



Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable Newsletter

September/October 2013

Greetings!

As we are now entering the last stretch of 2013, 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.

LBB CRIMINAL JUSTICE FORUM - October 4th

The Criminal Justice Data Analysis Team of the Legislative Budget Board is hosting a Criminal Justice Forum on Friday, October 4, 2013 from 1:30-3:00 pm at the Robert E. Johnson Conference Center, 1501 N. Congress Ave. LBB staff will present an overview of the January 2013 criminal justice report findings and 2013-14 interim research highlights. Forum topics will include overviews of the January 2013 Adult and Juvenile Correctional Populations Projections report, January 2013 Statewide Criminal Justice Recidivism and Revocation Rates report, January 2013 Criminal Justice Uniform Cost report, January 2013 Texas At-Risk Youth Services Project: A Second Look report, and highlights of the Criminal Justice Data Analysis team's interim research. In addition to the information provided by the Criminal Justice Data Analysis Team, the forum will also include overviews of the Agency Performance and School Performance Review Teams. For more information contact Laurie Molina at (512) 475-2511 or Email: laurie.molina@lbb.state.tx.us

UPDATE ON COMPLETED LEGISLATIVE SESSION

During the 83rd Legislative Session, the [A/TCRRT Policy Reform Agenda](#) partnered with the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC), the Texas Public Policy Foundation, ACLU, and many other organizations promoting progressive reentry legislation. TCJC's [2013 Wrap-up & Appreciation](#) is a comprehensive summary of 50 smart-on-crime policies that have now been signed into law.* They have also compiled a convenient summary of the successful new policies in each bill, which can be found [here](#). Check [our website](#) for more information.

*Note that the Solutions for Confinement & Reentry Bills start on page 17 and the Sunset Legislation Pertaining to Texas' Corrections and Criminal Justice Agencies start on page 19.

A/TCRRT Superstars

Pictured here at Travis County Sheriff's Office's national Vision Summit: Looking Toward the Future of Re-entry are some of our A/TCRRT superstars (left to right): **Gary Wardian, Darwin Hamilton, Lauren Johnson, and Jorge Renaud**. Our panel was so good that Sheriff Hamilton had Lauren give a speech to the entire summit prior to the keynote! We want each of you to know how grateful we are for your hard work and dedication to successful reentry and the A/TCRRT. For all that you have done and will do, thank you!



Keep Austin Affordable Campaign

Keep Austin Affordable is a coalition of business, faith, and community leaders calling for investment in affordable housing by putting city bonds back on the ballot in November 2013. The voters of Austin will be asked to decide the fate of \$65 million in affordable housing bonds. With 96-98% occupancy rates and rising rents, it is extremely important we utilize all strategies available to help us develop affordable housing including permanent supportive housing. To participate in our housing work, join us at the **ECHO Housing Work Group meetings the third Wednesdays of each month, 9 am-11 am, at 1000 E. 11th Street**. Investment of City of Austin affordable housing bonds from 2005 has made a huge difference in our community. With a loss of 40% of federal housing funding in the past five years, it is important that our community continue to diversify all funding options to help us meet our goals and close the gap on our needs around housing. For more information, see the Keep Austin Affordable [website](#) and [Facebook page](#), as well as A/TCRRT's [monthly housing reports](#).

Re-entry Housing News in the Austin Community

- The City is hosting informational sessions in October re: the housing bonds. For more information [City of Austin Informational Sessions](#).
- The Travis County Justice Reinvestment Permanent Supportive Housing for Frequent Users of Jail initiative (for operational funding for 22 units of permanent supportive housing), which launched in May 2013, currently has 13 persons enrolled in the program with 5 actually in housing (with services and housing provided by Foundation Communities).
- The City of Austin recently announced that ATCIC will be awarded 1115 Waiver funding to provide an Assertive Community Treatment Team services to 15 units of permanent supportive housing. Long term housing subsidies will also be provided through other city funding allocated earlier this year.
- The VA announced that we will be receiving 50 new VASH vouchers for homeless veterans. These vouchers are managed by the Housing Authority of the City of Austin and have reduced the barriers created by a criminal history to only the federally mandated restrictions.
- In August, the Travis County Commissioners Court approved site plans for Mobile Loaves and Fishes Community First RV Park that will serve 200 formerly homeless persons using the housing first model. Commissioners made powerful policy statements regarding housing the most vulnerable folks in our community: "We have to start saying, yes, in my backyard."

6th Annual National Prisoner's Family Conference

The goal of this conference is to strengthen the prison family and promote successful reentry and reunification, ultimately reducing the recidivism rate in the country. To that end, the National Prisoner's Family Conference provides critical connections and information to improve the quality of life for the entire prison family and offers ample networking opportunities with those from across the country serving the prisoner and their family. **Hosted in Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas February 19-21 of 2014**, the National Prisoner's Family Conference hopes to provide a forum to improve the quality of life for the prison family through increased awareness, education, and networking promoting positive relationships that reduce risks created by the incarceration of a loved one. For more information, please visit <http://prisonersfamilyconference.org/>, email info@prisonersfamilyconference.org, or call (915) 861-7733.

Employment in the News: EEOC Files Suit Against Two Employers for Use of Criminal Background Checks

BMW and Dollar General violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act by implementing and utilizing a criminal background policy that resulted in employees being fired and others being screened out for employment, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleged in two lawsuits filed. On April 25, 2012, the EEOC issued updated enforcement [guidance](#) on employer use of arrest and conviction records. The EEOC is a member of the federal interagency Reentry Council, a Cabinet-level interagency group convened to examine all aspects of reentry of individuals with criminal records. Among other issues, the Reentry Council is working to reduce barriers to employment, so that people with past criminal involvement - after they have been held accountable and paid their dues - can compete for appropriate work opportunities in order to support themselves and their families, pay their taxes, and contribute to the economy. The EEOC enforces the federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information about the EEOC is available on its [website](#).

As you can see, 2013 continues to be a busy and invigorating year. The Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable wants, needs, and IS you!

Find out more about how you can [get involved](#).

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Quick Links

- [Travis County Resource Guide](#)
- [Texas RioGrande Legal Aid Reentry Guide](#)
- [A/TCRRT Planning Council Membership Calendar](#)
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Save the Dates!

Support Systems Committee

Date: October 22, 2013
Time: 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Evidence Based Practice Committee

Date: October 7, 2013
Time: 11:30 am - 12:45 pm

XOffenders' Council

Date: October 7, 2013
Time: 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Planning Council

Date: October 14, 2013
Time: 12:00 to 2:00 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](#).