



Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable Newsletter

December 2012

Greetings!

As 2012 comes to an end, we begin this quarter's newsletter with wishing you a "Happy New Year"! Now that 2013 has arrived, we'd like to share the latest reentry news at the local, state, and national levels as well as the primary initiatives our committees are undertaking.

Sheriff Hamilton Hosts National Conference

Travis County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) is proud to announce that they will be hosting the first Annual 2013 Vision Summit: Looking Toward the Future of Reentry, on September 10-13, 2013 at the Holiday Inn Midtown in Austin, Texas. [SAVE THE DATE](#). There will be two-and-a-half days filled with workshops that target topics of reentry, e.g., transportation, IDs, homelessness, mental health issues, substance abuse, employment, veterans, youth, and family reunification. Nationally respected leaders in the field of reentry will give insight into what we as a community need to do to be part of the solution to successful reentry and reintegration.

Awards: Travis County Adult Probation Department

The [Travis County Adult Probation Department](#), directed by Dr. Geraldine Nagy (member of the A/TCRRT Planning Council and co-chair of the Evidence-Based Practice Committee), has recently been awarded two federal grants to further impact special population offenders in Travis County - felony high risk offenders on probation for a domestic violence offense and felony high risk probationers with severe and persistent mental health and substance use dependence disorders. The domestic violence grant will assist in the development of specialized felony domestic violence caseloads to ensure greater probationer accountability. The mental health grant will improve current service delivery for probationers with co-occurring disorders exiting the Travis County Jail. Both programs will be consistent with EBP supervision and intervention strategies shown to be most effective with these populations.

Child Support Review Process

We recently received an email from Oscar Esquivel in the Attorney General's office that may be of interest to you or your clients if child support payments are an issue to successful reentry and reintegration. He wrote: "For many of our formerly incarcerated parents, the thought of going to court for child support is not an avenue they care to take, so I thought it was important to let former offenders know that when they need to request for their child support to be adjusted to their new wages that they have another road that does not take place in the court room." To see the Child Support Review Process flyer that explains what will take place, along with further details, [click here](#).

A/TCRRT & the 83rd Texas Legislature in 2013

In preparation for the 83rd Legislative Session, the [A/TCRRT Policy Reform Agenda](#) provides direction as we partner with the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, Travis County Office of Intergovernmental Relations, Texas Public Policy Foundation, ACLU, and many other organizations promoting progressive reentry legislation. The legislative session officially begins on Tuesday, January 8th. Check [our website](#) for more updates as the session continues.

New Research and Enforcement Guidance on Criminal Records in the Employment Process

The National Institute of Justice Journal recently released an adaptation of a July 2011 testimony made to the EEOC regarding the "struggles of re-entering society as a convicted felon." The article, [In Search of a Job: Criminal Records as Barriers to Employment](#) by Amy L. Solomon, posits a number of powerful arguments as a result of numerous studies into the subject. One such study found that one-third of American adults have been arrested at least once by the age of 23; this means that a disproportionate amount of eligible employees also carry a criminal record and are thus unfairly kept from employment. Undue workplace and hiring discrimination are widespread throughout the country, which is why the EEOC released in April 2012 the [Enforcement Guidance on the Consideration of Arrest and Conviction Records in Employment Decisions Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#). These guidances essentially encourage the employer to consider three things if/when hiring someone with a known criminal record: 1. the nature of the job, 2. the nature and seriousness of the offense, and 3. the length of time since it occurred. Updated information on [this](#) can be viewed in the October 21, 2012 Chicago Tribune article.

A/TCRRT UPDATES

Xoffenders' Council: With only four meetings under their belt, this dynamic, consumer-driven group has already developed their structure as well as determined their internal and external objectives to provide peer support to former offenders/families. They focus on being leaders in reentry advocacy at the local, state, and national levels through their speakers' bureau. Monthly meetings are the first Monday from 5:30-8:00 p.m. at the AGE Center ([Map](#)).

Employment Committee: This new group of reentry employment specialists collaborated with the University of Texas to research evidence-based practices on employer outreach and employee marketing. This led to the development of a private sector presentation for employers, business coalitions, employment conferences, and/or other employer-related forums. Additionally, they are in the process of developing their work plan for an "Employer Resource Pool" that can provide employers with "job-ready" employees. Monthly meetings are the first Friday from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Workforce Solutions, 6505 Airport Boulevard ([Map](#)).

Evidence Based Practices Committee: Currently, this group is planning a spring workshop to be conducted by Dr. Geraldine Nagy called "Moving Forward." It will focus on moving from an evidence-based model structured around principles of what works to a business model emphasizing informed decision making. The Reentry Impact initiative will develop a "Reentry Report Card" for program analysis based on five identified indicators of successful reentry and reduced recidivism. Monthly meetings are the first Monday from 11:30-12:45 at the Terrazas Library, 1105 E. Cesar Chavez St. ([Map](#)).

Support Systems Committee: The new initiative for the Support Systems Committee is to partner with TDCJ, the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, and local churches to identify, recruit, and support a core group of students from Austin to attend Camp Good News located at Camp Allen in Navasota, Texas. This is a summer camp for children aged 10 to 15 whose mother or father is in jail or prison. This Committee has monthly meetings on the 3rd Tuesday from 2:30-4:00 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Conference Room at 700 Lavaca ([Map](#)).

Housing Focus Area: Under the leadership of Darla Gay and A/TCRRT's partnership with ECHO, great accomplishments are being made to tear down housing barriers. Of specific interest is the [A/TCRRT/ECHO Transition Planning for Homeless Persons from Correctional Settings Initiative's Final Report](#), which was finalized in November. The next Stakeholder Update Meeting for the Transition Planning for Homeless Persons Leaving Local Jails Initiative will be January 30th, 2013 from 9 a.m.-11 a.m. at the Travis County Correctional Complex-Del Valle 3614 Bill Price Rd. Monthly housing updates can be found [here](#).

As you can see, the new year brings many exciting opportunities for participation. The Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable wants, needs, and IS you! Find out more about how you can [get involved](#).

Wishing you the best for the new year, I am

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Save the Dates!

Evidence-Based Practice Committee

Date: January 7, 2013
Time: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Xoffenders' Council

Date: January 7, 2013
Time: 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Planning Council

Date: January 14, 2013
Time: 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Support Systems Committee

Date: January 15, 2013
Time: 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

More Information on Reentry

Interest in reentry is rapidly expanding around the country. The Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable has a page on its website where you can find resources for keeping up with nationwide trends in reentry. To see it, click [here](#).