



# 2011 Progress Report

on Community Outcomes, Indicators and Strategies



Montgomery County Family  
and Children First Council



## ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

### Ex-Offender Reentry Policy Board

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

The mission of the Montgomery County Office of Ex-Offender Reentry is to serve the citizens of Montgomery County with programs and services that minimize barriers to effective reentry and promote a reduction in recidivism. The office was initially funded through an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant, in conjunction with the Montgomery County Office of Family and Children First and the Economic Self Sufficiency Outcome Team. Since the office opened in July 2010 at the Montgomery County Job Center, The Reentry Team has seen many clients and helped them to achieve a more stable life.

The Montgomery County Reentry Policy Board, led by Co-Chairs Judge Walter H. Rice and Commissioner Debbie Lieberman, began 2011 with an official meeting with the members. The Reentry Policy Board consists of over forty members with stakeholders, Ex-Offenders, business leaders, faith leaders, community volunteers and local and state wide policy makers. The Policy Board is charged with establishing bylaws, including provisions for the appointment of new members; Providing oversight to the Office of Reentry; Developing and implementing plans and policies that will reduce recidivism in Montgomery County by 50% by December 31, 2015; Seeking short and long

term funding to support the ongoing efforts of the Office of Reentry; and establishing clear outcome and accountability measures consistent with the reentry strategic plan.

The January meeting highlighted the Office of Reentry's progress and updates, policy issues impacting reentry, and sub-committee development in support of the mission and objectives of the Office of Reentry. Six Policy Board sub-committees were formed, to work on issues including (1) Housing (2) Employment, Education & Training, (3) Financial Oversight (4) Community Education (5) Supportive Services, and (6) Legislative Advocacy.

By January 2011, the Office of Reentry had established a Kaplan College externship partnership, and had completed the planning phase of the grant program, *The Montgomery County Reentry Project*, and was providing direct services to reentry clients returning to Montgomery County from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC). The Office of Reentry contracted with three direct service partners. They are Goodwill Easter Seals of the Miami Valley for employment services, Family Services Association for case management and addiction and mental health services, and Think Tank, Inc.

for mentoring services. The services are available to eligible ex-offenders willing to take committed steps to change and strengthen their families and communities.



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The Office of Reentry staff and service providers worked collaboratively to create a seamless intake, need and risk assessment and program design process for each client. The Office of Reentry uses the Ohio Risk Assessment System or ORAS. ORAS is a validated risk assessment system recently implemented by the State of Ohio. ORAS is used in the prisons so the client can show their progress through the assessment system from the time they enter the prison to release and now into their reentry and reintegration. All Montgomery County Office of Reentry staff are fully trained on ORAS.

The Montgomery County Office of Ex-Offender Reentry held an open house and ribbon cutting in February. There were many reentry partners, ex-offenders, criminal justice professionals and state and local officials and other stakeholders on hand to help celebrate the opening of the facility. The event was another celebration as well. The first copies of the Montgomery County Community Wide Ex-Offender Reentry Task Force Report, *A Blueprint for Reducing Recidivism in Montgomery County, Ohio* were made available. The printing of the report was especially important to members of the Task Force and other participants because the graphics and layout for the report were completed by inmates at the Marion Correctional Facility. The report includes 17 priority recommendations from the task force and is available at [www.mcoho.org](http://www.mcoho.org). The recommendations of the Task Force culminate in the call for reducing recidivism in Montgomery County by 50% by the end of 2015.

Also in February, the Office of Reentry conducted its first Reentry Collaborative in order to bring community based reentry providers together and to create a pathway to identify and establish evidence-based programs throughout the County. Working with ODRC, the attendees were provided the steps necessary to become an ODRC certified reentry provider in Montgomery County. Technical assistance was offered to many participants and several community based providers have completed the process.

In May 2011, the Office of Reentry was notified it would receive the National Association of County Organizations (NaCO) National Achievement Award for the groundbreaking reentry initiative development in Montgomery County. The award was accepted by Commissioner Debbie Lieberman on behalf of the Office of Reentry and the Community-Wide Ex-Offender Reentry Task Force. The Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners acknowledged the efforts of Judge Walter H. Rice, Commissioner Debbie Lieberman, Commissioner Assistant John Theobald, Criminal Justice & Data Acquisition Director Joe Spitler, Office of Family & Children First (OFCF) Director Tom Kelley and OFCF Management Analyst Rita Phillips-Yancey, MCOER Manager Jamie Gee and Program Coordinators Amy Piner and Michael Ward in August 2011.



*Official opening and ribbon-cutting of the Montgomery County Office of Ex-Offender Reentry in February 2011. Pictured (left to right) Reentry Policy Board Co-Chair Commissioner Debbie Lieberman; Reentry Manager Jamie Gee; Commissioner Judy Dodge; Commissioner Dan Foley; Reentry Policy Board Co-Chair Judge Walter H. Rice; Reentry Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, Angela Lee; OCFC Director Tom Kelley; and Dayton City Police Chief Richard Biehl.*



## ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The work of the Office of Reentry was rewarded with a new grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance. The one-year Second Chance Act Implementation Grant for \$374,968 will be used to target moderate to high risk women and men, 18 years or older, returning to or living in Montgomery County with high criminogenic needs with antisocial attitudes, peers and personality traits. The grant will fund the Advanced Cognitive Treatment Services (ACTS) Project and will provide enhanced pre-release engagement and planning, cognitive based programs and supportive services to randomly selected participants.

A Reentry Expo sponsored by the Office of Reentry and the Adult Parole Authority was held in September. Many provider agencies, educational institutions, faith based organizations and other reentry service providers participated to give individuals reentering the community a look at the services and opportunities available.

Grace United Methodist Church played host to the first Client Positive Recognition Ceremony. The celebration allowed the Office of Reentry staff to recognize the good work that clients had accomplished during the last year. For friends

and family, it was a great opportunity to see for themselves the progress made with reentry planning goals. Commissioner Debbie Lieberman, Judge Walter H. Rice and Pastor Sherry Gale congratulated the participants on their accomplishments and many clients spoke about the positive changes in their lives since joining the program.

As of November, 2011, over 2,148 Ex-Offenders had engaged with the Office of Reentry, a number far exceeding the 800 initial engagements the *Montgomery County Reentry Project* calls for. The initial grant will end at the end of February, 2012 and enter a review period that will be conducted by the University of Cincinnati. The review (also conducted in five other grant communities in Ohio) will focus on the development of evidence-based practices and the impact of the project on recidivism and public safety.

In 2012, the Office of Reentry will continue to provide programs and services to the Ex-Offender community. The Office of Reentry and the Reentry Policy Board will continue to discuss and debate the newest issues and practices in reentry from across the county. A public education and advocacy campaign will be initiated in the community and a long term funding plan will be developed. The State of Ohio will undertake a comprehensive review of Collateral Sanctions that impact the reentering community and the Ohio General Assembly will consider reforms to address the concerns the review identifies.

The Office of Reentry will continue its pledge to the Ex-Offenders in the community and to those who will return in 2012, Action, Alliance & Accountability.

<sup>1</sup> Criminogenic needs are attributes of offenders that are directly linked to criminal behavior. Effective correctional treatment should target criminogenic needs in the development of a comprehensive case plan. Any treatment not targeting criminogenic needs is counter-productive to efficiency and effectiveness.

