

2009 Survey and Best Practice

Status of Ex-Offender Reentry Efforts In Cities

A 79-City Survey



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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FOREWORD

For more than 10 years The U.S. Conference of Mayors has advocated strong national policy on the reintegration of ex-offenders in our communities. Four years ago we adopted policy supporting passage of the Second Chance Act, a comprehensive approach to reentry requiring collaboration among government agencies and private service providers. Two years ago we made our boldest statement to date on reentry, outlining specific actions that must be taken by all levels of government. With the passage of the Second Chance Act of 2007 we gained federal support for ex-offender efforts that have been championed by mayors for years.

Across the nation city governments are partnering with a wide range of public and private agencies in efforts to increase the likelihood that ex-offenders' reentry to their communities will be successful. Under the leadership of Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon and Irvington Mayor Wayne Smith, the Ex-Offender Task Force has examined programs that provide mentoring, job skill development, housing assistance, substance abuse counseling, health and mental health services – the myriad services needed to effectively combat recidivism. We also know that mayors are committed to assessing and reducing the barriers that exist in their own municipal regulations to hiring, promoting, and fairly compensating ex-offenders.

In preparation for this year's Annual Conference of Mayors in Providence, the Ex-Offender Task Force asked mayors to describe how they were meeting the challenges posed by the return of growing numbers of ex-offenders. This report presents their responses to the Task Force's survey on prisoner reentry. I'm pleased that much of the report is devoted to descriptions of initiatives that have been successful in the survey cities. As always, we present these as part of our continuing effort to share among all mayors the programs and practices their colleagues have found to be most effective, and that may be adaptable, in whole or in part, to meet needs in their cities. And, as always, we thank the mayors who have provided the information that makes this possible.



Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pressure to provide effective programs in America's cities to ease the reentry of ex-offenders has grown along with the nation's prisoner population, but the current economic recession is forcing local governments and public and private organizations and agencies to reduce spending on programs and services, and is limiting the employment and other opportunities essential to ex-offenders' successful reentry to their communities.

In an effort to provide all members of The U.S. Conference of Mayors with current information on the status of cities' prisoner reentry efforts, including their "best practices," the Conference's Ex-Offender Task Force surveyed mayors for basic information on approaches being taken in their cities to ease the reentry of ex-offenders and for descriptions of both their greatest reentry challenges and their most successful reentry initiatives. Information was provided by 79 cities of all sizes in all regions of the country – from cities as large as Los Angeles and Chicago, to one as small as Desert Hot Springs, California.

Changing Local Ordinances and Policies

Thirty-six percent of the survey cities have made changes in ordinances or policies that prevented ex-offenders from successfully reentering the community. Among these, 77 percent changed ordinances or policies relating to employment, and 58 percent changed those relating to access to housing.

Targeting Particular Populations

Fifty-nine percent of the cities target special efforts to particular populations to ease their reentry into the community. Among these:

- 68 percent target young people;
- two-thirds target substance abusers;
- two-thirds also target persons with mental health problems;
- 56 percent target women; and
- 44 percent target persons with HIV/AIDS.

Partnering with Private Organizations

Seventy-two percent of the survey cities partner with private organizations to ease the reentry of ex-offenders. Among these, partnerships most often exist with:

- local nonprofits, in almost all (96 percent) of the cities;
- faith-based organizations, in 81 percent; and
- neighborhood-based organizations, in 69 percent.

The services or interventions most often provided through these partnerships include:

- employment services, by 93 percent of the cities;
- case management, by 85 percent;
- substance abuse treatment, by 84 percent;
- housing, by 80 percent;
- education, by 75 percent;
- mental health treatment, by 69 percent; and
- family strengthening services, by 67 percent.

Involving City Government Agencies

In two-thirds of the survey cities, various agencies within city government are working together to ease the reentry of ex-offenders into the community. Agencies involved most often include:

- police departments, in 84 percent of the cities;
- social services departments, in 75 percent;
- workforce development agencies, in 73 percent;

- local court systems, in 69 percent;
- mental health authorities, in 61 percent;
- substance abuse treatment authorities, also in 59 percent; and
- housing authorities, in 53 percent.

Working with Correctional Agencies

Just over two-thirds of the cities (68 percent) are working with correctional agencies to plan for and ease the reentry of ex-offenders. Work is being done with:

- probation departments, in 92 percent of the cities;
- parole departments, also in 92 percent;
- area jails and detention centers, in 84 percent; and
- prisons, in 71 percent.

Partnering with States

Two-thirds of the survey cities are partnering with their state to ease the reentry of ex-offenders to the community. Of these, partnerships most often exist with:

- workforce development agencies, in 63 percent of the cities;
- state mental health departments, in 61 percent;
- court systems, in 61 percent;
- social services departments, in 59 percent;
- public safety departments, in 51 percent;
- health departments, in 47 percent; and
- substance abuse treatment authorities, in 45 percent.

Partnering with the Federal Government and Using ARRA Funds

Forty-seven percent of the cities are partnering with the federal government to ease the reentry of ex-offenders, and many of these partnerships are described. Cities also described how they are using, or planning to use, Recovery Act funds to provide employment or other assistance to ex-offenders.

Creating Reentry Councils

Forty-three percent of the survey cities currently have a reentry council functioning at the local level. For 53 percent, a reentry council operates at the state level.

Facing Reentry Challenges

In response to an open-ended question, the survey cities described their greatest reentry challenges. Mentioned most frequently were lack of jobs, housing, and funding.

Successful Reentry Initiatives

The cities described successful reentry initiatives involving a wide range of public agencies and private organizations that share the goal of easing the reentry of offenders. Many of these initiatives involve the coordination and delivery of the full range of services needed by reentrants to stabilize their lives and assume a productive role in their communities.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The pressure to provide effective programs in America's cities to ease the reentry of ex-offenders has grown along with the prisoner populations in state and federal prisons and, closest to home, local jails. Adding to this pressure now is an economic recession that is forcing local governments and the public and private agencies concerned with prisoner reentry to reduce spending on programs and services, and that is limiting the employment and other opportunities essential to ex-offenders' successful reentry to their communities. In light of this, one of the objectives of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Ex-Offender Task Force is to document the current status of cities' prisoner reentry efforts, including their "best practices," and to share this information with mayors attending the 2009 Annual Conference of Mayors in Providence and, following this meeting, with other members of the Conference whose cities could potentially benefit from it.

In April the Task Force surveyed mayors for basic information on the approaches that had been taken to ease the reentry of ex-offenders – changes in ordinances or policies, efforts to target specific groups of ex-offenders, partnerships with other concerned groups, services provided, and work with correctional agencies and other levels of government. It also asked for descriptions of both their greatest reentry challenges and their most successful reentry initiatives.

Information was provided by 79 cities of all sizes in all regions of the country – from cities as large as Los Angeles and Chicago, to one as small as Desert Hot Springs, California. Thirty-three states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are represented. The cities submitting information are listed on the last page of this report.

Changing Local Ordinances and Policies

Thirty-six percent of the survey cities have made changes in ordinances or policies that have prevented ex-offenders from successfully reentering the community. Among these:

- 77 percent changed employment ordinances or policies;
- 58 percent changed those relating to access to housing; and
- 12 percent changed those relating to voting.

Among the cities citing specifics:

Los Angeles: We provide better access to Workforce Investment Act training opportunities.

Denver: We are providing coordinated reentry services with City funds used for jail and community based services. We provide temporary IDs that are accepted by various agencies for persons leaving jail, have created a new process to inform inmates about voting rights and access, and provide funds for housing mentally ill persons returning from jail to the community. Denver was chosen as the large jail model site for the National Institute of Corrections. All of our reentry efforts support those with and without mental health issues. We provide reentry housing for persons returning from the Department of Corrections homeless.

Washington: In January 2009, the Mayor signed Bill 17-750, the Equitable Street Time Credit Amendment Act of 2008. The bill amends Title 24 of the District of Columbia Official Code to provide a more equitable system of crediting time served on parole against an individual's maximum sentence in the event of parole revocation. Under current District law, an individual is given no credit for time on parole, often referred to as "street time," if parole is later revoked, thus requiring an individual essentially to re-serve that portion of their sentence.

Indianapolis: An ordinance crafted by Mayor Gregory Ballard's administration and passed unanimously by the City/County council gives businesses consideration in their bidding on public contracts if they

agree to hire qualified ex-offenders who are referred through a pre-employment system within the Mayor's office. There is a tracking system in place to match offenders to businesses and to track retention of these offenders for at least one year.

Baltimore: Our background check for public housing has not been amended. The Housing Authority agreed, however, to set aside 200 Housing Choice (Section 8) vouchers to be used in reentry programming. We hope to demonstrate through that set-aside that criminal background is not a good predictor of ability to comply with a lease and maintain housing.

Boston: Several years ago, the City of Boston implemented a progressive employment policy that supports employment of ex-offenders; it included the "Ban the Box" initiative – the removal of any questions about an applicant's criminal background from our employment application. Our policy covers not only City of Boston employees, but also employees of any businesses receiving City funds. Boston is seen as a leader in this field. In addition, Mayor Thomas Menino has filed legislation several times for Statewide Criminal Record Offender Information reform. Unfortunately, to date, this legislation has not been passed.

Battle Creek: The City and its vendors will not discriminate against an individual who has a felony record. Our vendors must adopt an employment policy that does not exclude people with felonies.

Minneapolis: In October 2007, Minneapolis modified its background check policy so that prospective employees for most positions are no longer asked on the employment application whether they have been convicted of a crime. Minneapolis's policy now states: "The City will conform to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 364 relating to criminal offenders and rehabilitation, which encourages the rehabilitation of offenders. The statute further recognizes that the opportunity to secure employment is essential to the rehabilitation of ex-offenders and the resumption of their responsibilities of citizenship."

Newark: First source provisions are incorporated into development and other contracts.

Providence: The City has established the "Ban the Box" initiative within the City's hiring policies, which will provide applicants who may have a criminal background and are interviewing for City positions an opportunity to have their background check done later in the hiring process and, thus, provide a fairer assessment of their qualifications. As part of Providence's current Second Chance Act proposal, we are working with our Public Housing Authority to amend their existing policies to pilot a "Family Reunification Initiative" which would allow formerly incarcerated individuals to reunite with their families living in public housing. Current PHA policies prohibit people with felony convictions from coming onto a PHA lease.

Austin: Employment: "Ban the Box" was approved by the Austin City Council October 16, 2008. As a result, the two Criminal Background Investigation (CBI) questions and Section Title Criminal History in the employment application have been removed from both the printable and viewable forms. Travis County approved "Ban the Box" on April 21, 2008. Travis County's Unlock the Vote program educates the public, including the ex-offender population, on their voting rights.

Spokane: We work with a multi-agency project to find housing for displaced at-risk citizens, and have encouraged private revitalization project builders to provide moderate-cost housing in their plans.

Seattle: The City recently adopted a new policy regarding criminal background checks. The policy describes the categories for performing criminal background checks and how background checks are used in consideration of applicants. Voting rights Statewide have recently changed. The Governor of Washington recently signed a bill to restore voting rights for felons that will take effect in July. Under current law, felons can't vote until they have served their sentences and are no longer under State custody, including any parole or probation, and have paid all restitution and other court fees. The new law removes the requirement that felons must pay off all their debts before their rights are restored. Voting rights could be revoked if a felon fails to make regular payments on financial obligations, including court fees or restitution.

Charlotte described how efforts to prevent crime and those to ease reentry can come into conflict: “As a crime prevention approach, we have encouraged landlords to screen potential renters, including arrest records. Sometimes, a potential renter is denied renting due to a criminal history. One well-meaning crime prevention approach sometimes has negative consequences for an ex-offender returning to the community.”

Targeting Particular Populations

Fifty-nine percent of the cities target special efforts to particular populations to ease their reentry into the community. Among these:

- 68 percent target young people;
- two-thirds target substance abusers;
- two-thirds also target persons with mental health problems;
- 56 percent target women; and
- 44 percent target persons with HIV/AIDS.

Among other targeted groups mentioned by individual cities are homeless persons, males age 18-35, gang members, veterans, transgender persons, adults, chronic offenders, persons released from state correctional facilities who have maxed out their sentences, and TANF and general assistance recipients.

Partnering with Private Organizations

Seventy-two percent of the survey cities partner with private organizations to ease the reentry of ex-offenders. Among these, partnerships exist with:

- local nonprofits, in almost all (96 percent) of the cities;
- faith-based organizations, in 81 percent;
- neighborhood-based organizations, in 68 percent;
- regional nonprofits, in 46 percent; and
- national nonprofits, in 33 percent.

The cities identified the kinds of services or interventions provided through these partnerships. Mentioned most frequently were employment services, by 93 percent of the cities. Others identified were:

- case management, by 85 percent;
- substance abuse treatment, by 84 percent;
- housing, by 80 percent;
- education, by 75 percent;
- mental health treatment, by 69 percent;
- family strengthening services, also by 67 percent;
- mentoring, by 67 percent;
- access to benefits, by 62 percent;
- medical treatment, by 47 percent;
- legal services, by 42 percent; and
- cognitive restructuring, by 40 percent.

Other services identified by individual cities include anger management, computer, GED/education, domestic violence prevention, life skills training, referrals, assistance with identification, culturally appropriate services, parole and probation assistance, and electronic monitoring.

Involving City Government Agencies

In two-thirds of the survey cities, various agencies within city government are working together to ease the reentry of ex-offenders into the community. Agencies involved are:

- police departments, in 84 percent of the cities;
- social services departments, in 75 percent;
- workforce development agencies, in 73 percent;
- local court systems, in 69 percent;
- mental health authorities, in 61 percent;
- substance abuse treatment authorities, also in 59 percent;
- housing authorities, in 53 percent; and
- health departments, in 49 percent.

Other city agencies identified by individual cities include the human resources department, city attorney/corporation counsel, homeless program, mayor's office of offender reentry, mayor's office of gang reduction and youth development, crime prevention and control commission, community and economic development department, parks and recreation department, public works department, purchasing department, school system, community and technical schools, jail, community corrections agency, and probation and parole.

Working with Correctional Agencies

Just over two-thirds of the cities (68 percent) are working with correctional agencies to plan for and ease the reentry of ex-offenders. Work is being done with:

- probation departments, in 92 percent of the cities;
- parole departments, in 92 percent;
- area jails and detention centers, in 84 percent; and
- prisons, in 71 percent.

Other individual cities indicated that they worked with entities such as a youth camp, drug court, halfway house, community corrections agency, and state mental hospital.

Partnering with States

Two-thirds of the survey cities are partnering with their state to ease the reentry of ex-offenders to the community. Of these, partnerships exist with:

- workforce development agencies, in 63 percent of the cities of the cities;
- state mental health departments, in 61 percent;
- court systems, also in 61 percent;
- social services departments, in 59 percent;
- public safety departments, in 51 percent;
- health departments, in 47 percent; and
- substance abuse treatment authorities, in 45 percent.

Among other entities identified by individual cities were the corrections department, community corrections facility, motor vehicles department, state attorney general's office, state reentry commission, child support, revenue department, drug court, state legislature, governor's office, governor's crime commission, and state youth commission.

Partnering with the Federal Government

Forty-seven percent of the cities are partnering with the federal government to ease the reentry of ex-offenders. Many of these cities described the kinds of federal assistance they are receiving.

- **Redlands** is receiving drug court funding.
- **San Francisco** has applied for Second Chance Act funds to address the needs of high-risk female parolees, and for JAG Byrne Economic Stimulus funding to strengthen probation supervision of ex-offenders and to enhance other criminal justice and community-based responses to probationer and parolee reentry.
- **Denver** has two federal grants, one for incarcerated drug court offenders, the second for women's mental health reentry services.
- **Stamford** has federal grant funding to support AIC's successful fatherhood program.
- In **Washington**, the Interim Director of the Office on Ex-Offender Affairs is also the co-chair of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council's Reentry Steering Committee. The Reentry Steering Committee is comprised of local and federal government entities (such as the Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency) which are all working in unison for positive reentry of residents and a lower recidivism rate. Most of the federal government members are tasked with upgrading the discharge planning provided to inmates upon their release.
- **Miami** had AmeriCorps VISTA members serving in reentry efforts from 2005-2007.
- The **Miami-Dade** Corrections and Rehabilitation Department has applied for the Second Chance Prisoner Reentry Initiative and Edward Byrne Memorial Competitive Grants. It also is a member of the Miami-Dade Reentry Task Force established by the U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Florida.
- **Honolulu's** Department of Community Services is working with U.S. Probation and the Federal Detention Center.
- The **County of Maui** works with grantee agencies to support applications they submit for federal aid.
- **Chicago** has developed an active partnership with Project Safe Neighborhoods and supports the probation and parole panels, which are provided for ex-offenders who are returning to the community and have firearm convictions.
- **Evansville** is following the guidelines from the President's Reentry Initiative and has included an offender reentry program in federal Weed and Seed grant applications.
- For **Fort Wayne**, the Allen County Reentry Court is currently receiving a Prison to Reentry Grant, with the Indiana Department of Corrections as the fiscal agent. The focus is on earlier release, faith-based effort, the community resource coordinator, and employment. The nonprofit Blue Jacket Employment Services Program received DOL grant funds to continue existing employment training efforts for the returning offenders.
- **Indianapolis** has congressionally-earmarked dollars aimed at re-entry of both males and females, the First Day Out Pilot Initiative, Department of Justice Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative, Weed and Seed, and Project Safe Neighborhoods.
- **Muncie** obtained a federal Weed and Seed grant through the Bureau of Justice Assistance in October 2008.
- In **Louisville**, a justice assistance grant provides supplemental funds for direct services to individuals reentering the Newburg community from prison or jail.
- In **Baton Rouge**, the local workforce development agency is collaborating with federally-funded and administered programs to assist persons reentering the community. This effort includes housing, education, employment, and social services.
- In **Boston**, the U.S. Attorney's Offices participate in the City's Reentry Programming, providing a federal authority in the program, both by offering support and coordination in the selection of offenders for the program, and in the follow-up and prosecution of offenders that return to violence.

- **St. Louis** collaborates with the U.S. Probation Office both locally and through the Missouri Reentry Project of the Missouri Department of Corrections. The City's Reentry Director is a member of the steering committee of that Statewide project.
- **Irvington** has a Department of Justice Reentry Public Safety Initiative Technical Assistance Grant.
- **Newark** is working with the U.S. Department of Labor on the Newark Prisoner Reentry Initiative, and also has grants through the Department of Justice.
- **Charlotte** is partnering with Federal Probation and Parole.
- **Durham's** Ex-Offender Program has partnered with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to facilitate Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) certification for organizations that provide services to ex-offenders. The purpose of this partnership training program was to assist local organizations in developing the capacity to provide competency-based training for practitioners who help individuals with criminal records to make informed decisions relative to job and career choices, based on their abilities, aptitudes, and interests, and information relevant to today's job market (i.e., occupational, educational, and labor market information).
- **Tulsa** is partnering with the U.S. Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and U.S. Probation Office.
- **Austin's** Employment Services Department has partnered with the National Institute of Corrections to provide Offender Employment Specialist (OES) and Offender Workforce Development Specialist Training (OWDS) to local reentry service providers.
- **Norfolk** recently received Prisoner Reentry Initiative funding from the federal Justice and Labor Departments.
- **Spokane** works with Federal Parole Officers in regard to sex offenders.

Using ARRA Funds for Reentry

Many of the survey cities described the ways in which they are using, or planning to use, funds available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide employment or other assistance to ex-offenders.

Los Angeles: We are using ARRA funds to help youthful offenders gain summer jobs.

Oakland: The City Local Hire Policy recommends a 15 percent hiring goal for the formerly incarcerated on all City-funded jobs. Funded would be job readiness skills, job training and job placement, construction jobs, green jobs, and street maintenance jobs.

Redlands: Funds are being used to hire and embed a criminologist in the Police Department, to be responsible for locating, evaluating, and assisting in the implementation of evidenced-based programs to control crime. It is expected that some of these programs will deal directly with reentry issues, thereby increasing the rate of success for people reentering the community from jail or prison. The implementation of programs proven through research to provide desired results should increase the effectiveness of efforts to lower recidivism among people reentering the community, and increase their opportunity for a higher quality of life.

San Francisco: San Francisco has applied for ARRA funding to address the needs of ex-offenders.

Stockton: Funded would be the WorkNet Center for a parolee/employer program.

Washington: The administration is currently looking at green job initiatives in addition to developing plans for using the new Workforce Investment Act formula-based job training funds. Ex-offenders will be one of the target groups once plans are finalized.

Miami-Dade County: The Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department has applied for ARRA funding.

Maui County: The County has aggressively sought ARRA funds necessary to meet the needs of our community. ARRA funding for re-integration has been sought by Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) which, through its BEST reintegration program, is the County's chief partner in addressing the needs of ex-offenders.

Chicago: Our City has proposed a number of initiatives under the stimulus package which include a transitional jobs program, a customized jobs program, expansion of our community reentry centers, increased support services, the creation of a deconstruction green jobs program, and other innovative programs.

Indianapolis: The transitional employment initiative would hire 100 offenders in 2009 and 100 in 2010.

Baton Rouge: Workforce Development is working with the Juvenile Services Division to place youth offenders in skills training positions.

Baltimore: Support for the Reentry Center (a one-stop employment development center) and Safe Streets was included in the City's JAG (Byrne) allocation. It is too early to comment on who has been employed on ARRA projects, except to note that in the weatherization area there has been extensive outreach to small businesses and local non-profits on the workforce opportunities, and the interested nonprofits included reentry programs. Successful Community Services Block Grant applicants are also likely to include reentry programs.

St. Louis: We are still in the planning stages of utilizing the \$8.1 million awarded the City for Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing, but expect ARRA funds will be used to assist ex-offenders. To prevent homelessness, discharge from correctional programs and institutions is included as an eligible expenditure of those funds.

Newark: We are leveraging stimulus dollars for youth employment initiatives. We are also using stimulus dollars to support community courts.

Trenton: The City is currently coordinating and monitoring all of the ARRA funds and has launched a City-wide initiative with various agencies to monitor and track funding for the creation of jobs for ex-offenders. In particular, the employment and training workgroup was developed to identify immediate employment currently available, which includes green jobs, retrofitting, installing solar panels, and weatherization.

Durham: The Durham Workforce Development Board, which administers the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds, will receive ARRA funds to assist clients with employment and/or short-term training. The WIA funds are used to provide services to three populations: youth, adult, and dislocated workers. Most ex-offenders will/can qualify for the services provided through the WIA program. The number of ex-offenders that will be served through the ARRA funds is unknown; projections show the ARRA funds serving approximately 160 youth and 110 adult and dislocated workers. The City of Durham's Ex-Offender Program will continue to work with the Board, referring clients to the WIA program.

Tulsa: We have not yet used any ARRA funds, but will be looking to using them aggressively in the area of workforce development and training programs.

Eugene: We will likely use Homeless Prevention/Rapid Re-Housing funds to help ex-offenders obtain housing.

Reading: Berks County and the City of Reading are proposing to utilize HUD stimulus funds to provide case management and post-release housing for ex-offenders released from the Berks County Prison who would otherwise be homeless. These program participants can also enroll in the Ready to Succeed jobs program currently run by BCPS/BerksConnections and the Berks County CareerLink. Currently, approximately 75 percent of all County jail inmates are unemployed upon release. Over 67 percent of inmates who successfully graduate from the Ready to Succeed program are employed post-release.

Based on these numbers and the proposed housing program, approximately 12 additional ex-offenders would gain employment each year (estimating 30 individuals participating in the housing program each year).

Providence: We continue to plan around the use of specific ARRA-related resources, and the issue of reentry will be addressed as we move forward. We are currently working with our State counterparts to ensure that former prisoners participating in our Second Chance Act program are able to access emergency housing/rapid re-housing ARRA-related resources as part of our demonstration. The State Housing Resources Commission also has committed these resources to our effort.

Austin: AARP has been granted stimulus funds to provide senior ex-offenders with job readiness, job training, and jobs – primarily administrative and receptionist positions.

Creating Reentry Councils

Forty-three percent of the survey cities currently have a reentry council functioning at the local level. For 53 percent, the reentry council is at the state level.

Facing Reentry Challenges

In response to an open-ended question, the survey cities described their greatest reentry challenges. Mentioned most frequently were:

- lack of jobs, by 24 cities;
- lack of housing, by 21 cities;
- lack of funding, by 19 cities;
- the current economy/job market, by seven cities;
- substance abuse and lack of adequate substance abuse services, by eight cities;
- lack of community understanding of the problems or community support; by six cities;
- lack of coordinated reentry efforts, by five cities;
- lack of education, by five cities;
- lack of adequate support services, by five cities;
- lack of job training opportunities, by four cities;
- mental health problems and lack of adequate mental health services, by four cities; and
- recidivism, by four cities.

Among some of the cities' comments:

Dothan: Recidivism is the most pernicious ill of most court systems, fueled mainly by substance abuse. While we can provide the best substance abuse education currently available during incarceration (and have excellent results during the incarceration period), once the jail doors open, the same patterns of behavior that landed the offender in jail in the first place tend to recur as the same temptations are once again available.

North Little Rock: There are half-way houses that operate only to remove a person from prison but provide little to the ex-offender to prevent recidivism.

Stamford: Employment and housing are the greatest reentry challenges. The Stamford housing market is among the nation's most expensive. Accordingly, securing affordable housing is a very widespread local problem, not at all limited to those reentering the community.

Orlando: The economic slowdown has flooded the market with qualified laborers, making it harder to employ ex-offenders.

Honolulu: Limited are pre-release referrals, linkages, and supports, and the availability of affordable housing for the individuals returning to the community after incarceration.

Maui County: One of the greatest challenges for our community appears to be generating the public will to finance re-integration programs, given the current economic challenges and the multiple competing human needs we deal with. Ex-offenders, even if they are our family members, are far less sympathetic than other special needs populations. Other challenges we face are more resource-oriented, e.g., developing appropriate housing opportunities, providing jobs in this shrinking economy, and providing job training opportunities to create sustainability.

Chicago: There are many. Two of our greatest challenges, however, would be securing employment for ex-offenders returning to our communities and coordinating the efforts of our City agencies with those of the County, the State, and the various community-based and faith-based organizations working with ex-offenders in our City.

Indianapolis: Funding is presently our greatest challenge. We are able to leverage resources for our strategies with local agencies but we have reached capacity for low- or no-cost development. Because we have complete buy-in from community providers, non-profit organizations, and other entities, we have begun to set a standard of outstanding quality. More staff and resources are mandatory for our future reentry initiatives.

Muncie: Unemployment is increasing because manufacturing jobs are leaving, mostly due to the economic downturn in the automotive industry. This would be one of the challenges. The other is having the offenders realize the necessity of finding other "friends" to associate with upon their return to the community.

Baltimore: The biggest challenge right now is budget cuts at the State and local levels, which make it hard to put the right people in place to do effective discharge planning. We've reached consensus that it makes sense to have discharge planners in the medical department at the local jail and benefit specialists available to work with people before release at the jail, and have developed good models for addressing both. Before these things can become a reality, however, we need to locate funds for the staff to do this.

Battle Creek: Challenge: Getting employers throughout the City to change their mindset and allow individuals who have been released from prisons an opportunity for employment.

Minneapolis: In light of the tremendous need for reentry services, the greatest reentry challenge facing Minneapolis is the need for long-term funding for sustainability. Without such funding, efforts will be limited or reduced in the long term.

St. Louis: Housing of ex-offenders presents a serious challenge due to inadequate funding, a lack of affordable housing, restrictions on access to public housing, geographic prohibition of housing locations for sex offenders, and NIMBY.

Buffalo: Challenge: Overcoming the stigma attached to reentry candidates in their quest to successfully re-acclimate to the community. At present, it is the economy and the competition for employment opportunities.

Charlotte: Challenge: The lack of resources for those public and private agencies addressing reentry. In Charlotte, we have over 1,000 offenders returning to the community. We do not have sufficient agencies providing resources to ex-offenders reentering our community. In addition, many of those agencies working in reentry face budget problems in raising the necessary funds, especially in the tight economic times we are facing.

Durham: The greatest reentry challenge facing the City of Durham currently is the reduction in various workforces. The recent economic downturn has decreased the number of job postings/listings in the local newspapers and JobLink centers. The "offender-friendly" occupations that were once occupied by ex-offenders have been filled by dislocated and laid-off workers.

Tulsa: The current job market makes it difficult to find jobs. The numbers of individuals incarcerated in Oklahoma per capita make it difficult because of the large volume of individuals coming back to Tulsa each month.

Reading: The greatest challenge is the lack of employment for ex-offenders reentering the community. Fully 74 percent of inmates released from the local jail are unemployed upon release. Adding more stress to the community's ability to successfully reintegrate ex-offenders, the State Department of Corrections has opened a new Community Corrections Center in the County that will eventually house up to 350 ex-offenders – all looking for employment locally.

Austin: Challenge: Stereotyping and discrimination which ultimately leads to lack of support from local employers to hire ex-offenders.

Norfolk: The number of offenders who return to this community without stable affordable housing is a tremendous challenge. Without housing it is difficult to find and maintain employment, pay restitution and fines, and establish an alcohol/drug/crime-free lifestyle.

Seattle: Accessing affordable housing is one of the challenges for individuals who have a history of incarceration or involvement with the criminal justice system.

Spokane: Individuals who have no viable plan upon release from incarceration have limited housing options; problems are availability, affordability, and legal barriers, including sex offender regulations and eligibility requirements.

SUCCESSFUL REENTRY INITIATIVES

The success of the reentry initiatives described by the cities responding to the survey depend on partnerships that mayors and other officials have established with a wide range of public agencies and with private organizations, including churches and faith-based organizations, that share the goal of easing the reentry of offenders. Their successful initiatives generally involve the coordination and delivery of a comprehensive set of services needed by reentrants to stabilize their lives and assume a productive role in their communities. Many focus on delivering employment services. Some focus on providing housing – helping reentrants avoid homeless – and some target specific groups or locales. Many describe programs that engage offenders prior to their release or are jail-based. And many are able to report low recidivism rates as a result of their services.

Comprehensive Services

Survey cities' descriptions of collaborative and comprehensive approaches to diagnosing and meeting the multiple needs of reentrants include the following:

Los Angeles: The Honor and Strength (HAS) program initiated by the Los Angeles Police Department is a multi-pronged collaborative effort involving the Mayor's Office of Gang Reduction and Youth Development, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Los Angeles County Probation Department, local and national non-profit organizations, and the private sector. The program engages prospective clients while they are still incarcerated and provides comprehensive case management and wraparound services that are geared toward employment, mental health stability, and adjustment and re-integration into housing and the work force.
CONTACT: Jorge Reyes, South Regional Supervisor, (213) 978-3106 or Jorge.reyes@lacity.org.

Redlands: The Police Department's Police and Corrections Team (PACT)/Drug Court Unit works in close partnership with Step by Step, a Redlands community reentry coalition founded in 2005 by the United Church of Christ, to help men and women returning to Redlands from prison make a successful reentry to the community. Through this partnership, the resources of the police, parole department, court, and guidance clinic are paired with a coalition of faith-based community advocates and volunteers to produce the combination of authority, resources, passion, and faith that is needed to help ex-offenders become contributing members of the community. Coalition members – an active, hands-on group – attend orientation sessions for new parolees every week, and provide hygiene kits, school kits, counselors and tutors, and information on sober living, employment, and education. They provide information on community resources that help with establishing identity, responding to domestic violence, and providing shelter, meals, and literacy training. Members also distribute Christmas stockings and hold bicycle workshops to bring parolees and volunteers together. Coalition programs include OOPS (Overcoming Obstacles to Parole Success), which meets for dinner on Thursdays, and "Get on a Bus," which takes children to visit their mothers in prison. Funding for the coalition is provided through the personal fundraising efforts of members and by the church and its members. At least one effort has been made to compete for grant funds; the results of that effort are pending.
CONTACT: Thomas Fitzmaurice, Commander, Redlands Police Department, (909) 798-7613 or tfitzmaurice@redlandspolice.org.

Denver: The Crime Prevention and Control Commission (CPCC) is coordinating the City's comprehensive "Jail to Community" effort for persons reentering the community, including those with mental health concerns. The program includes assessment, case management, and comprehensive program services covering areas such as life skills, job skills and placement, computer training, GED preparation, cognitive skills, substance abuse, transitional housing, and mentoring. It includes separate mental health units, called Transition Units, for male and female reentrants. The program is supported through City CPCC funds, in-kind services from City agencies, and grants. It is credited with decreasing recidivism and jail violence, and increasing cooperation and coordination across City and non-profit sectors.

CONTACT: Regina Huerter, Executive Director, Crime Prevention and Control Commission, (720) 913-6606 or regina.huerter@denvergov.org.

Stamford: The Stamford Alternate Incarceration Center (AIC) operates under the auspices of CTE, Stamford's federal and State-designated Community Action Agency. AIC provides supervision and services to accused and court-sentenced individuals, individuals on probation, and those who have been released from prison. The main focus areas of the program are individualized case management; education programs leading to a high school diploma or GED (AIC reports that it has been particularly successful in helping reentering youth obtain diplomas or GEDs); development of skills needed to secure or retain employment; development of pro-social thinking and attitudes; curriculum-based substance abuse education; and performance of community services such as landscaping, grounds keeping, painting, and general maintenance. The City owns the building in which CTE is housed, City funds are instrumental in operations, and City staff members provide in-kind services to CTE programs, including AIC, on an "as needed" basis.

CONTACT: Keith Sears, AIC Program Director, (203) 327-3260 or ksears@ctecap.org.

Maui County: The MEO-BEST (Being Empowered and Safe Together) Reintegration Program is based on several collaborations and partnerships between the agency and the County government and other community services. Established in 2003, the program provides transitional support services and training to prepare inmates for their successful return to the community. Its comprehensive services holistically address the multiple needs of ex-offenders, their families, and the community. Clients receive services in the areas of case management, employment training, housing assistance, cognitive skills restructuring, cultural renewal, family reunification, and mentoring. BEST collaborates with community service agencies to provide substance abuse and mental health treatment, as well as other support services. Through collaborations with correctional facilities, the program's interventions begin while clients are still incarcerated, so clients benefit from a more comprehensive continuum of services to aid in their reintegration into the community. Recognized statewide as a best practice, MEO-BEST is a project of Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc., a private non-profit organization that is funded largely through grants from the County of Maui, the State, and the U.S. Departments of Labor, Justice, and Health and Human Services.

CONTACT: Ken Hunt, Program Director, MEO-BEST, (808) 249-2990, ext. 311, or kh@meoinc.org.

Muncie: The City and multiple agencies are collaborating on the City's Weed and Seed services for reentering offenders. County Community Corrections has coupled with Parole to provide referrals for services such as mental health and substance abuse treatment to offenders in a targeted high crime area of the City. The offenders also are referred to on-site GED classes at Community Corrections taught by Muncie Community Schools teachers. Community Corrections has a contract with a mental health and substance abuse counselor who provides cognitive behavior and substance abuse classes. A faith-based organization has provided a residence for re-entering offenders, and this has been utilized by Community Corrections and Parole. The City Police Department has established a new district in the targeted area, and there is at least one officer on every shift doing community policing with the residents in the targeted community, as well as policing identified crime. Funding for these services is being provided through the Weed and Seed grant, Community Corrections, social services agencies, and the City.

CONTACT: Gregory Maynard, Site Coordinator for Weed and Seed, (765) 744-2024 or greg.maynard@weedandseed.org, or June Kramer, Director of Community Corrections, (765) 747-7825, ext. 123, or jkramer@co.delaware.in.us.

Louisville: Louisville's Pathways Reentry Program offers effective jail-based programming alternatives to offenders, helping to maximize their opportunities for successful reintegration into the community upon release. The program uses a continuum of care model to deliver services that include alcohol and drug treatment, employment, and housing assistance. Funded through the Louisville government and a federal Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), the program has reduced the recidivism rate dramatically, to 30 percent. It is featured in the March/April 2009 issue of *American Jail Association Magazine*.

The Newburg Justice Reinvestment Pilot Project takes a two-pronged approach to assisting individuals released from prison or jail to reintegrate into their home community. The pilot focuses on both the needs of the reentrant and the needs of the Newburg community residents. Funded by the Open Society Institute and a Justice Assistance Grant, it provides a case manager to align needed services for participants. Through the Reinvestment Neighborhood Group (RING), civic engagement concepts are employed to involve community residents in providing support while also establishing firm pro-social expectations for persons returning to the neighborhood. Preliminary data indicate that active participants of the Newburg pilot have the lowest re-arrest rate (20 percent) when compared to rates for terminated participants (42 percent) and for participants who either declined to participate in the program or were not accepted (80 percent).

CONTACT: For Pathways, Linda Zundel, (502) 574-8944 or Linda.Zundel@louisvilleky.gov. For Newburg, Faith Augustine, (502) 574-5120 or Faith.Augustine@louisvilleky.gov.

Aurora: An initiative titled Restoring Inmates to America's Society – better known as RITAS Ministry – was established in Aurora in 1997 as a 501(c)(3) organization with the sole mission of assisting individuals involved in the justice system to become productive citizens by providing a total support system of transitional jobs, transitional housing, counseling, and other needed services. Individualized plans of action for ex-offenders cover a 12- to 18-month period; these may include a three-phase substance abuse program, anger management classes, and services for their families. Recidivism among clients has been as low as nine percent in 2002 and 15 percent in 2003. Over the years, RITAS Ministry has served as a leader of prison ministry re-entry services and education in Aurora and the State of Illinois, developing strong collaborating relationships with other social service agencies, law enforcement, and government agencies in the City, County and State; a particularly strong relationship exists with the Illinois Department of Corrections.

The Executive Director of RITAS Ministry, who serves on the Illinois Commission for Prisoner Reentry and, in 2005, was appointed to the Governor's Executive Task Force on Prisoner Reentry, has devoted time to educating court officials, university staff, and the community on the complex issues faced by offenders and their families. Funding for the organization is provided by the Fox Valley United Way, Kane County Board, Aurora Foundation, Weed and Seed, churches, businesses, individuals, and through other grants and a few contracts. In-kind donations also help offset program costs. RITAS Ministry has been honored by the Illinois Courts Services for its instrumental role in bringing the Restorative Justice movement to Illinois in 1998.

CONTACT: Linda Martin, Executive Director, (630) 966-0252 or lindamartin@ritasministry.org.

Newark: The City has undertaken several prisoner reentry initiatives that focus on rapid attachment to work, reunification of families, and the provision of supportive services. Among these:

- In the Newark Prisoner Reentry Initiative (NPRI), which was developed in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor, five faith- and community-based organizations serve as the "front door" for returning prisoners, offering employment assistance, mentoring, and other supportive services. More than 1,300 individuals will be served under the NPRI over a two-year period. The NPRI requires service providers to demonstrate results, including a 22 percent recidivism rate.
- Clean and Green is a transitional jobs initiative that provides time-limited work in green jobs and social support to individuals transitioning to the labor market.
- Opportunity Reconnect, the City's one-stop reentry center, creates continuity between the criminal justice system and reentry services. At Opportunity Reconnect, an individual with a criminal record can, among other things, meet with a lawyer or a job developer, access medical and dental services, interact with parole and probation personnel, and apply for food stamps and other public benefits.
- The Mayor's Advisory Council on Prisoner Reentry is comprised of key local stakeholders such as representatives from parole, probation, corrections, municipal government, community-based organizations, ex-offender groups, and philanthropic organizations, and experts in the reentry field.
- ReLeSe is Mayor Cory Booker's effort to attract pro bono attorneys to assist formerly incarcerated individuals with matters such as expungement, outstanding warrants, child support, and driver's license restoration. To date, ReLeSe has served nearly 900 ex-offenders in the Newark area.

CONTACT: Ingrid Johnson, Chair, Reentry Coordinating Council, (201) 396-4686 or johnsoni@ci.newark.nj.us.

Charlotte: A network of public, private, and non-profit agencies work together to address issues facing the more than 1,000 offenders returning to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area from prison each year. The Mecklenburg Opportunities for Reentry Network (MORN) is a coalition of agencies and organizations that are working to address the needs of offenders, or those at risk of criminal involvement, from a public safety perspective. MORN's mission is to develop a system-wide, integrated response to addressing offenders' needs that creates a safer community. Goals are to 1) improve collaboration and coordination of procedures, processes, and services for those involved in the criminal justice system; 2) identify and eliminate gaps and barriers and advocate for services and programs to increase the opportunity for successful reentry; 3) advocate for services, programs, and public policies to increase the opportunity for successful reentry; and 4) increase public knowledge about criminal justice dynamics, including reframing reentry as a public safety issue. MORN meets monthly to network the resources among its membership that are needed to address reentrants' issues. Such resources include housing, employment, job skills development, education, substance abuse treatment, mentoring, and family support.

CONTACT: Myra Clark, Executive Director, Center for Community Transition, and Chairperson, Mecklenburg Opportunities for Reentry Network, (704) 374-0762, ext. 11, or mclark@centerforcommunitytransitions.org.

Employment Focus

Helping ex-offenders prepare for and secure employment upon reentry is the primary focus, or a major component, of many of the initiatives described by the cities. For example:

Orlando: Orlando's Blueprint for Using Community Venues to Create a Sustainable Economic Impact (the Blueprint) requires community venues contractors to post job opportunities with the City's Blueprint office; the goal is to give priority to employing the homeless, ex-offenders, and residents of impacted neighborhoods. Supported with general revenue funds, the Blueprint office is a one-stop location designed to help the target group overcome barriers to employment by offering access to job databases and consultation with job placement specialists. Through it, approximately 700 Central Florida residents have been placed in jobs and more than 100 residents have completed or are currently enrolled in construction training programs.

Another initiative, IDignity, was created by five downtown churches to provide identification, including Florida IDs and drivers licenses, Social Security cards, and birth certificates to approximately 200 poor people in downtown Orlando each month. More than half of those served are ex-offenders. Funding for this effort comes from a variety of sources, including the City. Since the program's inception one year ago, 2,000 individuals have been served.

CONTACT: Alana Brenner, Orlando City Clerk, (407) 246-3300 or Alana.Brenner@cityoforlando.net.

Indianapolis: Workforce, Inc. is a transitional jobs program that works with ex-offenders on a daily basis for up to six months. Services include substance abuse counseling, job coaching, education assessments, and job referrals after their six-month transitional employment has concluded. Current funding sources include the City, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services, and other federal and state agencies.

The City partners with Workforce, Inc. on its "SustainIndy" initiative through which residents dispose of unwanted electronic devices; ex-offenders in the Workforce program collect and process the electronics for recycling. Workforce, Inc. is now working with Chicago and several other programs wanting to replicate its program.

CONTACT: Gregg Keesling, President, Workforce, Inc., (317) 532-1367 or gkeesling@work-force-inc.com.

Baltimore: The Reentry Center (the ReC) is a one-stop employment development center focused in particular on the needs of ex-offenders. The ReC provides people returning to the City from prison or jail easy access to a continuum of barrier-removal interventions and employment-related services, including

pre-employment workshops, case management, referrals for job-specific training and job opportunities, child support assistance, ID assistance, and many others provided by program partners. Since opening in 2005, the ReC has served over 15,000 people. Of these, 1,604 were placed in jobs at an average hourly wage of \$9.20/hour. Additionally, a recent study by Johns Hopkins University showed that the participants in the ReC program realized significantly improved outcomes, including lower recidivism rates.

CONTACT: Karen Sitnick, Director, Mayor's Office of Employment Development, (410) 396-1910 or ksitnick@oedworks.com.

Buffalo: The City currently operates a reentry program for candidates at the Orleans Facility. The reentry staff members conduct pre-release assessments, internal outreach within the prison, and workshops, and participate in case conferences with a multi-disciplinary team. In case conference meetings appointments are made for the candidates to meet with re-entry staff, who are co-located at the City's One Stop Center. At the Center the candidates have access to the many services and training opportunities that are available. The re-entry staff focus is on the job development and placement of candidates in employment and training opportunities.

CONTACT: Tanya Perrin-Johnson, Commissioner, (716) 851-4152 or tjohnson@city-buffalo.com.

Rochester: Providing Real Incentives to Maintain Employment (PRIME), an initiative of Mayor Robert Duffy designed to link Rochester residents to jobs, focuses on preparing and training candidates for careers in a variety of industries. Forty percent of the individuals PRIME recruits, vets, trains, and places in jobs are ex-offenders. The program, which is supported by a combination of public and private funds, has been well documented by the local news media.

CONTACT: Keenan L. Allen, Employment Opportunities Director, (585) 428-7652 or allenk@cityofrochester.gov.

Durham: The Durham JobLink Ex-Offender Program strives to maximize the employability of ex-offenders, reduce the recidivism rate in order to reduce crime in Durham County, and improve the overall workforce of the Durham community. Funded by the City, JobLink provides employment orientations and workshops, employment case management and counseling, and placement services. Since July 2006 the program has placed over 230 clients in employment and over 50 in training. Twenty-nine of those job placements were made within City government, working through the City's Reentry Hiring Program. These positions ranged from entry level laborers to managerial staff. Other occupational areas in which placements were made include manufacturing, customer service, culinary service, and construction. Training areas included skilled trades (for example, brick masonry and carpentry), commercial trucking driving, and culinary arts.

CONTACT: Courtney McCollum, Ex-Offender Program Coordinator, (919) 560-6880, ext. 248, or courtney.mccollum@durhamnc.gov.

Wilmington: The Police Department works with a local nonprofit agency, Leading Into New Communities (LINC), to identify possible clients leaving the penal systems, share information on the agency's re-entry program, and coordinate local resources that are available to assist the clients. LINC provides shelter and services to men and women who have been released from local jails, State and federal prisons and, on occasion, young adults who have been released from detention centers. Assistance is provided through four programs: 1) The New Workforce Program is currently capable of providing 60 clients with employment opportunities and training, using various organizations throughout the region. It includes assistance with resume and cover letter writing, interactive training for job interviews, and educational services. 2) Housing services include a 10-bed facility for men through a downtown church, and a small transitional housing program offering single units for homeless ex-offenders. 3) Transportation in the form of bus tickets, a van, and staff members' personal cars is provided for ex-offenders needing it to get to a job or another destination in the City. 4) Job training and basic education are provided to help ex-offender locate work in the Wilmington area.

CONTACT: Sterling Cheatham, City Manager, (910) 341-7810 or sterling.cheatham@wilmingtonnc.gov.

Tulsa: Oklahoma's incarceration rate for women ranks number one in the country. Project Re-connect is a multi-layered program that prepares women coming out of prison for the workforce. It is an intensive workforce training and re-socialization program that works with female inmates before they are released. While the women are going through the training, they also go through the re-socialization experience with their children. At program's end, and when the women are released, they are prepared for a high-wage job and for return to life as a mother. The program is funded through a partnership of the Mayor's Office, the George Kaiser Family Foundation, the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology, the Tulsa Workforce Investment Board, and the U.S. Attorney's Office.
CONTACT: Monroe Nichols, Assistant to the Mayor, Education and Workforce Development, (918) 720-5271 or monichols@cityoftulsa.org.

Philadelphia: The Mayor's Office for the Reentry of Ex-Offenders (M.O.R.E) has entered into a unique partnership with Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey and Philadelphia to establish a transitional sheltered workshop for ex-offenders. One of the unique features of the partnership is that it is supported in total by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which has pledged \$1.4 million to the program over three years. Goodwill Industries will hire the ex-offenders for hands-on light industrial training, allowing them to earn a paycheck and build a resume. When considered job-ready, sheltered workshop participants will be placed in competitive jobs in the community.
M.O.R.E.'s Managed Reintegration Network (MRN) will refer ex-offenders to the Goodwill Workshop after they have completed an intake and assessment process, been assigned a case manager, and completed a two-week Community and Personal Responsibility training course. M.O.R.E. also will provide management of the sheltered workshop, case management, job retention skills, and additional job training to help ensure a smooth transition to permanent employment. This model has proven to be financially and programmatically efficient and, more importantly, can put ex-offenders to work quickly: Such "rapid attachment" of the prisoner to the greater working community is seen as the key to a sustained "prison to work" model.
The sheltered workshop will employ approximately 400 of the individuals released from the Philadelphia Prison System annually. It will provide an opportunity for individual transformational change among these ex-offenders, and also has the potential to change the attitudes of potential employers and the larger community toward ex-offenders, making it possible for them and their families to move forward with their lives and become productive members of society.
CONTACT: Carolyn Harper, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office for the Reentry of Ex-Offenders, (215) 685-3381 or carolyn.harper@phila.gov.

Reading: Launched with State Weed and Seed funds in the target City neighborhoods, and now expanded via United Way funding throughout the community, Ready to Succeed workshops begin offering community-based employment assistance to inmates at the County jail prior to their release. Staff of BCPS/BerksConnections and the Berks County CareerLink holds weekly sessions at the jail with inmates who are seeking help finding a job. The six weekly sessions (expanded this year from four sessions) last two to three hours and may involve entering inmates' information onto the CareerLink job-finding Web site, preparing resumes, participating in mock interviews, and working with an interactive video series specifically developed for inmates seeking post-release employment. There is an additional session following release, and individual post-release case management is available for up to three years. Prior to release, inmates sign a contract that allows local parole and domestic relations officers to share information with the program case managers and promote continuing resource follow-up. The program has also identified "offender friendly" employers who are more likely to hire program graduates. During 2008, over 67 percent of program participants who remained out of jail were employed 90 days after release. In addition, six cities (Easton, Bethlehem, Allentown, Reading, Lancaster, and York) have just completed a joint study of gang prevention, law enforcement, and re-entry of gang members, many of whom have been incarcerated. The study of the extent of gang activity involved criminal justice professionals from area educational institutions along with community members and local school students. Among the additional collaborative efforts underway in the community are the C.A.N. program, the Community Resources Network, and the Reentry Resource Center. A Community Reentry Center is expected to be open by July.

CONTACT: Scott Rehr, Executive Director, BCPS, (610) 478-6920, ext. 3935, or srehr@countyofberks.com.

Norfolk: The City of Norfolk has established a Reentry Council to coordinate the efforts of agencies and partners working with offenders and families. A Faith Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) subcommittee has completed a resource guide and has planned a mentorship program. Also, within DHS, an Employment Team focuses exclusively on the employment and training needs of returning offenders. The services provided by the Employment Team are funded through Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET); clients who are ineligible for this are referred to Reentry Council Partners for similar services.

CONTACT: Dr. Denise Biron, Prisoner Reentry Program Supervisor, (757) 664-7799 or denise.biron@norfolk.gov.

The survey cities of **Boston, Providence, Oakland** and **Austin** are among cities across the country that have responded to the “Ban the Box” movement, creating a fair employment opportunity for all applicants by removing from their employment applications or early employment screening any questions that would identify applicants as ex-offenders. Oakland reports that it is also finalizing a Local Hire Policy which will actually target the reentry population for employment. Austin and Travis County are the first city and county governments to collaborate on “Ban the Box.” **Battle Creek** takes pride in the fact that it was the first in the State of Michigan to enact an ordinance prohibiting most City vendors from imposing a blanket ban on hiring individuals with felony records.

Housing Focus

Three of the cities described initiatives that focus on combating the problem of homelessness that many reentrants face upon returning to their communities.

Miami: Miami’s ex-offender reentry programming is integral to its homeless population reduction efforts, reflecting a long-term strategy that contributes to public safety and responds to critical issues related to ex-offender reentry in a sustainable way. Many of the 27,000 prisoners released from Florida prisons each year are functionally illiterate, are substance abusers, are mentally ill, have little available to them in terms of support systems, and have few links to the communities they are entering. It follows that large numbers are rendered homeless upon their release. Since 2003, Miami’s Outreach to Homeless Detainees program has conducted a needs-assessment of prisoners upon their release to determine the social services that need to be provided – for most, housing is an immediate concern – and has helped them get the services they need.

Since homeless outreach in Miami was initiated in 1991, the City has successfully partnered with organizations such as the Community Partnership for Homeless, Camillus House, Miami Rescue Mission, Salvation Army, Carrfour, Lutheran Services Florida, Citrus Health Network, Inc., and with many others. Mayor Manny Diaz has made it a priority to reach out to community and stakeholder organizations. Close collaboration and a strong working relationship exist with the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust and continuum-of-care providers and partners.

In 2008, building on the homeless detainee programming to date, the City and the Homeless Trust partnered with Miami-Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Miami-Dade Justice System to establish discharge policies for homeless inmates and those inmates at risk of homelessness, strengthening outreach and contacts with the ex-offender community. Consultation and collaboration with local partners took place throughout the process. Referrals from County Corrections and the Justice System are the primary links to the program. In addition, referrals are received through calls to a toll-free Homeless Helpline. In the needs assessment conducted by the City’s outreach teams upon a prisoner’s release, areas such as housing, mental and physical health status, employability and job skills, legal status, and substance abuse history are discussed. Once the information is gathered, a trained housing specialist connects the individual with appropriate housing and other services, including transportation. While Miami’s program has been geared to inmates released from County jail facilities, the need to expand services to federal and state prison detainees has become a City priority due to the increasing numbers of releases from these prisons.

CONTACT: Katherine K. Martinez, Homeless Housing Supervisor, City of Miami Homeless Assistance Program, (305) 576-9900, ext. 243.

St. Louis: In the City's 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness, reentry of ex-offenders was one of the issues cited as contributing to the number of homeless people in the City. In 2006 Mayor Francis G. Slay succeeded in securing from the Missouri legislature a \$1 million appropriation to be provided by the Missouri Department of Corrections to assist ex-offenders in St. Louis who had maxed out their sentences in State correctional facilities. A contract was awarded to a local not-for-profit organization with extensive experience in addressing the needs of ex-offenders. Project Re-Connect included all of the components deemed necessary for successful reentry, including housing placement, employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, and case management. Based on the success of this program, a second year of funding was approved by the State legislature. Statistics for the period March 2007-December 2008 revealed that, of the 411 ex-offenders participating in Project Re-Connect, only 34 (8.2 percent) had committed new offenses since being released from prison. Of the 609 non-participants coming out of prison during the same period, 210 (34.5 percent) committed new criminal offenses. Only one of those participating in Project Re-Connect returned to prison; during the same period, 20 non-participants were recommitted. A request for a third year of funding is currently being considered by the legislature.

CONTACT: Bill Siedhoff, Director, Department of Human Services, (314) 612-5900 or Siedhoffw@stlouiscity.com.

Spokane: The Spokane Homeless Assistance Response and Prevention Partnership (SHARPP) works with incarcerated individuals who have no home to return to upon their release. While still in custody, potential program participants meet with the Community Re-entry Service Team (CREST) for an in-depth application and assessment session. Applicants then complete a Responsible Renter Program to equip them to occupy outside housing. The successful applicants are placed on appropriate housing lists. Upon exiting incarceration, they move to a transitional home and, as the re-entry process starts, they receive vocational training from Goodwill. Upon successful completion of classes and time in transitional housing, they are eligible for rental assistance.

CONTACT: Julie Driscoll, SHARPP Program Coordinator, (509) 477-4516 or jadriscoll@spokanecounty.org.

Focus on Young Offenders

Three of the cities described initiatives that pull together numerous public and private agencies to target young offenders.

Miami-Dade: The Miami-Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation Department (MDCR) operates a Boot Camp program for young ex-offenders that has been highly successful in maintaining a very low rate of recidivism. MDCR's reentry program for adults serves about 250 inmates annually. This program provides comprehensive reentry services and in-jail programs for inmates serving sentences of at least four months. Approximately 25 local community agencies partner with the Department to provide aftercare services to program clients.

CONTACT: Joel Botner, Program Director, Faith Works Reentry Program, (305) 597-2459 or m721@miamidade.gov.

Honolulu: Funded through the U.S. Department of Labor, the Honolulu Youth Offender Project provides young offenders, ages 16-24, with the opportunity to attain educational and employment goals and avoid further involvement in the court system. Services and activities include intensive wraparound case management services, an alternative high school diploma program, occupational skills training, community service projects, service-based mentoring, employment services, therapeutic counseling, and postsecondary education and training placement services. Since 2003, the program has served more than 300 youthful offenders, 150 of whom have earned a high school diploma, GED, or occupational skills training certificate; another 100 have secured and retained unsubsidized employment.

CONTACT: Leinaala Nakamura, Assistant Program Administrator, Department of Community Services, (808) 832-7960 or lnakamura@honolulu.gov.

Boston: The Boston Reentry Initiative (BRI) was created through a partnership between the Boston Police Department and Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and several other criminal justice, faith, community, and City agencies and organizations. BRI is the winner of the 2003 IACP Community Policing Award and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice as a national model for reentry. Of hundreds of inmates released from the County's House of Correction (HOC) each month, BRI prioritizes for intervention inmates 18-32 years of age with chronic firearm and violent offense histories, those who are gang-involved, returning to high-crime areas, and who are deemed most likely to recidivate upon release. Inmates attend an initial community panel where law enforcement partners warn offenders about the consequences of re-offending, while faith and community mentors and case managers, some of whom are ex-offenders themselves, offer long-term support and services.

A team case management approach ensures a seamless continuum of services and supervision. Starting within the HOC, case managers and mentors assist offenders with individualized reentry plans. Services include intensive case management, mentoring, child support assistance, ID, licenses, housing, health and human service referrals, extensive employment assistance, job skills development, and education and training. Those individuals who reject assistance and return to offending encounter, as promised, strict enforcement and fast-track prosecution with enhanced penalties.

Given that these are the City's most violent returning offenders who are 100 percent most likely to recidivate, BRI has demonstrated success. A 2007 Harvard University evaluation found that the BRI was associated with a 30 percent reduction in the recidivism rate relative to the rate for a comparison group of high risk offenders released from the HOC. BRI was funded by the Justice Department's COPS Office from 2001 to 2006, and since has been funded by a Charles E. Shannon Community Safety Initiative Grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety. Much of the core administrative and management functions are provided as in-kind contributions by the Boston Police Department and the Suffolk County HOC.

CONTACT: Hemali Gunaratne, Director, Research and Development, Boston Police Department, (617) 343-5096 or GunaratneH.bpd@cityofboston.gov.

Use of Mapping

Two cities described how the use of mapping technology will enable them to better connect reentrants with the services needed to avoid recidivism.

Washington: The District of Columbia's Office on Ex-Offender Affairs (OEOA) is creating a geographical mapping tool, similar to that of Mapquest®, to locate all of the facilities that provide services to residents returning from incarceration. Scheduled to be operational at the end of May, the tool will be placed on the OEOA Web site and will enable returning residents to navigate the variety of services and service providers available to them. Service providers also benefit because the site makes information on their services and locations readily available to their target populations. The mapping tool is expected to substantially increase the service capacity of the OEOA and its service providers. Mapping the network of service providers has long been an expressed need of the reentry community in the City, and so the concept of the mapping tool has received unanimous support from both government agencies and service providers. It is expected that the tool will be instrumental in helping obtain an up-to-date count of the ex-offenders who reside in the City as well as those who are receiving services. OEOA did not require any additional resources from the government to create this resource.

CONTACT: Theodore Sweet, Interim Director, Office of Ex-Offender Affairs, (202) 715-7673 or Theodore.sweet@dc.gov.

Albuquerque: The City of Albuquerque funds several law enforcement collaboratives and initiatives that aid ex-offenders. The COAST program, for example, helps homeless citizens obtain housing and community services. The Chronic Inebriate Program targets ex-offenders that consistently use medical and jail services with no positive outcomes for integration, providing services and court ordered sanctions to decrease both inebriate homelessness and criminal behavior.

The City and the Albuquerque Police Department have partnered with the State of New Mexico Corrections Department's Deputy Secretary for Reentry and Prison Reform to leverage information technology data for reentry mapping of parole and probation clients in Bernalillo County, which has the largest number of parolees and probationers in the State. The short-term goals include better understanding where ex-offenders are residing upon their return to the community, whether their presence has an effect on crime in their areas of residence or elsewhere in the community, whether they have access to jobs and to public transportation needed to get to jobs, and whether public and private support services, including those provided by churches, are able to connect to them. The ultimate goal is to use what is learned by overlaying maps to shape public policy and apply future public resources to services in locations that are most effective in helping ex-offenders, particularly multiple offenders, avoid recidivism.

The initiative's targeted reentry population will be property and auto theft offenders. Law enforcement officers will join Probation and Parole officers in their bi-weekly meetings with clients, communicating to them that they also have an interest in their ability to avoid criminal behavior and successfully reenter their community, and that they also will be monitoring them.

CONTACT: Bobbi Roberts, Executive Adviser to the Mayor and Chief of Police, (505) 553-3524 or broberts@acbq.gov.

Analysis and Action

Two cities described efforts undertaken to base their policies and programs on a better understanding of reentry and recidivism challenges:

Chicago: In order to address reentry in a more coordinated manner, the City has partnered with non-profit, for-profit, community-based and faith-based agencies, the Illinois Department of Corrections, the Cook County Jail, probation, parole, local law enforcement, and the County and State to create "The Collaborative on Reentry." The Collaborative addresses the complex issues raised by the large numbers of men and women leaving State prison and County jail each year and returning to local communities, as well as the unacceptably high recidivism rates being experienced. Members of the Collaborative use their expertise, judgment, and insight to advance policy and systems change in the City and State. A recent meeting of the Collaborative focused on alternatives to incarceration; it examined the Second Chance Act; the status of pre-trial hearings; local initiatives on prevention, pre-trial, and post-disposition/sentencing; assessment and determining eligibility for alternatives to incarceration; community-based alternatives for non-violent drug offenders; and information collection and sharing to expand alternatives to incarceration.

CONTACT: Christopher Mallette, Director of Community Safety Initiatives, (312) 744-9515 or Christopher.mallette@cityofchicago.org.

Fort Wayne: The Allen County Reentry Court began operations in 2001. When a team comprised of a Superior Court Judge, the Executive Director of Allen County Community Corrections, a senior advisor from the U.S. Department of Justice, and the Mayor began to address the City's escalating crime problem by evaluating the returning prison population, they found that the local statistics mirrored the nation picture. Based on their analysis, they conceived of a voluntary, year-round Reentry Court program which would be funded by re-allocating existing resources at the State and County levels. The mission was to significantly lower the rate of the "expected" re-arrest of returning inmates through gradually decreasing levels of supervision and enhanced delivery of services while maintaining public safety. The program accepted all inmates, unless their medical or mental health problems were too severe to handle. Two independent research projects covering 2001-2007 have concluded that those who completed the program had a much lower rate of re-arrest than would have been expected. Even offenders who had some exposure to the program but did not complete it had lower rates of re-arrest. Another important finding was that offenders who were re-arrested were less likely to commit the same kind of offense, and their new offenses were less likely to be of the most serious nature.

In 2007 the Indiana Legislature passed a Reentry Court statute, and the Allen County Reentry Court was the first to be certified by the Indiana Judicial Center. The Reentry Court program is currently collaborating with the City and the Indiana Department of Correction to evaluate individual offenders and

work with the community and family members to improve their continuity of care. The program currently is concentrating on identifying those inmates diagnosed with a mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse problems.

CONTACT: Sheila Hudson, Executive Director, Allen County Community Corrections, (260) 449-7252 or Sheila.hudson@co.allen.in.us.

Other Successful Initiatives

Several cities described successful initiatives that were unique in their focus on a particular target group, or in their approach to delivering services or enforcing policies,

Dothan: Municipal Court officials are frequently the first contact that mentally ill citizens have with "the system." Dothan's court system works closely with local mental health providers to obtain both evaluations and the assistance needed by defendants – for example, proper medication so that a bi-polar defendant does not feel the need to "self medicate" using illicit drugs. Recognizing that the best medication in the world is no good if the patient can't afford it, the court works with local community assistance programs to help ensure that, following their release from jail, defendants have an affordable source of medication. The court also works with several half-way houses in the Dothan area and in other areas in an effort to remove offenders from environments encouraging criminal activity, and it works with military officials on behalf of defendants attempting to enter military service in order to escape such environments.

CONTACT: Michelle Smith, Municipal Court Administrator, (334) 615-4160 or msellers@dothan.org.

Minneapolis: The centerpiece of the Minneapolis reentry effort is the Community Justice Project (CJP) of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, which operates in partnership with the Minneapolis Police Department, the City Attorney's Office, and the Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility, and which has been recognized nationally as a "best practice" in reentry. CJP's purpose is to increase public safety by reducing recidivism through changing the behavior of offenders and effecting system change. It accomplishes this by recruiting, training, and supporting volunteers who mentor ex-offenders. All mentors are required to attend five hours of training in which they learn how to forge positive relationships with their mentees, what rules they must follow within the correctional facility, and how to interface with corrections staff and probation officers. Mentors in the program commit to meeting with mentees during the month before the mentee's release, and spending four hours each month with their mentees during their first nine months back in the community.

The CJP operates on a budget of \$185,000; funding sources include the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, foundations, churches, and individual donations. The budget supports two full-time employees, three part-time employees, and a student intern. CJP received the 2008 Faith and Community Service Initiatives Best Practices Award from the Governor's Council on Faith and Community Service Initiatives, and has received recognition from the White House Office of Faith Based Initiatives.

CONTACT: Hillary Freeman, Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, (612) 673-2892 or hfreeman@gmcc.org.

Austin: A collaborative effort of the Travis County Criminal Justice Planning Department, the City of Austin's Employment Services Department, and the National Institute of Corrections provides Offender Workforce Development (OES) and Offender Workforce Development Specialist training (OWDS) to professional service providers. OES is an entry level training program for professionals who assist offenders in securing and retaining employment. Through OWDS, specialists are trained and certified by the National Institute of Correction to build service capacity in their jurisdictions. They are trained to help ex-offenders make informed career choices based on assessment tools, interest, skills, and ability to both obtain employment and advance in their career field. To date, Travis County and the City have trained 169 OES professionals and 27 OWD Specialists. These individuals represent government, non-profits, private employers, and faith-based organizations throughout the State. In addition, some ex-offenders have been trained through OES and OWDS.

CONTACT: Roberta Byram, Manager, Employment Services Department, (512) 974-3210 or roberta.byram@ci.austin.tx.us.

Seattle: The Neighborhood Corrections Initiative (NCI) Program joins Seattle Police Department (SPD) Officers with State Department of Corrections (DOC) officers in teams that work with chronic offenders who are on active DOC supervision. The NCI approach combines support for both the pro-social efforts of the ex-offenders with a zero tolerance policy for those found involved in violence, drug or alcohol consumption, gang activity, truancy, or loitering. The NCI team responds to offenses by transporting individuals to their probation officer or work crew, or to detoxification. Because of the close interaction between SPD and DOC, ex-offenders can be monitored and the best response can be made to their individual situation, effectively putting an end to the cycle of "arrest, jail, and release" which often occurs with chronic offenders. NCI is also somewhat of a safety net for the offenders themselves: Officers regularly check in on the ex-offenders, talking to them to encourage pro-social choices, urging them to enter drug and psychiatric treatment if necessary, and supplying hygiene kits if they are homeless. The NCI team has also made referrals to programs receiving funding from the City of Seattle. NCI has made referrals to nonprofit social service and housing agencies – Sound Mental Health and Plymouth Housing Group – that have successfully placed homeless repeat offenders in affordable housing units linked to mental health and other supportive services.

CONTACT: Andrea Akita, Senior Planner, Human Services Department, (206) 684-0113 or andrea.akita@seattle.gov.

Many additional survey cities provided brief descriptions of initiatives that have been, or will be, launched in a variety of areas.

- In **Phoenix**, a successful program initiated by Police Officer Nick Margiotta specifically targets persons who are homeless and reentry offenders. The partnerships he has developed span the State of Arizona.
- In **Desert Hot Springs**, a community committee concluded a nine-month study of the reentry of State parolees by calling for action on housing restrictions; a planning team to work with parolees before their release; a residential multi-service center for parolees; and lobbying for legislative relief from the consequences of the disproportionate number of parolees relocating to the City. The City Council has adopted and implemented the recommendations.
- **San Francisco's** Coordinated Reentry Council will meet for the first time on June 16. The 21-member body, co-chaired by Mayor Gavin Newsom, the District Attorney, the Public Defender, and the Sheriff, and including seven previously-incarcerated people, will coordinate information sharing, planning, and engagement among all interested private and public stakeholders.
- **Stockton's** Parolee Orientation Meetings engage parolees within two weeks of their release from prison, connecting them with community-based agencies to address issues that could hinder their reentry to the community.
- **Evansville's** South Sector Weed and Seed site, while not a recipient of federal funding, has launched a reentry program that utilizes the services of existing social service agencies to prevent recidivism and help reentering offenders become productive members of the community.
- In **Baton Rouge**, the Judicial Court Opportunity for Employment program, the local workforce development agency, and Louisiana's Department of Corrections have formed a partnership to provide employment and training services to offenders both before and after their release.
- **Irvington's** Operation Ceasefire, funded through the Rutgers Police Institute, provides intensive reentry case management for individuals on parole or probation. Case management plans are monitored on a weekly basis.

- **Eugene** has partnered with Sponsors Inc., a local nonprofit agency that targets ex-offenders, on construction of a housing project, and is preparing to partner on another project slated to begin construction soon.
- In **Jackson** (TN) the Mayor's Second Chance program will give offenders an opportunity to return to a positive and supportive environment and will help them overcome barriers to successful reentry. Recommended by Jackson's Safe Neighborhoods Task Force, the program will use FY 2009 Department of Justice funds to address growing problems of crime and violence.
- **Winston-Salem's** Offenders Connection Network offers all agencies that work with the offender population an outlet for their information and serves as a clearinghouse for resources.

Four of the survey cities reported that their reentry programs are operated or fully-funded by their state government.

- For **Kansas City**, the Kansas Department of Corrections manages and operates all aspects of the Wyandotte County reentry program.
- In **Lexington**, the Fayette County Drug Court, funded by the State of Kentucky, offers offenders an opportunity to address their addictions in a structured, "no nonsense" environment through a well-developed support system and partnerships with numerous community agencies.
- **Lewiston** reports that, while local services are available to anyone seeking counseling, work, or treatment, Maine's Department of Corrections operates the Reentry Network.
- In **Columbus**, the Returning Home program, funded by the Ohio Governor's Office of Faith Based Initiatives, provides a range of individual and family support for persons reentering the City within six months of their release.

SURVEY CITIES

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| Dothan | Alabama | Lewiston | Maine |
| Florence | Alabama | Baltimore | Maryland |
| Gilbert | Arizona | Boston | Massachusetts |
| Phoenix | Arizona | Everett | Massachusetts |
| North Little Rock | Arkansas | Battle Creek | Michigan |
| Cathedral City | California | Southfield | Michigan |
| Citrus Heights | California | Burnsville | Minnesota |
| Culver City | California | Minneapolis | Minnesota |
| Desert Hot Springs | California | Richfield | Minnesota |
| Fremont | California | St. Louis | Missouri |
| Los Angeles | California | Irvington | New Jersey |
| Murrieta | California | Jackson Township | New Jersey |
| Oakland | California | Newark | New Jersey |
| Redlands | California | Albuquerque | New Mexico |
| San Francisco | California | Buffalo | New York |
| Stockton | California | Freeport | New York |
| Denver | Colorado | Niagara Falls | New York |
| Stamford | Connecticut | Rochester | New York |
| Washington | DC | Rockville Centre | New York |
| Cape Coral | Florida | Charlotte | North Carolina |
| Clearwater | Florida | Durham | North Carolina |
| Miami | Florida | Greenville | North Carolina |
| Miami-Dade County | Florida | Wilmington | North Carolina |
| North Miami | Florida | Winston-Salem | North Carolina |
| Orlando | Florida | Columbus | Ohio |
| Sarasota | Florida | Tulsa | Oklahoma |
| Honolulu | Hawaii | Eugene | Oregon |
| Maui County | Hawaii | Philadelphia | Pennsylvania |
| Aurora | Illinois | Reading | Pennsylvania |
| Chicago | Illinois | Camuy | Puerto Rico |
| Glendale Heights | Illinois | Providence | Rhode Island |
| Carmel | Indiana | Jackson | Tennessee |
| Evansville | Indiana | Austin | Texas |
| Fort Wayne | Indiana | Beaumont | Texas |
| Indianapolis | Indiana | Denton | Texas |
| Muncie | Indiana | Norfolk | Virginia |
| Kansas City | Kansas | Spokane | Washington |
| Lexington | Kentucky | Seattle | Washington |
| Louisville | Kentucky | Trenton | New Jersey |
| Baton Rouge | Louisiana | | |