Cover Letter to Governor Ducey

January 4, 2018 – FINAL DRAFT

The Honorable Doug Ducey

Governor of Arizona

1700 W. Washington

Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

On behalf of your Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project Team, we are pleased to provide to you this report outlining activities undertaken during this past year to reduce recidivism in Arizona.

As you know, under your direction, Arizona applied to the National Governors Association (NGA)/National Criminal Justice Association’s (NCJA) for a technical assistance grant to further our state’s efforts to improve our reentry process and reduce offender recidivism, and address mental health and substance use disorders in the justice-involved population.

Arizona was chosen as one of five states to receive this National Criminal Justice Reform Project (NCJRP) technical assistance grant, and has worked with the NGA/NCJA support team since January to integrate data-driven best practices and processes into a framework to guide our state’s efforts to address these critical issues.

The attached report will provide you with an overview of our efforts to date on the project and provide some recommendations on how best to continue to work with the NGA/NCJA team if Arizona is once again chosen to receive assistance in 2018.

Thank you again for your continued leadership and willingness to seek innovative, data-driven solutions to providing second chances to Arizona’s justice involved population. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Tim Roemer Andrew T. LeFevre

Public Safety Policy Advisor Executive Director

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

The Arizona Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project- FINAL DRAFT

An Interim Status Report on the National Criminal Justice Reform Project Grant

January 4, 2018



**Executive Summary**

In an effort to address the state’s three-year recidivism rate of approximately 40 percent, Arizona Governor Doug Ducey initiated a recidivism reduction breakthrough project in the fall of 2016. As part of that group’s activities, Arizona applied for a technical assistance grant from the National Criminal Justice Reform Project (NCJRP), a joint effort between the National Governors Association (NGA) and National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA). The purpose of this grant was to further integrate data-driven best practices and processes into our efforts to improve our reentry process and reduce offender recidivism and to address mental health and substance use disorders in the justice-involved population.

Arizona was chosen as one of five states to receive this technical assistance grant. It has worked extensively with the NGA/NCJA support team since January to implement a framework and guide our state’s efforts to address these critical issues. The efforts of the National Criminal Justice Reform Project (NCJRP) Team have been aligned to further the goals of the Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project. The NCJRP Team decided to focus initial efforts on Arizona’s offender reentry process as the best opportunity for data-driven, best practice-based improvements that would hopefully lead to a reduction in the recidivism rates.

As a result, the NCJRP team engaged in a strategic planning process that analyzed Arizona’s reentry process for inmates exiting state correctional facilities. This process helped to identify specific gaps to address by state agencies; restructuring the Advisory Committee into the “Core Team” and associated sub-groups identified to address specific gaps identified in the reentry process; the creation of a Future State Map (Attachment I) that identifies what our reentry system should look like as we initiate the necessary reforms to improve our process and fill the identified gaps (Attachment II); and identified a methodology to implement an initial Time to Failure Study (Attachment III) to gage if the reforms implemented are reducing Arizona’s recidivism rate.

Through these activities, the NCJRP team determined that Arizona has already addressed several critical gaps in the reentry process. For example, an identified gap is the lack of transportation to a job for newly released inmate. To address this gap, Arizona has partnered with Uber to offer temporary vouchers to those returning to their communities that allows them to start their job with reliable transportation. Similarly, members of Arizona’s project team will seek a statutory change to make getting state identification easier for inmates leaving facilities, which was also an identified gap.

The most impactful program to date is the implementation of Employment Centers in three of our state facilities. These centers cater to medium and high-risk inmates who, if selected, attend an intensive 60-day program designed to prepare them for employment when they exit their facility. Inmates receive training on resume writing, interviewing, and attend job fairs within the facilities. As of October 3, 2017, roughly 358 inmates have participated in the program. Approximately 186 have had a job waiting for them upon their release. 172 were still in the program.

**Arizona NCJRP Stakeholder Advisory Committee Membership**

Through Governor Ducey’s leadership and with the assistance of the NCJRP, Arizona has pursued structured its reducing recidivism project through an Advisory Committee and Core Team structure. The NCJRP also received input from members of seven sub-groups including employment, pre-release planning, support services, housing, data, evaluation and faith based/non-profit subgroups. As members of the Goal Council 4 Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project, the following individuals comprise the NCJRP Stakeholder Advisory Committee:

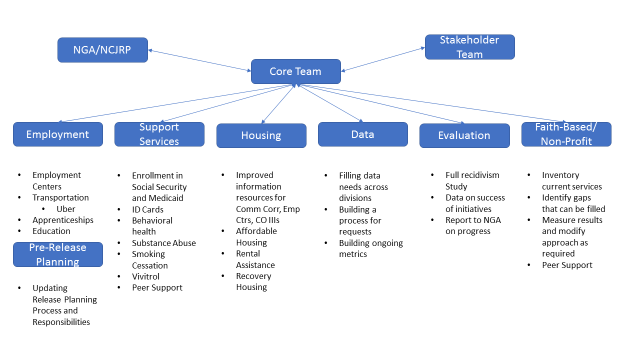
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| --- | --- |
| **Charles Ryan** | Director, Arizona Department of Corrections (executive sponsor) |
| **Tim Roemer** | Public Safety Policy Advisor to Governor Doug Ducey |
| **Andrew LeFevre** | Executive Director, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission |
| **Karen Hellman** | Division Director/Inmate Programs & Reentry, Arizona Department of Corrections |
| **Michael Trailor** | Director, Arizona Department of Economic Security |
| **Chevera Trillo** | Workforce Administrator, Arizona Department of Economic Security |
| **Michal Rudnick** | CJ Project Manager, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System |
| **Catie Clark** | Statistical Analysis Center Director, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission |
| **Carol Ditmore** | Director, Arizona Department of Housing |
| **Cara Christ** | Director, Arizona Department of Health Services |
| **Gilbert Orrantia** | Director, Arizona Department of Homeland Security |
| **Kathy Waters** | Division Director, Adult Probation, Arizona Supreme Court |
| **Tasha Aikens** | Reentry & Law Enforcement Specialist, Unites States Attorney’s Office |
| **Jeff Hood** | Interim Director, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections |
| **Kevin Wright** | School of Crime and Criminology, Arizona State University |
| **Jeff Zimmerman** | Assistant Director of Continuous Improvement, Arizona Registrar of Contracts |
| **John Scott** | Assistant Deputy Director, Arizona Department of Veteran Services |
| **John Halikowski** | Director, Arizona Department of Transportation |
| **Mike Mitchell** | Deputy County Attorney, Maricopa County Attorney’s Office |
| **Sheila Polk** | Yavapai County Attorney |
| **Benjamin Henderson** | Deputy Chief of Operations, Arizona Governor’s Office |
| **Brett Galley** | Policy Assistant, Arizona Governor’s Office |
| **Evans Kerrigan** | CEO, Integris Performance Advisors and Professional Coach |
| **James O'Neil** | Administrator of Office of Continuous Improvement, Arizona Department of Corrections |
| **Jan Wethers** | Reentry Coordinator, Arizona Department of Corrections |
| **Chris Moody** | GTO Fellow, Arizona Department of Corrections |
| **Tyler Armstrong** | Lean Consultant, Arizona Government Transformation Office |

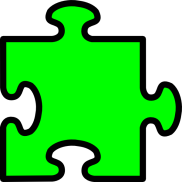
**Arizona NCJRP Core Team Membership**

Led by the Governor’s Public Safety Policy Advisor and Executive Director of the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, the following individuals serve on the Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project Core team and act as the guiding body for all of the work being done under the NCJRP:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Tim Roemer** | Public Safety Policy Advisor to Governor Doug Ducey (Co-lead) |
| **Andrew LeFevre** | Executive Director, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (Co-lead), Evaluation Sub-group Lead |
| **Karen Hellman** | Division Director/Inmate Programs & Reentry, Arizona  Department of Corrections |
| **Michael Trailor** | Director, Arizona Department of Economic Security |
| **Chevera Trillo** | Workforce Administrator, Arizona Department of Economic Security, Employment Sub-group Lead |
| **Michal Rudnick** | CJ Project Manager, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, Support Services Sub-group Lead |
| **Catie Clark** | Statistical Analysis Center Director, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, Data Sub-group Lead |
| **Carol Ditmore** | Director, Arizona Department of Housing, Housing Sub-group Lead |
| **Benjamin Henderson** | Deputy Chief of Operations, Arizona Governor’s Office |
| **Brett Galley** | Policy Assistant, Arizona Governor’s Office |
| **Evans Kerrigan** | CEO, Integris Performance Advisors and Professional Coach |
| **James O'Neil** | Administrator of Office of Continuous Improvement, Arizona Department of Corrections |
| **Jan Wethers** | Reentry Coordinator, Arizona Department of Corrections |
| **Chris Moody** | GTO Fellow, Arizona Department of Corrections |
| **Tyler Armstrong** | Lean Consultant, Arizona Government Transformation Office |

**NCJRP Structure**



[](http://clipartbarn.com/puzzle-piece-clipart_8844/)**Background of the Problem**

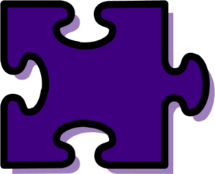
Recidivism reduction is a priority issue for Governor Ducey. Issues with violent offenders, violent crime, specialty populations, and challenges in facilitating a streamlined reentry process have helped raise this area to the forefront of the state’s agenda. While the overall crime rate in Arizona has decreased, the number of repeat and violent offenders being housed in Arizona's prisons has been increasing. Between 2009 and 2013, the number of nonviolent offenders decreased 5.25 percent, while the number of violent offenders increased 5.3 percent. Violent and repeat offenders make up 95 percent of the prison population in Arizona, and nonviolent first-time offenders made up less than 5 percent.[[1]](#footnote-1)

In 2013, Arizona averaged 429 violent crimes per 100,000 residents, compared to the national average of 387 per 100,000 people, according to FBI data. Arizona also had more property crimes, at 3,540 per 100,000 people compared to the national average of 2,800 per 100,000.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In 2013, Arizona had about 42,000 inmates in prison. Each inmate costs the state about $60 a day, or $21,900 per year, on average. By extension, the annual cost of the entire inmate population for Arizona is approximately $919.8 million a year. According to the website Arizona Indicators, most inmates average about 668 days incarcerated in one of the state's prisons.[[3]](#footnote-3) Specialty populations such as inmates who are Seriously Mentally Ill, elderly inmates, and inmates who have committed sex offenses create unique challenges for the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) programming and strategies to address their needs during their time behind bars and as they begin the reentry process.

Additionally, the chief challenges to reentry in the state of Arizona are connecting reentering individuals to employers, adequate housing, and substance use and mental health service providers. Given these challenges, Arizona has focused its strategic planning process on establishing additional Employment Centers and assessing gaps and challenges with existing transportation, housing and support services. If successful, Arizona has an opportunity to remake its reentry system and further reduce recidivism.

The rapid and sustained growth in the prison population from FY1980 to FY2011 necessitated that resources be dedicated to bringing new prison beds on line. Following a leveling of growth in FY2012, ADC was poised to begin addressing recidivism reduction and did so by opening the Pima Reentry Center in 2012. The election of Governor Ducey and his emphasis on both the Arizona Management System and recidivism reduction, created a sense of urgency and increased opportunities for collaboration across state agencies. This left the State of Arizona uniquely situated to tackle the linked issues of reentry and recidivism reduction.

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**Strategic Planning Activities**

**Background**

At the direction of Governor Ducey, a cross functional team began to meet to address the issue of recidivism in September of 2016. This team included representatives from a variety of state agencies including but not limited to the Governor’s Office, Department of Corrections, Arizona State University, Department of Homeland Security, Registrar of Contractors, Department of Economic Security, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, Department of Health, Maricopa County Attorney’s Office, Arizona Supreme Court, and Department of Veteran’s Services. In Arizona, Governor Ducey’s policy agenda focuses on a core set of goals, with cross-agency teams established to implement one of several goal areas. The aforementioned cross functional team comprises the Governor’s Goal Council 4; Public Safety Breakthrough Project – Reducing Recidivism Team.

To steer the framework and approach, Goal Council’s utilize the Arizona Management System (AMS).  AMS operates with all state agencies acting as one cohesive enterprise within a professional, results-driven management system, leveraging all of the resources of the state agencies and eliminating silo effects. Based on principles of Lean management, AMS uses a structured approach to identifying and documenting root causes and creates data-driven measures, targets and countermeasures to standardize and memorialize gains within and across state agency performance.

**Strategic Planning Process**

The Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project Team began by defining the scope of the project. With recidivism being a multi-faceted and complex topic and Arizona being such a large state, it was decided to focus initially on Maricopa County—the county which accounts for the majority of admissions to the prison system. System improvements made in Maricopa County could be replicated out to the other counties and tailored to meet any unique characteristics of the location.

Initial discussions focused on briefing the wider group on the prison system and the services offered, and identifying gaps or shortages. The larger group realized that smaller sub-groups would be needed to address the gaps in services and formed teams to address employment, support services, data, and housing.

With lack of employment identified as one of the major factors in a former inmate recidivating, one of the first ideas for improvement resulted in the creation of Employment Centers at three Arizona prison units. These centers serve inmates releasing in sixty days, teaching them job seeking skills, allowing them to apply on line for jobs, and arranging for employers to interviewing and offer employment to the releasing inmates.

This initial interagency effort was announced in the Governor’s State of the State Address in January 2017, and the centers became operational by the end of March 2017. The rapid deployment of this project was the result of cooperation among agencies. It is a model for how other state projects can proceed.

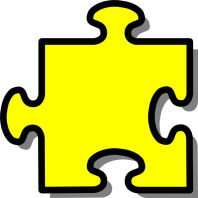
While the recidivism reduction effort was still in its early stages, Arizona applied for and was awarded a technical assistance grant through the National Criminal Justice Reform Project (NCJRP) managed by the National Governors Center for Best Practices and the National Criminal Justice Association for Justice Planning. (NCJA) This grant, funded by the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, allows for a team to assist Arizona in its efforts.

The technical assistance grant has proved invaluable in helping to shape and further refine a statewide plan for recidivism reduction. The Arizona NCJRP Team implemented a coordinated strategic planning process that resulted in the following:

* A System Blueprint (Attachment IV) that guides the efforts of the team and provides a logic model for the work. The Blueprint provides a clear and concise set of expectations for everyone working on the project.
* The utilization of the Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project Team as the Advisory Committee to the NCJRP, the Core Team to manage the NCJRP day-to-day, and the various Sub-groups to address specific gaps identified in the reentry process. This change allowed for clearer lines of communication and responsibility. The right people for the right meetings were identified, resulting in more productive use of valuable time.
* The creation of the Arizona Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AZ-PRI) Framework which identifies what our reentry system should look like as we initiate the necessary reforms to improve our process and fill the identified gaps (Attachment V). The AZ PRI Framework is based on the foundational work of the National Institute of Corrections, the National Prisoner Reentry Policy Council and the Center for Justice Innovation and serves as the evidence based model for prisoner reentry reforms in Arizona. The Guidebook for the AZ-PRI Framework is being used to identify what policies and practices were already in place and what additional practice and policies Arizona wishes to pursue.
* The identification of the methodology necessary to implement an initial Time to Failure Study (Attachment III) to gauge if the reforms implemented are having a positive impact on Arizona’s recidivism rate. The Time to Failure Study will focus on the newly opened Employment Centers. This will allow Arizona to conduct a “pulse check” to determine if the centers are actually having an effect and if expansion of these efforts is warranted.
* A Case Logic Plan (Attachment VI) for reentry efforts at the institutional, transitional, and community phases. The Case Logic Plan memorializes in a layman-friendly manner the efforts at each stage of an inmate’s progress through the correctional system. This enables the sub-groups to readily identify opportunities for other potential interventions points and efforts.
* A draft AZ-Prison Reentry Initiative (PRI) ADC policy (Attachment VII). This policy, when finalized and implemented, will articulate and codify reentry efforts at ADC.

Arizona has also created the following documents and/or processes:

* The Data Sub-group Request Form (Attachment VIII), which guides the request and collection of data necessary to answer questions from the Subgroups.
* The Sub-group Gaps document (Attachment II) is the result of analysis into Arizona’s reentry process for inmates exiting state correctional facilities, which resulted in identifying specific gaps which need to be addressed.
* A Current State Map of reentry efforts in Arizona.
* A Future State Map (Attachment I) for reentry efforts in Arizona.
* An initial system assessment of ADC’s reentry efforts utilizing the Transition from Prison to Community (Attachment VIIII) framework.
* A Known Risk Factors and Interventions document which clearly and succinctly identifies for the average layperson the top risk factors for recidivism and then details Arizona’s current efforts to address those risk factors (Attachment X).

[](http://clipartbarn.com/puzzle-piece-clipart_8814/) **Challenges to Implementing Reentry Reform in Arizona**

The NCJRP Team identified access to and sharing of data across agencies, as well as ongoing and systematic program evaluation, as key challenges to accurately study issues like recidivism and substance use disorder and mental health issues.

**Program Evaluation**

Evaluating programs for efficiency and effectiveness has become more important as sources of funding become increasingly scarce. On both a state and national level, agencies and programs are being required to justify their existence. This trend of program justification intensifies the need for evaluation to be ongoing and systematic. Establishing and building the evaluation capacity into criminal justice programs and services is a logical response to the concept of demonstrated effectiveness as a requirement for program funding or continuation.

**Data Access and Sharing**

Unreliable, incomplete, or inaccessible data structures can be major stumbling blocks for decision-makers, no matter how willing they may be to cooperate with and encourage program evaluation. In an environment where funding increasingly depends on the results of a program evaluation, it is necessary to ensure that accurate and complete data is collected and made available. As new programs are designed, data collection should be a key component. Statewide data collection standards should be implemented for information to be accessible and beneficial to the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

This process of making data more accessible will likely help identify information gaps and barriers to program performance. At the same time, enhanced infrastructure for ongoing evaluation provides a basis to identify both program obstacles and successes. Improvements to state and local data collection tools and data reporting methods can build the bridge toward recognizing effective approaches that can be replicated or tailored to address specific criminal justice needs or issues.

To fully study recidivism in Arizona, it is necessary to create data sharing agreements between many agencies, including the Department of Public Safety, Department of Corrections, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and ACJC to better facilitate analysis and evaluation of programs.

**Related Challenges**

Other major challenges identified include:

* Adequate resources for the Arizona Department of Corrections to do forward looking activities like training of Correctional Officer (COII) and Correctional Officer III (COIII) positions. ADC currently has a 12.7% vacancy rate among its front line COII positions. These officers are integral to the organization and vacancies create difficulties that ripple throughput the agency. Shortages lead to difficulties in getting inmates to classes and can result in inmate activities being limited on prison yards. It also sometimes results in COIIIs, the program/case manager officers, pulled away from their regular duties. These actions directly impact the quantity and quality of case management services COIIIs can offer.
* The need for a full-time project manager to drive the activities of all the various state agencies and stakeholder groups and serve as a large-scale organizational change expert. The project is currently managed through a variety of state employees who have other full-time duties. This work sometimes results in miscommunication or extended timelines.
* Access to the last five years of national research on best practices to inform work that Arizona is doing in reentry planning and recidivism reduction efforts. Research efforts from the previous decades are widely available on the internet but emerging best practices are not easy for the layperson to find. For example:
  + Minnesota High Risk Revocation Reduction Program; and
  + Los Angeles County’s “Just in Reach” Supportive Housing Program.
* The geographical spread of the state’s prison system and the number of inmates released every year make scalability of efforts difficult. In FY2017, ADC released 18,964 inmates from sixteen prison complexes across the state. Conducting in-reach efforts is difficult when inmates can be more than a four-hour drive away from a provider’s location.

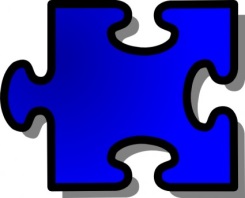
[](http://clipartbarn.com/puzzle-piece-clipart_8843/)**Recommendations for Continued Work**

Arizona’s Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project Team, organized under the office of the Governor, will continue to address the gaps that have been identified in our reentry process and act as the Advisory Committee to the NCJRP.

The strategic planning and technical assistance that Arizona received from NGA and NCJA has been instrumental in creating a sustainable framework to build on.

The NCJRP Team makes the following recommendations:

1. **Guiding body.** That the Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project Team will continue to act as the guiding body for Arizona’s efforts to reduce recidivism via the work of its Core Team and the various sub-groups that focus on the top service-area priorities of housing, education, employment and behavioral health.
2. **AZ-PRI Framework**: Continue using the System Blueprint and the AZ-PRI Framework to guide further development and implementation of reentry improvements and additional assessments of current and needed assets, barrier and gaps.
3. **Baseline Recidivism Study.** The state should conduct a baseline recidivism study in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the true recidivism rate across Arizona criminal justice agencies (state corrections, county jails, and probation). This recommendation reflects the efforts by the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC) which submitted a budget request to the Governor’s office for funding to conduct the in-depth study during the 2019 fiscal year. This study will provide a comprehensive recidivism study that looks at data from Department of Correction, the Administrative Office of the Courts, and County Sheriffs to better understand what the recidivism level is across all of the agencies in Arizona that deal with incarcerated individuals. ACJC anticipates partnering with Arizona State University’s School of Criminology and Criminal Justice to conduct this important research that will provide better data upon which to base future state-level efforts to reduce recidivism.
4. **Examine necessary statutory changes.** That the Core Team examines the necessary statutory changes needed to further its recidivism reduction efforts and present a legislative package to the Governor’s office for consideration and possible introduction during the 2018 and 2019 legislative sessions. These changes would be championed by the Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project Team as a whole rather than individual state agencies submitting their recommendations. (For possible areas of interest, please note the policy recommendation section.)
5. **Draft and execute data sharing frameworks.** That Arizona create the necessary data sharing framework between agencies like Department of Public Safety, Department of Corrections, Administrative Office of the Courts, and Arizona Criminal Justice Commission to facilitate the exchange of data necessary to complete the analysis and evaluation of the programs initiated by the NCJRP Team. Such frameworks could include, but may not be limited to, memoranda of understanding, data use agreements, etc.
6. **Transition focus to mental health and substance use disorder issues for justice-involved populations.** That Arizona continue to work through the strategic planning process to improve prisoner reentry but also begin to work “upstream” toward an emphasis on addressing the mental health and substance abuse disorder issues facing all of Arizona’s justice involved populations.
7. **Secure support for a project manager.** The Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project needs a project manager to help guide the work of the multiple state and local agencies that are all responsible for different pieces of the overall project.
8. **Receive training and technical assistance on national best practices with reentry, recidivism reduction, and related issues.** The various team and subgroup involved in the NCJRP should have better access to recent data-driven evidence-based and national best practices to help guide future efforts to reform our reentry process and drive recidivism reduction.

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**Policy Recommendations**

As a result of the processes and the catalogue of deliverables that the group has produced, including the Recidivism Reduction System Blueprint and the Prisoner Reentry Initiative (AZ-PRI) Framework, potential avenues for improvement and policy recommendations have emerged.

Using the vetting process generated by Governor Ducey’s Goal Councils for the development of specific policy issues, the NCJRP has identified the primary policy gaps and has prioritized them below. (More on this process can be found in Attachment XI).

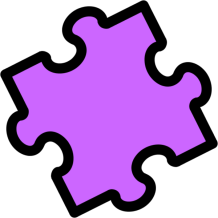
The Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project Team has identified the following policy recommendations for consideration:

**Immediate Issues to Consider:**

* **Adopt the Recidivism Reduction System Blueprint and the AZ-PRI Framework** **as the evidence based models for prisoner reentry reforms in Arizona.** And use the AZ-PRI Framework to determine policy, practice and program recommendations that will improve the impact of prisoner reentry consistent with the Recidivism Reduction System Blueprint.
* **Adopt the AZ-PRI Framework State and Local Organizational Structures so that the work is sustained as a state/local partnership with permanent bodies in place for developing and overseeing prisoner reentry reforms at the state and local levels.** .
* **Continue the Emphasis on working with faith congregations and community-based organizations as primary partners in the AZ-PRI.**
* **Strengthening existing transportation options.** Transportation to and from work and treatment appointments has been identified as a major obstacle for offenders. While the Uber pilot project will address some of the need, long term sustainable and scalable options have yet to be identified. It is recommended that this remain a priority of the team.
* **Strengthening placement procedures and voluntary standards for recovery homes.** The wide variety of quality and level of services offered by recovery homes can create obstacles for offenders. A study conducted through this project has concluded that improper matching of offenders to recovery home can increase the likelihood of technical violations and return to ADC custody. It is recommended that ADC staff be trained on better assisting releasing inmates to choose an appropriate placement. It is also recommended that recovery homes be encouraged to voluntarily adopt standards which provide the necessary supports services and encouragement to offenders.
* **Explore the creation of additional employment centers.** The Pima Reentry Center and the Maricopa Reentry Center provide a valuable intervention tool to ADC Community Corrections Officers. However, the current Maricopa Reentry Center is limited in size and scope and cannot serve homeless offenders. It is recommended that Arizona explore creating additional Reentry Centers in Maricopa County and any other variation, such as Employment Centers, which promote successful community reintegration.
* **Explore the use of peer navigators to bolster reentering prisoner’s access to support services.** Peer navigators have been successfully used in the mental health field for years and growing evidence suggests that their use in the criminal justice system would be extremely beneficial. It is recommended that Arizona’s criminal justice agencies explore incorporating peer navigators to help reentering prisoner’s access support services.
* **Strengthen formal data sharing partnerships and/or agreements.** Decision-making based on data is a core component of the Arizona Management System. It is recommended that Arizona increase availability of data and formalize data sharing partnerships through interagency agreements. Past interagency agreements have been successful in strengthening Arizona’s efforts to better state government and their potential use in this effort could institutionalize agency partnership and norms.
* **Increasing Pre-Release Uptake of Drivers’ License or State ID.** A valid ID is critical to post release success. Currently ADC and the Arizona Motor Vehicle Division have an agreement in place which provides an opportunity for a majority of inmates to apply for a replacement Drivers’ License or State ID prior to release. Unfortunately, only a minority of inmates choose to take advantage of this program. The recommendations for this area are fourfold:
  1. Determine why few prisoners avail themselves of the program.
  2. Address the causes found.
  3. Explore pathways for unique situation offenders such as sex offenders and offenders who never have had any sort of Arizona ID to obtain an ID.
  4. Explore methods to reduce the cost of the replacement ID and/or identify another source of funding for the IDs. ADC has already submitted, legislation which would allow inmates to utilize their Dedicated Discharge Account (DDA) to purchase the pre-release replacement ID. If passed, it is expected that this will increase the rate of program utilization.

**Future Issues to Consider:**

* **Use of Probation.** The increase of probation terms subsequent to serving time in prison is a potential area of exploration.
* **The use of evidence-based and evidence-informed programming.** Official codification of the requirement for service programs to be evidence-based and evidence-informed.
* **Behavioral health.** Eliminating barriers to behavioral health professionals dealing with justice-involved individuals.
* **Housing**. Educating rental property owners on crime-free housing regulations with the goal of increasing ex-offender access to rental housing. Additionally, this effort may consider the creation of housing assistance set asides for ex-offenders (rental assistance) and/or exploring sustainable funding for housing activities.
* **Employment**. Banning the box (eliminate criminal history on job applications until the interview stage) is an area of consideration. Similarly, the wider effort will consider requiring boards and commissions to create a pathway for ex-offenders to overcome criminal history and obtain certifications in careers not related to their criminal history.

[](http://clipartbarn.com/puzzle-piece-clipart_8808/)**Conclusion**

With your guidance, Arizona has begun the difficult but necessary work to identify ways to enhance and expand reentry programs that help to prepare incarcerated individuals to be successful upon their return to their communities.

The Recidivism Reduction Breakthrough Project Team will continue to identify ways to improve the reentry process to reduce offender recidivism by implementing evidence-based practices, improving access to data and information sharing practices, and adopting performance metrics and integrating evaluation as the best way to inform our future work. We recommend that Arizona seek to continue our partnership with the National Governors Association/National Criminal Justice Association technical assistance provided through the National Criminal Justice Reform Project. This partnership has brought important expertise and valuable guidance to Arizona as we have worked to implement the vision and goal of reducing recidivism and providing second chances to our justice involved population.

As Arizona continues this implementation work, we see the need for and respectfully request technical assistance from NGA and NCJA with the following:

* A full time project manager to drive the day to day operations of the project.  It is more important that the person be someone with experience leading a multi- party project than an expert in criminal justice. This person would handle administrative scheduling, documentation, and follow up.
* In-person, skills-based training for ADC Correctional Officer IIs and IIIs and Community Corrections Officers on case management principles and techniques.
* Assistance with data sharing practices and how best to achieve a smooth, cohesive data sharing system.
* Assistance with best practices associated with addressing substance use disorders.
* Continued and more detailed access to recent and emerging evidence-based and national best practices in reentry.

1. The Arizona Sentencing Report; <http://azsentencing.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Federal Bureau of Investigation; Crime in the United States; <https://ucr.fbi.gov/ucr-publications> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://arizonaindicators.org/criminal-justice/corrections/prison-inmate-count> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)