

Re-entry Task Force
Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice
Minutes

January 6, 2016, 1:30PM-4:00PM 700
Kipling, 4th Floor Conference room

ATTENDEES:

CHAIR

Stan Hilkey, Dept. of Public Safety

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Tom Giacinti, Representing Community Corrections

Sherri Hufford, Division of Probation Services

Alfredo Pena, Parole Board

Rick Raemisch, Dept. of Corrections

Melissa Roberts, Division of Parole

Dave Young, District Attorney 17th JD (phone)

Hassan Latif, Second Chance Center

Mark Evans, Public Defender's Office

Beth McCann, State Representative

Monica Chambers, Department of Corrections (phone)

Joe Thome for Robert Werthwein (phone)

Evelyn Leslie, Colo. School for Family Therapy

STAFF

Paul Herman/CCJJ consultant

Kim English/Division of Criminal Justice

Germaine Miera/Division of Criminal Justice

ABSENT

Joe Pelle, Boulder County Sheriff's Office

Regi Huerter, Denver Crime Prevention and Control Commission

Pat Steadman, State Senator

Charles Parkins, Division of Youth Corrections

Christie Donner, Colo. Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

Kelly Friesen, Grand County Juvenile Justice Department / SB94

Jennifer Bradford, Metro State University of Denver

<p>Issue/Topic: Welcome and Introductions</p>	<p>Discussion: Stan Hilkey welcomed the task force members and reviewed the agenda.</p>
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<p>Issue/Topic: Report Outs Action:</p>	<p>Discussion: Mark Evans provided a report out on the progress of the Conditions Working Group.</p> <p>Conditions Working Group <i>DISCUSSION</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Conditions Working Group met once since the last Re-entry Task Force meeting. • The working group is wrapping up the discussion on parole conditions and moving into the work around community corrections conditions. • There is tremendous diversity with the comm. corr. conditions since the 31 different comm. corr. facilities are owned by different entities. Therefore they each have their own set of rules. • At the Conditions meeting Glenn Tapia talked about the new BSMART program and DCJ’s effort to implement more standardization across facilities. • Mark noted it is still a little early to say definitively what the Conditions Working Group end product will be • The group will hopefully be able to provide input on comm. corr. standard conditions and hopefully help with communication between comm. corr. and parole/DOC – since the clients overlap. • There is crossover with transition offenders falling under conditions and standards from both DOC and Comm. Corr. • Mark noted that at the last meeting the working group also distributed a draft of proposed statutory Parole revisions and that parole is looking them over. • Representative McCann asked if Parole has seen the bill she’s carrying regarding the changes in the definitions of parole. Melissa replied that DOC is aware of the changes. • Mark added that he is far less certain that the comm. corr. work will necessitate statutory change. • Paul inquired about the working group’s products and timeline. • Mark answered that the group is looking at Parole, Probation and Comm. Corr. so the work is taking a while. • As for Parole, the work product will be proposed statutory changes, plus IOV (Initial Office Visit) directives by community parole officers. A parolee is given IOV directives during their first visit. • Mark added that the group is unsure about the final product and timeline for the community corrections work since they’ve only had one meeting on comm. corr. He’s also not sure there will be any work product from this group since changes seem to be underway for comm.
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	<p>corr. with BSMART.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark reported that the Conditions WG hasn't touched on Probation yet at all but that the work regarding Probation will be far less statutorily driven. • Sherri Hufford added that if there are statutory changes made to Parole conditions that are similar to Probation conditions, Probation would like to address the same concerns. • She added that there is some clean up that Probation wouldn't mind addressing, especially if in concert with Parole. • Probation has revised adult conditions in the last few years but also wants to look at sex offender, juveniles and possibly other special populations. • Melissa said that Parole too wants to look at conditions around ISP (Intensive Supervision Parole) and sex offender parole conditions as well. • Paul summarized that the working group spent a lot of time on parole discussing direction and draft statutory changes. • Mark added that the working group definitely needs one more meeting and maybe two before bringing parole info to the Re-entry task force. He said he thinks they will be ready to present by the March meeting. • As for Community Corrections, the ball is in DCJ's court as they've been working on BSMART for a while. • As far as actual work from the work group there's nothing on the table right now in regards to comm. corr. • The current work is centered on bringing the minds of Melissa (Parole) and Alfredo (Parole Board), etc. into the BSMART process. • Mark added that he needs to talk to Glenn more about where that work needs to extend to, or the desire around it extending. • Paul closed by saying that in terms of Probation, if there are some needed statutory changes there might be some work there. • He asked if there is any sort of timeline regarding Probation and the work around ISP, sex offenders and juvenile conditions. Mark replied that the group may have something around May. • Tom Giacinti added that the BSMART grant is being tested in seven comm. corr. facilities and that it will be a while before DCJ might be willing to report on the outcomes.
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<p>Issue/Topic:</p> <p>Alternatives to Incarceration for Technical Violators</p> <p>Action:</p>	<p>Discussion:</p> <p>Paul reminded task force members that during the October meeting the group started discussing the scenario of 'What would we do if we couldn't put a person in jail on a technical violation'. One of the main themes that arose from that conversation was the issue of an offender's first three days out and how problematic that can be. Regardless of the many strides that have been made to assist in re-entry – there are still people out there who get off the bus with a huge question mark. Paul asked the group to continue this conversation.</p>
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DISCUSSION

- The task force talked during the last meeting about the things that are being worked on by DOC and others as far as Re-entry and there are complex and rich strategies being implemented at DOC
- The next piece of the conversation was that even though great strides are underway, all things take time. While changes are being implemented, in the meantime there are still critical issues people are facing today.
- Paul reminded everyone that this conversation started a few months back when Joe Pelle mentioned an incident in Longmont where a DOC inmate was released late on a Friday with no plan in place until his meeting with his parole officer on a Monday.
- That conversation lead to this discussion about the first few days, first three days, first week of an offender's release.
- Conversation elements have been about the plan for an offender's release before they get off the bus and the need for additional volunteers, clothes, etc. The conversation has also touched on local laws and restrictions in regards to housing.
- Rick Raemisch commented that the number one issue facing DOC right now is housing. He added that it doesn't matter how good a plan someone has, if there's no place to stay it's not going to work.
- Paroling 'homeless' is a big problem in Colorado. There are states that do not release people homeless, but Colorado does.
- There are vouchers for some awful motels but that's about it.
- Transitional housing is available in many states especially where there isn't a comm. corr. set-up like Colorado's.
- Most states use transitional housing instead of comm. corr. as a 90 day place for transitioning out.
- Some other states won't release homeless and people stay incarcerated.
- Melissa added that in other states it's truly transitional living, a place to stay.
- Rick added that he believes the bigger picture is how can community corrections be transformed in a way that's more functional.
- He said he doesn't want to insult comm. corr. but he believes the way the whole system is set up is problematic
- Comm. corr. facilities are so independent there's no authority over them.
- Hassan added that his organization is overrun and overwhelmed by the lack of housing availability. A lot of the referrals of late are parolees with sex offender status, which makes it even more difficult to place them.
- There's not nearly enough housing available for people trying to re-enter.
- As for the Friday release problem maybe there should be a reverse reservation system where nobody is released on Friday and nobody is released on a Monday.
- As far as mandatory releases, those people aren't usually going to parole anyway, so maybe there could be a different system for them.
- Alfredo mentioned that he spoke to someone at the Time and Release office about how to resolve a Friday release. They told him that even if a release falls on a Friday they release them three days in advance of that.

	<p>Therefore a Saturday release is discharged on Wednesday and a Sunday release is discharged on a Thursday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basically, they should never be released on a Friday. • Who controls the release date? Time and release or DOC? And if Time and Release says no release on Friday what happened with the incident Joe Pelle was describing? • Melissa shared that in Wisconsin all releases happen on a Tuesday, period. • Alfredo shared he honors any requests for Tues-Thurs. release • Monica said she checked with Time and Release and said that it depends on what type of release. She said statutory discharges have to be release no matter what day it falls on, even holidays. • Statutory discharges are the group that actually needs the most help. • Facilities follow what Time and Release says. • Alfredo said it's generally the practice not to release on a Friday. • But the man Joe Pelle knows was still released on a Friday. • Stan asked that if there are enough people getting out on Fridays is it worth it to try for a statutory fix of backing up that release date to a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday before. • Parole has a reentry community resource coordinator and she's focused on parolees and max discharge individuals so that DOC can turn over a list of resources to them when they hit the streets. • Rick said that if DOC can transform CSP 2 into a central release facility he could address a lot of these issues. • Hassan mentioned that he has been in discussions with developers. Someone just recently built an apartment complex called Odyssey Residences which is felon friendly. • He added that his organization isn't prepared to be property managers and don't want that responsibility, but that the issue is overwhelming. • Couldn't the budget that is spent on the awful motels be better spent somewhere else? • There's a row of apartments on Fitsimmons that has been boarded up forever, it would be great if places like that could be shifted to affordable housing for ex-offenders. • Paul noted that there are lots of examples of how people have done this, but he doesn't know of any state that has addressed this on a large scale. • Hassan noted that Colorado is already doing some pretty historic things as far as partnering with communities. • The issue is how to take this to a statewide scale. • Ohio is driving this as a state based system. • Rep. McCann said that no one at legislature is looking this. They're talking about affordable housing but nothing in relation to offenders. • Denver is doing some social impact bonds - but this is around affordable housing, not releases from prison. • Another problem with the motel vouchers is the drug dealers and prostitutes that prey on the parolees in those motels. • Legislators are interested in helping people reintegrate, but the funding issue is the problem. • The homeless issue in Denver alone is out of control. There are not a lot
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	<p>of solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul summarized there are a couple possibilities and it makes sense to look at public/private partnerships. • Hassan said the legislature could be helpful in encouraging developers via tax breaks to encourage development of transitional housing. Rep. McCann replied they're doing that with affordable housing, but maybe they could push that for transitioning offenders. • Melissa added that there is also the issue of inmates vs. parolees. • Rick said maybe there could be some sort of habitat for humanity concept where parolees could be paid to build their own houses. He said it seems like there could be some opportunities there. • Hassan added that these are talented people and they have many great skills. • Paul noted that it looks like this group could move on several things as far as housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Partnering with developers -Habit for humanity type of option -Transitional housing as a different type of halfway house • Rick said that another big issue is around mental health, but that DOC is making a lot of progress in that area. • Baseline needs for re-entry include the need for someone to be mentally and physically fit, have a place to live and have a job. • What about using social media as far as helping people with employment. Rick said that DOC has been tossing around the idea of a social media website where they could list someone's job skills, where they're from, and then an employer could go to the site to find what they're looking for in an employee. • The manual labor field is really hurting for workers right now. • Hassan added that the Second Chance Center spent much of the first two years trying to develop relationships with employers to tailor job prep to that particular need. He said that they have had some experiences where employers have had good experiences and that opens it up for the next guy. He added that SCC promotes leaving a job in a certain way to promote good will. • Paul asked if anyone else is doing a good job helping people getting employment. • Stan shared that he was on a comm. corr. board run by Mesa County and that they did a good job connecting to employers and cultivating the willingness for employers to hire ex-felons. The county offered a preferred employer award and sometimes there weren't enough people in the program to feed the need. • Rick said the way things are done is antiquated because ordinarily when someone wants a job they check Craigslist, fill out a resume, submit it and wait. He said that's why he wants to have an on-line presence where DOC can post a resume and the job skill, and get the employer to come to the employee. • Parole officers right now don't always think it's their job to help someone find work. • The other thing that comes into play is that there is all this emphasis on a
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	<p>new parolee to get a job, but sometimes that's not the right place to start.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rick reminded the task force members that everything Colorado has been doing as a system in the past isn't working. Colorado has one of the highest recidivism rates in the country. Nobody can pat themselves on the back right now. Everything being done right now doesn't work. • Rick added that the parole staff is comprised of smart people; they've just been trained wrong and encouraged to trail them, nail them and jail them. • Rick noted that statutorily PO's are required to be POST certified so they can carry firearms, but DOC has changed it so a POST certification is not required to <u>apply</u> for a PO position. DOC is working on getting the right people hired and then certifying them after. • Hassan added that there have been lots of federal probation releases in the last few weeks. They're coming in droves to Colorado. • Rep. McCann said that she's considering a bill called 'ban the box' which would require employers not have a place on job applications asking about a prior record. There would also be different timeframes about when an employer could ask about criminal history. But private companies don't want to be told what they can and can't ask. • The concept is to allow the initial foot in the door. • Hassan reminded every that there was a similar push a few years back. • Places like Walmart and Target are already headed in this direction. • It's a good mindset for employers to get into. • Hassan said he works with employers on how to even read a CBI report. He said banning the box allows someone to have that initial interview, get in front of someone to show they're human, and then divulge the information in person. • There's a method to explain to an employer about past criminal history. • Paul brought the discussion back to housing and said he wants to get on the phone with three or four people to get their thoughts together on housing. Hassan and Melissa volunteered. The group also agreed to reach out to Regi, and Valarie for Glenn Tapia. • Outreach to Habitat for Humanity. • Outreach to Dennis Dunsmoor from Correctional Industries • Ask Regi about someone from Coalition for the Homeless. • Stan said there may be some funding changes after the Results First outcomes. • Paul asked the DOC representatives in the room to keep their eyes out on the Friday release issue. • Melissa will check with prison folks, sherri will look into the issue in probation • Paul and Germaine will pull together a call. • Stan asked Rep. McCann what help she may need with her ban the box bill. She replied that it would help to have the following people testify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Hassan -Someone from DOC - Needs a lobbyist to communicate with some of the legislators. - Melissa said there are felon friendly employers in Pueblo who could
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	testify too.
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Issue/Topic:	Discussion:
<p style="text-align: center;">Next Steps and Adjourn</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Action:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul and Germaine will pull together a call with the Housing working group. • Outreach to Habitat for Humanity. • Outreach to Dennis Dunsmoor from Correctional Industries • Ask Regi about someone from Coalition for the Homeless.

Next Meeting

February 10th, 2016 1:30pm – 4:30pm 710 Kipling St., 3rd floor conference room