



Criminal Justice Advisory Committee Minutes
Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Members Present: Drew Doll, Monica Biggs, Dr. Angelo Burch, Sandra Lassiter, Walter Tate, Eric Johnson, Ben Haas, Ontario Joyner, Ryan Smith, Dave Crispell, Adria Graham Scott, Kelly Inman, Elaine O'Neal, Syretta Hill, Lao Rubert, Irene Lawrence, Dawn Boxton

Staff: Roshanna Parker, Marc Strange, Kelley Waggy

Guests: DeWarren Langley

Welcome and Introductions

Chair, Ben Haas called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. Ben asked that all in attendance take a moment to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Ben Haas asked that the minutes be reviewed. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Durham's Reentry Community: An Ecosystem View

Reentry Providers Reflect

Ontario Joyner, Local Reentry Council (LRC), shared that the LRC services middle agencies, helping to connect clients to resources in Durham. Ontario shared that they may get an individual that is returning home from incarceration and the major goal is to get them connected to all the resources that are offered to them here in Durham. Once intakes are completed, LRC members sit down with the individual and inquire what resources may be the most beneficial to them. Once this base line is established, they connect individuals to exterior agencies and non-profits that can aid in each endeavor. Ontario shared that not all referrals start with the LRC, many are referred to the LRC from partners throughout Durham. Ontario shared that Durham is unique in that there is a unified effort and trust to assist and guide individuals along their path.

Monica Biggs, NC Works career center, shared that their purpose is to aid individuals in employment and increase skills for employment. Monica shared that she focuses on hands on technical assistance to aid in job finding online. Monica shared that she work in tandem with Peer-Support Specialists and others within the network to help eliminate any issues that may limit their ability to work such as housing, food etc. Monica shared that she connects all her individuals with Step-Up. Monica also shared that she could not provide the assistance she does without the entire network in Durham.

Sandra Lassiter, Welcome Home, shared that without the Justice Center and others in the network she would not be able to assist anyone. Sandra shared that often in working with a participant she finds things she was previously aware of and often her collaborations are what allows her to provide assistance.

Drew Doll, Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham (RCND), shared that the Coalition is uniquely positioned with the RCND Faith team coming in after the first 60-90 days. Drew shared that their partners typically address all the initial needs of individuals. I.e., Social security cards, careers, housing etc. The RCND provides long term assistance through peer support and community. Drew shared that the RCND places 5-6 individuals coming home to help build strong relationships and an enduring community. Faith teams follow traditional ministry community building, acknowledging that all individuals deserve acceptance and love. Drew shared one of the benefits of the RCND being a Non-Profit is that they can maneuver and provide in a way that Governmental Organizations simply can't.

Ben Haas asked Ontario to update the Committee on the progress of developing and hiring the new grant funded position. Ontario Joyner shared that the LRC was awarded an ARPA grant which allowed them to provide more short-term housing, emergency housing and long-term housing. Along with this came a Housing Case Manager position. Malik Kennedy was hired for this position and is an incredible wealth of knowledge and addition to the LRC team.

Welcome Home Program Update

Adria Graham Scott shared her appreciation for the council's invitation to this forum. Adria stated the City and County has been extremely supportive of these re-entry initiatives. Adria shared that the Training to Work Program has been extended and as it is no longer grant funded and they can extend services. The Welcome Home Program is located at the Career Center along with the Training to Work Program and this allows these programs to work together closely.

Adria shared that Welcome Home is the brainchild of a pilot program that thrived and morphed into much more than a soft hand-off and has become a crisis management team. Welcome Home has become imperative to individuals being released from prison and as such Adria has been working with the city to convert Welcome home from a pilot to a full-fledged program. Welcome home is in the process of obtaining two fleet vehicles, this will be a blessing as team members often shuttle around individuals. Additionally, they are working to pull together funding to build welcome home boxes, reinstate Food Lion coupons, food cards and hiring additional staff.

Adria shared that Welcome Home is also part of the Proud Program, a collaborative that includes 7 cities across the country, regionally they are working with counties to the north and south of Durham and Durham serves as the Hub. This collaborative awarded Welcome Home \$1.7 Million but, this is limited to federal prison centers. They will be bringing on 2 new positions, a Case Manager, and an Employment Specialist, that will

work in conjunction with Monica at the career center. This will allow them to continue to build and expand the Re-entry Ecosystem.

Questions & Conversation

Dr. Angeloe Burch asked what emotional support is being provided for individuals that are dealing with government entities? Dr. Burch acknowledged that often these individuals are left feeling less than after interactions that should be simple. Adria shared that this is why they utilize peer support and provide transportation. The hope is that they are able to provide hands-on assistance in helping individuals apply for documents and such.

Roshanna Parker, Justice Service Center Director, shared the importance of Peer-Support and their value in helping individuals navigate the system. Roshanna shared that part of the importance of this conversation is to identify the missing pieces and facilitate a conversation to start filling the identified holes.

Chair Ben Haas shared one of the standout points of today's conversation is the lack of Peer-Support and acknowledgment of how integral these positions are along with the need to expand these positions within the community and to pay them appropriately.

Lao Rubert shared her support for Ben Haas's statements and shared that as a group we need to think carefully, identify, and find ways to facilitate these needs.

Ben Haas asked Roshanna Parker where the issues are with lived experience-based positions. Roshanna shared that with the County we don't see issues directly with Peer Positions, issues stem more from lack of using the Peer-Support Position and focusing more on Case Management Positions. When internal organizations were posting positions and listing position requirements these were focused more on Case Management. Education on the difference between the position structures and the need for both positions help to streamline postings. The main issue is finding funding for these positions. Roshanna shared that we have identified some grant funding to bring one on board at Justice Services Center.

Partner Updates

Drew Doll shared that they host a monthly Peer Support meeting to help provide an opportunity to come and receive support from others in your service field. Drew shared that this is not limited to just Peer-Support workers, this is for anyone who works in the field. If you have anyone interested, Drew asked that they be referred to him.

Monica Biggs shared that the LRC is hosting a Re-entry Resource Fair at the Justice Services Department on September 27, 2023.

Eric Johnson shared that the State Budget addressed the 11-15 Re-entry waiver, this waiver allows you to start using Medicaid funding up to 90 days prior to release. North Carolina has opted into this waiver.

Roshanna Parker shared that at a previous meeting She and Dawn discussed wanting to provide services through JSD to Abuse, Dependency and Neglect Court. We have developed a MOU to provide services. We hope that we will begin receiving referrals October 1, 2023. Roshanna Shared that She, Marc Strange, and Ryan Smith are meeting to talk about providing support that the HEART Team encounters in the community and being the next round of referral source for these individuals. Roshanna Shared that Justice Services is excited about potentially filling voids within the community.

Ryan Smith shared the HEART Team is expanding to operate City wide towards the end of October and will update the Council at a later date.

Meeting Adjourned 5:04pm

Future Meeting Dates

November 28

January 23

March 26

May 28