



2010 Progress Report

on Community Outcomes,
Indicators and Strategies



Montgomery County Family
and Children First Council



Montgomery County Community-Wide Ex-Offender Reentry Task Force Report

The vision of the Montgomery County Ex-Offender Reentry Task Force (Task Force) is coming into focus. Over the last year, the Task Force has successfully completed its final report, applied for and received significant funding from the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services to implement its plans, and transitioned from the Task Force to the Montgomery County Ex-Offender Reentry Policy Board established by the Montgomery County Commissioners. The Final Report begins with “A Note to Victims” that helps set the tone for the reentry effort in Montgomery County.

A NOTE TO VICTIMS

Ex-offenders come in many different shapes and sizes. In fact, there is great variety in the nature of the crimes they've committed. These crimes often produce profound wounds in their victims, who are our parents, spouses, siblings, children, friends, and neighbors. The Montgomery County Community-Wide Ex-Offender Reentry Task Force members spent significant time contemplating the impact of these crimes, and the glaring fact that they were committed by the very people we aim to serve through this initiative.

*The Reentry Task Force wishes to acknowledge formally the impact that these crimes have had on not just the victims themselves, but their families, and sometimes their entire communities. Some of these crimes have created unpleasant, and sometimes atrocious, situations that the victims had to succumb to and endure at the hands of the offenders. **And for this, the Reentry Task Force wishes to express their sincere compassion and empathy to all people who have been victimized. The recommendations in this report are in no way meant to minimize the impact these crimes have had on the victims.** We simply choose to put forth efforts that will make our homes, neighborhoods, and communities a safer place to live for future generations and to assure that these crimes will significantly decrease over the coming years.*

The final report has been published and is available at the Montgomery County Office of Ex-Offender Reentry (located at the Montgomery County Job Center, 1133 Edwin C. Moses Blvd, suite 335), the Montgomery County website (www.mcoho.org), the Office of Family and Children First and other locations. The report lays out the vision of the Task Force, the logic behind the effort, the current local efforts to reduce recidivism, and the strategy, plan and process to reach the goal of reducing recidivism in Montgomery County by 50% in five years.

The report provides a series of recommendations (see next page) that provide a roadmap for the next steps to be taken to raise awareness and elevate the issue of ex-offender reentry in Montgomery County and to establish programming and services to assist individuals returning to Montgomery County from the state and federal prison systems.



Key: Red items are complete, Green items are under development and the Black recommendations have not yet begun.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Develop a One Stop Center as a single point of entry, assessment, and linkage to comprehensive services for all ex-offenders in Montgomery County.**
2. **Conduct a community-wide outreach, engagement and advocacy campaign to create awareness of the community-wide benefits of successful reentry, generate acceptance of ex-offenders, inspire community action, and advocate for necessary legislation and legislative changes.**
3. **Through the Montgomery County Commissioners, establish a Reentry Policy Board and a Montgomery County Office of Ex-Offender Reentry.**
4. **Create a county-wide collaborate that includes government and private sector service providers as well as other community stakeholders in order to effectively serve the ex-offender population.**
5. **Establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services/Child Support Enforcement Agency to develop consistent policies applicable to incarcerated individuals and ex-offenders with active support orders.**
6. **Engage with the Homeless Solutions Policy Board, Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority, and private local property owners to partner in the development of additional transitional and supportive housing options in Montgomery County.**
7. **Create a variety of opportunities for each Montgomery County offender sentenced to an Ohio prison to work with reentry professionals and staff from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC).**
8. **Publish a comprehensive resource guide so that incarcerated offenders and ex-offenders can access up-to-date reentry information and resources.**
9. **Utilize the multi-part universal assessment tool unveiled by ODRC for use in all Ohio prisons.**
10. **Partner with education and training resources within the community to provide comprehensive skill building and educational opportunities for the reentering population.**
11. **Clearly define relationships between service providers, county agencies, state partners, and the Office of Reentry through the utilization of Memoranda of Understanding.**
12. **Identify and utilize transitional jobs so ex-offenders can re-establish their work history.**
13. **Remove barriers to the Ohio Drivers License reinstatement for ex-offenders.**
14. **Provide access to legal services for ex-offenders.**
15. **Conduct appropriate lobbying that will advance and support successful reentry for ex-offenders.**
16. **Remove barriers to visitation to promote ongoing connection to family, friends, and the community.**
17. **Conduct a concerted education and lobbying campaign for a systematic review and response from the Ohio legislature regarding unjust collateral sanctions.**

ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The priority recommendations were established by the output of the Task Force's 7 Workgroups: Children and Families, Continuum of Care, Employment, Housing, Legal Issues, Pre- and Post- Release, and Technical. Each Workgroup produced a report with recommendations specific to its area of responsibility. A cross reference of all of the workgroups and the recommendations was created. Those recommendations suggested by more than one workgroup are the priorities. The remainder of the recommendations will be addressed by the policy board as time and resources allow.

In early 2010, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) and the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) teamed up to provide a funding opportunity to counties in Ohio to implement strategic reentry plans. Counties with a plan were authorized to apply for up to \$1 million in funding. Montgomery County did so and was awarded just under \$720,000. The grant (funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funds the operation of an office of ex-offender reentry, two of its three staff (the Manager of Reentry position is funded through a 2008 award to the Task Force from the FCFC Initiative Fund), funding for the further development of a reentry database, and most importantly, almost \$500,000 in direct services for ex-offenders. These services include: Employability Services, Case Management, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Counseling, A Transitional Jobs Incubator and Mentoring Services. Contracts have been awarded to Goodwill / Easter Seals of the Miami Valley for the Employability and Job Incubator, to Family Service Association for the Case Management and Mental Health Services, and to Dayton Circles (Think Tank, Inc.) for Mentoring.

The Montgomery County Office of Ex-Offender Reentry and the Welcome One-Stop Reentry Center (W.O.R.C.) is open and working with clients and community providers to coordinate service, improve the efficiency of service delivery, and continue the public education and advocacy started by the Task Force. The grant funds the office through the

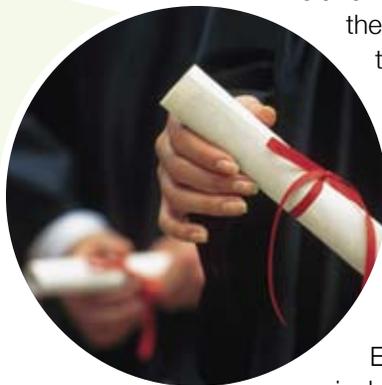
end of 2011. Another primary goal of the office is to obtain additional public and private grants.

The Office is staffed by three reentry professionals hired by Montgomery County to execute the grant and provide full time leadership to the local effort to reduce recidivism. One is a formerly incarcerated individual who can relate to the women and men who are seeking services in the Office.

The Montgomery County Ex-Offender Reentry Policy Board was established by Resolution Number 10-1662 on October 26, 2010. The members were appointed to either a two- or four-year term. The members, listed below, have been given the following charge:

Establish By-Laws for the Policy Board, including provisions for the appointment of new members; provide oversight to the Montgomery County Office of Ex-Offender Reentry; develop and implement plans and policies to reduce recidivism in Montgomery County by 50% by December 31, 2015; seek short- and long-term funding to support the ongoing efforts of the Office of Reentry; and establish clear outcome and accountability measures consistent with the reentry strategic plan.

It has been a challenging journey since 2005 to bring greater attention to the issue of ex-offender reentry in Montgomery County. However, with the publication of the Task Force Report and the opening of the Office of Reentry, several important milestones have been reached in the last year. Now is the time for results; preliminarily, they are impressive. At the time the contracts were executed, all of the December and most of the January intake and orientation slots were filled. Congratulations to all of the people who have worked on this project and to the many people who will continue to work with the reentering population in 2011 with more resources and tools than ever before.



The members of the Board (titles listed are as of December 2010) are:

Commissioner Debbie Lieberman (Co-Chair), Judge Walter H. Rice (Co-Chair), Jamiyl Al-Haniyf, Rabbi Bernard Barsky, Cheryl Bennett, Chief Richard Biehl, Rev. Robert Bishop, Brian Bucklew, Gayle Bullard, Jim Dare, Commissioner Judy Dodge, Deborah Feldman, Derrick Foward, Rev. Sherry L. Gale, Joyce Gerren, Judge Barbara Gorman, Jacquelyn Jackson, Steven Johnson, Tom Kelley, Mayor Mark Kingseed, Jim Knowles, Larry Lane, Angela Lee, State Representative Peggy Lehner, State Representative Clayton Luckie, Phillip Parker, Bob Pawlak, Father Francisco Pelaez-Diaz, Sheriff Phil Plummer, Tamico Pullium, Arvin Ridley, Chief John Sedlak, Joe Spitler, Senator Fred Strahorn, John Theobald, Dr. Robert Walker, Rick Wegman, Rudy Wehner, Commissioner Nan Whaley, John White, Anthony Whitmore, and Charlton Williams.