**Reentry Advisory Council (RAC)**

4th Quarter 2019 Meeting Minutes

Department of Corrections Headquarters

Thursday, October 17, 2019

**Attendees Present:**

Dr. Emily Campbell, Designee for Dr. Monty Sullivan, Louisiana Community and Technical College System (Telephone Conference)

Winona Connor, Louisiana Housing Corporation (Telephone Conference)

Rhett Covington, Dept of Public Safety and Corrections

Bridget Dinvaut, Louisiana District Attorney’s Association

Robert D. Hanser, University of Louisiana at Monroe (Telephone Conference)

Holly Howat, designee for Judge Jules D. Edwards, III, 15th Judicial District Court (Telephone Conference)

Lindsay Jeffrey, designee for Arthur L. Hunter, Jr., Orleans Criminal District Court (Telephone Conference)

Secretary James Le Blanc, Dept of Public Safety and Corrections

Dr. John Morrison, Department of Public Safety and Corrections

Reverend Paul R. Murray, Elayn Hunt Correctional Center

Karissa Page, Designee for Jennifer Katzman, Department of Health

Joseph Prejean, Big Poppas Fitness Gym

Alfreda Tillman Bester, Designee for Marketa Garner Walters, Department of Children and Family Services (Telephone Conference)

**Absent:**

Joseph Ardoin, Jr., LA State Building and Construction Trades Council

Courtney L. Baker, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry

Michael ‘Mike’ Cazes, Louisiana Sheriff’s Association

Ava Dejoie, Louisiana Workforce Commission

James T. Dixon, Jr., Louisiana Public Defender Board

Daniel R. Martiny, LA Senate

Steve Pylant, LA House of Representatives

Sheryl Ranatza, Committee on Parole

Chairman Louis Reine, LA-AFL-CIO

**Other:**

Carmen Coutee

Renee Delouche

Brittany Herron

Vonetta Lacy

Nicole Miller

Layla Pedigo

Renard Thomas

Terry Trichell

James Windom

**Dept of Public Safety & Corrections Headquarters Staff:**

Rochelle Ambeau, Deputy Assistant Secretary

Marlon Battley, Office of Offender Reentry

Derek Berryhill, Office of Offender Reentry

Kiara Bynum, Office of Offender Reentry

Kewana Caesor, Probation and Parole

John Easley, DPSC

Nicole George, DPSC

Rebecca Ikner, Probation and Parole

Colby Johnson, Office of Offender Reentry

Natalie Laborde, DPSC

Amanda Mayeux, Office of Offender Reentry

Malcolm G. Myer, Deputy Secretary

Kelsey Pearce, Office of Offender Reentry

John Poche, Parole Board

Dr. Henry Sanders, Office of Offender Reentry

Robert Vehock, Office of Offender Reentry

Stephanie Webb, Probation and Parole

Missy Young, Probation and Parole

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Assistant Secretary Rhett Covington at 9:35 am.

**Roll Call**

Roll was called but a quorum was not established.

**Welcome and Introductions, Malcolm G. Myer, Deputy Secretary**

Deputy Secretary Malcolm Myer welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He reminded everyone that if they are attending via telephone conference, they will not count towards the quorum or be able to vote. This is a statutory requirement. He mentioned that in every reminder email prior to the meeting, there is a designee form sent out. If those individuals unable to attend would like to have someone attend in their place, they are to fill out and send in this designee form prior to the meeting date.

**Approval of the July 2019 Meeting Minutes**

The July 2019 minutes could not be approved because there was no quorum.

**Opening Remarks, Rhett Covington, Assistant Secretary**

Assistant Secretary Covington reported that reentry continues to move forward at a rapid pace. He briefly touched on the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) that was released for the tier 2 parishes. He also highlighted the importance of Industry Based Certifications (IBC) and including employers in our work. The TIGER risk assessment has been released and has replaced LARNA. The needs assessment is hoped to be released at the end of the calendar year. Louisiana Correctional Association had their conference which was successful and included several sessions regarding the Reentry Accountability Plan (REAP) and TIGER.

**Justice Reinvestment Implementation Contracts and NOFA, Nicole George, DPSC**

Ms. Nicole George reported that the East Baton Rouge Request for Proposals (RFP) which was re-released, was awarded to Lifeline Global. The Tier 2 NOFA was awarded to 8 or 9 awardees. She reported that there was a formal protest, but that that had been lifted as of Monday. There was another NOFA in St. Tammany which was unable to be awarded. It will be re-released in a month or two with an award available of $200,000 a year for 2 years. The transitional housing opportunity is in the works. They are currently wrapping up the language with hopes to publish it to the website by the end of that week. This will consist of a housing voucher with a list housed at Probation and Parole offices of those individuals in need of housing. This will happen on a rolling basis with selections being made in spring as well as in the fall of each year. Deputy Secretary Myer asked if this was long-term housing, to which Ms. George replied it will be for those needing emergency shelter for 2 weeks. Those in need of transitional housing will have 6 months which at the end of they will either have to pay the housing or they will no longer be able to reside in said program. Mr. James Windom asked if this housing was open to sex offenders. Ms. George answered affirmatively. She added that this program is only for tier 1 and 2 parishes. It will be open to probationers and parolees as well as those participating in specialty courts.

Ms. George stated that the legislative annual report has been released and asked that if anyone would like a copy to please let her know.

Secretary James Le Blanc briefly spoke on the fact that the Reentry Advisory Council will be providing oversight to the JRI funds and the way they are being spent. He also gave a brief report regarding the fact that the $100 million budget for the rebuilding of LCIW has been approved. He mentioned that the 2nd year of JRI investments is underway which involve the 2nd tier of LA-PRI parishes. He mentioned that the Probation and Parole population is below 60,000 currently. He also reported that mental health and substance abuse problems are a large component of criminal activity in our community.

**Employer’s Advisory Committee Update, John Easley, DPSC**

Mr. Easley provided an update on Angola, stating that they have been providing ASE certifications (94 certificates earned this year). ASE testing serves Angola, DCI, EHCC, RLCC, RCC, LSP barracks. They are also providing GM training and offenders are close to being able to obtain GM certifications when they are released from incarceration. They are also in talks with Toyota to provide the same type of training. Mr. Easley reported that they are down in reentry court program participants. Secretary Le Blanc asked Mr. Easley to send him the number of participants from 6 months ago as well as the numbers for today. Mr. Joseph Prejean posed a question regarding the amount of time necessary for an offender to complete a certification. Mr. Easley stated that he would want an offender to have at least two years before their release in order to complete a certification program. Mr. Easley mentioned that Bill Hood in Covington, LA is their biggest employer. In FY 18/19, there were 425 credentials earned.

Secretary Le Blanc mentioned that the Department is working with Ascension Staffing (employment agency) in order to provide employment opportunities for those releasing.

**Adult Reentry Employment Strategic (ARES) Grant, Robert Vehock, DPSC**

Mr. Robert Vehock mentioned that the Reentry Advisory Council is set to be the executive council for the ARES grant which is currently in the planning phase. Kelsey Pearce and Ciara Marlow are currently working on systems and process mapping with LCIW, EHCC, Plaquemines, and RLCC. They are currently exploring for the implementation grant where the current holes are. There is uncertainty as the national TA provider has lost their contract.

**LA-PRI Implementation Steering Team, Rhett Covington**

Mr. Covington reported that the next LA-PRI Implementation Steering Team meeting would take place on December 17th at New Orleans Goodwill in conjunction with the local coalition group. At the last meeting there were several reports on what is currently happening in each community.

**Expansion of Regional Reentry Programs, Rhett Covington**

Mr. Covington reported that Plaquemines has been up and running since April/May. St. Tammany is being expanded from a phase 1 regional reentry program and expanding in the same way that Plaquemines has. Allen reentry has been moved to the old C. Paul Phelps center. They are currently training on phase 1. The largest challenge has been the housing of ICE detainees limiting available beds at the local level.

**Carl Perkins Grant, Derek Berryhill, DPSC**

There will be a stakeholder meeting Tuesday, October 22nd at RLCC from 9:00 – 11:00 AM. This meeting is part of the statewide plan with LCTCS. He briefly reported that there is a transition plan (Paul Perkins Plan) and 4-year plan thereafter (total of 5 years). The Department is looking to pull the jump start program, LCTCS, and Correctional programs into a continuum of opportunities for offenders. They will be educating individuals on the Perkins V law. There are hopes to have lots of business and industry people at the stakeholder meeting. He touched on the differences in the new Perkins V program.

**2020 Meeting Schedule, Malcolm G. Myer**

The vote to establish the 2020 meeting schedule was deferred to the next meeting when a quorum could be established.

**Other Business**

Mr. Rhett Covington passed out materials for the New Beginnings reentry program and stated that the program is highly effective and active in Baton Rouge and St. Tammany. It is for those incarcerated who have mental health and substance abuse issues (co-occurring). It has been awarded the Innovations in Corrections Best Practice award in the past. The director of the program is Jodi Mallet. Mr. Vehock asked that the Reentry Advisory Council would be the executive oversight committee for the program, although there was no quorum so there could be no vote on the issue.

**Public Comment**

During the public comment portion Mr. James Windom mentioned the 2nd Annual Employer Forum taking place December 5th at the Main Library, which will be hosted by CAPARC and Right on Crime. There will be a Partnership Appreciation Meeting on November 13th at the Tracy Life Center with special guest speaker Marcus Bullock which is free for formerly incarcerated individuals. You can register online for this event at www.caparc.org. He also asked that those who work with formerly incarcerated people to nominate someone for the Building the Best award.

Mr. Windom also asked that DOC work with Mr. Renard Thomas who owns the EDAC Staffing Agency, which hires over 125 individuals a year. The staffing agency can be reached at edac.net. He works with employers such as Ray Brandt Nissan, Entergy, Walmart, etc. EDAC is also on the Orleans triage team referral list. Mr. Myer asked that Mr. Thomas send him more information.

Malcolm G. Myer entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:47 AM. Joseph Prejean adopted the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be held on January 23, 2020 at 9:30 AM at the *Department of Public Safety and Corrections Headquarters, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA*.