

Reentry Advisory Council (RAC)
3rd Quarter 2019 Meeting Minutes
Department of Corrections Headquarters
Thursday, July 18, 2019

Attendees Present:

Francis Abbott, Designee for Sheryl Ranatza, Committee on Parole
Joseph Ardoin, Jr., LA State Building and Construction Trades Council
Alfreda Tillman Bester, Designee for Marketa Garner Walters, Department of Children and Family Services
Dr. Emily Campbell, Designee for Dr. Monty Sullivan, Louisiana Community and Technical College System (Telephone Conference)
Rhett Covington, Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections
Judge Jules D. Edwards, III, 15th Judicial District Court
Stacye Falgout, Designee for Dr. John Morrison, Department of Public Safety and Corrections
Secretary James Le Blanc, Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections
Reverend Paul R. Murray, Elayn Hunt Correctional Center
Karissa Page, Designee for Jennifer Katzman, Department of Health
Richard Pittman, Designee for James T. Dixon, Jr., Louisiana Public Defender Board
Joseph Prejean, Big Poppas Fitness Gym
Chairman Louis Reine, LA-AFL-CIO

Absent:

Courtney L. Baker, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry
Michael 'Mike' Cazes, Louisiana Sheriff's Association
Winona Connor, Louisiana Housing Corporation
Ava Dejoie, LA Workforce Commission
Bridget Dinvaux, Louisiana District Attorney's Association
Robert D. Hanser, University of Louisiana at Monroe
Judge Arthur L. Hunter Jr., Orleans Criminal District Court
Daniel R. Martiny, LA Senate
Steve Pylant, LA House of Representatives

Other:

Larry Andrews, K&L Management, LLC
Verna Bradley-Jackson, One Touch-Ministry
Twanda Lewis, Community Coordinator - Jefferson Parish (Telephone Conference)
Nicole Miller, Community Coordinator - Calcasieu Parish (Telephone Conference)
Layla Pedigo, United Way of Southwest LA (Telephone Conference)
Bishop E. Rene Soule', Reentry Alliance for Louisiana
Terry Trichell, Community Coordinator - Ouachita Parish (Telephone Conference)
Angela Whittaker, DPSC (Telephone Conference)
James Windom, Reentry Alliance for Louisiana
Ann Zanders, Baton Rouge Community College

Dept. of Public Safety & Corrections Headquarters Staff:

Corey Acosta, Probation and Parole
Phil Adkins, Probation and Parole (Telephone Conference)
LaCara Broussard, Office of Offender Reentry
Kewana Caesar, Probation and Parole
Carmen Coutee, Probation and Parole (Telephone Conference)
Renee Delouche, Probation and Parole
Shelly Edgerton, DPSC
Nicole George, DPSC

Rebecca Ikner, Probation and Parole
Isabel Jones, DPSC
Ciara Marlow, Pardon and Parole Board
Brad Nolan, Probation and Parole
Kelsey Pearce, Office of Offender Reentry
Mike Phelps, Probation and Parole
Jennifer Plauche, Office of Offender Reentry
John R. Poche Jr., Pardon and Parole Board
Dr. Henry Sanders, Office of Offender Reentry
Hester Serrano, Probation and Parole
Robert Vehock, Office of Offender Reentry
Felicia Villalobos, DPSC
Stephanie Webb, Probation and Parole
Melissa Young, Probation and Parole

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Assistant Secretary Covington at 9:31 am.

Roll Call

Roll was called and a quorum was established. 13 of 22 present

Welcome and Introductions, Assistant Secretary Rhett Covington

Assistant Secretary Covington welcomed everyone. He thanked everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to come and take part in the meeting. He thanked everyone for their service and expressed that as we start a new fiscal year that we strive to continue advancing in the world of justice reform, reentry services, reducing recidivism and reducing incarceration in the state. He stated that we have a lot going on and we need everyone's input and help. This body is designed to provide us with an interagency and interdisciplinary voice to try to address the barriers and problems that have plagued our state and nationally for many years.

Opening Remarks, James M. Le Blanc, Secretary

Secretary Le Blanc thanked everyone for being at the meeting. He stated that ICE is on the forefront of his schedule and wanted to bring everyone up-to-date. There are roughly 5,000 ICE inmates in our state currently and there are 2 additional facilities on the local level that are in the process of converting, which is about an additional 1,800 beds; however, there are some problems surfacing of not having enough space to house state inmates at the local level. An option will possibly be to open up beds at Phelps Correctional Center that was closed due to the Transitional Work Program. Secretary Le Blanc will meet with Governor Edwards and Commissioner Dardenne over the next couple of days to figure out how to solve the issue of space. He feels like the issue can be addressed and be to an advantage on our behalf.

Alfreda Tillman Bester asked Secretary Le Blanc what are the conditions under which these individuals (ICE detainees) are being held. Secretary Le Blanc stated that these individuals are being held under the same conditions the state inmates are being held; however, they have to provide a little upgrade. For example at Winn Correctional Facility, the entire facility will need to be air conditioned to meet federal standards. Secretary Le Blanc expressed that he is almost sure the conditions in the facility is much better than where the detainee is coming from. He wants everyone to understand that the living conditions of the detainees have nothing to do with the state operations. This is federally operated and the facilities and sheriffs are getting in between \$62-\$65 a day to house the ICE detainees.

Judge Jules Edwards wanted to clarify that local facilities that were housing state inmates are now housing Federal ICE inmates because they pay more and as a result of this we need to find more space in our state facilities to house state inmates? Secretary Le Blanc replied "Correct." Judge Edwards also asked does this means you will be able to send people to the Lafayette Correctional Institute within 3 years of their release date on parole due to the space problem? Secretary Le Blanc replied, "Sure, he would like to utilize the vacant space he has seen at 2 newly constructed facilities - Lafayette and Terrebonne-Lafourche."

In addition, Secretary Le Blanc reported the Annual Report will be presented at the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Council Meeting. He was a little reluctant to discuss details in the report because everything had not been finalized and presented to the Oversight group; however, he assured everyone that he would send out an electronic copy to those in attendance. He stated that this is the first full year of operation and we are still implementing programs and services. The numbers look good and are still trending in the right direction. Also, Secretary Le Blanc mentioned the “carry forward” letter has been sent to the Commissioner and the Chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget asking to carryforward \$17.8 million from Fiscal Year 2019 to Fiscal Year 2020. He explained it will be a little different from last year - 30% goes to State General Fund, 70% remains with 20% going to Office of Juvenile Justice. Allotted funding of 70% (50% DOC, 20% Victims and 30% Community Grants). We can project about the same amount of money to allocate out to be available for next year. Secretary Le Blanc mentioned that Tier 2 parishes will be receiving money in the second year of funding for Justice Reinvestment; however, the challenge will be how to allocate the funding where it is most effective in those parishes.

Secretary Le Blanc reported that the Probation and Parole population is down from 72,896 to 60,509 with caseloads down from 143 to around 119 per officer. Those numbers continue to move in the right direction and enables the agents to spend time with people that need their time the most. Also, the prison population is on a steady decline, which is good. It has gone from roughly 40,170 to 31,756 at the end of June which accumulates into the savings that was mentioned earlier.

Lastly, Secretary Le Blanc mentioned he is in the process of discussing with Governor Edwards on possibly combining the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Council and the Reentry Advisory Council. He feels the two bodies are somewhat a duplication of efforts and this will require some legislative action if the decision is made to combine them. He concluded by saying that he wants everyone to be supportive of the process if the decision is made to combine the Justice Oversight Council and Reentry Advisory Council.

Approval of the January 2019 Meeting Minutes

Chairman Reine entertained a motion to adopt the January 2019 minutes. A motion to accept the minutes was put forward by Joseph Ardoin Jr. and second by, Judge Jules Edwards III and the minutes were unanimously adopted.

Justice Reinvestment Implementation Contracts Update & NOFA, Nicole George & Robert Vehock, DPS&C

Nicole George reported on the Community Investment grants stating that the Department is converting over to a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) opportunity verses a Request for Proposal (RFP). Essentially it is the same as an RFP, but the NOFA will allow the Department of Corrections to have more control over the document itself without having to go to the Office of State Procurement for every little change. Also, the NOFA will be easier for applicants to respond to and have fewer challenges. She stated the NOFA was released at the end of June and the written inquiries were due on July 17, 2019 and are now posted. NOFA applications are due on July 26, 2019 at 3:00 pm. It is Nicole’s hope that if everything goes as planned, the “Notice to Award” will go out by the end of August and have them executed by September/October 2019 depending on the contract negotiations.

Chairman Reine stated he had never heard of a NOFA. Nicole informed Chairman Reine that normally whenever you have a grant opportunity it is called a “Notice of Funding Opportunity” or “Notice of Funding Availability.” The terminology fluctuates, but essentially it is the same document depends on how the awarding group wants to word it. Chairman Reine also asked if there are any restrictions on the dollar amount that can be awarded. Nicole answered, a NOFA award amount is at the discretion of the awarding group. The amount awarded can be as low as \$2,000 or as high as \$2 million.

In addition, Nicole mentioned going forward this will be the new process. Every year participants can expect to have the NOFA come out mid-summer and be awarded early Fall.

Lastly, last year the EBR Parish contract was awarded to Capital Area Human Services District. They returned the funds, so an RFP was rereleased for EBR Parish. 3 applications were received and they are waiting for the Office of State Procurement to approve the awardee. Hopefully, they will be able to notify all applicants within 1-2 weeks.

Robert Vehock reported on the year 1 contracts. There are 10 active contracts from a Community Incentive perspective, with 4 more Judicial contracts. He and Courtney Dickerson continue to monitor these contracts. The Department of Corrections started referring participants for services in April. Since April, 115 participants have been referred for services and that number will continue to go up slightly before the end of the month to roughly 130. Also, 5 initial quarterly reports have been put together for those contracts that have had 3 months' of programmatic work done YTD. He and Courtney Dickerson continue to track performance measure for the end of year reports and evaluations. They also continue to stay in contact with contractors to discuss specifics of contracts/programs, ensuring that everyone understands expectations.

LCIW Restoration Furniture Restoration Apprenticeship, Dr. Henry Sanders, DPS&C

Dr. Sanders reported that DPS&C Education will be implementing a Furniture Restoration Apprenticeship. The program formerly known as an Upholstery Program for the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). The program has been brought up-to-date with a revamped curriculum. Some of the changes include: offender certified NCCR instructors (trained by master trainer, Dr. Sanders). NCCR CORE will be taught and NCCR Cabinet Making will be taught in the program. Dr. Sanders stated that he also looking for ways to tie in carpentry into the program. This apprenticeship is a natural fit, which is a great deal. The individual will make money while going to school. Once the program is complete, the individuals pay will increase and will leave the program with no college debt.

Asst. Secretary Rhett Covington stated that this is DPS&C Education second Apprenticeship Program. He wanted to make sure that we have the support of the Reentry Advisory Council.

Joseph Ardoin Jr. asked where this Apprenticeship Program will be taught.

Asst. Secretary Rhett Covington stated LCIW (the old Jetson Center) and also at Allen Correctional Center.

Secretary Le Blanc stated that it has been 3 years since DOC vacated the LCIW facility. Currently, the plans are that DOC will take whatever funds FEMA will give (somewhere in the \$38 million range) and rebuild LCIW in between where it is now and Hunt Correctional Center. It will have to be built up a little to keep it clear of flooding. If LCIW remained where the foundation currently is, a \$15 million wall would have to be built around it due to flooding. Total need to rebuild LCIW is roughly \$60 million.

Judge Edwards asked how long the Apprenticeship Program will be. Dr. Sanders stated the Apprenticeship Program will be an 18 month program. Chairman Reine asked Dr. Sanders why LCTCS dropped the program. Dr. Sanders stated that the instructor retired and they could not find a replacement.

Adult Reentry Employment Strategic Grant - (ARES) Grant, Robert Vehock, DPS&C

Robert Vehock stated that last year the DPS&C in collaboration with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) applied for the planning grant. The goal for applying for this grant was to reduce recidivism by improving employment of returning citizens. Robert reported that 11 states were awarded funding. Louisiana is 1 of 3 southern states awarded funding, in addition to Texas and Florida. The grant is intended to be a 12 month grant (September 2020), with a total funding amount of \$169,932. The money is intended for hiring/contracting with staff and getting a strong of strategic plan as possible. To date, they have contracted with Larry Andrews, K&L Management, LLC. Robert introduced Larry and mentioned that he previously worked for Louisiana Workforce Commission and has quite a bit experience in not only employment, but also grant writing and grant management. Robert explained the current plan in place is to complete the Strategic Plan by February 2020. The reason this is the target date is because he wants to be able to respond as soon as the Implementation Grant comes out. When the Implementation Grant comes

out, the only entities that can apply are the entities that have completed planning. The highest number of entities that are able to apply for this source of funding is 11 total. The implementation awards will be up to \$1 million each.

Robert stated that BJA and Council of State Governments have identified the foundation of where they want this planning grant to focus on:

- Establishment of a cross disciplinary executive level Steering Committee comprised of relevant leaders and administrators of relevant agencies to guide the strategic planning process.

Robert asked that this role be added to the Reentry Advisory Council. RAC will continue to look at the bigger issues and the things that the executive levels can start to handle. That will also work well with the second group, which is the cross disciplinary work group (planning and implementation), with guidance from the executive level group. Currently on this group, representatives from LABI, DOC, P&P, United Way of Southeast LA, NOLA BA, Workforce Commission and Prison Enterprises. Robert has also asked Goodwill Industries for some representation and asked that if anyone knows of someone who would be a positive impact on this group to please inform him. Chairman Reine volunteered Joseph Ardoin Jr.

In addition, another component is the completion of a comprehensive process analysis and systems mapping. There are certain things that BJA and Council State Governments have said are things that we need to be focused on:

- Risk/Needs and job readiness screenings beginning 3-36 months pre-release
- Program referrals
- Information sharing process
- Transitional planning protocols
- Inventory of existing capacity and alignment with best practices

Assistant Secretary Rhett Covington stated that this is a Planning Grant. All names will be shared of those who are currently serving in the group and all suggestions are welcomed on who can be added to the group.

Ann Zanders asked what Formerly Incarcerated Persons (FIPs) and direct service providers are on the committees. Also, would you consider entrepreneurship as one of their career ladder options in the Strategic Plan. Robert stated there are no FIPs on the committees at this time. Direct service providers, groups like United Way and Goodwill are the best examples of that right now.

Bishop Soule' newly appointed by the Governor for the first ever small business and entrepreneurship. He stated entrepreneurship is a viable pathway if it is done correctly.

Robert will email the ARES PowerPoint to those in attendance.

LA-PRI Implementation Steering Team, Asst. Secretary Rhett Covington, DPS&C

Assistant Secretary Rhett Covington reported that the LA-PRI stands for the Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative. It is a model that is based on the transition from prison to community national best practice model. He stated the Implementation Steering Team (IST) continues to meet on quarterly basis. All organizations serving on RAC should have some level of representation serving on one of the subcommittees. The responsibility of the IST is to help us implement a continuum of reentry services, looking at barriers/gaps and opportunities on the state level vs. local level. The groups are using a standard strategic framework that DOC have adopted based on Community Assessments, policies, regulations and statutes. As an example, the ARES Grant Project would fall under the Employment and Education working groups. He encouraged everyone to have representation as we move forward.

In addition, Assistant Secretary Covington introduced Corey Acosta, Assistant Director of Probation & Parole. Secretary Le Blanc asked all Reentry Program Manager to introduce themselves.

- Phil Adkins, Caddo (Telephone Conference)

- Kewana Cesar, Jefferson
- Carmen Coutee, Rapides (Telephone Conference)
- Renee Delouche, Lafayette
- Rebecca Ikner, Orleans
- Brad Nolan, Ouachita
- Mike Phelps, St. Tammany
- Stephanie Webb, East Baton Rouge
- Melissa Young, Lake Charles

Chairman Reine asked the Reentry Program Managers what are the biggest challenges they face, stumbling blocks and things that make their jobs more difficult.

Mike Phelps (St. Tammany) - Formerly Incarcerated Persons (FIPs) job placement without having reliable transportation.

Rebecca Ikner (Orleans) - the lack of affordable housing and transportation for FIPs.

Lastly, Assistant Secretary Covington reported that the Reentry Program Managers are a part of the local jurisdiction group. Providing some organization, structure and representation as it relates to the Criminal Justice system. Also, there are Community Coordinators who are contracted in 10 areas of the state to act as staff and help coordinate that efforts. The goal is to share best practices across the state and replicate successful models.

Other Business

Dr. Sanders reported on the Employer Advisory Committee. They held their first meeting on March 6, 2019 and a decision was made to tie it together with the Reentry Advisory Council (RAC) instead of making its own separate entity. Dr. Sanders provided everyone with a handout which included names of individuals in mind to serve on this committee. The mission of the Employer Advisory Committee is to advise the Reentry Advisory Council (RAC) and the Department of Public Safety & Corrections (DPS&C) regarding the continuum of factors that support the overall goal of developing in its population skills that will result in gainful employment and successful reentry, in order that they may support themselves and their families in a meaningful way, thus making it less likely they will re-offend, thereby improving public safety.

Assistant Secretary Covington asked Dr. Sanders to elaborate more on the vision of the Employer Advisory Committee for those on the phone who do not have a copy of the handout. Dr. Sanders stated the vision is to make sure that they have quality programs available and that they are able to tie those programs to industries that are in high demand.

Chairman Reine appointed the Employer Advisory Committee as a Subcommittee. He also appointed Reverend Paul R. Murray as Chairman, Joseph Ardoin Jr. and Sonya Williams to serve on the Employer Advisory Committee in addition to the list of names on the handout.

- Ken Naquin - Associated General Contractors, State Executive Director, Baton Rouge, LA
- Wayne Tyson - Turner Industries, Workforce Development Mgr., Baton Rouge, LA
- David Theriot - Performance Contractors, Inc., Workforce Development Mgr., Baton Rouge, LA
- Eric Lane - Gerry Lane Enterprises President, Baton Rouge, LA
- William (Bill) Hood - Bill Hood Automotive CEO, Amite, LA
- Greg Sizemore - Associated Builders & Contractors National, VP of Environmental, Health, Safety & Workforce Development, Washington, DC
- Tom Richardson - ASE VP of Governmental Affairs, Birmingham, AL
- Mike Stilley - S&B Engineering & Constructors, Director of Training & Workforce Development Houston, TX
- Dan Belcher - NCCER Workforce Development Director, Alachua, FL

- Randy Gueho - South Central Laborer's Training & Apprenticeship Fund, Central LA Technical College
- Tiffany J. Howard, MPA – Interim Campus Dean/Workforce Project Manager, Central Louisiana Technical Community College

Richard Pittman, designee for John T. Dixon, Louisiana Public Defender Board reported that John Dixon resigned his position and will be moving to take a job in Massachusetts. Mr. Pittman has been named interim State Public Defender.

James Windom, Reentry Alliance for Louisiana announced that he and Bishop E. Rene Soule' have been working with Dixon Correctional Institute (DCI) to establish a mentoring program for men. They will be utilizing the AMACHI model which will address the needs of children of incarcerated parents. The model will benefit the family as a whole. He introduced Bishop Soule' to speak to the components of the model due to his involvement with the program. Bishop E. Rene Soule' reported AMACHI is a program that came out in the mid 2000's that was run by public/private ventures. It was a reentry initiative on the federal level to address stemming the tide of children of incarcerated parents. It is a vetted model and is nationally used by a couple sites in Louisiana.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Chairman Louis Reine adjourned the meeting at 11:17 AM.

The next meeting will be held on October 17, 2019 at 9:30 AM at the *Department of Public Safety and Corrections Headquarters, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA.*