**Reentry Advisory Council (RAC)**

1st Quarter 2019 Meeting Minutes

Department of Corrections Headquarters

Thursday, January 24, 2019

**Attendees Present:**

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

Courtney L. Baker, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (Telephone Conference)

Dr. Emily Campbell, Designee for Dr. Monty Sullivan, Louisiana Community and Technical College System

Michael ‘Mike’ Cazes, Louisiana Sheriff’s Association

Rhett Covington, Dept of Public Safety and Corrections

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

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

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

Harlen Henegar, Designee for Ava Dejoie, Louisiana Workforce Commission

Jennifer Impastato, Designee for Arthur L. Hunter, Jr., Orleans Criminal District Court

Jennifer Katzman, Department of Health

Secretary James Le Blanc, Dept of Public Safety and Corrections

Dr. John Morrison, Department of Public Safety and Corrections

Joseph Prejean, Big Poppas Fitness Gym

Sheryl Ranatza, Committee on Parole

Chairman Louis Reine, LA-AFL-CIO

Alfreda Tillman Bester, Designee for Marketa Garner Walters, Department of Children and Family Services

**Absent:**

Bridget Dinvaut, Louisiana District Attorney’s Association

Daniel R. Martiny, LA Senate

Reverend Paul R. Murray, Elayn Hunt Correctional Center

Steve Pylant, LA House of Representatives

Nicole Sweazy, Louisiana Housing Corporation

**Other:**

Taryn C. Branson, Governor’s Office

Dr, Raymond Delaney, LaCOR

Vonnie Hawkins, SocialWorx & LAPRISTA

Gay Owens, Louisiana Housing Authority

Karissa Page, Louisiana Department of Health

Chad Sanders, First 72

James Windom, CAPARC

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

Francis Abbott, Pardon and Parole Board

Rochelle Ambeau, Deputy Assistant Secretary

LaCara Broussard, Office of Offender Reentry

Kewana Caesor, Probation and Parole

Jodi Cain-Mallet, DPSC

Courtney Dickerson, Office of Offender Reentry

Nicole George, DPSC

Rebecca Ikner, Probation and Parole

Natalie Laborde, DPSC

Amanda Mayeux, Office of Offender Reentry

Malcolm G. Myer, Deputy Secretary

Dr. Henry Sanders, Office of Offender Reentry

Robert Vehock, Office of Offender Reentry

Stephanie Webb, Probation and Parole

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Louis Reine at 9:31 am.

**Roll Call**

Roll was called and a quorum was established.

**Welcome and Introductions, Chairman Louis Reine**

Chairman Reine welcomed everyone. Mr. Reine read a portion of a letter of appreciation from Secretary James Le Blanc to the Reentry Advisory Council for all of their hard work and dedication.

**Approval of the October 2018 Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Reine entertained a motion to adopt the October 2018 minutes. The motion was adopted by Mike Cazes seconded by Joseph Ardoin, Jr. and the minutes were unanimously adopted.

**Opening Remarks, James M. Le Blanc, Secretary**

Secretary Le Blanc stated that he hopes that those on the Reentry Advisory Council would involve themselves (or someone from their agency) in the LA-PRI local coalition meetings whenever possible. He also mentioned that when minutes are received from those meetings, he would like to share those with the Reentry Advisory Council.

He stated that the role of the council will become more active in providing oversight in the months to come.

He mentioned that the prison population has been reduced by 1,400 in the last calendar year. The total now is approaching 9,000 total reductions, which is over 20%. He also reported that the Probation and Parole population is down from 72,000 to 62,000 with caseloads down from 150 to around 123 per officer.

Secretary Le Blanc expressed a need to share data back and forth between the Reentry Advisory Council and LA-PRI, including the Reentry Advisory Council Strategic Plan. Communication is key.

Alfreda Tillman Bester asked Secretary Le Blanc to share a copy of the statistics that he reported on with the members of the Council. Nicole George directed Ms. Bester that some, if not most, of the statistics the Secretary shared can be found on the DOC website. Secretary Le Blanc stated that he would share this information.

**Justice Reinvestment Implementation Contracts Update, Nicole George & Robert Vehock, DPSC**

Nicole George reported on the Community Investment grants stating that the Department has awarded 11 contracts. 3 of the contracts started January 1st, another 4 should start February 1st. The Department is currently waiting to get final signatures as well as approval from the Office of State Procurement. 3 contracts are still in progress.

Robert Vehock introduced LaCara Broussard and Courtney Dickerson who will be aiding in the monitoring of these contracts. He stated that over the last month they have visited every site possible (9 of the 11) and met with the contractors to discuss specifics of contracts/programs, ensuring that everyone understands expectations. They are currently working on building monitoring plans. There is a monthly and quarterly process currently in place for all contracts.

Chairman Reine asked for specifics on who the contracts are with and what they are for.

Nicole George reported that there was a total of $2.5 million to allocate to the different contracts. 11 contracts were awarded.

**East Baton Rouge**

Life of a Single Mom – For single mothers exiting institutions, this program focuses on family reunification and life skills to succeed after incarceration.

CAHSD – Capital Area Human Services District will provide wraparound services and community coordination through subcontractors that they are going to work with

**Orleans** – 5 contracts

Orleans Public Defenders – This will provide legal services when an offender is released with detainers, liens, fines, etc.

Goodwill Industries – Will provide wraparound services, including housing, employment, family reunification component, etc.

Catholic Charities – Will provide wraparound services, including housing, employment, family reunification component, etc.

Welcoming Project – This program will be working specifically with juveniles with adult offenses. They will help to get them their HiSET and will be doing training and mentoring to make sure that they stay out of trouble once released from custody.

Southern University at New Orleans – They will be providing peer support and mentoring with an entrepreneurship component as well as getting them a college degree. Participants will be on campus, as a college student, getting credits or if they prefer to start small business, they will help them start small business.

Fit Clinic – “Formally Incarcerated Transitions” concentrates on the physical health of the offender. Medicaid pays for a majority of services, but Fit Clinic will bring them in and whatever Medicaid doesn’t cover, physical health, they will help with that component.

Louisiana Parole Project – all 5 parishes – They will be working with juvenile lifers, 2nd degree murder, 40 year lifers, etc.

**Jefferson**

United Way of SELA – Will provide wraparound services similar to Orleans parish such as family reunification, employment, housing, etc.

**Caddo**

United Way Northwest LA – Will provide wraparound services.

**St. Tammany**

Catholic Charities – Will provide wraparound services.

**Co-Occurring Grant & Medically Assisted Treatment, Jodi Cain-Mallet & Shelley Edgerton, DPSC**

Jodi Cain-Mallet stated that the Co-Occurring Program which focuses on mental illness and substance abuse issues is called the New Beginnings program which came from a grant that was received from BJA in 2011. At that point they were just in Baton Rouge. It then expanded to New Orleans with further grant funding in 2014. They received the 2017 Innovation in Corrections award. With this program, they were able to break down the silos and bring the community mental health and the pre-release mental health teams together and worked with the clients both pre- and post-release to provide a warm handoff with peer support. They have been awarded the 2018 grant. Mrs. Mallet is already working on the planning and implementation guide. They are unsure of when funding will be allocated.

Mrs. Mallet also reported on the State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis program which works with offenders who have opiate use disorder in which they have enrolled 700 offenders thus far. They are currently at Angola, LCIW, Steve Hoyle, and have expanded to Dixon Correctional Institute and LTCW. They offer intensive substance abuse treatment while there. Two-months prior to release they offer medically assisted treatment in the form of Vivitrol, a non-narcotic opiate blocker which helps with cravings. The program has performed approximately 60 injections. Those getting the injection are extremely successful. Approximately 10% are successful recovering from opiate addiction without medical assistance.

Sheryl Ranatza posed a question regarding the New Beginnings Program. She asked if the participants are coming out of state facilities. Mrs. Mallet stated that programming would be housed at LCIW and EHCC but that the grant has identified the top 5 parishes that have difficulties and will be bringing in participants from the local jails in these areas as well.

Karissa Page offered to provide training to those peer support employees in these programs on any issues regarding Medicaid.

Shelley Edgerton, Program Director of the Opioid Substance Abuse Program, mentioned that COAP (Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program) is a new grant that has been received (managing agent through OBH). For those diagnosed with opiate use disorders released from parish facilities going to New Orleans as well as DOC releases they will be referred to the New Orleans DRC where they can get extended opioid, substance abuse programming as well as MAT in the form of Vivitrol and possibly other forms of MAT such as Suboxone and Methadone. She asked that everyone keep this program in mind when you have someone releasing to the DRC in New Orleans. Offenders can receive extended care upon release. The funding for this program will be for three years.

**Orleans Triage Team/Transition Team Presentation, Rebecca Ikner, DPSC & Dr. Raymond Delaney, LaCOR**

Dr. Raymond Delaney introduced himself as the President of Louisiana Council of Resources (LaCOR) and the assistant chair to the Orleans LA-PRI task force. He stated that they have been formed for about 4 or 5 years and have accomplished great strides as a community surrounding community reentry initiatives. They are currently working on their community assessment plan for 2019 so that they can identify the gaps and barriers of their community in the parish of Orleans. Currently the Orleans reentry task force consists of 65 organizations and community members. Organizations include Goodwill, Total Community Action, Volunteers of America, Probation and Parole, LaCOR, First 72 Plus, etc. They also have different subcommittees under the New Orleans Reentry Task Force and one of those subcommittees includes First Responders which offers wraparound, intense, direct services for formally incarcerated persons or people coming from prison to community.

At Probation and Parole, they have a “triage team” process in place. In 2018 they served over 539 participants who came from prison to the community. Rebecca Ikner of Probation and Parole reported that all the triage team members are part of the task force but not all task force members are part of triage. Triage teams are at the New Orleans district office 3 days a week. So far, for the month of January, they have screened 29 individuals. The services that the triage team can assess individuals for include housing, employment, mental health, emergency assistance, physical health, HiSET, substance abuse, legal, counseling, job training, clothing, education, literacy, childcare, and food bank services. Some of the local partners that are within the triage team are the Mayor’s office, Goodwill, Urban League, Job One, CADA, Justice Accountability Center, SLS (legal services), LaCOR, Catholic Charities, TCA (Total Community Action), Strive, Metropolitan, Odyssey House, Community Service Center, Veterans, Probation and Parole, First 72 Plus, Delgado, Fit Clinic, etc. Since November 1st 2017 they have triaged 624 individuals that have been touched with services through Probation and Parole with these partnerships. In November of 2018 they moved to all electronic referral forms for triage which has allowed to ensure fidelity as far as tracking who they’ve serviced and what partners have touched those individuals. Just had a dental bus at NO District last 2 days which serviced 14 individuals with dental checkups (provided by EXCELth in Algiers). New Orleans District also added a new door to conference room that will be able to secure a larger area to enable screenings, trainings, classes, etc. for those who come to them so the transportation barrier is less impactful.

Dr. Delaney mentioned that the dental bus will be coming back March 14th. They are also exploring a similar set up for eye care services and he asked if anyone had any resources, to please share them. He mentioned that recruitment for Jefferson parish has begun for those in Jefferson East and West.

Assistant Secretary Covington mentioned that there was a training for East Baton Rouge to enable them to begin their own triage. Dr. Delaney stated that they are doing well thus far. There is a hope to expand this process throughout the state.

**Employment Strategic Planning Grant, Robert Vehock**

DOC has been awarded a planning grant from BJA to put together an Employment Strategic Plan to identify better ways to prepare our population for employment post release. This hasn’t made much progress due to the government shutdown which has affected BJA. They are still waiting for the deployment of funding so they can’t officially do any work on the grant yet. The main thing that can be accomplished without funding is the population of a few different committees and boards. The RAC currently constitutes the executive steering committee. Robert Vehock has been talking with the cross-disciplinary work group, which consists of staff from DOC, United Way Southeast LA, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, Louisiana Workforce Commission, NOLA Business Alliance. This group is primarily responsible for the writing of the strategic plan. Mr. Vehock is reaching out to the RAC to help securing an industry-advisory group of employers. This would function as a group that DOC can collaborate with on how to put together the best possible plan to help our population in being responsive to what employers want. Mr. Vehock asked for input of the RAC and anyone interested who can populate those groups. He reported that he received an email from BJA that this grant will be extended due to the government shutdown resulting in the completion date being pushed back to October.

Assistant Secretary Covington added that the important thing, particularly for AFL-CIO, LABI, and other workforce representatives who are on this council, is to determine who they have that can help populate these groups in order to help develop a vision for how to improve the pipeline from prison to employment in the framework of a strategic plan which we can then leverage to get a federal grant to test the model out and get people to work.

Chairman Reine asked if there is some consideration for the training necessary for employment and then the training after employment to move up the ladder. Assistant Secretary Covington stated that it is up to the planning groups to decide if that is important to include, but believes that it would more than likely be included.

**Update on Louisiana Workforce Commission Employment Development Partnership, Harlen Henegar, Louisiana Workforce Commission**

The project is currently on-track and developing momentum. The plan is to permanently integrate Louisiana Workforce Commission Reemployment Case Managers into the prerelease process of the parish jail facilities and post-release processes of the day reporting centers. There was a meeting at Covington Day Reporting Center (DRC) which Probation and Parole attended. The intention is to start with implementing in the tier I parishes which will start at the Plaquemines facility where staff selection has been completed. There is a plan to have staff in Covington DRC no later than February 9th full time with a roll out across the state set for March 1st at all locations. The reentrants will already have met and been acquainted with their reentry case managers that work for LWC in the process of them being released. Case managers are going to have the offender’s information 45 days prior to release. If there are people who have been released prior to the program start who have a DRC requirement, on a “space available” basis, they will be able to meet at the DRC with the case managers for employment services. This offering will be expanded based on the population being served, the amount of resources available, and funding availability. There is a meeting planned at St. Tammany today in order to have the case manager in place by February 9th. Caddo meeting dates are being discussed with GEO and Probation and Parole. Within the next week or so there will be a tour of the Plaquemines, Orleans, Jefferson facility to establish where the case worker’s workspace will be, and to discuss the process flow. The EBR meeting will be determined soon.

There is a plan to expand to other DRCs and jails. Monroe and Thibodaux have both opened DRCs. As Mr. Henegar can make staff available, he plans to establish someone in these locations. His overall goal is in 18 to 24 months to have someone at every parish jail that releases offenders. There was a meeting with CLASP to discuss electronic data sharing. They have developed a methodology for tracking services that are provided as well as outcomes. At the end of every month he will be able to tell how many people were served, what services were provided, etc. At some point, there will be electronic data sharing capabilities. He plans to continue what LWC has been doing with the Reentry Courts in New Orleans, looking to expand to other parts of the state. He recently had in-service with the Reentry Courts where they have serves 258 reentrants. He wants to expand the court process. He stated that of those LWC reentry court participants in NOLA 23% are SNAP recipients and 6.8% veterans.

Jennifer Impastato questioned if they are tracking the New Orleans reentrants and have served 200 for reentry court because she stated that she has not seen anyone from LWC in her courts. She doesn’t believe these individuals are reentry court. She states that there is no one from LWC currently serving the reentry court in New Orleans. She stated that LRS is providing services to those who qualify including tools for work and stated that they need some conversation regarding the challenges being faced.

Harlen Henegar stated that these are individuals identified as coming out of the court system of Jefferson, Orleans, St. John, and St. Bernard. He believes that these individuals could be from reentry court, drug court, or sent by the judge to LWC. Mr. Henegar stated that they are currently working on updating the court referral system. In regards to Ms. Impastato’s concerns he directed her to speak with Melissa Bayham, the new director of LRS.

Assistant Secretary Covington stated that part of the reporting and data sharing that needs to be done is comparing notes. This will increase buy in by staff on all sides.

Henegar is currently working on getting statewide access for case managers. It is a challenge to figure out what information can be shared. He expressed a need for a Data Sharing Agreement in order to share information.

**Other Business**

Chairman Reine stated that he joins the Secretary in acknowledging and thanking everyone for their time, input, and expertise. He mentioned that he is excited to see the progress. He also commended Secretary Le Blanc and the staff of the Department of Corrections.

Dr. Raymond Delaney expressed his appreciation for the concerted effort that he has seen from this administration.

Judge Jules Edwards mentioned that his community coordinators have submitted invoices that have not received approval or payment. Assistant Secretary Covington mentioned that he would look into why and resolve said issue.

Secretary Le Blanc referred to a criminal justice radio interview that was given by Judge Edwards and asked him to share this interview with the other members of the Reentry Advisory Council.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

Chairman Louis Reine adjourned the meeting at 10:46 AM.

The next meeting will be held on April 18, 2019 at 9:30 AM at the *Department of Public Safety and Corrections Headquarters, 504 Mayflower Street, Baton Rouge, LA*.