

Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable 2018 Annual Report



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Vision Statement: *A community that values and supports equity for formerly incarcerated persons and individuals with criminal histories.*

Mission Statement: *To be a robust collaborative promoting safe and healthy communities through effective reentry and reintegration of formerly incarcerated persons and individuals with criminal histories.*

Core Values:

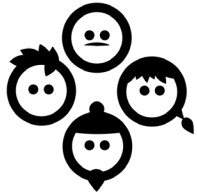
- » **Community Voice** – we listen to and engage people with lived experience in the criminal justice system and communities impacted by the criminal justice system.
- » **Inclusion** – we include multiple perspectives on how to achieve safe and healthy communities through effective reentry and reintegration.
- » **Respect** – we honor the basic dignity of every person and support relationship building as a means to overcome challenges.
- » **Equity** – we focus on disparities and inequities in system delivery and we are not afraid to ask hard questions to facilitate system change.
- » **Preventing Incarceration** – we champion strategies that offer alternatives to jail/incarceration whenever possible.

Intended Impacts:

- » Reduced recidivism and revocations from community supervision with the ultimate aim of reducing the number of incarcerated persons in Travis County;
- » Improved access to housing, job opportunities and health care for persons with criminal backgrounds in Travis County; and
- » Shifted public perception of people with criminal justice involvement so that every person in Travis County understands that people with criminal histories are functional members of society.

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2017-18 Impact



Engaging Diverse Stakeholders Impacted by Reentry

This year, the Roundtable engaged community leaders and policymakers across the region and state to better understand the impacts of incarceration and reentry on diverse communities, including the following activities:

- » Sustaining the Advocacy Fellowship Program to enhance the Roundtable’s capacity while also developing the leadership and professional skills of the Fellows with significant lived experience navigating the criminal justice system and reentering the community;
- » Hosting monthly Reentry Advocacy Project meetings for those directly impacted by incarceration and criminalization to support and connect to resources utilizing a mutual aid self-help model;
- » Conducting ongoing outreach in areas of Travis County disparately impacted by incarceration;
- » Co-hosting UNTOUCHABLE – A Documentary Screening & Discussion Co-Sponsored by the Roundtable (March 2018);
- » Sharing the stories of persons with lived experience in the criminal justice system including a KUT/Austin Monitor profile on Annette Price (October 2017) and RAP Speaks event with District Attorney Margaret Moore (April 2018); and
- » Participating in the Statewide Reentry Conference ‘Empowering Women: Reentry from a Female Perspective’ (April 2018).



Convening Dialogue and Critical Conversations

The Roundtable is uniquely positioned as a convener to support transformational change in our local criminal justice system and in related areas including employment/workforce development, behavioral health care, and housing stability. This year, activities included:

- » Engaging workforce system representatives and employer associations to discuss strategies to engage and educate employers about Second Chance Employment (May 2018);
- » Convening allied regional and statewide criminal justice organizations for shared learning and impact (October 2017);
- » Supporting and participating in Travis County discussions on jail diversion (April/June/August 2018);
- » Facilitating CAN Deliberative Dialogues on Safety and Justice (October 2017); and
- » Hosting a focus group at RAP to discuss fair housing concerns of persons with criminal backgrounds for inclusion in the Regional Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing report (August 2018).

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2017-18 Impact (continued)



Advocating to Support Institutional and Public Policy Change

The Roundtable serves as an intersectional network to build momentum for system change in criminal justice and reentry. This year, we focused on:

- » Publishing an instructional guide and template to assist landlords and property managers in complying with the U.S. Fair Housing Act and current U.S. Housing and Urban Development Office guidance on screening tenants with criminal backgrounds (April 2018);
- » Serving as presenters at the City of Austin Fair Housing Summit and Fair Housing Training for Legal Aid attorneys at UT Law School (April 2018) ;
- » Engaging with area academic institutions to discuss the Roundtable and support study and research on issues related to reentry;
- » Encouraging the Travis County Commissioner's Court to recognize April as Second Chance Month.
- » Co-sponsoring Texas Disability Issues Forum (August 2018);
- » Advocacy Fellow selected to participate in Women's Jail Programming Task Force; and
- » Partnered with the City of Austin on implementation of the Fair Chance Hiring Ordinance including participating in a work group to promote community engagement and attending regional job fairs.



Partnering to Broaden Our Impact

Partnerships allow the Roundtable to maximize its impact. In 2017-18, the Roundtable partnered with the following entities on a variety of projects. Thank you for supporting our mission!

- » Austin Apartment Association
- » Austin Community College
- » Austin Tenants' Council
- » City of Austin Equal Employment/
Fair Housing Office
- » Ending Community Homeless Coalition (ECHO)
- » Housing Authority of the City of Austin
- » Housing Authority of Travis County
- » Impact Hub
- » Mt. Zion Church
- » Texas Department of Housing
and Urban Development
- » Travis County Health & Human Services
- » Travis County Justice Planning
- » The University of Texas School of Law
- » Wildflower Church

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Advocacy Fellow Profile: Annette Price

Annette Price started her Advocacy Fellowship with the Roundtable in February 2017. By the second year of the Fellowship, multiple career opportunities began to materialize and in June 2018 she took a position as Statewide Coordinator for Texas Advocates for Justice.

Now, she organizes formerly incarcerated individuals, their families, people of all faiths, and allies to build safe and resilient communities through organizing, leadership training, and connections to community resources. Annette shared some thoughts on her term as Advocacy Fellow as well as advice for future Fellows.

When you started your tenure, how knowledgeable were you of the criminal justice system?

I am directly impacted by the criminal justice system having served twenty years in prison. I understood the law and procedures for the Illinois criminal justice system and knew very little of the Texas of Criminal Justice System.



In what ways did the fellowship advanced your criminal justice knowledge?

During my fellowship, I obtained knowledge of the criminal justice system. It provided me with a deeper insight into the work we have ahead to end mass incarceration and change barriers to successful reentry for those returning to the community with a criminal background(s).

As a person with lived experience, what would you describe to be most challenging to overcome as a fellow?

Engaging decision makers in the community to practice second chance as a way of life for those directly impacted. Being able to change the way society views criminal history as a mistake and not who the person is as a human being.

In what ways did the fellowship advance your criminal justice knowledge?

I now have organizational skills, skills in facilitating Liberating Structures convening tools to organize meetings, and improvement in time management.

What were your major accomplishments?

I testified at the Legislature on behalf of Fair Chance Hiring, I spoke at the Statewide Women's Reentry Conference, I was selected by Sheriff Sally Hernandez to sit on the Women's Jail Advisory Board, and I participated in the planning of A/TCRRT Housing Guide, which was released April 2018.

In what ways do you think the fellowship program impacts the Reentry Roundtable?

Persons directly impacted can share their experience with the criminal justice system as it relates to the work of the Planning Council. It is important for organizations working on criminal justice reform to collaborate with those directly impacted. It is because of that relationship that optimal changes are now seen daily no matter how subtle those changes are, they are happening.

How did this position prepared you for your new role at Statewide Coordinator for Texas Advocates for Justice?

It provided me with skills and tools necessary to organize base building trainings and group facilitation as it directly relates to the work at TAJ.

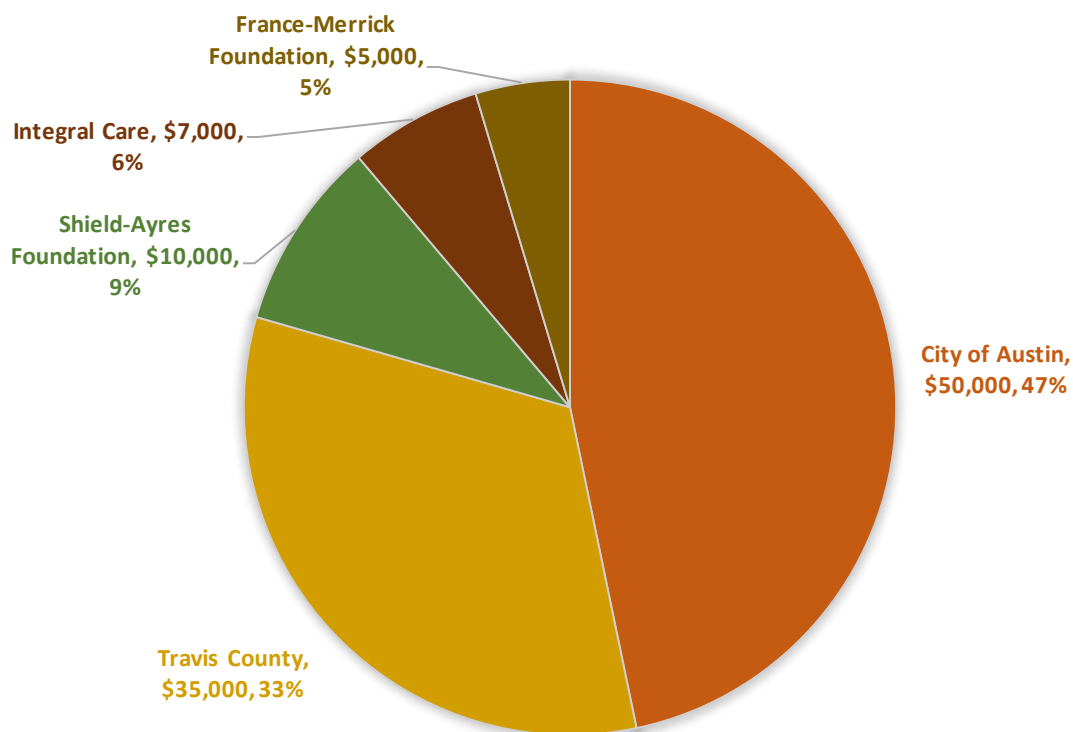
What advice would you pass along to the next fellow?

This is an opportunity to gain skills and knowledge to continue to move this work forward. Remain open with the process and allow yourself to step outside your comfort zone to new possibilities.

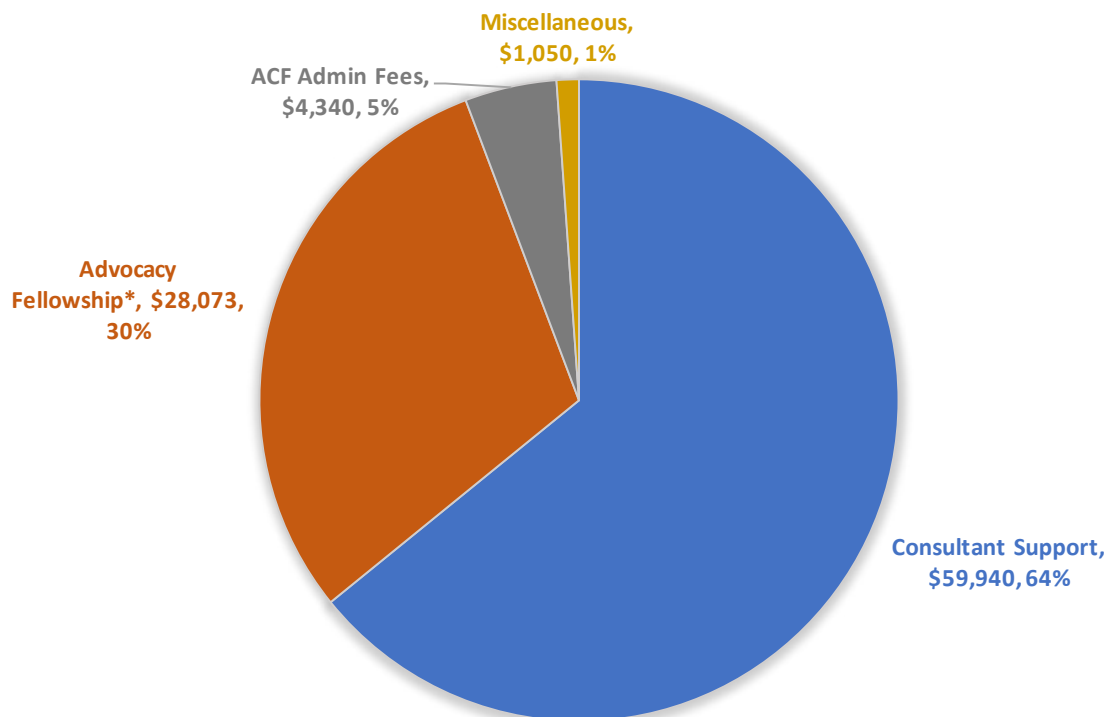
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Financial Overview

Fiscal Year 2018 Total Income: \$107,000



Fiscal Year 2018 Total Expenditures: \$93,404



**The variance between actual revenues and expenditures was due to cost savings from incomplete Advocacy Fellowship terms*

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Planning Council Members

- » Helen Gaebler, JD | UT School of Law
| Planning Council Co-Chair
- » Kenneth Thompson | Texas Department of Family
& Protective Services | Planning Council Co-Chair
- » Sarah Pahl Worthington, MSSW, JD | Texas
RioGrande Legal Aid | Immediate Past Chair
- » Reggie Smith | Community
Representative | Vice Chair
- » Karen Keith | Community Representative |
Executive Committee RAP Representative
- » Michelle Collins | Integral Care
- » Sandra Eames, Ph.D. | Austin Community College
- » Rebecca Farrell, Ph.D. | Community Representative
- » Darla Gay | Travis Co. District Attorney's Office
- » Darwin Hamilton | Community Representative
- » Sherri Cogbill-Snyder | Texas
Department of Criminal Justice
- » Rodolfo Perez, Jr., | Travis County Adult Probation
- » Kimberly Pierce | Travis Co. Justice Planning
- » Jaime Rodriguez, RAC, FBOP |
U.S. Bureau of Prisons
- » Mary Moran | Travis County Sheriff's Office
- » Douglas Smith, MSSW | Texas
Criminal Justice Coalition
- » Mia Sneed | Community Representative
- » Laura Sovine, LMSW-AP | Austin Recovery
- » Jennifer Tucker | Goodwill Central Texas
- » Louella Tate, Ph.D. | Community Representative
- » Pete Valdez | City of Austin
Downtown Community Court
- » Bree Williams, LMSW | Ending Community
Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)

Planning Council Sectors Represented

Legal/Judicial
Public Health
Community Supervision
Nonprofit Education
Faith
Business
Advocacy
Corrections
Local Government
Behavioral Health
Concerned Citizen

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Reentry Advocacy Project 2018 Update



A project of the Roundtable, RAP engages formerly incarcerated men and women to advocate for the development and implementation of policies and practices that directly and positively impact the reentry population and their families, as well as provide guidance to the Roundtable.

In 2017-2018, RAP held monthly meetings to allow persons directly impacted by incarceration to get support and advice to address reentry challenges and barriers, including meetings focused on personal storytelling, a focus group on fair housing concerns, and visits from public officials including Travis County District Attorney Margaret Moore.

In late April, RAP also hosted the inaugural RAPSpeaks event at Wildflower Church. DA Margaret Moore provided the keynote address, and was joined by several RAP members sharing their personal stories of reentry.



RAP meets on the first Wednesday of the month from 6–7:30 p.m. with pizza and informal networking starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church Zion Action Recovery Center at 2951 E 14th St.