

Governor's Reentry Council meeting minutes
March 26, 2009
Governor's Large Conference Room, State Capitol
Pierre, SD

Members present: Tim Reisch, Secretary of Corrections, Tom Oster, Secretary of Education, Pam Roberts, Secretary of Labor, Roger Campbell, Director of Tribal Government Relations, and Terry Dosch, Executive Director of South Dakota Council of Mental Health Centers. Dave Munson, Mayor of Sioux Falls joined the meeting via teleconference.

Laurie Gill, Department of Health, Dan Lusk, Department of Human Services, Sharon Sonnenschein, Department of Social Services, John Fette, Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs, Marcia Hultman, Department of Labor, Barb Garcia, Rapid City Community Development Director, and Laurie Feiler, Department of Corrections, also attended. Kevin McLain, Department of Corrections, joined the meeting via teleconference.

Technical difficulties with the teleconference prevented Alan Hanks, Mayor of Rapid City, from participating in the meeting.

The meeting of the Governor's Reentry Council began at 10:15 a.m. Tim Reisch, Secretary of Corrections, welcomed the participants and asked them to introduce themselves to others attending. Reisch explained that the Governor had established the Reentry Council by issuing an Executive Order on March 11th. The responsibilities of the Council include studying ways to reduce the number of inmates that return to the state prison system after their initial release. The Reentry Council is made up of representatives of state and local government agencies and other organizations that provide services that are essential for released inmates to succeed. Reisch stressed the need for the Reentry Council members to work together and provide helpful input and assistance for those inmates that return to our communities. Reisch explained that inmates releasing from prison have many needs, including housing, employment, transportation and health care and often cannot access the necessary resources they need to succeed.

Reisch reviewed the state prison population, which has risen from an average daily population of 2,267 in 1998 to a projected 3,451 in the current state fiscal year. About 30-percent of the inmates that were released from prison in 2007 returned within a year, while approximately 39-percent returned to prison within two years and 45-percent returned within three years of their initial release.

Reisch said the Department of Corrections budget has risen from \$49.4 million ten years ago to \$108.7 million this year. It costs nearly \$69 a day to keep an inmate in the South Dakota State Penitentiary and only about \$3.65 a day to supervise someone on parole.

Reisch said the United States' incarceration rate is the highest in the world. A recent study by The PEW Center on the States showed that one in every 31 people in this country are under some type of correctional control, whether it be in prison or jail or on parole or probation supervision. In South Dakota, the number is one in every 40 people under correctional control and one in every 104 adults in South Dakota is either in prison or in jail. South Dakota ranks 25th of the fifty states and the District of Columbia in incarceration rate according to the PEW study.

Laurie Feiler, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Corrections, provided an overview of recidivism and demographic information about inmates in the state prison system. The average length of stay for an inmate in the state prison system is only 15.3 months. More than 90-percent of the inmates in the state prison system have a chemical dependency diagnosis and the current inmate population has had an average of 2.29 prior treatments for chemical dependency. More than a quarter of the inmate population has had an identified mental health issue, even though that doesn't mean they are necessarily chronically mentally ill. The average inmate has 2.4 felony convictions and 2.5 prison admissions. Less than half of the inmates in the state prison system are currently serving their first stint in prison. More than 80-percent of the inmates that are released from prison are on parole supervision. Only fifteen percent of the inmates are released from prison because their sentence expired. Of the 2,072 inmates that were released from prison in 2007, more than half were in prison for either an alcohol related crime or for drug possession or distribution.

Feiler explained that each inmate that enters the state prison system is assessed and is given an Individual Program Directive (IPD) that lays the groundwork for what is expected of the inmate to complete while incarcerated including work, school and program participation and abiding with the rules and policies of the system. Inmates begin working on their IPD as well as their transition and release plans almost immediately after entering prison. The release plans are reviewed annually and include components such as housing, employment, education, chemical dependency and sex offender treatment needs as well as any medical and/or mental health needs. There are approximately 2,800 people on parole in South Dakota. The PEW study showed that one in every 64 people in South Dakota was either on parole or state/federal probation. The state ranks 36th in the number of people on probation or parole in the PEW study.

Feiler said the state has adopted the Association of State Correctional Administrators definition of recidivism that includes those inmates that return to prison with either a new conviction or as a result of violation of the terms of supervision after 12, 24 and 36 months following their initial release. Feiler reviewed information regarding recidivism by county of commitment, race/ethnicity and gender.

Kevin McLain, Director of Grants and Research for the Department of Corrections, briefed the Reentry Council on The Second Chance Act, which was signed into law in April 2008 to help states and communities reduce recidivism and authorize grants for demonstration projects that are designed to reduce recidivism. South Dakota is

developing their application for one of the grants. The grant requires that a Reentry Task Force be established to review ways to combine resources and funding sources to promote lower recidivism. Applicants must show evidence of collaboration including state and local agencies overseeing health, mental health, housing, child welfare, education, substance abuse, victim services, employment services and local law enforcement. Up to \$750,000 per year for three years is available through the grant. South Dakota's target population with the grant application is Minnehaha County, which constitutes 22.6 percent of those being released from prison and 27.9% of those that recidivate within one year of release, and Pennington County which comprises 20.4 percent of those being released and 32.8% of those recidivating in one year as well as those releasing inmates that are identified as high risk to recidivate. Data analysis is underway to help identify those inmates that are at the highest risk and their needs.

McLain said local reentry workgroups will also be established. An analysis of risk and needs will be conducted. State agencies are asked to identify any program resources that may be available to releasing inmates that could assist in reducing their risk to recidivate. State agencies and local reentry workgroups will assist with the program design. Agencies will also be asked to identify staff that can assist in the grant application and implementation process and draft agency specific letters of support for the grant. It's anticipated that state agency contacts and local reentry workgroups will meet to discuss offender needs, resources, sources of matching funds and program design.

Secretary Reisch told the group that the subgroup of the Reentry Council, the "Reentry Workgroup," would begin their efforts in the next couple weeks with Laurie Feiler taking the lead. Reisch advised that Laurie and Kevin McLain have developed a preliminary list of potential workgroup members but he was looking for the Reentry Council members to delegate the person (or persons) they believed to be the most appropriate to do this work. Get your names to Laurie as soon as possible.

Secretary Reisch thanked the Reentry Council for their participation in the inaugural meeting and the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.