



STRATEGIC PLAN

FOR A WORKFORCE PIPELINE FOR INDIVIDUALS REENTERING MILWAUKEE, RACINE, KENOSHA AND WAUKESHA COUNTIES FROM INCARCERATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The nation's prison population continues to grow at an alarming rate and according to a recent PEW Center on the States report (*One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008*) for the first time more than one in every 100 adults is now confined in an American jail or prison. Of equal concern is the increasing number of individuals returning to the community each month. Between 1990 and 2003 Wisconsin has experienced an unprecedented increase of over 300% in the number of adult offenders released from prison and from 2001 - 2007 the Department averaged over 8,000 releases to the community annually. Over this six-year period 25,250 individuals were released to Milwaukee County. If recent trends continue more than a third (38.7%) of the individuals released from prison in Wisconsin will return to prison within three years of release.

The ability to obtain a job that provides a family supporting wage and the appropriate supportive services gives individuals returning to the community the best chance of not returning to prison. The primary purpose of this Strategic Plan is to create a workforce pipeline that helps individuals returning to Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha and Waukesha Counties prepare for employment in *export driver* and emerging industries. The Regional Workforce Alliance of Southwestern Wisconsin (RWA) notes that these industries not only offer family supporting wages, but also are expected to grow and be the best source of employment for the future. The Plan identifies RWA as a key player in the implementation and subsequent success of this planning effort.

Planning Process

The Planning Process included 37 participants, invited by Wisconsin Community Services Inc., from the private sector, community-based organizations and government entities from the four county regions. Three planning sessions were held and a fourth session was scheduled to review a draft of the strategic planning document. The initial planning session included a SWOT analysis. Preparation of the plan was funded (in part) by the Department of Labor Employment and Training WIRED grant, awarded to Wisconsin Community Services Inc. A list of participants is included in Appendix A.

Goals and Objectives

The plan establishes the following goals and recommends specific actions that can be taken to achieve each goal:

- 1. Bridge the gap between employer needs and workforce needs and link workforce development services to driver export and emerging industry needs.*
- 2. Implement a skills training, job placement and job creation program for individuals returning to the community from incarceration, with special emphasis on export driver and emerging industry needs.*

3. *Create a demand driven menu of workforce support services.*
4. *Organize a reentry collaborative in Milwaukee County, which can be expanded to Racine, Kenosha and Waukesha Counties.*

Implementation

Goal 4 calls for the creation of a **Reentry Collaborative** to implement the plan and includes the following actions:

- ◆ *Identify public agencies, community based organizations and employers that should be a part of a Reentry Collaborative*
- ◆ *Convene a meeting of Collaborative members to form a working group, which will determine structure and responsibilities of the collaboration and how it will be coordinated and staffed.*
- ◆ *Take steps to ensure that the formation and subsequent operations of the Collaborative includes employers and former correctional inmates.*
- ◆ *Develop a plan of operations, which outlines the Collaborative's method of referral and case management approach.*
- ◆ *Develop an implementation schedule that includes measurable short-term and long-term outcomes.*

Planning process participants have asked and Wisconsin Community Services has agreed to take the lead and introduce this Plan to the Department of Corrections and coordinate implementation of the Plan.

Planning Resources

Appendix C includes reentry models and studies that were consulted to develop this Plan. These resources can also be used to help implement the recommendations of the Plan.

INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin Community Services Inc., received an Innovative Exploration Grant from Wisconsin Regional Economic Development (WIRED) to prepare a *Strategic Plan* to develop a ***Workforce Pipeline Design for People Re-entering Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha and Waukesha Counties from Incarceration***. The primary intent of this plan and what makes it unique is its focus on getting individuals returning from incarceration involved in export driver and emerging industries in the seven county region. These are employment opportunities that are expected to grow and will be the best source of well paying, new jobs for the future.

This planning process is based on the premise that these individuals will need to be trained, preferably before they return to the community, to be most successful. This will require that training during incarceration will need to meet the needs of export driver industry employers. Critical to the success of this plan is the implementation of the Department of Correction's Reentry Initiative, which can offer new training and educational options. Similarly, this planning effort calls for the appropriate training at the local level for returning individuals who were not able to obtain the necessary training while incarcerated.

The plan also calls for a level of cooperation and integration of a wide range of existing services that will best benefit the returning individual, when they are better coordinated. A 2006 study, *The Milwaukee Workforce Development Landscape Report* by the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Center for Workforce Development found that there are more than 100 agencies and organizations that provide some level of workforce development services and notes that...*There was almost unanimous agreement that there was a vacuum of leadership in local workforce development efforts*. The report goes on to say, *Effective coordination of services throughout the system is essential to realize the goal of a high quality regional workforce sustained by engaged employers and public and private investment in training*.

It is important to note the parameters of this strategic plan. Its focus is primarily on getting individuals returning to the community into jobs that offer a family supporting wage, require specific skills that may not be offered in the prison system at this time and are in industries that may have limited experience working with individuals who have been incarcerated. It does not provide a comprehensive offering of options for individuals returning to the community, regardless of their level of training or educational achievement. It does call for a centralized workforce development and training center that could be equipped to serve anyone returning to the community regardless of their level of preparation or work experience.

It is also important to note that for the most part the reentry activities recommended and supported by this plan targets younger individuals returning to the community. Not included in this population are the older inmates who may have more and certainly different supportive service needs than younger individuals and may be even less employable due to their age. Planning process participants were concerned that the

needs of this group may be ignored and strongly recommend that the Department of Corrections Reentry Initiative should lend more specific attention to the reentry needs of older inmates.

PART 1 - THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The *Strategic Planning Process* conducted to prepare this plan considered both current and future employer and workforce needs. The current reentry system was analyzed and how the system can be more effective was explored.

The Planning Process included 37 participants, invited by Wisconsin Community Services Inc., from the private sector, community-based organizations and government entities from a four county area, including Milwaukee, Racine, Kenosha and Waukesha Counties. Three planning sessions were held and a fourth session was scheduled to review a draft of the strategic planning document. (See Appendix A for a list of participants)

The work sessions covered the following:

- Session 1.** The planning process began with an environmental scan of the current re-entry system and a review of reentry initiatives from around the country. (See Appendix B for a list of the initiatives and programs reviewed). A key task of the initial group session was a *SWOT analysis*, which examined the current re-entry system's Strengths and Weaknesses and external Opportunities and Threats. *Critical issues*, which must be considered and addressed to design an effective re-entry system, were identified in this session and are presented in Part 1. Held on November 7, 2008.
- Session 2.** In the second planning session participants initiated work on the development of a strategy for the successful reentry of incarcerated individuals. This strategy includes measurable goals and objectives and specific outcomes that may be achieved through specific action steps. An implementation schedule was also considered. The information gained and work completed in this session was used to prepare the draft of the Plan. Held on December 5, 2008.
- Session 3.** Goals and objectives were refined in this session for production of a draft of the Strategic Plan and a fourth session is planned for a final review of the draft. Held on January 16, 2009.
- Session 4.** A draft of the plan was reviewed and refined to prepare the final draft of the plan. Held on January 13, 2009.

The Reentry System

On July 18, 2008 there were 22,797 adult offenders incarcerated in Wisconsin's prison and according to the State's Department of Corrections 97% of these individuals will one day complete their prison time and be released to the community. In fact, between 1990 and 2003 Wisconsin has experienced an unprecedented increase of over 300% in the number of adult offenders released from prison. From 2001 - 2007 the Department

averaged over 8,000 releases to the community annually and during this six-year period 25,250 individuals were released to Milwaukee County. Between 1980 and 2003 recidivism (the percentage of offenders who committed a new crime resulting in a new conviction, within three years of release from prison) was 38.7 %.

Current recidivism rates are explained by a range of educational and training limitations and related challenges that characterize the prison population in Wisconsin. According to Department of Corrections data, 47% of inmates lack either a high school diploma or equivalent, 49% read below the ninth grade level and 74% perform math below the ninth grade level. This data also indicates that 70% of inmates entering the adult prison system in Wisconsin have alcohol or drug abuse treatment needs, 8 to 10 percent are seriously mentally ill and 24% are on clinical monitoring for mental health needs.

Two recent studies provide some insight into the current status of individuals returning to the Milwaukee area—the primary focus of this strategic planning effort. A 2007 study conducted by UWM Employment and Training Institute focused on an inner city neighborhood that has served as a... *bellwether for poverty changes in Milwaukee and nationally*. The study found what it termed...*staggeringly high rates of incarceration (and recidivism) for the male population...* in this neighborhood, citing the following statistics:

- ◆ *Since 1993, the number of individuals being released from state adult correctional facilities in zip code 53206 has grown dramatically from 201 in 1993 to 879 in 2005 a 336% increase. Many subsequently return to prison.*
- ◆ *For most major crime areas, the numbers released each year in 53206 have tripled, although for individuals charged with “drug offenses only” the numbers have increased at an even higher rate (a 493% increase from 1993 to 2005).*
- ◆ *The number of individuals serving time and released after incarceration for “drug offenses only” has increased five-fold, from 43 in 1993 to 255 in 2005 (and another 105 in the first half of 2006).*

A 2007 study, *Barriers to Employment: Prison Time* by John Pawasarat, University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, estimated that 2,506 individuals are now living in this inner city neighborhood (Zip code 53206) that were previously incarcerated in state Department of Corrections facilities. All but 273 of these individuals are men and nearly all (97%) are African American.

This study revealed that this population faced a range of barriers including the following:

- ◆ *High recidivism rates of 53% were found for those ages 25 through 29 and 53% for those ages 30 through 34. Thus, over half return to state correctional facilities one or more times.*

- ♦ *Low levels of educational achievement were shown, with 63% having less than 12 years of schooling and no degree, 19% with a GED or high school equivalency credential, 11% with a high school diploma and no college, and 7% with postsecondary education beyond high school. Government policies instituted for the population of felons with drug-related convictions may prevent many from obtaining Pell grants to attend vocational education classes, college, and other post-secondary education programs.*
- ♦ *Almost none (i.e., only 4%) of the released population living in 53206 had a driver's license with no suspensions or revocations.*

It comes as no surprise that one of the primary recommendations of this study was:

- ♦ *The DOC should assess the driver's license status of prisoners immediately upon their entry to the DOC facilities as part of an employability plan to target those most likely to benefit from license restoration initiatives.*
- ♦ *This need can be addressed by the Increase offender opportunities for employment objective of DOC's Reentry Business Plan.*

Other barriers cited in the Pawasarat study include housing barriers that may prohibit residency in subsidized housing and income maintenance barriers, which are most severe for individuals with drug convictions, which make them ineligible for food Stamps or TANF services.

These statistics and the opinions provided by the experienced individuals who participated in the SWOT analysis support the need for an effective workforce development pipeline for individuals returning to the Milwaukee area and identify the most important issues and circumstances this effort should address.

The subsequent design of an effective reentry pipeline can also be aided by the experience of other communities around the country and a wealth of reentry models and studies (See Appendix C). Research has shown, in fact, that recidivism can be reduced substantially when individuals returning to the community are able to obtain employment. For example, this notion is clearly supported by the success of the *Workforce Development Initiative* of the Federal Probation's Eastern District of Missouri. Since enactment of the Initiative in 2001... *the re-arrest rate for offenders under the district's supervision decreased to 14.9 percent in July 2007, significantly less than the 67.5 percent reported nationally.* Similarly, a *Loyola University 3-year study shows that participants who attain and keep employment through Safer (Foundation) for 30 days had a 67% lower risk of being returned to prison as compared to all Illinois Department of Correction releases.*

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was conducted during the initial planning session with participants, who were asked to indicate what they believe to be the most important *Strengths*, *Weaknesses* or *Concerns* related to the current reentry system and the external *Opportunities* and *Threats* to the efficient and effective performance of this system. Twenty-Five participants, representing state and local government entities, workforce development agencies, community-based organizations and former correctional inmates took part in the exercise (See Appendix for list of participants). The results of this session are presented in this section of the plan. A summary of participant responses is provided, along with the actual responses offered.

Summary of Participant Responses

Strengths:

Strengths identified in the SWOT analysis represent things we can build on when designing and implementing a more effective workforce pipeline for reentry. These are aspects of the existing system that should be retained and improved if necessary.

The one strength of the existing reentry system that was identified by more SWOT analysis participants than any other was *an abundance of resourceful partners including community based organizations and public and private sector officials*. A weakness related to this strength, however, is that the services and support offered by these agencies is not as well known, as they should be. A number of participants noted that they were not entirely knowledgeable of the services other agencies and organizations offered.

The *changing philosophy both at the federal and state levels* was noted, which in each case, according to participants, has resulted in more support for reentry activities. For example, a federal correctional official noted that there is now more emphasis on keeping released individuals on the street and a parolee can now work jobs that were not allowed in the past and education and training can now be pursued instead of a job.

A State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections official points out that the Department has launched a Strategic Reentry Initiative, which...*reflects a change in philosophy and a change in how we do business at every level*. The Department has also developed a Reentry Business Plan to implement this initiative.

Another strength identified by a number of participants, and one that this effort can build on are *evidence-based programs*. A similar number of participants also noted that *bonding* is available, but most job seekers and employers were not aware of it. Participants felt that there needs to be more awareness and utilization of these programs.

Participants noted that while there is need for a lot more job development for reentering individuals, there are *a number of employers that are on board* and that these

relationships should be nurtured and used to expand job development activities and create a *regional job bank for those reentering the community*.

Concerns:

The number of weaknesses or concerns expressed by participants outnumbered the number of strengths participants identified. This is to be expected since a primary objective of this strategic planning process is to determine what's wrong with the current system. It is important to note, however, that expressed weaknesses should not be viewed as criticism, but as concerns that should be addressed in order to improve the system. More important, this information, along with a review of available data related to the performance of the current activities allows us to separate perception from reality and better understand what needs to be fixed, eliminated or left alone. For example, existing training may be considered inadequate or outdated if it does not result in a family supporting job. This may be the perception but further investigation (including a review of appropriate data) into why trained individuals are not getting hired may reveal that not getting hired may have more to do with the lack of sound job development or the need to enhance certain job readiness skills that have little to do with training.

A key concern expressed was *pre-release activities were not effective*. Participants noted that individuals returning to the community need to be better prepared for the world of work and one participant felt that job fairs were not effective. Some participants noted however that *preparedness is not just a matter of acquiring job skills while incarcerated, but also a matter of improving one's attitude and soft skills*. A related concern was that there were not enough incentives offered to encourage lifestyle changes.

Related concerns expressed were, what's really lacking is *comprehensive training* and the *reentry activity timeline is too short and this does not allow enough time for some inmates to fully benefit from these services before release*. The strategic planning process will need to understand the extent to which inmates are taking advantage of available reentry services and how they have benefited from this preparation.

Another important concern was the *lack of communication and coordination among reentry partners* and related concerns included *over lapping services and duplication of effort* and a *lack of coordinated employer relationships and job development training for provider staff*.

A key concern that must be addressed in the strategic planning process, if this effort is to result in a more effective reentry pipeline is that *there were no employers participating in the SWOT Analysis*.

Opportunities and Threats:

Items in these two categories are external and are typically beyond the control of reentry stakeholders. They may be influenced, however, by stakeholders through an organized

effort, such an appeal to elected officials to provide more funding and more adequate oversight of funds earmarked for reentry.

Unlike the somewhat random lists of participant assessment of the *Strengths* and *Weaknesses* of current reentry activities the *Opportunities* and *Threats* responses have been organized to illustrate that more often than not, for every external threat there are opportunities to address them.

For example, a consensus *threat* to an effective reentry system is the *worsening economy*. Events (opportunities) that could help improve the economy and have a positive impact on the reentry system are the new administration in Washington and new political leadership at the state level.

A number of participants believe that the *lack of family supporting jobs* is the greatest threat to a more effective reentry effort. Opportunities identified that may address this threat are the aging of the workforce, which will allow for more employment opportunities for individuals who are not now in the workforce. A related threat is employers unwilling to hire offenders. An opportunity identified by SWOT Analysis participants that could address this threat is the use of incentives for employers to hire former inmates. Another stated opportunity, which may be more appropriately categorized as a strength is *Partners for Success* working with employers to market reentering individuals.

One other threat expressed by a number of participants was the “bad” environment that most incarcerated individuals will return to. An opportunity, which could help reentering individuals overcome this threat is *mentoring by successful former inmates*.

One final opportunity, which I believe should be afforded some attention is *more brainstorming sessions on reentry*. This opportunity, which may also be viewed as a strength, should be a key element of the new workforce pipeline.

Summary:

A wide range of useful responses was provided by the SWOT analysis and can be used to develop a more effective workforce pipeline for individuals returning to the community from incarceration. Several key themes, however, are worth restating. In regards to the *Strengths* we can build on the work of a number of community based organizations that are providing needed support to returning individuals. Equally significant is the change in philosophy at both the federal and state levels with more attention being given to reentry. Evidence based programs were also identified along with employers that *are* hiring individuals returning to the community.

There were a number of *Concerns* expressed, which provide opportunities for improving how incarcerated individuals are prepared for release. The concerns related to educational and training needs identify areas that the strategic planning process will need to focus on and better understand in order to develop an effective approach to reentry.

This segment of the SWOT analysis also identified what incarcerated individuals need to do personally to be more successful and avoid a return to incarceration. A critical concern, which must be addressed in the strategic planning process, is the need to involve employers in the design of the workforce pipeline.

The need for improved communications and coordination among service providers at all levels was clearly articulated in the responses. Addressing this concern will be key to the subsequent success of the new workforce pipeline.

A review of external opportunities and threats revealed that many of the threats identified could be mitigated by corresponding opportunities. For example, a number of participants felt that the worsening economy and shortage of family supporting jobs for those returning to the community from incarceration might improve with a new administration in Washington and new political leadership at the state level. Participants also believe that mentoring by successful former inmates may minimize the influence of the “bad” environment many individuals return to.

PART 2 - GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps for an Effective Workforce Pipeline

The environmental scan, including the SWOT analysis has confirmed a number of the assumptions that went into the decision and subsequent support for the development of an effective workforce pipeline for people reentering the community from incarceration. More specifically, this information supports the following goals and objectives that have evolved from the strategic planning process:

Training and Educational Goals

Goal 1: Bridge the gap between employer needs and workforce needs and link workforce development services to driver export and emerging industry needs.

To be most successful individuals returning to the community from incarceration must have or be able to obtain employment soon after release. These individuals stand the best chance of employment if they have the appropriate skills for employment—that is skills that meet the needs of those employers who are hiring, including driver export and emerging industries. Individuals entering the correctional system that are not trained need to obtain the appropriate skills during incarceration.

In spite of the best efforts of Corrections personnel some individuals will return to the community without job skills and will need to be trained. Community-based and on the job training opportunities need to be available for these individuals if they are to obtain employment that provides family supporting wages and help avoid a return to prison.

Objective 1: Identify Driver Export and Emerging Industries and determine their needs.

The action items associated with this objective will identify those industries that offer the best opportunity for employment. Individuals returning to the community must have the skills needed to work in these industries or must acquire these skills sooner after release.

Action Items:

- 1.1. Confer with the Regional Workforce Alliance (RWA) of the Milwaukee 7 Initiative, employers and other workforce development personnel to determine employer needs.
- 1.2. Develop an inventory of employer needs that can be shared with Corrections, local officials, community based organizations and others.
- 1.3. Work with local officials, including RWA and employers to develop on-the-job training opportunities that supplement existing job training programs.

- 1.4. Work with the appropriate local and state officials to develop incentives (i.e., tax abatement and training wage supports) for employers to hire individuals returning to the community.

Wisconsin Community Services Inc., should take the lead, or co-lead the effort to convene an initial meeting with the Regional Workforce Alliance and key workforce development personnel to identify employers are willing to confer with state and local officials who need to better understand their needs.

These action items can be used to launch the Pipeline Initiative, because they represent the primary objective of the proposed workforce pipeline, which is to get individuals returning to the community into good paying (export driver jobs) that offer the best chance for employment in the future.

To be most effective at least one new or existing WCS staff person should be dedicated to helping implement this and other action items related to establishing a workforce pipeline for individuals returning to the community from incarceration.

Objective 2: Work with DOC to develop an inventory of training and educational programs offered by DOC to incarcerated individuals, determine how they measure up to employer needs and how existing programs may better meet these needs.

In 2008 Wisconsin Department of Corrections instituted a Reentry Business Plan, which provides...*a comprehensive strategy that, maps the course for the (Department's) Reentry Initiative over the next several years.* DOC describes the Business Plan further as a dynamic document that will guide the department as new reentry strategies are implemented and higher goals are achieved and promises to...*Continue to review and update the plan with the active involvement of our staff and community stakeholders...* This important objective and proposed action items provide the context for a cooperative working relationship between DOC and the implementers of this plan to help ensure that the objectives of these planning efforts are consistent.

Action Items:

- 2.1. Confer with Department of Corrections to better understand the Department's Reentry Initiative and related activities and compile an inventory of training and educational programs offered to incarcerated individuals.
- 2.2. Share employer needs information with DOC and determine how training available during incarceration measures up to these needs.
- 2.3. Work with Corrections to help bridge the gap between employer needs and workforce needs.

Goal 2: Implement a skills training, job placement and job creation program for individuals returning to the community from incarceration, with special emphasis on export driver and emerging industry needs.

This goal recognizes that regardless to how available training may be in the prison system, many individuals will not take advantage of this training and will need to be trained after they return to the community. In addition, the work they have trained for may not be available upon their return and alternative training and employment options will be needed.

Going to Work with a Criminal Record (one of a number of recommended efforts from around the country that this initiative should consider when working out the details of an effective workforce pipeline) points out that family supporting full-time employment is the goal, but transitional or temporary jobs (and the appropriate training) may be the first step to steady employment for those return from incarceration with limited work experience and/or marketable skills.

Training Service Goals

Training

An effective workforce pipeline must take advantage of existing workforce training and employment services. The Milwaukee 7 Economic Strategy notes...*Wisconsin was the first state in the nation to establish a vocational educational system and it is still regarded as one of the best. Each of the four technical colleges serving the area – the Gateway Technical College, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Moraine Park Technical College and Waukesha County Technical College – has an extensive workforce-training program.*

The following objective includes steps that take advantage of these training opportunities.

Training Objective: Develop an inventory of skill training opportunities available to individuals returning to the community and determine how they measure up to employer needs.

Action Items:

- 1.1 Identify training opportunities that will prepare returning individuals for employment, with special emphasis on training that meets the needs of export driver and emerging businesses.
- 1.2 Determine the availability of apprenticeship opportunities and how individuals returning to the community can participate in these training opportunities
- 1.3. Determine the availability of training stipends for individuals returning to the community from incarceration.

- 1.4 Work with RWA personnel and local skill training schools and programs to maximize participation in local training programs.
- 1.5 Confer and work with the RWA to help ensure that individual returning from incarceration will be included in its talent development strategy, including efforts to improve prospective employees' soft skills.

Job Placement

Job Placement Objective: Establish a central job placement center for individuals returning to the community, with special emphasis on export driver, emerging industries and other skilled job offerings.

Action Items:

- 2.1 Assess current job placement services for individuals returning to the community and identify those services that best meet the needs of both individuals returning to the community and employers.
- 2.2 Determine how a new placement program could best meet the needs of those returning from incarceration.
- 2.3 Determine the training needs of personnel staffing the central placement center and identify how needed training can be secured.
- 2.4 Confer with employment services, workforce development and community corrections personnel on the final design of a placement center.

Job Creation

Job Creation Objective: Explore how individuals returning to the community can start new businesses that will create new jobs.

Many individuals returning to the community have skills and job experience that can be used to start a new business. Restaurant and catering, construction subcontracting, auto repair, commercial cleaning and lawn care are a few of the possibilities. New, small businesses (which account for two - thirds of all jobs nationwide) can provide stable jobs for the business owner and employees. These new businesses, operated by individuals who have been incarcerated, should be more willing to hire others returning to the community from prison.

Action Items:

- 3.1 Convene a business development task force, which includes Community Corrections officials and agencies that provide business start up support, such as

UW Extension Small Business Development Center and Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation.

- 3.2 Confer and work with M 7 Regional Workforce Alliance personnel focusing on Minority and Inner City Business Development.

Support Service Goals

Goal 3: Create a demand driven menu of workforce support services

Supportive services are important to the success of individuals returning to the community. DOC's Reentry Initiative stresses the importance of meeting basic needs, including stable residence, food, clothing and health care and has established the following goal which is consistent with this plan's emphasis in this area—*Assure that interventions, programs and services available to offenders within institutions and in the community are evidence-based...*

Objective 1: Identify available workforce support services including housing, child support, substance abuse, transportation, drivers licenses reinstatement and other support services.

Action Items:

- 1.1. Identify and assess available support services for individuals returning to the community.
- 1.2. Develop a directory of available services, which indicates how each service can be accessed and any special requirements for assistance.
- 1.3. Create a web site that includes the service directory and provides related information on topic related to problems individuals returning to the community will face.
- 1.4. Support and encourage greater involvement of mentoring programs.

Objective 2: Work to get local support agencies involved with incarcerated individuals well in advance of release.

This objective and action items supports the notion that an effective reentry strategy begins at the moment an offender enters the correctional system and continues until the point of discharge, a core principle of Department of Correction's recently adopted reentry strategy.

Action Items:

- 2.1 Confer and collaborate with Department of Correction officials to allow community-based service providers to begin work with inmates early in their stay in a correctional facility.
- 2.2 Work with Corrections officials to determine the most appropriate time to initiate various services to inmates.

Organizational and Implementation Goals

Goal 4: Organize a reentry collaborative in Milwaukee County, which can be expanded to Racine, Kenosha and Waukesha Counties.

The reentry collaborative would provide the leadership and coordination needed to design, implement and manage an effective workforce pipeline, which builds on and replicates three Milwaukee-area initiatives that have been in process for more than three years.

The first is an initiative encouraged by the Annie Casey Foundation called Making Connections-Milwaukee, which brings together the **Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, Wisconsin Community Services, the New Hope Project, Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, Project Return, the Kaiser Group, Esperanza, Milwaukee careers cooperative, and several employers** to facilitate re-entry employment services for ex-offenders.

The second is an initiative supported by the US Department of Justice, called Safe Neighborhoods, which is an anti-gang and prison re-entry effort that partners **Wisconsin Community Services with such institutions as Marquette University, the Greater Milwaukee Committee, the Rotary Club, the Medical College of Wisconsin, Word of Hope Ministries, Kaiser Group, courts and law enforcement** to intervene with, and prevent young people ages 16-24 years from becoming involved with gangs and violence through social services and employment programs.

The third initiative is an unfunded collaborative of *30 agencies including workforce development programs, employers, community agencies, law enforcement and correctional facilities*. It is called Partnership for Success. It hosted a first-time resource fair with employers and community agencies in the Milwaukee County House of Corrections and meets the needs of both employers and ex-offenders.

Objectives 1: Organize Reentry Collaborative

Action Items:

- 1.1 Identify public agencies, community based organizations and employers that should be a part of a reentry collaborative, including the Wisconsin Department

of Corrections, Wisconsin Department of Workforce development, Milwaukee Workforce Investment Board and the Mayor's office, Employment and Training Institute, elected officials UW-Milwaukee, Milwaukee Police Department, Wisconsin Community Services, and others serving individuals returning to the community and create a Reentry Collaborative to implement the Strategic Plan.

- 1.2 Convene a meeting of Collaborative members to form a working group, which will determine structure and responsibilities of the collaboration and how it will be coordinated and staffed.
- 1.3 Take steps to ensure that the formation and subsequent operations of the collaborative includes employers and former correctional inmates.

This Action Item is critical to the subsequent success of the workforce pipeline this plan proposes. The Milwaukee Workforce Development Landscape Report, prepared for The Wisconsin Council on Workforce Investment by UWM Center for Workforce Development concludes:

Employers must become actively engaged in workforce development. Employers are the driving force of our economy. They have the jobs. Engaging employers and coordinating workforce development efforts around employer needs will only enhance the overall opportunities for potential and incumbent workers in our region.

- 1.4 Develop a plan of operations, which outlines the collaborative's method of referral and case management approach.
- 1.5 Develop an implementation schedule that includes measurable short-term and long-term outcomes. (Some possible outcome are provided in Section to follow)
- 1.6 Consider National Offender Workforce Development Partnership resources, including Offender Workforce Development Training and Partnership Development assistance.

Objective 2: Expand reentry collaborative into Racine, Kenosha and Waukesha Counties.

Action Items:

- 2.1 Convene a meeting with workforce development personnel and employers from Racine, Kenosha and Waukesha counties to determine how reentry collaborative can be expand to these areas.
- 2.2 Share the Milwaukee experience with the expansion areas and help tailor specific reentry activities to their local circumstances.

Expected Outcomes

The following expected outcomes were generated in the preparation of the application for the grant that funds the preparation of this strategic plan and can be used to gauge the subsequent success of the proposed workforce pipeline for individuals returning to the community from incarceration.

1. Improved Reentry Training and Services

- ◆ *More job ready individuals returning to the community*
- ◆ *More diverse skilled trades workforce*
- ◆ *More individuals returning to the community with jobs or employed within 30 days of release*
- ◆ *Fewer individuals returning to prison*

2. Improved Urban Communities

- ◆ *Fewer returning individuals committing new crimes and returning to prison*
- ◆ *Reduced crime rate*
- ◆ *Reduction in violence*

PART 3 - IMPLEMENTATION

Getting Started: Initiating Implementation of the Plan

Planning process participants felt strongly that this plan should be formally presented to the Department of Corrections and State Legislators to help ensure that these officials are aware of the plan and more important, to gain their support of the core provisions of the Plan. Participants also encouraged Wisconsin Community Service Inc. to take the lead in helping to implement this plan and convene the meeting with Corrections officials to introduce and discuss implementation of the plan.

WCS has agreed to assume this responsibility and introduce the plan to Corrections officials. A key topic of discussion will be the important role the Department of Corrections must play to help ensure the success of this effort, which is consistent with and supports the core objectives of the Department's *Reentry Initiative*. Other planning process participants have agreed to introduce the plan to Legislators and solicit their support for the plan.

How specific features of the Plan can be implemented is outlined in the *Organizational and Implementation Goal*, in Part 2. This goal calls for the creation of a **Reentry Collaborative** to implement the Strategic Plan and recommends the following actions:

- ◆ *Identify public agencies, community based organizations and employers that should be a part of a Reentry Collaborative*
- ◆ *Convene a meeting of Collaborative members to form a working group, which will determine structure and responsibilities of the collaboration and how it will be coordinated and staffed.*
- ◆ *Take steps to ensure that the formation and subsequent operations of the Collaborative includes employers and former correctional inmates.*
- ◆ *Develop a plan of operations, which outlines the Collaborative's method of referral and case management approach.*
- ◆ *Develop an implementation schedule that includes measurable short-term and long-term outcomes.*

APPENDIX

- A. PARTICIPANTS**
- B. SWOT ANALYSIS RESPONSES**
- C. RESOURCES**

APPENDIX A - PARTICIPANTS

WIRED REENTRY PLANNING SESSIONS PARTICIPANTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>County</u>
Altizer, Will	Americans for Dem Action	Statewide
Badger, Richard	State Senator Lena Taylor	Milwaukee
Boatwright, Mark	Racine Vocational Ministry	Racine
Brown, Darrell	Former inmate	Milwaukee
Coates, Julius	WCS Parsons House	Milwaukee
Crane, Catrina	Menomonee Valley	Milwaukee
Crockett, Marie	Genesis Behavioral, Inc.	Milwaukee
Full, Terri	Federal Probation and Parole	Milwaukee
Gray, Valentino	Former inmate	Milwaukee
Harris, Mark	Former inmate	Milwaukee
James, Frank	Racine Vocational Ministry	Racine
Johnson, Torre	WCS PSN-GRP	Milwaukee
Jordan, Jordan	Former inmate	Milwaukee
Kehoss, Kristy	WI DOC-Safe Streets Initiative	Milwaukee
Kollat, Mary Kay	WI DOC	Statewide
Kubsiak, Joe	Safe & Sound	Milwaukee
Lange, Bill	Bill Lange and Associates	Waukesha and Milwaukee
Lopez, Joceyln	Attic Correctional Services	Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine, Kenosha
Luzaj, Rebecca	Waukesha County Criminal Justice Council	Waukesha
Moore, Tony	Birds of A Feather	Racine
Nitz, James	Kaiser Group, Inc.	Waukesha
Petty, William	Former inmate	Milwaukee
Sanders, Welford	MLKEDC/UWM	Milwaukee
Schatzman, James	Racine Vocational Ministry	Racine
Scott, Rose	Prison Action Milwaukee	Milwaukee
Sherard, Andre	WCS PSN-GRP	Milwaukee
Sewell, James	PSN	Milwaukee
Sims, Regina	New Concept's Mentoring Connection	Milwaukee
Smiter, Stecey	Former inmate	Milwaukee
Starks, Tiffany	State Rep. Tamara Grigbsy	Milwaukee
Thompson, Lizzie	Prison Action Milwaukee	Milwaukee
Turner, Rebecca	CJCC	Waukesha
White, Wallace	W2EXCEL, LLC	Milwaukee
Welch, Barbara	Kenosha County Job Center	Kenosha
Williams S., Gregory	Veterans Administration	Milwaukee
Williams T., Gregory	WCS	Milwaukee
Yang, Jack	Word of Hope	Milwaukee

APPENDIX B - SWOT ANALYSIS RESPONSES

The following are participant responses from the SWOT Analysis. Responses provided by more than one participant are noted by a number in parenthesis, which indicates the frequency of a given response.

Strengths:

- ◆ Existing community partners (9)
- ◆ Bonding available but not well known or utilized (4)
- ◆ Evidence based programs (that work) and related supportive programs are in place, but not well known (4)
- ◆ Deferred prosecution and treatment instead of confinement (2)
- ◆ National reentry models
- ◆ Community based organizations have resources available, need to redefine
- ◆ Change in culture and values in Federal system:
 - *More emphasis on keeping individual on the street*
 - *Social support redefined, now a realization that certain contacts will occur*
 - *Individuals can now work jobs that were not allowed in the past*
 - *Education and training can now be pursued instead of a job*
- ◆ Changing philosophy and the way things are done within Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC):
 - *Greater attention to preparing inmates for reentry, beginning at point of intake*
 - *DOC now provides incentives to encourage inmates participation in reentry activities*
 - *DOC Strategic Reentry Initiative and Business Plan*
- ◆ Supportive Parole agents
- ◆ Temporary employment services, can be of benefit
- ◆ Law enforcement willingness to change
- ◆ Probation officers who take an interest in released individuals
- ◆ Employers now on board
- ◆ People willing to work together
- ◆ More general awareness that we must help people reintegrate back into community.
- ◆ More funding available for reentry
- ◆ Dedicated professionals

- ◆ Faith based programs

Concerns and Perceptions:

- ◆ Pre-release activities not effective (7):
 - *Individuals returning to community need to be better prepared for world of work*
 - *Job fairs need to be more effective*
 - *Returning individuals need more resources, more appropriate training and better attitude*
 - *Returning individuals need state identification and/or driver's license*
- ◆ Many in Federal system still “old school” and old “got you” attitudes still exist
- ◆ Need better understanding and consensus on what is acceptable employment
- ◆ Temporary employment services
- ◆ On line training not available
- ◆ Media
- ◆ Not enough evidence-based programs
- ◆ Lack of communication, more emphasis on negative than positive issues
- ◆ Need more and better data and better measurement tools
- ◆ Lack of incentives provided to inmates to encourage change of lifestyle
- ◆ Lack of communication and coordination among partners
- ◆ Not enough family and community support
- ◆ Old values
- ◆ Values and attitudes of returning individuals
- ◆ Trust between clients, correctional officials and service providers
- ◆ Lack of comprehensive training
- ◆ Over promise/under deliver
- ◆ Too much red tape
- ◆ Reentry activity timeline too short, not enough reentry before release
- ◆ Discrimination
- ◆ Lack of coordinated employer relationships and job development training for provider staff
- ◆ Systematic and consistent work readiness training and certification is lacking
- ◆ Not enough vocational opportunities
- ◆ No employers at the table

- ◆ Attitude of public, individuals and employers need to improve
- ◆ Over lapping services and duplication of effort
- ◆ No network directory, opportunities not published
- ◆ Lack of communication with P&P Agents
- ◆ Lack of coordination of internal and external reentry activities
- ◆ Need more options for reintegrating offenders back into society

Opportunities:

- ◆ New administration in Washington may have a positive impact on reentry services
- ◆ Aging of workforce will allow for more employment opportunities, but reentering individuals will need appropriate training to realize these job opportunities
- ◆ Political change at state level, with control by Democrats may have a positive impact on reentry system
- ◆ Untapped employers
- ◆ Creation of post-release training center (recommendation from a number of former inmates.)
- ◆ Housing market slump will generate jobs
- ◆ Partners for Success can work more with employers to market reentering individuals
- ◆ Use of incentives for employers (including small businesses) to hire reentering individuals
- ◆ Improved mobility will help open up suburban area employers
- ◆ Lobby for faith-based dollars
- ◆ More brainstorming sessions on reentry
- ◆ Veterans have additional support opportunities
- ◆ Mentoring by successful offenders

Threats:

- ◆ Bad and worsening economy
- ◆ Lack of jobs
- ◆ Lack of family supporting jobs
- ◆ Employers unwilling to hire offenders
- ◆ Public unwilling to support initiatives that support reentry activities
- ◆ Lack of funding

- ◆ State level dollars not making their way down to neighborhood level
- ◆ Lack of oversight of funds for training
- ◆ Most job centers are not prepared to work effectively with offenders
- ◆ Need additional businesses and job opportunities in city
- ◆ Drugs
- ◆ Returning to same “bad” environment, with negative thinking old friends and family
- ◆ No transportation and housing

APPENDIX C - RESOURCES

Selected Resources for Reentry Plan Development and Implementation

State of Wisconsin

1. ***Reentry: A Bridge to Success***
Wisconsin Department of Corrections
Planning for return to the community begins at the time of admission.
www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lc/committees/study/2008/WORK/Reentry--
2. ***Reentry Business Plan***
Wisconsin Department of Corrections
www.wi-doc.com

Research

3. ***Barriers to Employment: Prison Time***
John Pawasarat, University of Wisconsin-
Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute, 2007
www4.uwm.edu/eti/barriers/MilwaukeePrisonStudy.pdf
4. ***The Milwaukee Workforce Development Landscape Report***
UWM Center for Workforce Development 2006
www.WorkforceEnterprise.org
5. ***New Indicators of Neighborhood Need In Zipcode 53206.***
Lois M. Quinn, Employment and Training Institute,
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 2007
www.eti.uwm.edu

State and Local Reentry Initiatives

6. ***Chicago's Safer Foundation: A Road Back for Ex-Offenders***
U.S. Department of Justice
www.saferfoundation.org
7. ***Going to Work With a Criminal Record***
Public Private Ventures
*Though developed for program staff working with formerly incarcerated people, the lessons in **Going to Work** reflect principles of workforce development used by effective organizations serving a variety of participants. Key principles include:*
 - ♦ *Learning about employer needs and preferences*

- ◆ *Assessing the job seekers' experience, skills and personality to make good matches*
- ◆ *Following up to ensure retention*
- ◆ *Taking action when problems arise on the job*

One increasingly accepted principle of good job development—the dual customer approach of providing services to employers as well as job seekers—seems especially relevant when placing people with criminal records.

www.ppv.org/ppv/publications

8. ***Michigan Reentry Program***

The mission of the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI) is to reduce crime by implementing a seamless plan of services and supervision developed with each offender - delivered through state and local collaboration - from the time of their entry to prison through their transition, reintegration, and aftercare in the community.

www.michpri.com

9. ***Washington State Reentry Initiative***

The [reentry] process begins when an offender enters the correctional system and receives an extensive evaluation. They are classified based on identified risks and needs, and an individual reentry plan is developed. The plan identifies programs and services specifically targeted to address those risks and needs throughout the process of incarceration and community supervision.

Such efforts will continue after an offender is released. Partnerships between DOC and the community are essential to ensuring each offender's successful adjustment. DOC will expand the number of criminal justice centers around the state, where offenders on community supervision engage with supervising Community Corrections Officers, who work with the offender to obtain job-finding assistance and take advantage of other community-based programs.

10. ***The Workforce Development Initiative of Federal Probation's Eastern District of Missouri***

Scott Weygandt NIC, et al.

Stresses importance of workforce development training and strong partnerships.

National Models and Initiatives

11. ***National Blueprint for Reentry.***

Legal Action Center

Model policies to promote the successful reentry of individuals with criminal records through employment and education.

www.lac.org

12. ***The National Offenders Workforce Development Partnership (NOWDP)***
The mission of the partnership is to facilitate a transitional approach to apprenticeships and employment strategies for ex-offenders. The ultimate goal of the partnership is to enhance reentry success through increased opportunities for career-oriented employment of ex-offenders.
www.nicic.org/NOWDP

13. ***Prisons and Corrections Leadership Series: Strategy and Tactics for Successful Correctional Reform and Reentry***
Joyfields Institute for Professional Development
www.joyfields.org