on-going feedback until new behaviors become habits;
- A structured system of immediate positive reinforcement for progress and sanctions for non-compliance;
- Engaging on-going support from natural (free world) communities for transition and re-entry;
- Measuring and evaluate processes; and
- Providing a measurement feedback loop to policy makers and adjusting practices accordingly.

Wallens Ridge State Prison was selected as the first institutional site to receive training and implementation in evidence based practices in 2006. In addition, five other prisons are involved in evidence based practices implementation: Greenville Correctional Center; Nottoway Correctional Center; St. Brides Correctional Center; Sussex I State Prison; and Sussex II State Prison. Implementation in DOC institutions is led within the new Re-entry and Programs Unit.

Henrico County Jail-Based Re-entry Program

The Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC) began placing Transition Coordinators within local and regional jails in 2003. The program provides transitional services and is responsible for delivering life skills training and connecting offenders with community services. Currently this program operates at 14 jails. As of January 1, 2011 all but one of the programs will be brought back into DOC prisons to receive re-entry programs within DOC in larger numbers before participating in work release programs.

The decision to bring the resources back into to DOC was made to increase the number of offenders that receive re-entry programming before release. Under the VARI plan, Governor McDonnell has made offender re-entry a priority of his administration and has requested the DOC develop a comprehensive re-entry program that will serve all offenders being released from the Department. In order to consolidate the resources to operate a program that will serve all released offenders, the Department will reallocate the resources operating these jail programs into a comprehensive statewide effort to provide re-entry services for all offenders being released from prisons back into communities. The Department's goal is that all available resources be accessible to the offender the day he or she returns to the community.

The DOC will continue to collaborate with local jails on work release programs. Under the new concept, an offender will be enrolled in a program that will provide re-entry services to include life skills, connection with community resources, and development of a release plan with local Probation and Parole services.

DOC resources remain at the Henrico County Re-entry program because it uses the evidence-based model, accepts both male and female offenders and consistently maintains full capacity. Henrico's Pilot Jail-Based Re-entry Program incorporates intensive substance abuse treatment with other evidence-based practices. In addition, the program features high quality mental health, education, health, housing and vocational training services in Henrico County, and its close proximity to major Virginia prisons enables easier transition planning during prison incarceration to better prepare returning re-entry participants.

Participation in this program is completely voluntary. Participants gain entry by requesting written permission, being seen in an orientation group, and then having their name submitted to classification to see if they qualify. Once approved for the program, they sign a contract to obey the rules and program schedule, and receive a thorough orientation from senior participants in the program. The two main components of the re-entry program are RISE (Recovery In a Secure Environment) for the first 6-12 weeks and work release for 3 to 12 months. RISE offers psycho-educational and therapeutic programming relating to life skills, substance abuse, anger management, and criminal thinking. During work release, offenders work day shifts at a variety of local employers and return to jail at night for continued programming provided by the Community Services Board clinician and Coordinator. A component has also been developed for women to help address their unique recovery needs. Specialized programming focusing on

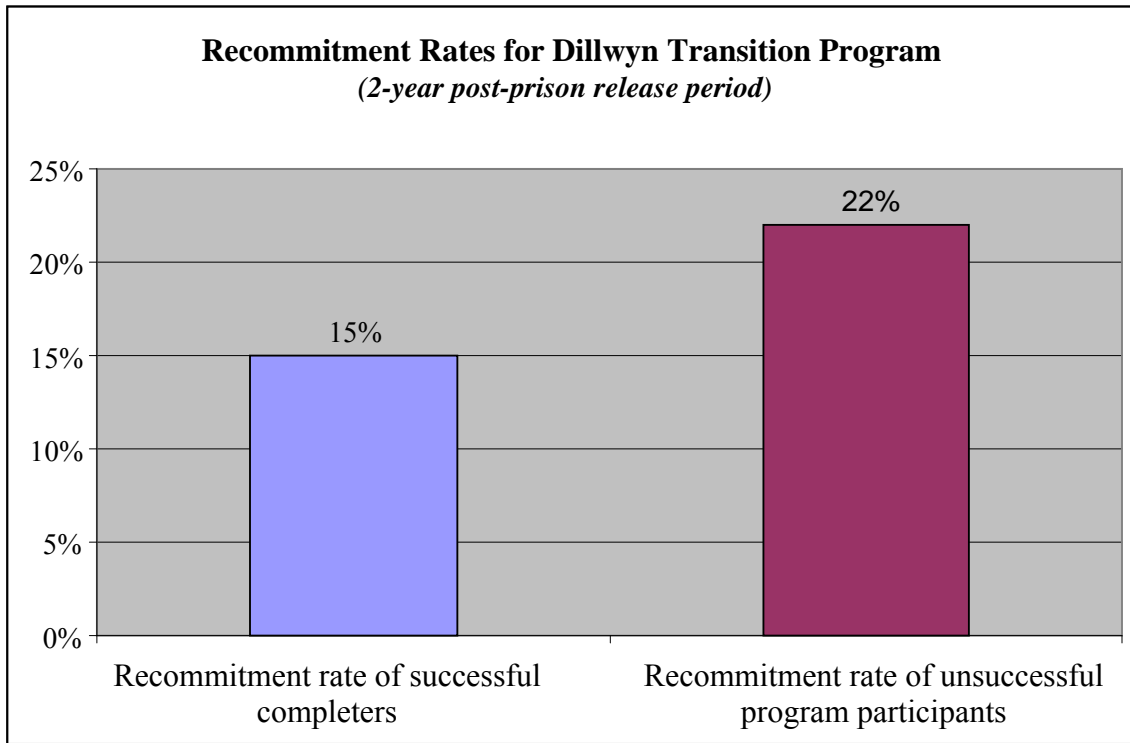
domestic violence, parenting skills, relationships and recovery are addressed. Graduates from the Henrico Jail-Based Re-entry program have demonstrated lower recommitment rates (11.1 percent) in comparison to the general population.

Transition Cooperative Program at Dillwyn Correctional Center

The Transition Cooperative Program at Dillwyn Correctional Center was initiated in 2005 as a pilot re-entry program at an all male, medium security prison. Participants reside in the same housing unit, which contains a total of 88 beds. This is a voluntary program for offenders no more than 18 months and no less than 90 days from their release date. The Transition Cooperative includes paid institutional work assignments. During the orientation phase, an assessment is conducted of the offender's needs including academic service, career education, employment, home and release plan, fines and court cost obligations, driver's license, probation obligations and special conditions of release, vital records, child support obligations, mental and physical health needs, Social Security and military benefits, and needs for other community resources. Academic programs include Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes, General Equivalency Diploma (GED) classes and post-secondary classes in partnership with community colleges.

The second phase focuses on psycho-educational training on topics such as substance abuse and financial skills. Offenders participate in cognitive behavioral therapy programs including "Thinking for a Change" and "Breaking Barriers." Family reunification is also sought through in-person and speaker-phone visits. During the discharge phase, the inmate receives useful community resource information, letters of reference, tax, SSI and food stamp applications. A 2010 evaluation of the Dillwyn Transition Cooperative found that successful program completers had a recommitment rate over a two-year post-prison release period of 15 percent. Unsuccessful program participants had a recommitment rate of 22 percent. The 15 percent recommitment rate cannot be compared with DOC's 3 year out recidivism rate of 27.3 percent because of the difference in post-release time periods.

Chart 5. Recidivism Rates for Dillwyn Transition Program Participants



Cognitive Community Program at Powhatan Correctional Center

The Cognitive Community Program (CCP) began in 2007 and houses participants separately from the general prison population to create an intensive programming environment away from negative influences of non-program participants. This program is for men who have not committed a sex offense and who are three to four months away from their prison release dates. A cognitive community is a residential program that focuses on the development of pro-social values through cognitive-behavioral programming and skills practice. The community is maintained by the offenders with the oversight and guidance of program and institutional staff who serve as role models. The CCP includes didactic and experiential elements, such as problem solving, role-playing, release planning, family issues, resume writing, communication skills, substance abuse/relapse prevention, mock job interviews, life skills (money management, dress for success, etc.), stress management and computer training. Structured programs such as Breaking Barriers and Productive Citizenship are also provided. A major ingredient of the CCP is the use of Thinking Reports. Thinking Reports are written exercises that help offenders think through problems and consider pro-social solutions.

Re-entry Preparation Housing Unit Programs at High Security Prisons

Three high security prisons (Sussex I, Sussex II and Wallens Ridge State Prisons) provide residential re-entry programming to offenders starting five years from release. Programming includes the Thinking for A Change cognitive- behavioral curriculum, life skills training, re-entry planning, education and anger management programming. The programs complete a re-entry version of the COMPAS Risk and Needs Assessment that is shared with Probation and Parole staff when the offender is released.

Faith Based Re-entry Programming

Prison Fellowship has partnered with the DOC and provides faith based residential re-entry programming at two prisons, James River Correctional Center and Central Virginia Correctional Center for Women. The program uses a Christian based life skills and cognitive thinking curriculum to promote pro-social habits in offenders. A unique aspect of the program is the mentoring component. Participating offenders are paired with community volunteer mentors prior to release. After release, the mentors continue to guide and support the offender's adjustment to the community.

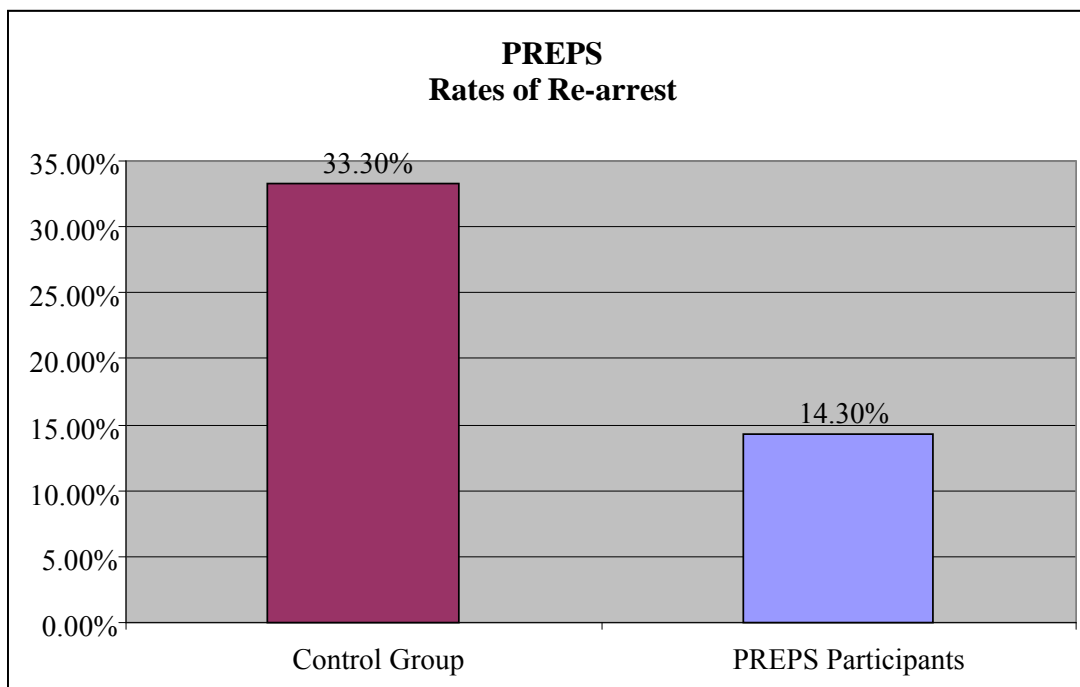
Chaplain Services of the Churches of Virginia, Inc., provides faith based counseling and support to all of the DOC major prison facilities. This organization provides chaplains to each prison who coordinate all faith based activities and services within the prison. Chaplains also provide counseling and crisis intervention as needed. Chaplain Services of the Churches of Virginia subcontracts with Muslim Chaplain Services for provision of faith based activities to Muslim offenders across the state. In addition, each prison has numerous religious volunteers from local communities from a variety of churches and faiths that regularly enter prisons to provide religious services and lay counseling.

Preventing Recidivism by Educating for Parole Success (PREPS)

PREPS is a program that deals with the emotional aspects of incarceration and re-entry and is offered at many prisons across the state. It was developed and copyrighted by a recommitted inmate according to his personal experiences in dealing with institutionalization, release, and returning to prison. Using seven sessions, the PREPS program aims to "reshape" an offender prior to their release by addressing four key aspects of their life: physical, emotional, psychological, and physiological. PREPS examines the causes of recidivism through classroom-based instruction, class exercises, and guidance from more senior offenders in the program.

During each participant's exit interview, a summary of the course's most crucial points are discussed and a handbook is given to the offender, which is intended to help him understand and manage some of the adjustment complications and problems he may encounter after release. A similar handbook is mailed to family members with whom the offender will live after his prison release. Preliminary results have revealed that there was a 19 percent difference between the re-arrest rate of the control group (33.3 percent) and the PREPS participant group (14.3 percent). Although these findings are preliminary, the outcomes are promising.

Chart 6. Recidivism Rates for PREPS Participants

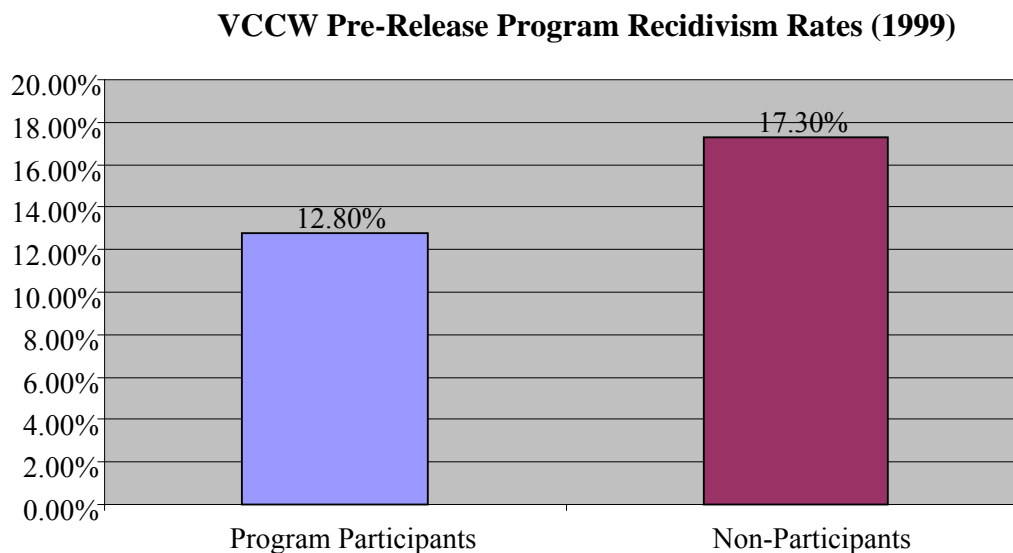


Pre-Release Program at Virginia Correctional Center for Women (VCCW)

The Pre-Release program at VCCW accepts both violent and non violent offenders, as well as some participants from Fluvanna Correctional Center or Central Virginia Correctional Unit. Eligible participants are within 45 to 60 days of their release to the community. The VCCW Pre-Release Program lasts 6 weeks with daily classes from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Offenders are offered life skills, Productive Citizenship, employment and job readiness training, substance abuse treatment, medical and mental health information and referrals, self esteem, parenting, domestic violence education, cognitive skills training, money management, effective

communication, problem solving, probation and parole orientation, family matters, legal matters, healthy living, nutrition, and resources and referrals. A 1999 recidivism study revealed that participants in the Pre-Release Program had a lower recidivism rate (12.8 percent) than the females who did not participate in the re-entry program (17.3 percent). The study showed promising results for the Pre-Release program, especially in comparison to the overall 1999 recidivism rate for VCCW releases of 22.8 percent.

Chart 7. Recidivism rates for VCCW Pre-Release Program Participants

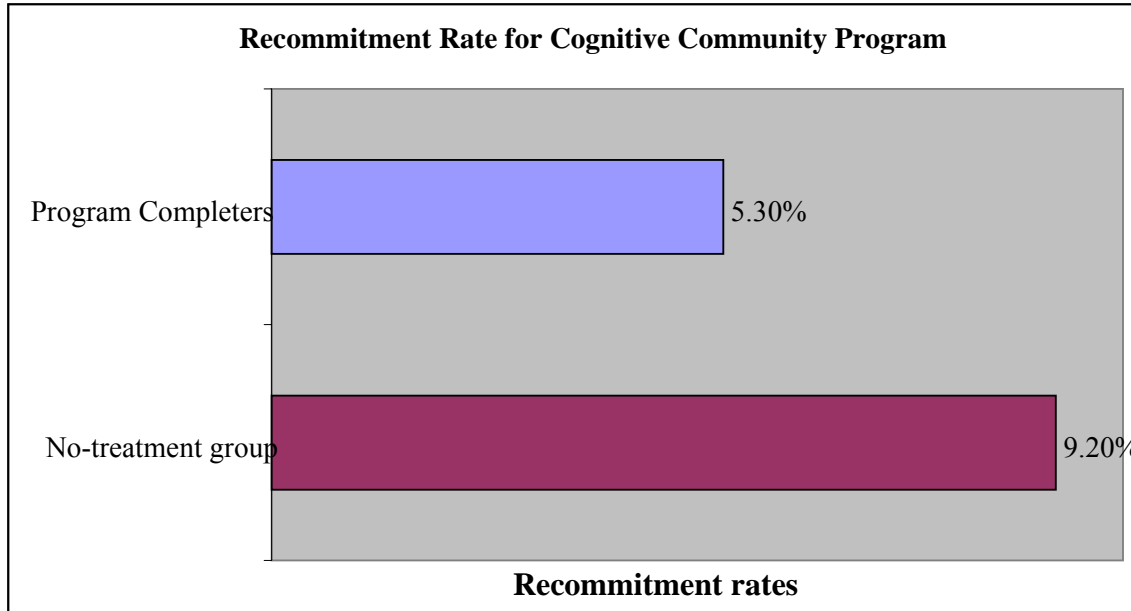


Cognitive Community at Brunswick Women’s Work and Pre-Release Center

This program is for female inmates classified to any security level, excluding those who have warrants, sex offenses, excessive disciplinary charges, and escape histories. There are 50 women in the work center and 50 in the cognitive community. Length of stay in the program ranges from 8 weeks to 90 days. This program is based on a “cognitive community” model, similar to the aforementioned program at Powhatan Correctional Center. The cognitive community at Brunswick offers relapse prevention, life skills, parenting, healthy relationships, self-esteem and problem solving. In addition to the daily schedule, offenders participate in the Step-Up Program, which focuses on employment including job applicant skills and how to keep a job. A quasi-experimental study revealed that women who completed the program had a recidivism rate almost 6 percent less than the no treatment comparison group. In addition, the recommitment rate for the no treatment comparison group increased by 9.2 percent from year

one to year two, whereas the program completers' recommitment rate grew by only 5.3 percent over the same period.

Chart 8. Recidivism Rates for Cognitive Community Program Participants



Social Security Card Agreement

DOC has a Memorandum of Agreement with the federal Social Security Administration to obtain duplicate Social Security Cards for offenders before release. Cards are needed before offenders can obtain employment after release from prison. The MOA allows DOC officials to submit incarcerated offenders' applications for cards 120 days before release. The MOA specifies partnerships between specific SSA offices and prisons.

Veterans Administration Partnership

The DOC partners with the federal Veterans Administration to allow medical and mental health examinations to be conducted on incarcerated veterans. Examinations are used to determine if disability benefits are warranted. The Veterans Administration staff also makes contact with all incarcerated honorably discharged veterans to assist in special release planning needs.

Work Release Programs

DOC partners with local and regional jails across the state for Work Release. Non-violent offenders nearing release that meet criteria and are approved by the jail and DOC are returned to

local jails for work release. On work release, offenders work community jobs during the day and return to the jail at night. Offenders earn prevailing wages and are required to pay for jail costs and court ordered financial obligations, as well as save for release. A total of 605 offenders have participated in work release programs between January 1, 2010 and November 10, 2010. Jails that have work release sites include: Albemarle-Charlottesville Reg. Jail; Botetourt-Craig Reg. Jail; Blue Ridge Reg. Jail Authority; Central Virginia Regional Jail; Charlotte County Jail; Danville City Jail Farm; Fairfax County Pre-Release; Fauquier Co. Jail; Gloucester County Jail; Hampton City Jail; Hampton Roads Reg. Jail; Henrico County Jail West; Henrico County Jail East; Middle Peninsula Regional Jail; Middle River Regional Jail; Newport News City Jail; Newport News City Jail Farm; Norfolk City Jail; Northwestern Reg. Adult Det. Ctr.; Northern Neck Regional Jail; Page County Jail; Pamunkey Regional Jail; Petersburg City Jail; Piedmont Regional Jail; Portsmouth City Jail; Prince William Adult Det. Ctr.; Rappahannock County Jail; Rappahannock Regional Jail; Richmond City Jail; Riverside Regional Jail; Southampton County Jail; Southampton County Jail Farm; South West Valley Reg. Jail; Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail; Warren County Jail; and Western Tidewater Regional Jail.

Assisting Families of Inmates and New Jubilee Education and Family Life Center

The DOC offers an offender video visitation program at selected prisons across the State in partnership with community faith-based and non-profit organizations. Video visitation allows family members to meet with the offender via video conferencing at a cost lower than what the visitor typically spends traveling to a remote prison. Visitor Centers are located in Richmond, Norfolk and Alexandria and operate on Saturdays and Sundays. The DOC expects to expand its video visitation capability to incorporate seminars and other re-entry related efforts linking community service providers with offenders before release.

Goodwill Industries

Goodwill partners with DOC to provide a “One Stop Behind Bars” at Dillwyn Correctional Center. The program is a collaborative effort among DOC, DCE and Goodwill Services. Offenders apply for and are accepted to the program based on their COMPAS risk score, programs completed, and disciplinary information. Dillwyn has three groups of offenders in this program: (1) those within 12 months of release; (2) those within 18 months of release; and (3) those within 24 months of release. Participants are given assessments to evaluate their job skills and occupation preference. They are also enrolled in programs that address interpersonal

workplace skills and academic needs. Goodwill works with the offenders to attain employment prior to release. Once released, Goodwill continues to work with offenders for 18 months. Offenders may work for Goodwill for up to 90 days or until they find outside employment. The project involved over a year of planning and officially opened in September 2010.

Virginia Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Program (VASAVOR)

VASAVOR is a re-entry program operated through partnerships between Fairfax and Newport News Probation and Parole Districts, local city jails, and community non-profit services providers whereby violent offenders are returned to the jails before release from DOC. Service providers meet with offenders in jail to prepare for housing and other services prior to release, and to provide services and support upon release. The program is unique in that it deals specifically with violent offenders often screened out of other programs. Since its inception, VASAVOR has enrolled over 319 offenders, 254 of which are currently employed (The *SkillSource* Group, Inc., 2009). The recidivism rates (defined as re-incarceration) for participants in VASAVOR, as reported by program administrators, was 3.1 percent (see The *SkillSource* Group, Inc., 2009), which shows tremendous promise for the effectiveness of the program. A study conducted by DOC (2008) reported that there were only 4 recidivists who committed new violent crimes (3 percent) from VASAVOR Fairfax during their first three years out. The National violent recidivism rate is 35 percent and the 2006 VDOC recidivism report cites Virginia violent recidivism rate at 14 percent. The DOC would like to expand this program to other localities provided funding is available.

Virginia Correctional Enterprises

Virginia Correctional Enterprises (VCE) is a work program established over seventy-five (75) years ago by the General Assembly. Inmates working for VCE in prison jobs produce goods or services for sale to state agencies and other entities within government that are supported in part or whole by funds of the Commonwealth. All tax supported agencies and non-profit entities are authorized to purchase these goods and services. VCE is not supported by General funds but rather by the monies retained from the sale of these products and services. VCE provides work opportunities and skill learning programs for offenders incarcerated within DOC. A large number of skills related to the manufacturing process including upholstery, furniture building, printing, and commercial laundry are transferable to real jobs upon release from prison. The average number of offenders working in VCE in the first quarter of FY 2011 was 1296.

Department of Correctional Education

The Department of Correctional Education (DCE) has always been involved in the provision of re-entry and transitional services for offenders through its various programs such as: academic (Adult Basic Education, General Equivalency Diploma, post-secondary), special education, career and technology education, Productive Citizenship, Career Readiness Certificate, and additional re-entry activities provided by the Offender Workforce Development Specialists.

In addition to the above, DCE has been directly involved in Governor McDonnell's Prisoner Re-entry Initiative. A number of DCE staff currently serve on Re-entry Issue Work Groups and are resources in support of the Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-entry Council. DCE staff serves as committee members and provide invaluable information on offender workforce and educational issues, programs, and national initiatives. In addition, staff supports the Council to ensure that timelines are met and the needs of specific re-entry focus areas are addressed. DCE also contributed to the development of the Department of Corrections' Virginia Adult Re-entry Initiative, which will provide a solid re-entry strategy in Virginia.

Academic Programs

DCE provides adult offenders with academic programs at all correctional institutions. Academic instructors are certified by the Virginia Department of Education and through continuing education maintain that certification. Academic programs include Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes, General Equivalency Diploma (GED) classes and post-secondary classes in partnership with community colleges. In FY 2009, there were 8,498 adult offenders enrolled in ABE programs, which represents 27.1 percent of the average daily population of DOC facilities. Adult offenders completing ABE in 2009 totaled 4,715. In the same period, 1,559 adult offenders received GED testing and 1,131 passed and were credentialed. The pass rate for offenders enrolled in GED is 73.8 percent, while the overall state rate is 68.2 percent.

Career and Technology Education

The Career and Technology Education (CTE) program at DCE offers programming at all DOC institutions. The CTE programs prepare offenders for jobs that need to be done within the institutions, as well as prepare the offenders for jobs in the community. Students in the programs can earn Industry Certification, Vocational Completer Certificates, and in some cases, Apprenticeships. CTE programs include, but are not limited to: specialties in the building trades

(i.e.: brick masonry, plumbing, electricity, painting/drywall, HVAC); business software and other computer related courses; cooking; horticulture; print production; auto repair and technology; barbering; and cabinet making. During FY 2009-2010, 4,647 students participated in CTE programs. Of that number 1,577 completed the programs in which they were enrolled. On average adult offenders completed 98.8 percent of assigned tasks.

One goal for DCE is to reduce the amount of time it takes adult students to complete CTE programs. DCE is currently finalizing two pilot studies that involve changes to the criteria for enrolling in CTE programs. This is the last of several strategies that have been implemented over the past few years. DCE has been able to reduce the average number of days to complete programs from a high of 366 days in FY 1997 to 1998 to 264 days in FY 2008 to 2009 (a reduction of 28 percent). By reducing the time to complete programs, more offenders will have the opportunity to participate in programming that will assist their successful return to the community.

Licensure is required for some jobs and this is a significant issue for offenders. To assist, DCE has created a handbook entitled: "Guidance for Occupational Licensure Applicants with Criminal Convictions." The handbook describes the additional steps offenders will likely be asked to perform (copies of criminal records, evidence of rehabilitation, Informal Fact-Finding Hearings, appearance before the Board) as well as tips for navigating the process. This product will help students and others with criminal records navigate the licensure process as quickly and successfully as possible. This document is currently being reviewed by the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) to ensure its accuracy.

During 2009-2010, DCE offered apprenticeship programs in 29 adult apprenticeship trade areas at 21 adult correctional centers. A total of 657 offenders were enrolled in apprenticeship programs and 76 completed those programs. Apprenticeship programs are a key component of preparing offenders for re-entry to the community, as the offenders are better prepared to secure and maintain stable employment in the field in which they served their apprenticeship.

Offender Workforce Development Preparation

DCE has 22 Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS) who teach Productive Citizenship and provide employment preparation and other related activities at 29 adult correctional facilities. In addition to teaching Productive Citizenship, OWDS instructors

coordinate job interview events in which employers are recruited to provide offenders with opportunities to practice interviewing skills and receive live feedback. OWDS instructors also connect offenders with jobseeker resources, market the talents of DCE students through community outreach, and make presentations to local employers and other organizations (i.e.: Workforce Investment Boards, Economic Development Departments, Chambers of Commerce).

Parenting Skills Education

The Parenting Skills Education curriculum is presented at seven (7) adult correctional facilities, and equips offenders with the parenting skills to prepare them for uniting with their children. In FY 2008-09, there were 456 participants in this program. Offenders that develop positive parenting skills will be more successful in their efforts to develop support within the family unit.

Department of Criminal Justice Services

Pre and Post Incarceration Services programs (PAPIS)

Grant-funded Pre and Post Incarceration Services programs (PAPIS), administered by the Department of Criminal Justice Services, provide housing, clothing, and employment assistance to released offenders through various community organizations. There are nine programs currently receiving a state appropriation for re-entry services totaling \$2.1M. This represents approximately 15 percent less than the previous year due to budget cuts. Programs include: Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center (Winchester); Colonial Community Corrections (Williamsburg); Northern Neck Regional Adult Detention Center (Westmoreland); OAR-Arlington; OAR-Fairfax; OAR-Jefferson Area; OAR-Richmond; STEP-UP (Norfolk); and Virginia CARES (state-wide). These programs served a total of 20,682 individuals in FY 2010. Direct services include emergency food, clothing and shelter, as well as I.D. procurement, bus tickets for job search or medical appointments, educational/vocational classes, job readiness classes, employment assistance and job placement.

Evidence-Based Practices Implementation in DCJS

The Virginia Community Criminal Justice Association (VCCJA) members focus on EBP issues specific to local probation and legal and evidence based practices (LEBP) specific to pretrial services. The members discuss on-going issues and activities related to the successful implementation of EBP at the ten sites and plan for the future expansion of EBP. VCCJA's

primary focus has been on the implementation of the statewide strategic plan and timeline for enhancing EBP throughout local probation and pretrial agencies. This focus includes forming partnerships with local service providers and the DOC Probation & Parole district offices, as well as the judiciary and city and county executives.

The Department of Criminal Justice Services, with federal grant funds from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), provided support for the following:

- Research to drive the development of bail/release recommendation guidelines based on the Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument (VPRAI);
- Development of case classification and differential supervision guidelines for pretrial and local probation;
- Validation of the use of Offender Screening Tool and Modified Offender Screening Tool on the local probation population;
- Development of EBP specific training curriculum for both pretrial and local probation; and
- Upgrading the Pretrial and Community Corrections Case Management System (PTCC) case management system to capture needed data for evaluation.

Table 2. DCJS EBP Programs

Colonial Community Corrections*	Williamsburg, VA
Community Corrections and Pre-trial Services*	Lynchburg, VA
OAR/Jefferson Area Community Corrections*	Charlottesville, VA
Old Dominion Community Corrections*	Winchester, VA
Blue Ridge Court Services	Staunton, VA
Chesterfield Community Corrections	Chesterfield, VA
Hampton/Newport News Criminal Justice Agency*	Newport News, VA
Henrico County Community Corrections*	Henrico, VA
Piedmont Court Services	Mecklenburg, VA
Rappahannock Regional Jail Community Corrections*	Fredericksburg, VA

* Matched with DOC Probation and Parole EBP site

Department of Juvenile Justice

The Department of Juvenile Justice participates in multiple ways with the Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Re-entry Initiative. In addition to supporting Governor McDonnell's initiative through the development of a four year strategic re-entry plan, DJJ has internal re-entry programs aimed at providing the best possible community adjustment for juveniles under supervision and their families. Many of these programs include collaboration with Virginia localities, non-profit organizations, and faith-based organizations in local communities.

Family Link Pilot Video Visitation

The Family Link program allows juvenile offenders and their family members to visit via video in collaborative sites operated by DJJ and non-profit agencies. This contact will augment and support the DJJ visitation program while fostering a stronger family connection to enhance re-entry initiatives. At this time, the program is being piloted at Culpeper Juvenile Correctional Center, with video services available in the community at Saint James United Methodist Church in Hampton, Virginia. Additional facilities and visitor centers will be added in the future.

Work/Education Release Program

The Work Education Release Program (WERP), housed at the Reception and Diagnostic Center, accommodates 12 male participants and provides education and work experience outside of a juvenile correctional center (JCC). A priority for wages earned is to pay any restitutions, fines, or court costs prior to release to the community. In addition to equipping residents with employability skills and/or furthering their education, the program provides a life skills component that includes financial planning, culinary skills, social etiquette, personal hygiene, parenting skills, household cleanliness, vocational preparation, and moral reasoning.

Female Transition and Work/Education Release Unit

Bon Air JCC operates a six-bed transition/WERP unit for its female population utilizing grant funds administered by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). In this program, female residents eligible for Work/Education Release, or within six months of their release dates, are housed in a separate unit from the general female population. The participants live in a unit modified to resemble a typical home-like environment that includes a kitchen, dining area, common area/family room, and individual bedrooms. While in this new environment, the residents receive intensive life skills programming as preparation for a successful re-integration to the community.

Badges for Baseball

The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation (CRSF) has developed a curriculum to pair at-risk youth with law-enforcement officers who serve as mentors in a structured activity and curriculum-based program. Its concept of pairing officers with juveniles is designed to reshape the relationship between law enforcement and at-risk youth. The Ripken Foundation has agreed to bring their concept to Hanover JCC and apply it, for the first time, within a correctional facility. Participating residents will be paired with law-enforcement mentors and complete a 16-session program consisting of an educational curriculum entitled *Healthy Choices, Healthy Children*. The curriculum teaches life skills concepts couched in sports terminology in conjunction with an athletic program. It provides participants with new opportunities to learn, grow, and make positive choices for their future. The kickoff date for this program was November 9, 2010.

Juvenile Mentoring Project

DJJ, in collaboration with the *Virginia Mentoring Partnership*, has developed a Mentoring Project. The mentoring initiative is designed to provide incarcerated juveniles who are within 90 days of their projected release with a caring adult to aid him or her to overcome specific risk factors. The mentor-mentee relationship will begin a minimum of 60 days prior to release while the juvenile is still in direct care. The relationship will continue in the community for an additional ten months' post-release. The program's goal is to increase the juvenile's competencies in the areas of consequential thinking, impulse control, problem-solving, decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and goal setting. The initiative will officially commence on December 1, 2010.

Mental Health Services Transition Plans

For those residents with mental health needs, facility counseling staff will work with the assigned court service unit staff to facilitate a case review meeting 90 days prior to release. Case review includes the institutional counselor, Behavioral Services Unit (BSU) therapist, parole officer, the resident, the resident's family, and community services providers. In this meeting, these parties collaboratively develop a mental health services transition plan for the resident to provide a seamless transition from facility to community with no lapse in mental health services.

Responsibility, Empowerment, Achievement, Change, Hope (REACH)

DJJ's behavior management program used in the facilities provides residents with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for rehabilitation, positive growth, and behavioral

change. Through participation in REACH, residents earn credits for positive behavior. They use these credits to purchase reinforcers and/or privileges. The main premise behind REACH is to teach residents to make better, independent choices and decisions to provide for a positive transition following release.

Phoenix Program

The Phoenix Program is an evidence-based curriculum developed by A. R. Phoenix Resources, Inc. The curriculum helps residents develop a variety of behavioral, cognitive, and affective skills necessary to function effectively in the institutions and community settings. This curriculum, designed for adolescents, includes skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, anger management, coping skills, relapse prevention, returning home, vocational issues, understanding and handling feelings, and dealing with transitions. Phoenix addresses a wide spectrum of independent living principles while the treatment programs touch on various aspects of independent living.

Transitional Services

An array of transitional services is provided statewide by a network of contracted vendors from which the local court service units purchase services for paroled juveniles and their families. The intent of community-based transitional services is to provide short-term non-residential services to support and assist in the offender's adjustment to the community following commitment. Clinical services, such as sex offender and substance abuse treatment, build upon treatment that was initiated and often completed while under commitment. Services focus on criminogenic needs in the individual, peer group, family, school, and community domains. The utilization of contracted services is guided by the youth's level of risk and need with resources focused on those youth at greatest risk of re-offending and those whose offense pattern represents a particular risk to community safety.

Halfway Houses

DJJ operates two halfway houses. Hampton Place is located in Norfolk and Abraxas House is located in Staunton. The halfway houses are designed to provide transitional skills to juveniles released from the JCCs. Each halfway house program is designed to take advantage of the unique resources available in its community to meet the needs of the residents. Upon completion of the program, the resident will have gained additional skills to promote a continued positive adjustment and to reduce the risk of recidivism.

Juvenile Offender Re-entry Demonstration Project Grant

DJJ, in partnership with Tidewater Youth Services Commission (TYSC), received a Second Chance Act grant award from the Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice for a Juvenile Offender Re-entry Demonstration Project. The project will serve high- and moderate-risk parolees up to the age of 21 from multiple localities to include the Cities of Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, Portsmouth, Norfolk, Suffolk, Newport News and Hampton; and the Counties of Southampton and Isle of Wight. The grant funding supports a comprehensive range of services and provides for graduated re-entry options to address challenges posed by re-entry and to reduce recidivism. The program is grounded in research-based principles and implements evidence-based modalities targeting criminogenic needs.

Department of Social Services

Virginia Community Re-entry Initiative (VCRI)

The Virginia Community Re-entry Initiative (VCRI) is a community-based collaborative approach to re-entry facilitated by the Department of Social Services and unique in its integration of human services and public safety. This initiative began from recommendations from Virginia's participation in the 2003 National Governor's Association Prisoner Re-entry Policy Academy. Initially five localities volunteered to implement the VCRI approach. Currently there are seven re-entry councils representing 30 Virginia localities.

VCRI is based on four principles: pre-release planning, interagency coordination, integrated service delivery among community agencies, and intensive family and community reintegration programming. On a strictly voluntary basis, representatives of the local public and private agencies, businesses, community-based service providers and faith-based organizations work collaboratively to make their communities safer, reduce victimization and provide those previously incarcerated a second chance.

Communities that adopt the VCRI approach establish local re-entry councils that identify re-entry needs and the resources available to address them. The councils then coordinate with correctional centers and local/regional jails throughout the three phases of the VCRI process: pre-release, re-entry and reintegration.

Pre-release activities focus on planning and preparation for the transition back to the community. In the re-entry phase, the first 90 days following release, representatives from the re-

entry council work with offenders to assist them with access to employment, housing and education resources, as well as available treatment and support services including mental health and substance abuse programs. During the final reintegration phase of the VCRI approach, there is continued emphasis on employment, family and community stabilization, planning for the future and developing a system of positive links in the community. This final phase of the VCRI approach includes the fourth through the twelfth months following release.

Throughout the VCRI process mentors play an important role, as they serve as positive role models and links to the community. They remain a concerned and supportive presence for the previously incarcerated person by spending at least one hour a week with them for twelve months after release. They also assist inmates prior to release in preparing for family reintegration by working with them on conflict resolution principles and skills for developing healthy relationships, and helping them prepare for the social and emotional impact of re-entry. Mentors receive training and ongoing supervision and support from local social services departments or other re-entry council member agencies.

Current councils in the state include Albemarle/Charlottesville Re-entry Council, Culpepper Re-entry Council, King George and Planning District 16 Re-entry Council, Norfolk Re-entry Council, Richmond Regional Re-entry Council, and Southwestern Virginia Re-entry Council. During FY 2009-2010 these local re-entry councils served over 2000 returning inmates.

Additionally, in 2010 the Danville/Pittsylvania Re-entry Council has been established and council development is underway in the Piedmont, Hampton Roads, Central Virginia and Northern Virginia areas of the Commonwealth. New councils are being developed with the support of grant monies from the Second Chance Act.

In collaboration with Virginia Commonwealth University in the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia State University and Old Dominion University will conduct an evaluation of the four original local re-entry councils to which include Richmond, Norfolk, Culpepper and King George. The first phase of the evaluation should be completed by the fall of 2011. The second phase of the evaluation will include all of the newly identified Second Chance grant funded re-entry councils. The evaluation is to inform how to better expand the councils in other parts of the states and to identify best practices.

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services provides mental health, developmental services, substance abuse treatment, and assessment services to reentering offenders through local Community Service Boards (CSB). In total, there are 40 CSBs throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Each CSB receives local funds and support from the locality in which it is based, in addition to state and federal funds that are administered by DBHDS. Many Community Service Boards network closely with DOC and DCJS and some CSBs maintain a memorandum of agreement with criminal justice offices.

Department of Rehabilitative Services

The Department of Rehabilitative Services collaborates with the New River Valley Community Services Board in the Bridge Program, available in local jails in the New River Valley. The program identifies inmates with mental illness and co-occurring disorders (substance abuse and mental illness) so that treatment services may be provided to meet the needs of such inmates as quickly as possible.

Virginia Employment Commission

The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) participates as a member of the Virginia Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-entry Council. Local offices provide pre-release job-related information and services in Virginia's local jails and state prisons as a partner agency in the Local Re-entry Councils. In addition, VEC collaborates with the Department of Labor to provide "stand-down" services for homeless veterans who are also ex-offenders. Services include job opportunities, free haircuts, clothing, and supplies, and information on housing, transportation and other services.

VEC also works with other community agencies engaged in re-entry, such as Second Genesis and VACares. Agency representatives travel to the community and provide pre-release information sessions in local jails. In addition, these agencies refer ex-offenders to VEC offices and other one-stop locations for services and information.

Summary and Recommendations

Virginia has made significant improvements to its prisoner and juvenile re-entry efforts in 2010. The issuance of Executive Order 11 by Governor McDonnell has provided for an unprecedented level of communication and collaboration among all state agencies involved in the re-entry initiative. Agencies under the Secretariat of Public Safety have reorganized and designed a thorough evidence-based plan for re-entry services in support of Governor McDonnell's initiative. Across the Commonwealth, employees of state agencies have invested significant time and effort to develop partnerships within committees to garner resources to improve re-entry success.

Individually, Virginia's agencies possess a number of promising re-entry programs in both institutional and community settings. The implementation of the evidence-based practices paradigm to inform services in multiple criminal justice agencies is a positive development. Research from a number of programs shows substantial success in providing offenders with assistance for a wide variety of re-entry needs.

Although many of Virginia's re-entry programs have demonstrated success or potential due to a solid foundation in research, the inventory of services developed by the Office of the Secretary for Public Safety shows that much more work needs to be done to coordinate and improve re-entry services in Virginia. Key barriers to effective re-entry services include:

- **Resources.** The current economy has reduced resources for both state agencies and their non-profit partners in the community, including faith-based communities. In addition, high unemployment and the housing crisis have placed many former middle-class families into competition for some of the programs typically open to ex-offenders, such as temporary housing programs.
- **Knowledge Gaps.** Multiple agencies noted that program efficiency is diminished at times by a lack of shared information among agencies. Duplicate referrals, misunderstanding of program policies and requirements, and infrequent communication combine to slow services and limit the opportunity for offenders to participate in available programs and services. In addition, knowledge of re-entry services and programs varies within the criminal justice community as well, impacting sentencing options and program referrals. For some agencies, public lack of awareness about re-entry and anxiety about ex-offenders serve as barriers to effective program design and location.

- **Policy.** Agencies report that restrictive federal, state, local, and agency-level policies often place barriers in effective re-entry services. The “hard to place” offender populations, including violent and sexual offenders, offenders with mental illness, and medically ill offenders, are particularly difficult to serve in this respect because many programs aimed at general offender re-entry will place restrictions on this population for reasons of perceived safety, resource availability, or community unease.

Future re-entry efforts in Virginia must address these key barriers. Potential solutions include increased communications among key stakeholders, further development of research based approaches and more effectively using funding for offender re-entry programs. In addition, agencies need assistance in identifying and obtaining grant monies to support services. Technology within agencies, including databases and internal and external websites, should be improved to share more information about program availability, eligibility and referrals. The establishment of ongoing channels of communication through the Prisoner and Juvenile Offender Re-entry Council also should help to improve collaboration among agencies and sharing of necessary information.

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